“History, despite its wrenching pain cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage need not be lived again.”

— Maya Angelou
In 2022 Back Bay Mission will celebrate 100 years of service on the South Mississippi Gulf Coast. We have an impressive legacy to celebrate. As the Board and staff begin planning for this celebration, we are reviewing the BBM journey and the ways that events and context has shaped BBM’s mission to Strengthen Neighborhoods, Seek Justice and Transform Lives. The Board reviewed the many financial challenges that threatened to close the mission through the years. During these times of financial distress, BBM leadership did not shrink from these challenges but used them as an opportunity to expand and deepen our commitment to serve vulnerable populations. For example, in 1972, David Stephens was tasked by the UCC to close the mission, but Karlyn and David Stephens saw the scope of unmet needs of impoverished families on the coast and created Traveling Shrimp Boils to tell the story of Back Bay Mission to UCC congregations. The overwhelming response of congregations to learning about the work in coastal Mississippi allowed the mission to continue as well as expand services. Another example is reflected in the bridge building skills of Shari Prestemon who in 2000 recognized the importance of stable safe housing and so began developing a relationship with the City of Biloxi that had been ruptured as a result of BBM’s participation in desegregation activities during the sixties. This bridge building work, in 2001 led to grants from the city to rehab homes with work done by mission campers. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the Board made the decision to rebuild in order to continue to serve the needs of a devastated community. The numbers of people who came as mission campers exploded. These are just three of the wonderful stories on our journey that reflect the resilience of Back Bay Mission in using financial challenges as vehicles for expanding services that better serve the needs of people struggling to move out of poverty.

Back Bay Mission began its work 1922 in Mississippi, working with German immigrants and other impoverished communities. Over the years, BBM, has been an advocate for justice for vulnerable communities in a variety of ways. For example, advocating for improved working and housing conditions for seafood workers, establishing a medical clinic for impoverished families, organizing a credit union, and actively advocating for and participating in efforts to end segregation. In order to have a greater appreciation for the historical context in which we live out our mission, the staff spent a day in Montgomery, Alabama visiting the Legacy Memorial and the Peace and Justice Museum learning about the history of lynching in the United States. The Board of Directors and a group of mission campers heard from Edwin L Pittman, former Mississippi Attorney General, about the history of struggle against discrimination in the state.

As we look to celebrate a hundred years of mission, our history gives us much to celebrate as well as encouragement and inspiration for BBM’s continuing commitment to Strengthening Neighborhoods, Seeking Justice, and Transforming Lives.

Executive Director,
Alice Graham

Find us online

Table of Contents

Reflections From The Executive Director ........................................... 2
A Glimpse in the Daily Work of the Day Center Case Manager ..................... 3
A Mission Moment ........................................................................... 4
1978: The Year I First Journeyed to Back Bay Mission ................................... 5
2019 Back Bay Mission Staff Retreat .................................................. 7
Mollau Institute Experience .................................................................... 7
Hope Can Be Found .............................................................................. 7
A GLIMPSE IN THE DAILY WORK OF THE
DAY CENTER CASE MANAGER

BY KIRSTEN HEBRON, DAY CENTER CASE MANAGER

I met “David” at the end of August 2018 and have been meeting with him regularly on a weekly basis. When I first met with David, he had been homeless for a year and was staying on the beach under the bridge. His needs included housing, employment and mental health services. David stated that he suffered from seizures and had been diagnosed with bipolar disorder and anxiety. In September 2018, David came to the day center wearing a hospital scrub shirt and wrist band. He stated that he just got released from the hospital. His face and eyes appeared red and his speech was slurred. He kept repeating over and over that he was just released from the hospital, he felt like he was going to have a seizure and for me to call AMR. He also did not have his seizure medication. I suggested David rest and wait for a while before calling AMR. On this day it was evident that David was drinking. He did share with me that he drank several beers about an hour after he was released from the hospital. AMR was called and David was taken to the hospital. The next week, David came to the day center and apologized for his behavior. He stated that he was frustrated that he could not get his medication for seizures. He also stated that he was frustrated with Department of Human Services because every time he calls, he cannot get in touch with someone. It was told to him previously they had not received his application (it was sent five times). We called DHS and reached his case worker and a phone interview was scheduled and he eventually received SNAP benefits. In November 2018, David stated that he had been gone because he was arrested and extradited to Alabama. The charges were eventually dropped and now he is back in the area. He stated that he needed to call Coastal Family Health Center to see about rescheduling an appointment with the neurologist so he can get his medication for seizures. I encouraged David to go to Coastal Family Health Center that afternoon and then go to the emergency shelter. David stated he was having a hard time since coming back with feeling down and suicidal ideation. He stated he would not act on it but had been thinking about it. I spoke with David for a while and asked him if I could call the Mobile Crisis Unit, but he declined. I gave him the contact information for Suicide Prevention Hotline. He stated that in the future he would come to the day center to talk to me when he is having a hard time. The next week I assisted David with completing new patient registration paperwork for his neurologist appointment. In December 2018 and January 2019, I helped David with getting his medical records so he can file for disability. During this time, he also received and started taking his seizure medication and episodes of seizures decreased. In February 2019, David stated that he had been drinking and wasn’t feeling well and that he felt a seizure coming on. He stated one side of his brain was telling him to kill himself and the other side was telling him not to. He stated he wouldn’t do anything to himself. He asked if I could call an ambulance but wanted to wait until everyone was gone from the day center before calling. I spoke with David until he agreed to rest and drink some water and coffee and he would also go back to his camp to sleep. David expressed wanting to go to rehab because he is using alcohol to deal with day-to-day issues of being homeless. He also stated that it is hard for him to be around people in his camp because of the drug use and erratic behavior. He doesn’t want to be homeless and stated it is hard to take the steps to get out of his current situation. A few days later, David came to the day center and showed me a completed application for Crossroads Recovery Center and asked me to fax it for him. He stated that he is adamant about going and feels that it is the best next step to getting out of homelessness and feeling better. I commended David for making the hard decision and told him I am here to support him along his road to recovery and self-sufficiency.

Jasmine Quinerly has taken the reigns as the new President of the Back Bay Mission Board. Thank you to Matt Williams for your leadership as President and now as you fill the role of the Past – President.

(Left to Right) Jasmine Quinerly, Matt Williams, Rev. Alice Graham, PhD.
I’ve had the pleasure of serving with Back Bay Mission for nine years now. I’m from St. Louis, Missouri and attended Nerinx Hall High School from ’08–12. The summer before senior year, it was required that you have a certain amount of service hours and complete a project. At my school, the weeklong trip to Biloxi was always the most popular. Years ago, my older sister was about to go into her senior year and decided that she would go to Biloxi with the majority of her class and my dad would come along to chaperone. One week went by and when they got home, they ran into the house and my sister could not stop rambling on and on about this person and that person, where they worked, the tools they got to use, etc. They insisted that next year, I HAD to go with them. Count me in!

The year passed by and as summer came, I started meeting with the group of girls going to Biloxi. Since I had just finished my sophomore year, I was one of the young ones on the trip, slightly nervous but still very excited. As we drove into Biloxi and across the bridge, I knew this was going to be an unbelievable experience just by seeing the excitement on my sister and dad’s faces. My first year, I got to put up and break down scaffolding each day to paint a raised house. Our “monkey” crew had so much (maybe too much) fun that week, always volunteering to be the ones to climb up and down to get more paint just for the fun of it.

The week went by way too fast, as it always does. When I got home and back to Nerinx, I could not stop telling all of my friends and family about the trip. The following summer would be our year to choose our service trips for our project and I wanted anyone and everyone to come to Biloxi with me and have the same experience I did. Sure enough, over 100 girls came on the trip. We looked like an army walking around Biloxi then parting ways to each of our projects. For me, I felt so proud to be with my classmates and see all of their hard work and commitment in a place that we all were quickly growing to love. What was amazing to me is that through the service we were completing, it didn’t feel like a project we were forced to be there for. Along with these homes, true friendships were being built. Bonds between a high school girl from the Midwest and a homeowner in Mississippi. Girls that never spoke back home, now eating meals together and talking about the projects they worked on together and the people they met. Back home, new groups congregated in the halls at school talking about their projects. Two people who rarely spoke the year before, now walking by saying hi to each other or sharing an inside joke about something they did in Biloxi. I knew I wanted to be a part of this experience and a part of Back Bay Mission for as long as possible.

My all-girl high school is often known for calling their students “empowered women.” I don’t think I’ve experienced anything more empowering than Back Bay Mission giving us this opportunity to serve in the way that we did and trusting us to do so. Year after year, I look forward to going to Biloxi. I’ve grown to be so passionate about getting the next group of high school girls down to Mississippi to show them just how much they’re capable of. I have friends that used to be surprised that I still go every year. Now they know not to ask “are you going to Biloxi this year?” and instead ask “when are you going to Biloxi?”

When I talk about Biloxi and Back Bay Mission to other people, I explain to them that it feels like a ‘reset button’ on my year. Both while being in college and now having a job, my year is always busy and I put a lot of work in, as many people do. Coming to Biloxi and working with Back Bay Mission never fails to reset my mind. I am reminded of how lucky I am to have what I have and how if I am healthy and capable of serving others, that is what I should be doing.

Working with Back Bay Mission started a love for service within me. While in college, I went on numerous service trips and at each one, I always talked about Back Bay Mission. I couldn’t help it. Back Bay Mission doesn’t just give you a small task that needs to be completed then leaves you to it so they can cross it off their list. They take the time to educate you on the issues their community is facing. Back Bay Mission instills this compassion for the community in you before you begin working just by telling their story and sharing their experiences.

When I’m asked about why I keep coming back to Biloxi to work with Back Bay Mission, I don’t always know where to start. My trip to Mississippi every summer has turned into something that is just a part of me. I couldn’t imagine a year without getting off the highway and turning onto Division Street. Nine years ago as a 16 year old, I never would have thought I would find a home in Mississippi but that is truly what it is for me and many of the others that return each year. For those wondering, I can only say that for myself, it has allowed me to be a part of a community outside of my own, where I can serve them in multiple ways wherever I am needed, whether that is through construction, volunteering at the Micah Center, or working in the food pantry. Lastly and most importantly, it is a place where I can see the best parts of myself and the people I come with. For that I am always thankful to Back Bay Mission and will continue to come back each year.
I made my first journey to Back Bay Mission along with twelve senior high youth and four adults when Pastor of the Suffield UCC, Suffield, OH in 1978. We spent the week scraping and painting the house of an 89 year old resident on the east end of Division Street. During that same week we learned the extraordinary story of Christian service to the poor and marginalized that began in 1922 by the small Evangelical Reformed Church located on Back Bay Blvd, now the home of the Imperial Palace Casino.

That first visit was the beginning of a love affair that has continued to this day through six more weekly work camps, a two month sabbatical leave and since retirement, joined by my wife Marian, sixteen yearly visits to share in the work at BBM, and to visiting numerous churches in the Ohio Conference to encourage support for BBM.

There are countless institutions and programs that are worthy of one’s support. Here are several reasons why BBM is so special and has received a significant amount of our time and financial support over the years.

BBM remains connected to UCC churches across the nation, particularly in the south, midwest, and northeast states. Its work camp program is second to none in providing all ages an opportunity to learn many of the root causes of poverty, racism and the marginalized poor of our country. It truly lives up to the scriptural basis throughout its programs based on Micah 6:8b, “…do justice, love kindness and walk humbly”. BBM is an institution that excels in changing existing and adding additional programs to meet the needs of the ever changing needs of the city of Biloxi and the surrounding area through strengthening neighborhoods, seeking justice, transforming lives. I know of no other institution that “does it better” than BBM. Work camps are able to participate in those programs and return to their own areas and become more effective in their outreach programs. I also know of no program that stretches the charitable dollar better or further than BBM. You can trust that your support will be well spent.

This ability to enable change is a gift to churches seeking to remain relevant to the changing needs in their own communities. I have often said to churches, “If you have conflict or are struggling to make needed changes in your local church, put the pastor and the leadership in a bus, travel to BBM and you may just find the courage and resources to move forward together.”

From providing children with shoes and a glass of milk in 1922, leadership during the Civil Rights Movement during the 1960’s and since, the establishment of the first medical and dental clinics on the Gulf Coast, the response to Katrina, providing housing for homeless veterans and emergency programs to name just a few, BBM has been a model of consistency in the midst of ever changing needs along the MS Gulf Coast.

For these and many, many more reasons that could be given, Marian and I continue to come to BBM to add our support to the work of this extraordinary ministry and remind the churches of the Ohio Conference of this beacon of light to the poor and marginalized on the MS Gulf Coast.

BY THE REV. DR. DOYLE A. AND MARIAN LUCKENBAUGH

1978: THE YEAR I FIRST JOURNEYED TO BACK BAY MISSION

Back Bay Mission’s volunteer, Kimberly Gage, received a Certificate of Appreciation at the City of Biloxi’s Volunteer Recognition Awards. Congratulations Kimberly Gage! Back Bay Mission appreciates all your hours spent strengthening neighborhoods, seeking justice and transforming lives! Thank you for all your hard work.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION AWARDS

(Right to Left) Deborah Horn, Kimberly Gage, and Kenney Washington
2019 BACK BAY MISSION STAFF RETREAT

The Back Bay Mission staff and some added guests took a field trip to The Legacy Museum & The National Memorial for Peace and Justice in March for the annual Staff Retreat. These retreats are planned to help the staff better perform the duties asked of them every day they are at Back Bay Mission. This Staff Retreat took a lot of planning. Not only the logistics of how to get everyone to the site but how best to process the information to give us tools to better serve our clients. Logistics were worked out and the task of decompressing the information for those in attendance was covered. The day was intense as we viewed these magnificent museums and took in the hard history and suffering of our fellow human beings. On the way back to Biloxi we had a chance to speak about what we had seen and were trying to process. We give much thanks and appreciation to Jona Burton with the University of Southern Mississippi for leading the discussions and helping us through the processing of our emotions and thoughts. The day ended with much to reflect on. What a powerful message to be able to take in and process to help us grow in understanding of the historical context in which we and our clients live and work. For more information about The Legacy Museum & The National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, AL please visit their website: https://museumandmemorial.eji.org/.

CELEBRATING DR. GRAHAM

Congratulations to Rev. Alice Graham, Ph.D. on becoming a fellow of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Community Leadership Network with the Center for Creative Leadership! Looking forward to seeing what she does through the fellowship to lead transformational change toward a more equitable society. Learn more at wkkfcin.org. #WKKFCLN

BACK BAY MISSION HAS A MOBILE APP!

It is easy to load and operate. You can use it to read The Changing Tides, check out the Annual Report, Donate, check out upcoming events, look through pictures, see our latest video, and so much more.

To download the app please follow these easy steps:

• Go to the Apple Store or Google Play
• Search for the free Tithe.ly Church App
  (the icon will appear with a phone and leaf on a blue background)
• Download App
• Open and Search for Back Bay Mission
• Select Back Bay Mission
• Explore and Enjoy the New App!
NOLLAU INSTITUTE EXPERIENCE
BY KENNEY WASHINGTON, DIRECTOR OF CLIENT SERVICES

The Nollau Institute is a yearlong program of leadership formation for its participants: it's CHHSM's signature leadership development program. The institute prepares leaders for consecration as Diakonal Ministers, a vocation characterized by servant leadership.

As I reflect on my experience in this class, I felt like I was challenged to look within myself as a person and as to who I am as a leader within my agency and community. We discussed numerous topics but what stuck with me the most were topics that were implemented within my agency such as Appreciative Inquiry, Gracious Space and Strength Finders. Strength Finders was the most intriguing topic to me, because it’s my belief is that if you have a better understanding of the people that you work with, it will create and sustain a healthy and productive atmosphere in the workplace. The culture of the workplace is a lot more productive because of your understanding of your colleagues. It’s also my goal as a leader with my agency to help the people that I supervise and the clients that we serve to become the best version of themselves, not who I want them to be or think that they should be. Also because of my awareness of being a servant-leader, I will be even more effective because will I pay closer attention to my colleagues and to people within the community, so that I can help them to grow and perform at their highest possible levels. I will also pay attention to the clients, so that I can understand what their needs, and help them find the best solution to meet their needs.

The Nollau experience allowed me to make and maintain a connection with my classmates who are scattered throughout the United States so that we can support and encourage each other. When asked what Servant Leadership means, “I believe that it means displaying a giving heart while leading others. Caring more about the well-being of others than seeking your own self-gratification.” The work that I do and attempt to do each, and every day is my calling and a requirement of God to give to the people who are less fortunate than we are.

I am thankful and grateful for the experience that I received at Nollau Institute. I will take what I learned and share it with every person that cross my path both in a professional and personal life.

HOPE CAN BE FOUND
BY SARAH BOONE, HAL CASEWORKER

This story about “J” wasn’t always a story of hope. J has struggled for some time with addiction, drinking, and gambling. We aided J in getting his social security about 8 months ago and from there we struggled. Through a series of events J was being evicted by the apartments he was living in as a result of these struggles. J a week prior to eviction had suffered a stroke; he already had other severe health conditions and was diagnosed with painful shingles. J was having a hard time walking, speaking, or generally functioning. Generally, in Permanent Sustainable Housing (PSH) there is not an available unit to move a person if they are evicted and as a result fall homeless again. We decided to take a chance on J. J needed someone to take a chance on him. We had an amazing group of mission workers in that went over and moved J into our open and available unit. The deal we made J is that we would begin to address some of the painful struggles that were keeping him from being successful in housing. J and I worked at getting him specialized help for some of his medical issues that would be conducive to his needs. I am proud to say that not only was J honest about his struggles, but asked for rehab, filled out the paperwork, and is currently awaiting a bed date. But most of all he is grateful and reminds me almost daily that we saved his life he would have died if he went back on the streets. J has already shown enormous growth and we are so proud to be a part of his journey here at BBM.

CONGRATULATIONS

to our own newly consecrated Diakonal Minister Kenney Washington!

Dr. Alice Graham and Kenney Washington attended CHSSM: The Council for Health and Human Service Ministries’ 81st Annual Gathering, held March 5-7 in Chicago. During the 2019 Annual Gathering, Kenney Washington became a newly consecrated Diakonal Minister. Each Diakonal Minister received a certificate, along with a symbolic servant leadership bowl and towel.

YOU SHOP. AMAZON GIVES.

Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the charitable organization of your choice.

AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know. Same products, same prices, same service.

Support your charitable organization by starting your shopping at smile.amazon.com For more information go to smile.amazon.com/about

MORE THAN ONE MAILING?

If you receive multiple mailings of the same piece from Back Bay Mission, please contact our Community Relations Associate, Laura, so we can get it corrected! You can send an email to lpayne@thebackbaymission.org or call 228-432-0301 ext. 302. Thank you for your cooperation.