

# STEW POT COMMUNITY SERVICES

FAITH MEETING NEEDS IN OUR COMMUNITY

SPRING 2022 NEWSLETTER: ISSUE 2

## DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Originally, we did not plan to publish another newsletter until the summer. But we had so many good things to share that we changed our plans! In these pages you will read about Taste of Mississippi (welcome back!), some of our dedicated volunteers (whom we cannot imagine Stewpot without), a new initiative (filling a gap in our homeless response system), and new Board members.

Taste of Mississippi has long been one of my favorite events in Jackson (I may be biased). As one of Stewpot's signature fundraising events, "Taste" has raised over a million dollars over the past 30 years for hunger relief and homeless assistance in our City. But Taste is so much more than a fundraiser: it is a chance to see and experience the best that our community has to offer.

For example, Taste of Mississippi has become one of the most diverse events in Jackson, truly representing the spectrum of people that call our Metro area home. It's an honor to be part of a mission that draws so many people together for a common purpose. Taste of Mississippi also features and celebrates homegrown talent. We are grateful beyond measure that our local chefs and restaurateurs offer their time and resources so generously.

I hope you'll visit [tasteofms.org](http://tasteofms.org) to see the full list of restaurants and sponsors who made Taste of Mississippi 2022 so wonderful. Consider visiting one (or more) of the restaurants listed there as a "thank you" for their commitment to our community. And, I invite you to follow Taste of Mississippi on facebook so you can be in the know about next year's event.

With a grateful heart,

Jill Buckley, Executive Director



# Taste of Mississippi Returns After 2-Year Hiatus

Taste of Mississippi Presented by Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi took place on Monday, April 11th at The District at Eastover. The event was a huge success, raising over \$100,000 for Stewpot! Stewpot was unable to have Taste of Mississippi in-person in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19. However, the community's love for Taste of Mississippi hasn't wavered, as evidenced by an estimated 1,200 attendees on April 11th.



Participating restaurants included 4th Avenue Lounge, Aplos, Amerigo, Babalu, Blue Bell Ice Cream, BRAVO!, Broad Street, Cakes and More, Crazy Cat Eat Up, Elvie's, Hattie's Chicken & Waffles, Johnny T's, La Brioche, La Cour, Library Lounge, The Manship, McClain Resort, Primos Cafe, Sal & Mookie's, Saltine, Table 100, The Country Club of Jackson, The Good Guys Kitchen, The Holy Smokers, Iron Horse Grill, Tuk Tuk Boom, Scrooge's, Uniquely Kovered, and That Special Touch.

The Holy Smokers of St. Andrews Cathedral remained the reigning champions of Best Entree and Best Presentation. Hattie's Chicken & Waffles took the title of Best Appetizer and That Special Touch was declared Best Dessert.

The event garnered local and state-wide support, with 33 businesses supporting the event through both financial and in-kind donations. Stewpot is incredibly grateful to all those who attended and made the event possible. We are already looking forward to 2023!



Pictured (Left to Right): The Manship Wood Fired Kitchen, The Country Club of Jackson, and Hattie's Chicken & Waffles

# Stewpot Spotlights Volunteers for Volunteer Appreciation Month

April is National Volunteer Month—a month dedicated to recognizing the importance of volunteering and honoring the significant contributions volunteers make by generously donating their time and talents to worthy causes. Stewpot relies heavily on the support of volunteers. The volunteers you see below have been nominated by members of the community who admire their hard work and service to Stewpot.



**Locke Barkley**



**Clint Hickman**



**Leroy Jackson**



**Ember Tabor**



**Patrick O'Brien**



**Tim Seachris**

***Stewpot would also like to recognize the following congregations for their continued service:***

St. Richard Catholic Church  
Cade Chapel Missionary Baptist Church  
Beth Israel Congregation  
St. Philip's Episcopal Church  
Meadowbrook Church of Christ  
St. Andrew's Episcopal Cathedral  
St. Peter Orthodox Church

Galloway United Methodist Church  
Northminster Baptist Church  
St. Mark's Episcopal Church  
Hillcrest Baptist Church  
Covenant Presbyterian Church  
Christ United Methodist Church  
St. Peter's By the Lake

Fondren Presbyterian Church  
New Jerusalem Church  
The Chapel of the Cross  
Belmont Baptist Church  
Anderson United Methodist Church  
Pleasant Gift Missionary Baptist  
Mount Carmel Ministries

# Filling A Gap

When Bianca was kicked out of her cousin's apartment, she had nowhere to go and no one to call. Not knowing what else to do, she went to UMMC. Fortunately, at UMMC she connected with a social worker, who called Stewpot's new Temporary Emergency Shelter for help.

Over the course of the pandemic, Stewpot has helped about 200 households move from homelessness into stable housing. We discovered quickly that it can take up to two months for the process to go from start to finish. Gathering and obtaining documents, finding safe and affordable housing, and getting utilities turned on can be extremely difficult for someone whose life is in daily crisis, even with assistance from a case manager.

In January, Stewpot received a grant from the City of Jackson to operate a Temporary Emergency Shelter to help make that process a little smoother. We now have 20 rooms set aside at a local hotel so that people who are trying to move out of their cars, from under bridges, or off the street can have some stability while they connect the dots. Our Community Kitchen provides meals, our bus driver assists with transportation to Stewpot, and our staff help them execute their plan.

*"My caseworker at Stewpot listened to me. Without the shelter and Rapid Rehousing, I don't know where I'd be"*  
-Bianca, Temporary Emergency Shelter Client

In Bianca's case, once she made it to the hotel, we were able to connect her with our Rapid Rehousing program, which provides short-term rental subsidies and case management. It only took about 6 weeks to find the right place for her. She says, "My caseworker at Stewpot listened to me. Without the shelter and Rapid Rehousing, I don't know where I'd be."

Finding safe, stable housing is a critical need for many in our city. There is no one solution that will eradicate homelessness, but this is a step in the right direction in making sure resources are available to those who seek them. Stories of resilience such as Bianca's give us hope for the future ahead.

***If you are interested in supporting the Temporary Emergency Shelter, here is a list of our current needs:***

- Bottled Water
- Complimentary breakfast items such as packaged muffins, pop tarts, and fruit cups
- Evening Meals

***Any support is much appreciated. To inquire, please contact Laronda Davis at [ldavis@stewpot.org](mailto:ldavis@stewpot.org)***

# Stewpot Welcomes Three New Board Members



Sheila Hailey is a history instructor at Hinds Community College and serves as the Curriculum Coordinator for History and the Humanities. She also volunteers with the Incarcerated Veterans Program at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility, leading classes pertaining to Military History with a group of veterans. Her religious home is at Beth Israel Congregation, currently serving as 1st Vice President after having been 2nd Vice President for the last two years. The Jewish concept of tikkun olam means one should work to repair the world and the work of Stewpot certainly fits that mission.



Jay Kucia graduated from Jackson Academy in 2012 and Mississippi College in 2017. In 2020, he graduated magna cum laude from the University of Mississippi School of Law where he served as a civil rights research assistant and a labor and employment teaching assistant and also founded the Mississippi Workplace Law Society. In his practice, Jay concentrates on equal employment opportunity cases. Most of Jay's work for the firm involves issues of

workplace accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Family and Medical Leave Act. Jay is an active member of Northside Baptist Church.



Diva Whalen is a native of Clinton, MS. She attended Clinton High School. After high school, she transitioned to Tougaloo College and graduated with a biology degree. Upon her completion at Tougaloo, she went on to complete her doctoral degree in biomedical sciences with an emphasis in biochemistry and cancer biology. Diva is currently a professor of biology at Tougaloo College. Diva has always been connected to Stewpot.

Since twelve years old, Diva has journeyed through the Stewpot summer camps and tutored during the school year throughout high school and college.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Cassandra Stovall  
Dr. Diva Whalen

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# STEW POT

## COMMUNITY SERVICES

*Faith meeting needs in our community*

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### BECOME A MONTHLY PARTNER TODAY!

By signing up to be a monthly donor at [www.stewpot.org](http://www.stewpot.org), your contribution will immediately be used to help some of the most vulnerable people in and around the Metro area. When you subscribe as a Monthly Partner, you become part of helping us to guarantee:

**A hot meal or groceries for people who are hungry • Safe Shelter for those who are homeless and vulnerable • A safe and nurturing environment for over 100 at-risk children and teenagers each year**

Become a Monthly Partner Today! It's the easiest and most efficient way to make an impact right now - and for years to come.

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