



A Newsletter of Stewpot Community Services March 2011

Taste of Mississippi

By: Rev. Frank Spencer

March winds bring in the 23rd annual Taste of Mississippi to Highland Village on March 28, 2011. Called Taste of the Nation when it was first introduced 23 years ago, the event was a part of a national group that sponsored events in many locals. Luther Ott, the Executive Director of Stewpot at the time decided that the event was paying too much of its hard earned funds to the organization when the funds were need to fight hunger right here in Mississippi and so we started our own event with the current name.

The event has been staffed mainly with 15-20 volunteers working almost year round and about 50 extra volunteers on the day itself. This year, the event has 2 new Chairs, Doris Scott and Michelle Bingham. Many thanks are due to former chairs Stan McGee and Susan Frazer and their sub committee chair for making the last few years tremendous successes raising well over \$100,000 each year. This years group has been working hard to duplicate past successes.

The event will feature the finest entrées, appetizers and desserts available, made by chefs from local upscale restaurants who are compet-

ing for Best of Taste of Mississippi trophies. The food is simply the best one can imagine and ticket holders are able to sample as many as they can get around to in the 3 hours of the event.

Another highlight is the silent auction in which a large group of highly desirable donated items including paintings, jewelry, art objects, vacation packages and many other crafts will be available. Most items sell for much lower than their actual value.

All Stewpot supporters are encouraged to attend this event and help support Stewpot by having a great time at the event. The event will be held at Highland Village as usual and the food will be great and the drinks will be great. The event is for those 21 and older since liquor, wine and beer will be available for ticket holders. Tickets are available online at www.tasteofms.org, and also Fresh Ink, BeBop, Lemuria, the Highland Village office, and McDade's, Many local churches are also selling the tickets to their congregations, check at your church office. Tickets are \$65 in advance and \$80 at the Taste of Mississippi entrances.

Please join us for

Stewpot's 23rd Annual Taste of Mississippi

This event has been a Jackson-area favorite for two decades where dozens of Mississippi chefs and fine restaurateurs come to share their finest culinary delights. There will be a silent auction which will showcase artwork by Jackson-area artists, restaurant gift certificates, and handmade craftworks, etc. All proceeds will benefit Stewpot ministries.

- When:** Monday, March 28, 2011
- Where:** Highland Village
- Music:** Pryor and the Tombstones and Hunter Gibson & the Gators
- Time:** 7pm – 10pm
- Tickets:** \$65 in Advance
\$80 at the Door

Tickets are available at:
Be-Bop, Fresh Ink, Lemuria, Highland Village Offices, St. James Episcopal Church, McDades Grocery Stores, and www.tasteofms.org

Director's Corner *By: Rev. Frank Spencer*

Stewpot had its Annual Meeting on February 3, 2011, at the Stewpot Community Center. New officers elected were: Holmes Adams of St Andrews Cathedral as Board Chair, Vice-Chair Jane Anna Barksdale of St James, Treasurer Charles Parrott of Northminister and Margie Cunningham of St. Peters as Secretary. A New Board Member also was elected and



Opportunity Center: filling a *Need*

By: Heather Logan-Ivery

Opportunity Center has been open daily since November 22 assisting our city's homeless by providing shelter, laundry, showers, phones, computer and other basic necessities of life. The Center could not have reopened at a better time with the bitterly cold temperatures we have been having lately. Many days the Center has been opened 24 hours providing emergency shelter for the overflow from Gateway and Brumfield when the temperature is below freezing.

On an average day the Center will see about 115 people come through its doors. All of them are coming because they need. They need a place to be, or to take a shower or wash their clothes. They need to get warm or make a phone call. They need to rest or fill out an application online. Maybe they need to meet with a mental health caseworker or get a ride to the WIN Job Center. Whatever the reason, the Center strives to meet these needs.

The Staff at Opportunity Center works hard to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and accountability among those who utilize the services of the Center. With 115 different personalities and attitudes coming through the door each day this is somewhat of a feat. There are no rules at the Center, only a list of Expectations that focus on respecting each other, respecting the building and respecting the staff's authority. All who enter the Center are expected to adhere to these principles including clients, staff and volunteers. Because we are all held to the same

expectations, individuals hold each other accountable when they do not live up to them. Positive peer pressure helps ensure that things run smoothly.

Our ultimate goal is to help people end homelessness and become successful. We do this by building relationships with those who come to the Center. Sometimes this is done easily and people are willing to share their lives with us. Other times, it is more difficult and takes time to cultivate that relationship. We are also very careful to let them tell us what a successful life is for them. Too many times we try to make people live

our ideas of success. A good job, a family, a house, a car, a bank account and nice clothes may be what we strive for, but it is not everyone's idea of success. For many of the people who come to us, success is measured by whether or not they have a warm place to sleep that night and if they were able to get more than one meal that day. So allowing individuals to measure success

on their terms and set their own pace to get there is challenging, but necessary.

Providing basic necessities and building relationships may seem like a slow and tedious process sometimes. Often we want to hurry up and fix people so they will be better. But, we are called to help those in need, not fix them. That is the Lord's part. We are here to help and encourage them through their journey, no matter where it leads.

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More about Taste of Mississippi



Taste of Mississippi Committee

Back row, (L-R) Robert Byrd, Elizabeth Grey, Kristin Gorney, Michelle Bingham, Rene' Johnson, Heather Ivery, Jessica Lynch, Calvin Doughty. Front row, (L-R) Enjoli Ward, Cathy Funches, Doris Scott, Amy Marquez, Christie Burnett, Denise Wall, Tara Lindsey, Not Pictured - Jennifer Boydston, Bill Cook, Melinda McLaurin, Amy Waidelich-Fowler, Ann Lauren Fratesi, Georganna Keenum, Lori Stewart, Charlotte Seals, Ricky Emmons, Megan West, Miriam Lamar, Kendall Poole, Sylvia & Sam Pooley, Kimberly Jacobs.

Thank You for Your *Support!*

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Richard McRae
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Virginia & Robb Farr

See you there!
MONDAY
March 28
Two-Thousand and Eleven

Top 20 Event

SOUTHEAST
TOURISM SOCIETY



Hello Again *Stewpot*, Hello!

By: Amy Kristin Delaughter



It has been nearly two years since being introduced to the Stewpot Community. In early April 2009, I began work as a volunteer, helping out in the office wherever needed, answering the telephone, copying, filing and serving lunch. Although the road that initially led me here was

pretty bumpy, at best, I felt welcomed and loved from the moment I walked thru the front door. I could not wait to get here in the mornings in time for the fantastic breakfasts that Mr. Don would faithfully prepare for his volunteers, and I am blessed to have been included in that group. My days were filled with interesting people and fulfilling encounters, and I felt rich from the experience. A part of me saddened at departing at the end of each day. When circumstances beyond my control called me away from Stewpot, I was so very disappointed.

That period of my life and year that followed were perhaps the most challenging yet, but my Stewpot family was never

far from my mind. We stayed in contact, and even though I was miles away, their prayers of love and concern sustained my heart. Coming to believe that we all make mistakes has taken some time, as I had always assumed that I had made more than most, and that, perhaps, in the grand scheme of things, I had used up my share of “second chances.” As it turns out, though, no one at Stewpot thought I had, and when I found myself stuck, completely frustrated, and on the verge of giving up, they came running and did not hesitate to help or to suggest various opportunities of which I could take advantage or explore.

Now, refreshed in body and renewed in spirit, I have been welcomed back into the fold, if you will. I initially rejoined Stewpot Staff as the receptionist, and most recently, as Brother Frank’s assistant, and may I just say, “It’s good to be home!” I have the received the warmest “welcomes” and “welcome backs”, and I am still running into folks from two years ago. Some things are different; most are the same. A few faces have changed, but the community of love, commitment, encouragement and support I remember so clearly has only grown stronger in my time away. Thank you Stewpot Staff, volunteers, and extended family, for saving my place. I sure missed y’all. Oh, and Mr. Don’s breakfasts...well, some things will never change. All My Love!

Summer Camp *is Just Around the Corner!*

We’re looking for groups to make lunches for our campers. Or if you have a special talent to share with our campers for enrichment, we need you! Contact Enjoli Ealey or Tara Lindsey at 601.353.2759 to sign up today.



3 Cheers for *Justin!*

Justin Bell is a 5th grade student at Davis Magnet Elementary in Jackson and a participant in the Stewpot Afterschool Program. He has been in our Program for 5 years and has always excelled in academics earning high honor rolls and Principal's List awards throughout elementary school. Justin has received many other scholar awards and has been recognized by the school district for his achievements. He has represented his school in several district wide events. Most recently he took a test that would qualify him for admittance into the International Baccalaureate (IB) Program. No surprise to his teachers, Justin received a letter this week stating that he has been accepted in the IB program at Siwell Middle School next year! We are so proud of Justin and even prouder to say that he is a part of our Program! When asked what he wants to be when he grows up he replied "An Aerospace Engineer". We applaud Justin for his accomplishments thus far and await the day he is developing and designing air and space crafts!



Director's Corner ...Continued from front

that was Barbara Brunini of St. Francis. Thanks to former Chair Sheldon Alston and Treasurer Eileen Shaffer for their dedicated work on behalf of Stewpot for the past 2 years as board officers.

The Annual Taste of Mississippi Preview Party was held March 3rd at the Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame on Lakeland Drive and everyone had a great time. Thanks to Trustmark for making the location available, NBC for the great music, VIP Grand Events, Wal-Mart on Highway 80 in Clinton, Taste of the Islands for the great food, That Special Touch and The Cake Diva for the wonderful cakes, and Metro Wine & Liquor and Madison Cellars for the wine and Southern Beverage for the Beer. The party was a great showcase for the artwork, the silent auction items and the fun that will be available at the Main Taste of Mississippi on March 28th at Highland Village.

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See you at the Taste!

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