MISSION STATEMENT

Back Bay Mission meets the urgent needs of those suffering from poverty and its effects while building pathways to social justice. We lead the way in delivering services, creating collaborative solutions, and transforming lives through mission immersion experiences.
A Message From the Executive Director

Back Bay Mission has had a year of change. We added new staff: a new Executive Director, a new Community Relations Associate, and two new positions: a Case Manager for Rental Assistance, and a Community Health Partner. We have added two new programs, art classes and a community garden. These changes have brought moments of confusion as well as excitement. Back Bay Mission Staff have prayed, played, talked and worked together to enhance our capacity to collaborate across programs to assist Back Bay Mission clients in life-giving ways. By life-giving we mean ways that communicate to clients their value as human beings regardless of their history; that each and every client has possibility; and that the staff is here to support a future with hope. The two new programs that specifically carry that message are the Back Bay Mission Art Council’s art sessions and the Community Garden. The art classes provide a safe space for self-expression and emotional self-care. The Community Garden, named God’s Green Acre, by our clients, was initiated and developed by clients with the guidance of a Master Gardener and the support of a local women’s group. This garden has emerged as a client space for self-nurture and self-empowerment as they nurture fragile seedling plants. Responding to the changing needs of the community has historically been a hallmark of Back Bay Mission. We look to continue that tradition as we incorporate new programs that focus on long-term sustainability for Back Bay Mission clients. In 2016, we intend to make our housing rehab program financially secure through a targeted fundraising campaign and to establish Bridges Out of Poverty as a framework for actively assisting clients in moving out of poverty. We are challenged and energized by the possibilities that lie ahead.

Time to Care

Miss Ann came to Back Bay Mission in March through a referral from another faith-based organization. They had helped her with her electric and water bills for a few months, but were unable to continue doing so. She was struggling with end-stage liver disease as well as a new diagnosis of breast cancer which had run in her family. Back Bay Mission has paid her electric and water bills and will do so for the next few months as she has been accepted as a Case Management client. This has enabled her to concentrate on her health and doing what is necessary to improve it. She has been approved for Social Security Disability and will be receiving her first payment later this month. Her financial challenges will soon become more manageable with this income. Even with the stress of the unknown hovering over her, she has never given up.

Miss Ann is a woman of unyielding faith and is an inspiration to many who know her. From the first day she walked through the doors of Back Bay Mission, she has not stopped giving thanks for all of the assistance she has received here. Today, she presented me with a token of her appreciation. In the box was a small watch on a clasp with a note that read: “Just a little something to remind you that the time you spend helping others is such a blessing and you bring peace into people’s lives when they need it the most”. It was signed, Love always! Ann.

It is a blessing to have the opportunity to do the work that we do here at Back Bay Mission. To see lives strengthened and transformed is a humbling experience. To be the catalyst for the peace that Miss Ann has been given in her life is a blessing I will always cherish.

Jill C. Cartledge
Emergency Assistance Caseworker
Back Bay Mission Community Garden
- Spring 2016 - By TJ Testman

Last winter when a group of clients asked if the mission would support establishing a community garden, Mary Tell (title) reached out to her longtime friend, Martha Boyce, for assistance. As the Executive Director of the Mississippi Renaissance Garden Foundation in Biloxi, Martha knew that Master Gardeners were always looking for a worthwhile community horticultural project. A few Master Gardeners mission staff and interested clients attended a start-up meeting or two at the mission. Clients formed a committee to plan the garden, establish ground rules, assign responsibilities and, put together a proposal. I presented the proposal to the Harrison County Master Gardeners and it was heartily approved. Mission staff recruited donors and obtained a grant for needed materials. Kenney Washington and I visited Home Depot and purchased the materials and on February 26th we officially started constructing the raised beds for Back Bay Mission Community Garden.

It was really great working with such an energetic group. I was impressed at how much was accomplished that morning and how everyone chipped in. Step One - accomplished. It was time to let the soil settle and decide what to plant in the raised beds.

On April 6th Master Gardeners and junior gardeners returned for phase two - planting the garden.

Harrison County Master Gardeners, Brenda Meyers, assisted by Margaret Mallet demonstrated square foot gardening techniques, the group put some plants in the ground. Pat Sharpe, Harrison County Master Gardener donated starter plants. I brought a couple of fig trees from my yard. With luck and good watering the group will enjoy veggies and fresh figs later this summer.

I have gardened much of my life when the opportunity was available. Following retirement I became a Master Gardener for personal learning and to give back. Working with this group has been a great experience.

Happy Growing, TJ Testman
A note from one of the Master Gardeners

Good morning-

I wanted to take a moment to thank you for the opportunity to work on the community garden project at the Back Bay Mission.

The effort put in by Benny, Andre, Patrick and the rest of the team is impressive as is the support by the admin staff of the Mission. It was a pleasure to assist them in setting up the square-foot gardening beds and setting out the plants. Gardening for me is often a solitary activity but working with you and the group offered a wonderful fellowship opportunity. As you know, cooperative gardens often bring people together from different backgrounds and different stages of life and this is certainly true for me in this project. And I hope your garden will engage and inspire others to make some space for growing things in their lives.

Additionally, I know you had some grant support and I believe the final garden will demonstrate how a small amount of “seed money” can have a large impact on a neighborhood. I would love to see community garden projects become the norm for neighborhoods throughout Biloxi. Lawns can be beautiful but garden boxes full of herbs and veggies are inspirational in so many ways. Let’s hope our “horticultural inspiration” spreads in the city’s consciousness to foster more gardens.

Thank you again,
Pat Sharpe
Biloxi, MS

Letter From Andre the Gardner

Spring is here once again and still no relief from this grinding poverty. We try and seek ways to relieve stress, some through a God, others through something called working itself out. I finally found something to do and love (Gardening)! Coming up in Chicago we never saw a Community Garden in and form, just concrete. This has become one of my little niches in life, something I used to dream of. I am a vegetarian an I am tired of buying things that grow free. Nature gives us food freely to nourish our bodies and mind as well as our Ka (spirit). Everyone in our community should come see our square gardening and learn these plants and how to plant, when to plant and when and how to harvest. This should be a must and a priority to get this message out to the nation at large. Feed yourself. We the nation have to depend on the stores providing for you, when this you can do for yourself. Farmers are experimenting with terminator seeds so you can’t grow or reproduce their products. Medicines that grow all around us we mow over as weeds unwanted. Nature provides everything we need to sustain ourselves. We have always had gardens in front of us. It’s just hiding in plain sight, this is the illusion that society has forced on us through the media and all other forms of communication, blinding the public or as we say in my knowledge, pushing the public in the direction of entropy, chaos and castration. I take a lot of pleasure in the garden. I’m devoting my time to this constructive thought or bringing it from a potentiality to an actuality subjective realm to the objective realm.

- Asar Ra Amen
Andre Foster
2015 Revenue and Expenses

**REVENUE**
- Program Fees and Earnings: $208,903.94
- Public Grants and Contracts: $278,377.77
- Total Revenue: $1,252,779.78

**EXPENSES**
- Program and Services: $1,052,265.42 (78%)
- Management and General: $69,305.63 (5%)
- Fundraising and Public Relations: $227,199.94 (17%)
- Total Expenses: $1,348,780.98

**Housing Recovery & Volunteer Services**

**2015 Project Statistics**
- Major Completed Rehabs: 1
- Major In-Process Rehabs: 10
- Minor Completed Rehabs: 9
- Total number of projects undertaken: 21
- Total number of projects completed: 10
- Total number of projects in waiting: 30
- Total funds expended on housing projects: $180,296.48

**Thanks to our Volunteers!**
- Number of churches/organizations represented by volunteers: 60
- Number of volunteer work campers utilized: 941
- Number of volunteer hours: 26,829
- Dollar value of volunteer hours: $387,370

**Day Center for the Homeless: Micah Day Center**

**Micah Center Services Provided**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entitlement Benefits Applications</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haircuts Given</td>
<td>2,685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Stamp Applications</td>
<td>1,755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hygiene Kits</td>
<td>1,655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer/ Telephone Services</td>
<td>788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Items of Mail Dispersed</td>
<td>690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loads of Laundry Dispersed</td>
<td>485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showered</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showers Taken</td>
<td>2,685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loads of Laundry Done</td>
<td>1,755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Items of Mail Dispersed</td>
<td>1,655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer/ Telephone Services</td>
<td>788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hygiene Kits</td>
<td>690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Stamp Applications</td>
<td>485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haircuts Given</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entitlement Benefits Applications</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of People Served</td>
<td>423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless Veterans Served</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showered</td>
<td>2,685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loads of Laundry Dispersed</td>
<td>1,755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Items of Mail Dispersed</td>
<td>1,655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer/ Telephone Services</td>
<td>788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hygiene Kits</td>
<td>690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Stamp Applications</td>
<td>485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haircuts Given</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entitlement Benefits Applications</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Emergency Assistance

Dollars Expended to Services
- Medication Assistance: $590.17
- Birth Certificates: $940.00
- Case Management: $1,267.54
- Rent/Mortgage Assistance: $1,275.00
- Transportation: $2,827.20
- Misc./Other: $6,711.45
- Food Pantry: $9,757.79
- Utility Relief: $43,120.42
TOTAL: $66,489.67

Age of Emergency Assistance Clients

Number of Services
- Food Pantry: 4,155
- Utility Relief: 836
- Birth Certificates: 58

Home At Last (HAL) Services

Outreach Services Provided
- Referrals
- Bus passes
- Tents/Blankets/Sleeping Bags
- Socal Security Disability applications
- Hygiene kits
- Laundry vouchers
- HAL applications

Housed Clients
- Adults: 24
- Children: 17
- Home At Last Graduates: 2

HOME AT LAST CLIENTS
- Children
- Adults

OUTREACH CLIENTS
- Continued Clients: 48%
- New Clients: 52%