THE CHANGING TIDES
The Magazine of Back Bay Mission
Summer 2018

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Indeed, nothing else is as consistent in our lives as change. Change happens at Back Bay Mission in many ways. Adding new staff brings new ideas that broaden our perspective on the work that we do. Change happens as we listen to the challenges that confront our clients as they seek resources to survive homelessness, low wages, mental/physical disabilities, aging and a range of chronic diseases. Change happens as we create new approaches to meeting their immediate needs and then to provide resources for addressing the long-term aspirations of the individuals and families we serve.

We are impacted by changes in federal and state programs that affect our bottom line as well as the bottom lines of the people we serve. We are changed as we experience the courage of clients doing the hard work of moving towards long-term sustainability. In this issue you will learn about one of our clients who after many years using the resources of the Micah Center made the decision to take the steps to make a change.

Beginning in June for ten weeks we will welcome the Shari Prestemon Interns. These two talented young women will undoubtedly pepper us with many “why/how come” questions that will cause staff to view our work through the lens of their more youthful eyes. We will be changed by their presence. We are also experimenting with a new format for our Church Relations Associate. We will have two part-time people focused on different regions of the country for fundraising and donor development. This is a change initiated by the resignation of our Church Relations Associate, Chris Marlin-Warfield who has moved into full-time pastoring. The many Mission Campers who come to Back Bay Mission tell us that they are changed by the people that they encounter in the Micah Center, the Food Pantry, and in doing housing rehab. We are changing and being changed by the work and the lives we touch. Munia Khan writes “You cannot change any world unless you become a vital part of the changing.” So, as we do this work of strengthening neighborhoods, seeking justice, and transforming lives we are being changed as well.

Executive Director,

Alice Graham

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Volunteer Corner

Amalie Cummins

First off, there are many places to volunteer and there are also many missions in each state that need help in many different ways. When I was 14 I went on my first mission trip with my grandparents to Mexico. When there we did and completed a couple different tasks, I also got to meet some pretty amazing people. When I returned home I felt uplifted, refreshed and just really good on the inside…That is where it all began. I am 25 years old and I decided to volunteer at the Back Bay Mission in Biloxi. Here I worked for 3 days doing different things, I helped add a second coat of paint to one of the houses that is being finished, I helped at the MICCAH Day center and I also helped at the food pantry. My grandparents come down to work/volunteer at the mission every year after Christmas. My mom, family members and family friends have all volunteered at the mission before and some still return every year. I have been hearing many things about Back Bay Mission for quite a few years, I just had to go.

I arrived on a Friday and got to watch a little exit interview of the group that came before me. Monday is when work began, I got woken up bright and early (7 am) did my morning routine and followed my grandma Jeanette over to the mission. I wanted to try to volunteer at every place possible, so I could see what everything was and how it ran and what I liked doing more. At about 8:45 the construction volunteers left for the work site. The house was pretty close to being finished. We had people laying floors, painting, adding shelves doors and many other things at the house. I love to paint, so that’s the task I chose to help with. The inside really only needed a second coat of paint, but it still took 3 people and the entire time I was there Monday and I am sure it took longer than that. At noon everyone sat down for our lunch and to relax, Work ended about at 4 pm. The house is gorgeous, Back Bay Mission and the volunteers do a wonderful job on the houses!

Tuesday, I volunteered at the Micah Day Center. Here I helped make coffee, make sure the pot in the main room was full, made sure showers were clean between people using them, I labeled bags of different items and I let people know how much longer they had in the shower before their time was up. I am a very shy person, but people would introduce themselves and some even talked to me. One person really touched my heart, we sat and talked for about 20 minutes. He did not hesitate to talk to me about his recent struggles. While hearing everything he had to say my heart just sunk for him, but he wasn’t crying he didn’t seem sad he just wanted someone to listen to him. He talked to me like he knew me, I listened as he finished putting his socks and shoes on. It also really stood out to me that a lot of the people there looked close to my age, this made me realize how blessed I am to have what I have.

The third day I worked at the food pantry, here I walked around a room with people and depending if they were a Micah Day Center person, a household of 1 or even a house hold of 7 I helped with a list of food items they got to pick from and quantity of the items. Everyone was just so grateful. Some people even stood there just to talk after they were done, it didn’t matter about what, but they seemed to smile more before they left. People even said God bless you as they walked out with their bags of food. That day we had some fresh produce that was donated, I have never seen a person so excited about tomatoes or fruit like the people that come for help there. I realized that I take simple things like that for granted.

Since I’ve returned home I have actually sent a little Easter goodie box to one of the men at the MICAH center. I also plan on returning next year. I would love to make and bring blankets, food and other things to donate next year. If any of you have a chance to volunteer don’t hesitate!!!
The City of Biloxi recognized several outstanding volunteers on April 24, 2018 at their 35th Annual Volunteer Recognition Ceremony. Back Bay Mission was so pleased to have three of our volunteers recognized at the event. A summary of all their nominations are below. Congratulations Inez Cage, Frances Crawford, and Harriet Mitchell.

Inez Cage joined us from First Missionary Baptist Church of Handsboro where Back Bay Mission went before the congregation to ask for volunteers. Inez was one of the members who answered the request. Inez volunteers in the front office where she answers phones, assist with the Food Pantry process, and directing those in need to the services that will best help their situation. Her bubbly personality brings a smile to the faces of our guest. Her commitment to people shows each time she is here at Back Bay Mission.

Frances Crawford volunteers here time three days a week assisting clients in our Food Choice Food Pantry. She takes the time to have meaningful conversations with the guest as they choose the food that is best for them. Her calmness and compassion show as she listens and helps. Frances is an excellent collaborator; team player and she provides valuable insight and expertise to our Food Choice Food Pantry.

Harriet Mitchell volunteers in the Micah Day Center where over 700 homeless guests came through our doors last year. Harriet volunteers in the clothing closet distributing clothes, towels, personal hygiene items and a few other items as needed. The day center allows our guest to have access to showers, clean laundry (as they can get two sets washed at a time), a physical mailing address, a phone access, computer access, haircuts and resume building. Harriet greets each guest with a smile and warm welcome.

It is staggering how the efforts of one person can truly make a difference in lives of our fellow man regardless of their situation. Back Bay Mission could not provide the services to our guest without the support of many volunteers. We applaud these three outstanding ladies and all the volunteers that have served at Back Bay Mission.
Rose Kennedy said, “Life isn’t a matter of milestones, but memories.” For one of our Home at Last (HAL) clients that is entirely true. This client entered our Home at Last Permanent Supportive Housing in February 2017. At the time of his intake into the program his story really embodied the Housing First theory that there should be no barriers to being housed. Housing takes place first then they are wrapped in the services that they need to become self-sufficient. This particular client was a long-term alcoholic that was close to death on the streets. Luckily, he was housed with the Home at Last program. From there we got him into to detox, after detox he attended Crossroads Recovery Center for further treatment. After he successfully finished Crossroads he came back to his fully furnished/stocked apartment. He started working with an after-care specialist on a weekly basis to work through his recovery.

When I first encountered this gentleman, about 6 months ago, he was adamant that he did not want to talk about his sobriety or share his story with other people. Through his work with his aftercare therapist he approached me and asked if I would allow him to come along to do outreach with me. He felt he could pay it forward and maybe reach other people with the struggles he went through. After some conversations between him, myself, and his therapist we decided that it could be an amazing experience as long as it did not affect his sobriety. We started the process by taking him to an Open Doors Homeless Coalition monthly meeting, where he not only attended but stood in front of a room full of people and told his story of perseverance and the will to help others; he received a standing ovation. His enthusiasm for this outreach was really intoxicating. We set a day to head out to camps planning to meet up the following week to start our journey together.

The day we mutually decided to go out, I let Him pick the camp he wanted to go to. He asked if we could go to his old camp to see if anyone might be living there again. He lived at this particular camp for two and a half years until he was arrested, and the cops removed him from the property. We walked for a long time as I was following him to his camp. When we arrived, it was a full circle moment, his camp was still mostly intact. His things were still there scattered on the ground forgotten about by everyone but him. It was an emotional journey for everyone who was there that day; we got to witness and see the success that he envisioned for himself.

His story is a powerful story of success! Success that can come from believing in yourself; and when you have a team of people like Back Bay Mission, an after-care specialist, Mental Health Association, and people who will love and support you on the journey to recovery. His road will continue, and milestones will occur, but his memories looking back can be a useful and a powerful tools that he can take into the field with me to pay it forward and maybe touch other people’s lives as he undoubtedly touched ours.
BACK BAY MISSION IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE
NEW ADDITIONS TO THE STAFF FOR 2018

Kirsten Hebron joins the Back Bay Mission team as the Day Center Case Manager. Kirsten graduated from University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Park with a Bachelor’s Degree in Psychology and Master’s Degree in Social Work. She worked for Gulf Coast Mental Health Center for 4 years until she moved to California in 2005. In California, she worked for a non-profit agency as Director of Social Services. She also worked at a mental health agency as Clinician. Kirsten moved back to the Mississippi Gulf Coast in 2017 with her husband and two dogs to be with their families.

Lucy Nettles joins the Back Bay Mission team as the Day Center Assistant. Lucy is a Gulfport native, retiree from Ingalls Shipbuilding after 19+ years, mother of two and grandmother of three. Lucy graduated from Harrison Central High School and studied to be an Auto & Diesel Mechanic at Bailey Tech in St. Louis, MO.

Rev. Paul Longstreth joins the Back Bay Mission team as a Church Relations Associate. Paul has held clergy standing and various offices in several denominations, including the United Church of Christ and Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). After a pastoral and teaching career in Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Texas he is excited to return to Back Bay Mission where he served as a Board member while serving as pastor of Trinity UCC on Canal Street in New Orleans. Most recently he has been serving with UCC Disaster Ministries work teams coming to help rehabilitate Southeast Texas properties still unlivable following Hurricane Harvey. He is married to Marilyn Maloney, a previously lifelong New Orleanian and UCC member, who was sent by her law firm to open a Houston office in 2005. Their jazz musician children live in Nashville and New Orleans.

Carol Merriman joins the Back Bay Mission team as a Church Relations Associate. Carol is from River Falls, Wisconsin, a longtime member of the First Congregational UCC church in that community. She is retired from Andersen Windows, after nearly 30 years. She has volunteered with Habitat for Humanity for many years, serving on the board of directors for St. Croix Valley Habitat, including being chair for six years. She has also been very involved in volunteering for the church, including Conference Board of Directors, Wider Church Ministries Board, numerous association and local church committees. She has served on the Back Bay Board of Directors, and is currently serving on the United Church Camp Board of Directors. Carol has a son and daughter, and five grandchildren, two step-grandchildren and a great-grandson.

THE CHANGING TIDES: SUMMER 2018

2018 SHARI PRESTEMON SOCIAL JUSTICE INTERNS

The internship is named for former Back Bay Mission Executive Director Shari Prestemon, who first came to the Mission as an intern before serving on our board and, eventually, as Executive Director. The internship provides young adults between the ages of 19 and 35 with an opportunity to participate in a 10-week summer program. Drawing on the Mission’s long experience in community engagement and advocacy for justice, the internship will nurture participants’ passion for social justice and develop their appreciation for the Mission’s role in seeking social justice. Please go to our website, thebackbaymission.org, or contact Kenney Washington, 228-432-0301 or kwash@thebackbaymission.org, for more information.

Kairah Roseau is a sophomore Sociology major at the historic Tougaloo College. Not only does Kairah hold the position as the Vice President of the renowned Reuben V. Anderson Pre-Law Society, but also serves with the national title of Tougaloo College Miss United College Fund 2018-2019. She enjoys cheerleading and being involved in numerous organizations such as the Pre-Alumni Council, NAACP, Womanhood international Inc., and the Ashanti Girl’s Mentorship Community at her beloved church, Friendship West Baptist Church, where she learned the most important verse in her life, 1 Timothy 4:12, “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for believers in speech, life, in love, faith, and in purity.” Kairah has hopes of earning her PhD in Epidemiology, and study diseases in her community, specifically affecting women. In addition to being a strong advocate for social justice, she strives to be a role model for younger girls. Kairah wants to show them that with hard work, anything in life is possible.

Ashlee Beaver is an upcoming Sophomore at Heidelberg University, in Tiffin, Ohio, where she is majoring in Criminology and Psychology with a minor in International Studies. While attending Heidelberg University, she is the Alternative Spring Break Coordinator, a Student Caller in Heidelberg’s Admissions office, a part of Kappa Psi Omega, a member of the Cross-Country team, the Speech and Debate team, and College Democrats, and is a frequent volunteer at the Humane Society. Her hopes, after graduation, is to join the Peace Corp and teach youth. Ashlee is originally from Louisville, Ohio, and cannot wait to become a member of Back Bay Mission’s staff.

Kirsten Hebron

Carol Merriman

Lucy Nettles

Rev. Paul Longstreth

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Ms. Melvina inherited her home from her mother and father. She had been raised in this house along with her siblings. Ms. Melvina originally lived next door to her parents. That is up until Hurricane Katrina. Her home was destroyed by the hurricane and not rebuilt. She moved to another part of town until her parents passed. She then moved back into her childhood home.

In February 2017, Ms. Melvina contacted Back Bay Mission for assistance with her home. During her interview she stated her concerns for the home were decaying exterior window trim, uneven floors, exterior paint peeling, vinyl tiles in two bedrooms were incorrectly installed after Hurricane Katrina and were coming up. During Back Bay Missions assessment of the home we found other concerns to be added to the list; siding that was starting to rot, the roof needed replacing and piers at one corner of the house were failing.

Back Bay Mission started work. A contractor was used to repair the piers around the house and replace the roof. Volunteers removed the old siding and replaced it with cement board siding and painted the home. We rebuilt a back deck that was not in compliance with building code. We then repaired the interior walls that had cracked when the portions of the house were jacked up to repair the support piers. Finally, we replaced the vinyl tile flooring with a product known as vinyl plank flooring. This flooring installs and looks like laminate flooring. It is very durable and carries a 25-year warranty.

Replacement of the heating and cooling system completed our work for Ms. Melvina.

During our working on the home, Ms. Melvina was diagnosed with cancer. She made several trips to a cancer center in New Orleans. Her major concern was not about herself but being able to be home and healthy enough to entertain her extended family on Christmas Eve. Back Bay Mission made it possible for Ms. Melvina to live in a safe and sustainable home. She was able to host her family for Christmas Eve.

**YOU LIKELY WILL NOT GUESS.**

What do Noel Eggebraaten of Prior Lake, MN, and Jim Brygger of Appleton, WI, have to do with Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, MS? Volunteer rehab workers, you might guess, but not this time, not exactly. They are helping BBM GO GREEN!

The next time you visit the campus on Division Street you might not even notice the change, but it is major. While helping us to be better stewards of the environment, your gifts, and visitors’ and staff members’ eyes, Noel (officially known as Eco Energy Midwest) and volunteer Jim have been working with our own Benji to move us to energy-saving and cost-efficient LED lighting throughout our buildings.

Many of our old light fixtures had become obsolete with replacement bulbs no longer being available. Bulbs for the new fixtures should pay for themselves within six years and are under warranty for five of those—and should last even longer.

Come check out our new GREEN campus; it will be an enLIGHTening experience.

**TAX REFORM IS HERE!**

As with any economic change, you may be looking at your finances and wondering how you will be impacted. There are many ways to enjoy financial benefits for yourself while making a difference for Back Bay Mission. Here are some of the ways to give in 2018:

- **Gift Annuity:** A gift annuity provides you with a guaranteed income stream for life that is often higher than you can receive from other investments such as certificates of deposit, stock dividends, or bond interest. Gift annuity rates are based on the life expectancy of the annuitant and range from 3 percent (for a 40-year-old) to 9 percent (for someone 90 or older). You get an income tax deduction in the year the gift is made, and a portion of each annuity payment is tax-free. Name Back Bay Mission as a beneficiary of your retirement plan assets: These assets are tax-free when given to a nonprofit.

- **Give from your IRA (if you are 70.5 or older):** Regardless of whether you itemize your taxes, this gift helps you fulfill your Required Minimum Distribution and is not considered taxable income.

- **Donate Appreciated Stock:** With the stock market at or near all-time highs, give your appreciated stocks to Back Bay Mission and eliminate capital gains tax. Monthly electronic gift: A monthly electronic gift to Back Bay Mission is a simple way to give, and often allows donors to give more than they could with a one-time gift.

You can give online at thebackbaymission.org/give. If you would like more information regarding any of these ways to give, contact Paul Longstreth, church relations associate, at 228-365-9037 or plongstreth@thebackbaymission.org.
STRENGTHENING NEIGHBORHOODS, SEEKING JUSTICE, TRANSFORMING LIVES

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