



# Food4Thought

People Helping People's Newsletter

October 2023

## HERNANDO HOMELESS INITIATIVE - WHERE DO WE GO NOW?

Homelessness is a complex problem in Hernando County. In May 2023, partners, stakeholders, and concerned citizens met and formed the Hernando Homeless Initiative (HHI). The community task force was organized to mobilize existing resources and services to maximize outcomes.

HHI has been meeting monthly since May. In that time, ideas were discussed, suggestions were made, a Facebook group was formed (to join, search for the Facebook group Hernando Homeless Initiative), tours of shelter facilities in other counties took place, and a Day of Hope was planned and happened in September. The Day of Hope brought out more than two dozen agencies and organizations that offered help and information as they could to almost 30 folks from the homeless community. The idea of holding a similar event in the Brooksville area is under discussion.

There were moments of hope and frustration. As stated, it is a complex problem and the majority of the group and much of Hernando County believe the situation will only worsen if nothing is done.

So, what do we do? What's next for the homeless in Hernando County?

People Helping People (PHP) and all the agencies who are part of the initiative receive calls and requests for help on a mostly daily basis. Requests from senior citizens who are about to be evicted from their homes. Requests from families with children who have no where to go and are currently living in the woods, in a tent. Requests from people struggling with substance abuse or mental illness looking for shelter.

Deputy Jimmy Dean from the Hernando Sheriff's Office is an active member of HHI. He will continue to discuss with the Catholic Diocese the possibility of procuring land to be used for a location for the homeless. At this time there is no county funding for the homeless so it is up to 501c3 charitable organizations and community services to provide whatever wrap around services are available.

Each of these agencies offer help as is their mission or purpose. PHP's main mission is to alleviate hunger in Hernando County while also offering supportive services or referrals to the appropriate organization to break the cycle of poverty. PHP will continue to also provide laundry vouchers and bus tickets, in addition to our weekly meal distribution to local homeless campsites. There are individuals who are "boots on the ground" working directly with the homeless to find the resources they need. HHI has a list of volunteer resource coordinators from its member organizations and agencies that offer the services they provide best - healthcare, housing assessment, clothing, rent and utility assistance, food, comfort, and more.

Every January, a Point in Time Count is conducted for Hernando County by Mid Florida Homeless Coalition. The Point-in-Time Count, or PIT Count, is an annual survey of homeless people in the United States conducted by local agencies called Continuums of Care on behalf of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. Data attributed to the Office of Policy Development and Research reported 25,959 people were experiencing homelessness in Florida in January 2022, and an estimated 45.2% of them were unsheltered, the 11th largest share among the 50 states.

Counties surrounding Hernando have built shelters, some specific to addressing substance abuse and mental illness of its homeless residents, and/or provided land for tents. Those have been a joint effort with the local government, social services, religious institutions, and law enforcement that has allowed these solutions, some temporary - yes, to address the situation.

If you have services or volunteer efforts to offer to assist with the homeless situation in Hernando County or would like to share your thoughts, please contact PHP 352-686-4466.



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## ROTARY CLUB OF SPRING HILL CENTRAL - A TRUE FRIEND OF PHP

The Rotary Club of Spring Hill Central was chartered in 1998. In those years it has been a part of many projects for Hernando County:

- ◆ Years of fundraising and planning led to Hernando County's only dog park, the Rotary Centennial Park which opened in 2009 on eight acres in Spring Hill and now undergoing renovations to add pavilions, seating, tables and landscaping.
- ◆ The club also participates in Hernando County's Adopt-a-Road program to keep the surrounding roadways near the park clean
- ◆ Splash Park at Anderson Snow Park (now under construction)

Its membership has been a true friend to PHP through its monetary support toward ending hunger for children, families, seniors, and the homeless.

Other organizations that benefit from the Rotary are Youth and Family Alternatives, Hernando Community Coalition, Pasco-Hernando Early Learning Coalition, the Boys & Girls Club, and the Salvation Army. The club also supports disaster relief events as they happen, Rotary's Camp Florida, Inc., a 21-acre ADA-compliant campsite that provides a safe, fun space to learn, grow, and play for groups whose members need supportive accommodations. They also contribute annually to Rotary's Polio + and Cart Program for Alzheimer's research.

As the Spring Hill Central Club seeks to expand its membership they are looking for "trailblazers, community leaders, problem solvers, and people of action."

If that sounds like you, contact member Doug Brainard @ 352-667-3140.



Members of Rotary Club of Spring Hill Central at PHP's Holiday of Hope Celebration

### **HELP Center Calendar**

#### **Nature Coast Art League**

Mondays, 9am

#### **AA meetings**

Mondays & Thursdays 8 pm

Tuesday & Wednesday 7pm

Fridays 7pm

#### **Free Health Clinic**

Tuesdays, 10 am - 1 pm

#### **GED classes**

Mondays, Wednesdays 1:30 - 4:30 pm

#### **Meals for those in need**

Sunday 3:30 pm

Tuesdays & Fridays, 11:30 am

#### **Showers available**

Tuesdays & Fridays, 10 am - 1 pm

Our Calendar is online - view it here:

<https://phphernando.org/calendar>

### Most People

Most people are good. Most people kiss their pets good bye and read just one more bedtime story to their child. Most people visit their grandparent even when they don't have time and stop by to visit quiet friends, after a day too long and draining. Most people return their shopping carts despite being already late and let someone with only one item jump ahead of them in line. Most people give money when money is scarce and most people worry about people they don't even know, day in and day out. When the world seems bad, remember most people are good.

-Donna Ashworth



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*Good food*  
brings people together and  
*nourishes the soul*

**Sunday Blessings  
Meal Sponsors -  
October  
THANK YOU!!!!**



**WITHLACOOCHEE RIVER ELECTRIC  
COOPERATIVE, INC.**



**Cliff and Sandy Morgan**

**Kingdom of Hope Ministries**

Are you a restaurant owner/manager,  
a homeowner's association, a religious  
institution, or a group of friends who  
would like to donate a meal for our  
Sunday Blessings program? Please call  
352-686-4466.



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**"You can always, always give something, even if it is only kindness."**

**Thank you to all who provided in-kind donations in September**

Anonymous (we know who you are)	Temple Beth David
Ana	Tender Care
Frank Andrae	Timber Pines
Lee Anomorous	Dana Watson
Michelle Assalone	Weeki Wachee Eagles
Christ the Savior Greek Orthodox	Wellington

Janice Enderla

Kevin Foley

Dollar General

GFWC

Hernando Animal Hospital

Jack

Jennifer

Linda Lance

Merry Oakes

Publix

Andy Reardon

Windham Rotunda

Trena Smith

Christian Snapp

Michael Squillace

Stacey & Joe

Charles & Veronica Stringer

**What, when, where to donate?**

Please consider - the items you donate may be going to someone who is experiencing homelessness with no means to heat or bake or to someone without the funds to purchase additional ingredients.

In-kind: Drop off at 1396 Kass Circle, M - F 9a - 2p.

Monetary: mail to: PO Box 6182,  
Spring Hill FL 34611  
or online at [www.phphernando.org](http://www.phphernando.org)

**Thank you!**

**Thank you to those who contributed monetarily in September!**

*Anthony & April Artemisio*

*Linda Bixby*

*Bryan & Barbara Blavatt*

*Brooksville Kiwanis Foundation, Inc.*

*Kelly Brown*

*Catherine Buonemani*

*Murilene Cronk*

*Dennis Henize &  
Tina Andracke*

*Elks Lodge #2582*

*Syad Waqar Hasan, MD*

*Hernando Physician  
Alliance Foundation, Inc.*

*Alison Kalvelage*

*Joan Kenyon*

*Gail Leonard*

*Sona Movalia*

*Nature Coast ParrotHead Club, LLC*

*Network For Good*

*John Rinaldi*

*Caroline Sachs*

*Wal-mart*

**Special call for these donated items: (unexpired, please!)**

- ◆ Holiday dinner fixin's (stuffing mix, turkey gravy, instant potatoes, cranberry sauce, canned corn or green beans)
- ◆ Fruit bars
- ◆ Dry/powdered milk packets
- ◆ Fruit juice boxes

**Weekend Blessings is supported by grants from the following:**



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## CHEERY GREETINGS FROM TONY AND JUDITH!

Whenever someone enters PHP's facility, they usually will be greeted by Tony or Judith, two volunteers helping to make those who visit our organization feel recognized and welcome.

There is much more to being a greeter at the HELP Center than saying "Hello!". Our greeters first need to understand the reason for someone's visit - are they hungry? In need of shower? Wanting to meet with someone at our clinic? Here to volunteer? They even come to know some of the folks PHP helps, some daily, and develop "special" relationships with them. They learn names, ask about their family, feel their pain.....

PHP's executive director has known Tony for several years. They first met at the YMCA where Tony was volunteering. As much as he enjoyed the people at the YMCA, when Tony learned about the opportunities to volunteer at PHP and our mission, he knew he wanted to give it a chance. And, boy are we glad he did!

Tony moved to Florida after his wife passed. He left behind an active social life but was at the time of life where volunteering allowed him to give back.

"I get a thrill out of working alongside those at PHP who give so much of themselves and are so willingly to help others in need.

There are days that I go home feeling down about the lives those who turn to PHP are living, but I come back the next time ready to help even if it's just a simple 'Hello, how can we help you?', shared Tony.



Judith first became familiar with PHP as someone in need of food herself. She left that day with food and helpful information and returned as a much treasured volunteer. Judith's pleasant personality and smile lets those who walk through our Kass Circle doors feel welcome and lets them know they are in the right place.

"I truly have been blessed to have the opportunity to help in my community and to make a difference. The people who stop in are so grateful that we have so much to offer in one place," said Judith.

PHP feels blessed to have someone as kind and caring as Judith as part of our volunteer family.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, stop by 1396 Kass Circle to pick up an application, M - F 9a - 2p.



### Mobile Food Distribution

For low-income  
Hernando County families

**Always the LAST Wednesday**  
**of the month**  
**1396 Kass Circle**

352-686-4466 with any questions  
or to volunteer



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