



# University Community News

Volume 7

*Restoring hope . . . one life at a time.*

Issue 4

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## UCM CLOTHING DRIVE HELP FOR THE HOMELESS



We should never forget the poor are always with us. To help them prepare for the cool weather ahead, we are collecting NEW and SLIGHTLY USED COATS and BLANKETS to support the homeless in our area.

Please call the UCM Office at 813-930-2088 for pickup or directions to the drop off location.

The items collected will be distributed by University Community Ministries (UCM) Operation Jumpstart Program that provides services such as feeding, clothing and providing showers to our homeless neighbors in the Northeast Tampa Area.

Contacts for this drive are America Van Gorp 813-390-0271 and Jerome Van Gorp 813- 334-3709.



During this holiday season, it is our prayer to you that,

*The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.*

*Numbers 6:24-26 (NIV)*

**May your holidays be filled with love, joy and peace.**

UCM is all about *"Restoring hope . . . one life at a time".*

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**OPERATION JUMPSTART  
(Homeless Community  
Outreach Program)**

**A House With a  
Force for Good**

On the first day of our Human Services class at Springfield College, four ladies with like mind and in one accord banded together to form a group now called – “Women of Change” (WOC). The women involved are Rita Gregg, Rosa Lopez, Daisy Perez and Angela Gilmore.



Rita Gregg, Rosa Lopez, Daisy Perez, Angela Gilmore and Carolyn Curtis (TA)

As part of our Group Project course, we had to connect to a known non-profit helps organization and provide a needed service. With shared determination and full of anticipation, we took a page from Mr. Boss, who later became our staff support for college and stated “It takes a special type of person to become effective agents of change!” WOC became that agent!

After the entire group had met the University Community Ministries, Inc. (UCM) Operation Jumpstart (OJ) Program leadership team, the ladies of WOC were elated about the need for an administrative office for the Benevolent House.

The Benevolent House offers meals, clothing, showers and respite for our neighbors who have found themselves unable to avail themselves to many of these common needs on their own. WOC will work with America Van Gorp, UCM secretary, who is heading up this UCM OJ Program venture of turning a small supply room into a fully functional administrative office. Completion of this task will help provide a greater range of help in a private, secure environment to singles, families with children and all those coming in needing assistance. Carolyn Curtin, an OJ Volunteer, accepted the role to be the WOC Technical Assistance (TA) representative between WOC and UCM OJ Program organization.

Our initial task of a “Meet & Greet” was used to introduce WOC to the UCM OJ community. On Saturday, 10/8/11, we went out with OJ Program volunteers to help in the feeding of the homeless where Daisy Perez took an active role in handing

out WOC “Meet & Greet” invitations to those that were being fed.

On Sunday, 10/16/11, the “Meet & Greet” luncheon was prepared by the WOC team with Rosa Lopez taking an active part in preparing over 30+ plates served that day. Rita Gregg took the lead in obtaining many of the donations included in the gift bags presented to each individual that day! Angela Gilmore blessed us by having her sister donate rice and beans for the lunch that was served!

In taking this to a conclusion, President Obama said last year – “There is a force for good greater than government, et al”. That “force for good” can be found in each woman involved in WOC. Each woman comes with talents and gifts that make WOC such a vital group of promise. Rita Gregg is a mother of four children and a grandmother staying on task and is expecting to graduate in August 2012. Rosa Lopez, who often brings her son to OJ meetings and WOC events, is showing her son first hand what it takes and how it feels to be an effective part of change. Daisy Perez, who in spite of working long and/or odd hours, still shows up with a heart for change. Angela Gilmore whose heart is first and foremost to be an effective vehicle for change is an integral part of the very glue for the WOC group.

Finally, the “force for good” will be felt with the completion of this office by the projected completion date of February 2012. On a more grand scale, that “force for good” will be felt within the hearts of the Women Of Change knowing that our homeless neighbors are on the road to restoring their broken lives!!!!

**Women of Change “Meet & Greet” luncheon pictures**



Picture 1 - Rita Gregg w/ some of Homeless neighbors and OJ Family



Picture 2 – Angela Gilmore w/ Homeless family



Picture 3 – Rosa Lopez and Daisy Perez w/ some of our Homeless neighbors and OJ family.

Expressions of help and donations for the homeless may be dropped off at Citylife Church Benevolence House. You can also call the UCM office at 813-930-2088 or contact the OJ Program Director, Jerome Van Gorp at 813-334-3709.

**PCAT PROGRAM CHANGE**

As of August 31, 2011, The UCM Board of Directors has released the UCM PCAT Program in Sulphur Springs to a new non-profit organization to emphasize literacy and education. Christene Worley has resigned to head up this new non-profit organization called “Parents and Children Advance Together Literacy Ministries, Inc.” and to continue the work with the kids and families in the Sulphur Springs area.

The UCM Board is convinced that the PCAT team and Program in Sulphur Springs is well developed and supports Christene in this new venture.

UCM is assembling another PCAT staff and establishing a second PCAT Program in Hillsborough County duplicating the very successful PCAT model and supporting yet another elementary school. This will increase our work being done in building strong families and providing the best opportunity for our children to succeed in Hillsborough County.

UCM has brought another PCAT Program Director, Toni Stone, on board. Toni’s background in Human Resource Administration, Early Literacy Learning and preschool experience will serve us well in developing and building a similar PCAT Program model for Miles Elementary School in the Northeast Hillsborough County area.



## PCAT LIFE (Family Literacy Program)

PCAT News Now  
By Toni Stone



I am very pleased to accept the position as the PCAT Program Director. I want to thank UCM for this humbling opportunity. I am eager to make a positive contribution to the UCM organization and excited to work with everyone on the UCM team.

Please allow me to share a few words about myself. I have been married to my wonderful husband, Warren, for nearly 27 years. We have two beautiful daughters, Samantha and Rebecca, and a precious two year old granddaughter, Savannah. We have attended Citylife Church for over 25 years and it has been my privilege to serve in children's ministry for 22 years, ministering primarily with preschool children.

From 1997 – 2007 I was privileged to serve as University Preschool Director. University Preschool was a certified VPK program and was a model for Early Literacy Matters (E.L.M.); a highly effective early literacy program. I look forward to using my early education experience and literacy training as the PCAT Program Director.

In recent research, I have discovered a few startling statistics. One in six children who are not reading proficiently by third grade do not graduate from high school on time, a rate four times greater than that for proficient readers. Twenty-two percent (22%) of children who have lived in poverty do not graduate from high school compared to 6% of those who have never been poor. This rises to 32% for students spending more than half of their childhood in poverty. This comes from an article by The Annie E. Casey Foundation called *Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation*. Educators and researchers have long recognized the importance of mastering reading by the end of third grade.

PCAT's mission is to continue to offer an after-school literacy reading intervention Program in socially and economically depressed and underserved areas of Hillsborough County. The Program will continue to service first and second

grade children who have been identified by school officials as reading below a desired reading level and displays low academic achievement. Parents will also be encouraged to participate and will be given life skills training and opportunities for education advancement. My intention is to call this new Program PCAT Literacy Intervention and Family Enrichment (PCAT LIFE).

I'm excited to see all the great things in store for PCAT in which we desire to make a difference for a brighter future for children and families in our community. I ask that you partner in prayer with us as we reach out for opportunities to connect with additional foundations and agencies with the same mission and heart for the need to touch the lives of these young children and their families.

Miss Toni's Tips: Kids need to read a lot. Practice makes perfect. Practice reading with your child at least 20 minutes each day. Reading practice - just reading - is a powerful contribution to the development of accurate, fluent, high comprehension reading.

Have a blessed holiday season.

For more information on PCAT, call the UCM office at (813) 930-2088 or contact the PCAT LIFE Program Director, Toni Stone at (813) 244-4909.

### FRIENDSHIP BRIDGE (Senior Adult Connection)

Holidays and More . . .  
By Molly Cox

"Holidays" is a word that may mean many things to many people. To some it may mean "family, joy, shopping, giving, receiving, being thankful, seeing old friends, caroling, going to church for the first time since the last "holiday", OR, it may mean to some sitting by the phone waiting on a call that never comes, watching TV all day, not receiving anything and not able to buy someone else anything, or just being more lonely than any other time of the year.

For those of us who are fortunate to have family around us, a close church family, friends and neighbors, it is usually a very busy time of shopping, partying, giving, and going to church. I am amazed sometimes how I can get so caught up in the busyness of the holidays that I forget those whose lives are not as full of wonderful, beautiful things as mine.

Over the past several months, because of the construction that is happening at Citylife Church, we have been unable to meet on a regular basis. However, the members of Friendship Bridge

have not been forgotten. We have had to move our time and place around a little because of the changes that are being made with the church and the Charter School of Excellence. We were able to experience a gathering in October and it was wonderful to see everyone and we had a great time of "catching up".

The change that is happening at Citylife Church and the Charter School of Excellence is good because it means growth in the church and the school. However, change also means that we have to be patient and understanding until the process is walked out.

*Thank you to our Friendship Bridge members for their patience and understanding through this exciting process of change for us.*

Friendship Bridge will offer a time of fellowship and celebration for those who are 60 plus on Saturday, December 10, at 11:30am in the fellowship hall. We will celebrate the Season of Thanksgiving and Christmas together as friends and family.

For more information about Friendship Bridge, call the UCM office at (813) 930-2088 or contact the Friendship Bridge Director, Molly Cox at (813) 933-3991 ext. 227.



### ANNOUNCEMENTS

If you prefer to receive the UCM Newsletter via email, then email us at [newsletter@universitycommunityministries.org](mailto:newsletter@universitycommunityministries.org) to be placed on the emailing list and removed from our mailing list.

### NEEDS

UCM needs your time and talents – volunteer today! Call the UCM office at (813) 930-2088 or email us at [info@universitycommunityministries.org](mailto:info@universitycommunityministries.org) and let us hear from you!

### CHECK US OUT!

Visit UCM's website at [www.universitycommunityministries.org](http://www.universitycommunityministries.org) for the latest news and updates. Your comments are welcomed and encouraged.

If there is anything that you would like to see posted on the website or in the quarterly newsletter, email us at [info@universitycommunityministries.org](mailto:info@universitycommunityministries.org) or fax to (813) 968-4140. We would love to hear from you!

A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE FLORIDA DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL FREE WITHIN THE STATE 800-435-7352. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE.



## YOU CAN HELP

Join UCM in *Restoring hope . . . one life at a time*. As a supporter, you will receive our quarterly newsletter with important messages about our programs as well as success stories about the people we serve. UCM is a non-profit organization. All contributions are tax deductible.

**YES**, I would like to partner with UCM in *Restoring hope . . . one life at a time*. Enclosed is my gift to UCM in the amount of:

\$500     \$100     \$250     \$50     Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 One Time     Monthly     Quarterly     Annually

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone/Fax \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in becoming a volunteer.

### Planned Giving Options

Please consider a gift to UCM in your will or estate plan.

Please send me information about naming UCM in my will.

I have already made provisions for UCM in my estate plans.

**Thank you. Make checks payable to:  
University Community Ministries, Inc., PO Box 280024, Tampa, Florida 33682.**

## University Community Ministries, Inc.



*Restoring Hope . . . one life at a time.*

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