



Because
We CARE,
We SHARE

Save These Dates

Call Mark Romagosa at 321-945-2895 for corporate sponsorships for both of these fun fundraisers. All proceeds will benefit The Sharing Center, and a portion from both is earmarked to provide children's new school shoes.

Saturday, Sept. 29 2nd Annual "Love Your Neighbor"

Walk-a-thon

8 am-10 am at Crane's Roost Park in Uptown Altamonte. Put on your walking shoes and come on over. Don't even stop for coffee — Ed Becker says he'll brew a free cup of hot java for everyone at his "The Aroma" booth.

Thanks to UCF students who have been gathering gifts and pledges and holding a bowl-a-thon at AMF Lanes on 434, Longwood.

Monday, Oct. 22

Annual Fun Scramble Golf Tournament

At the exclusive RedTail Golf Club, Heathrow Country Estates, on 46-A, Sorrento. Registration & continental breakfast 7:30 am; tee-off 8:30 am. Great lunch buffet & plenty of gifts and awards!

Sharing Matters

Summer 2007



Photo by Brion Price of Brion Price Photography, courtesy of Seminole County Regional Chamber of Commerce

The Sharing Center Chosen 'Community Champion'

Members of Seminole County Regional Chamber of Commerce voted The Sharing Center "Community Champion of the Year" for 2007. Angie Romagosa, President/CEO of The Sharing Center, is shown accepting the award (center in photo). The May 11 gala, honoring 8 local businesses and 5 individuals, was emceed by former Seminole County Commissioner Randy Morris at Orlando Marriott – Lake Mary.

'I'm Not Afraid of Life Any More' 'Standing Here Today' Program Gives Women Life-Changing Skills

It was an unlikely group of women who gathered to share time, confidences, and encouragement with each other over several months. Teen moms. Middle-aged divorcees. Grey-haired widows. But the women age 19 to 69 all share at least these things in common: a deep desire to change their circumstances, a recognition that they needed help in setting goals and making decisions, and a determination to work hard to achieve those goals and move on to a better life.

The first goal for all of them was to complete The Sharing Center's new "Standing Here Today" program, offering life-changing experiences for low-income women who are trying hard to improve their families' lives.

The program began last October. In June, 22 women received Certificates of Achievement to remind them of their progress and their plans.

Chris Lutz, Director of Social Services, said the astounding success of the first class "definitely means there will be another class this fall." And, participants in the first class will return as mentors. "That's the way the class was struc-

tured—women helping women," Chris said, "but we had no idea how enthusiastic the women would be about this. All of them are eager to become mentors and help other women get a new start."

In fact, Chris said, "one of the women is already helping another single Mom where she works."

Teaching the women how to "network" to help each other was a goal of the program, but from the very first session the women began networking on their own, offering others encouragement and advice learned through personal struggles.

After only a few weeks, two women landed better jobs, crediting interview skills learned in "Standing Here Today."

Additional workshops centered on self-worth, business etiquette, personal manners, and Crown Ministry, a scripture-based budgeting program.

The idea for *Standing Here Today* was conceived by two working women who had reached their career goals and through development of their personal relationships with God wanted to "give back" to the community in a special way.

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'Community Champion of the Year' - Seminole County Regional Chamber of Commerce



Who Would Miss Morning Rush-Hour Traffic?!!

Kathryn Broussard sure missed it — *longed* for the frustration, in fact — when the transmission in her old car blew up, and she couldn't get to her job in Winter Park from her home in Sanford.

The mother and sole support of six children and one grandchild, Kathryn was grateful her employer was holding her job open for her, but after 3 weeks she wondered how much longer the job would still be there and how she would pay her bills without a paycheck.

How did she feel when The Sharing Center called to say "Someone has donated a car for you"? Relieved, excited, "*absolutely thrilled.*"

Even better, it wasn't a car. The vehicle is a 6-passenger van. "This really IS a blessing!" Kathryn exclaimed when she picked up the keys and title.

"I didn't know what I was going to do. I had to do *something* because I have to keep paying the bills, but I never expected this! Thank you!"

Gifts of vehicles in good, working condition are tax-deductible when donated to The Sharing Center, and such gifts really can change a family's life. Just ask Kathryn.

Growing To Meet Growing Needs

Two Grants Allow Hiring of Experienced Social Worker and Disabilities Caseworker

The Sharing Center is pleased to welcome two highly-qualified staffers to assist in our mission of helping those with the greatest need in Seminole County to improve their situation and move forward to a healthier, more stable life.



Frankie Marcano is looking forward to doing what she does best — helping people — in her new position as a Social Worker with The Sharing Center. An Air Force veteran, Frankie was last stationed in "beautiful, peaceful" Fairbanks, Alaska before leaving the service and following the sun to Florida. She is pursuing a Master's in social work from UCF,

where she received her BA in psychology, and has completed an internship with Seminole County Community Assistance. A native of Pittsburgh, Frankie and her new husband Eddie are enjoying the Florida sunshine.

Our new Disabilities Caseworker, **Sara Purcell** will help people with all kinds of disabilities on the road to employability and a stable life. A Florida native, Sara received her BA in Fine Arts/Photography from Florida State, but skills learned through her volunteer experiences working with people with mental illness started her on a career in social work. She first worked with Seminole County Mental Health. Moving to Texas, she taught basic living skills to people coming out of institutions, later joined Medicaid Managed Care and "traveled all over Texas" with the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill. Returning to Florida, she joined the Homeless Services Network, placing homeless disabled in permanent housing.



Caseload Increases 16.5% in Nine Months

In the first nine months of our fiscal year, 711 more families sought help at The Sharing Center than in the same period a year ago. A total of 18,595 individuals have been touched by caring hearts at The Sharing Center in that time.

A major reason for the upsurge: rising cost of housing. Many apartment rents increased \$300 or \$400 in just one month. People couldn't find cheaper rentals or couldn't afford deposits to move. Apartments turned to condos, but renters could not afford to buy their units. Mortgages ballooned; salaries stayed stagnant.

This year, more clients are seeking help with utility payments. The Sharing Center paid \$21,355 more in utility bills in nine months than in the same nine-month period last year. This increased need is an offshoot of the lack of affordable housing. Now, working people are forced to pay even higher rents to keep a roof over their heads, but there's not enough money left for other usual expenses: utilities, food, medicines, insurance, auto costs, school supplies.

To enable us to help growing numbers of clients without the cost of adding physical space took some creative shuffling. Our Boutique was moved inside the main Thrift Store to free up space for corporate offices outfitted with donations of new carpet and office cubicles. Walls came down, more pantry shelves went up, and work progresses on creating more space for client assistance. Come and see for yourself! Call 407.260.9155 ext. 13 to schedule a tour.

Help us save postage and receive news about events and needs sooner! Email us at: webmaster@thesharingcenter.org. Please include your name, snail mail address and phone so that we know who you are. Thank you!

5★ Customers Rate Our Thrift Store Tops



Jenifer is a design student who has volunteered in the Thrift Store & Boutique this summer, helping us earn that 5-star rating.

If you've been to The Sharing Center Thrift Store, you know it's first-rate. Now, anyone who visits www.thethriftshopper.com knows it, too!

On this national thrift store directory, customers gave our store rave reviews and 4.91 points out of a possible 5! "We're all so thrilled and proud," said Store Manager Debra Lauffer, praising her volunteers for their hard work to display the goods and keep our store attractive and friendly.

The Thrift Store is a charity in itself, giving away over \$150,000 worth of clothing and household goods every year, but it also is our major fund-raiser, open to the public for great bargains 9:30 am-5:00 pm Monday-Saturday. While you're here, don't forget to check out all the pretties in the boutique.



The 14-year-old girl drew a large purple and yellow flower in the middle of a sheet of blue-lined school notebook paper. At the bottom, below where she signed her name, she drew a cartoon smiley face girl.

This was her "painting" of herself being enormously happy for a special gift from The Sharing Center.

In pink gel ink, she neatly printed an emotional thank you to our volunteer caseworker, computer repair guys, and store manager who went out of their way to give her a special gift: "I wanted to thank you all for granting my wish with the computer, because I've been praying for a computer since I got very ill with my kidneys and lungs. I'm on

home-bound, and I'm so behind on my school home-bound work, and I appreciate what you all have done for me, and I can ask God to bless each and everyone of you that made this possible for me." The computer was several years old and used, but Lily's family could not afford it even at a thrift store price. We're passing Lily's heartfelt thanks on to you because it is through your gifts that The Sharing Center is able to help over 7,000 families with basic and special needs.

Another Good Carpenter Needed

A carpenter is needed to build a cash-wrap desk for cashiers. If you have the skills and/or can donate the materials, please call Cecilia at 407.260.9155 ext. 36.

The Sharing Center Thrift Store & Boutique Hours

Open 9:30 am-5 pm Mon.-Sat. for shoppers and volunteer workers. The store is in the same location as The Sharing Center client and corporate offices: 600 N. Hwy. 17-92, Longwood, FL 32750, approx. 1/2 mile north of Hwy. 434 & 17-92 intersection. Call 407.332.0925 to schedule pickup of furniture donations.

Drop off household items at our Distribution Center tel 407.260.0270 9:00 am-4:30 pm Mon-Sat at 747 Commerce Circle, Longwood. From 17-92, go west on Longdale (north of Courtesy Pontiac), right on Commerce Circle.

Volunteer Opportunities — Call Michael Kenyon 407.260.9155 ext. 14 Morning & afternoon receptionists; cashiers; thrift store sorters and food pantry workers to stock shelves and pack groceries. We need more help every day!

Visit www.thesharingcenter.org and click on "Buy Christian-themed gifts" at bottom of home page to visit the Religion, History & Values Network, which will donate 10% of your purchase to The Sharing Center.

Wish List

Call 407-260-9155, x12

- New Commercial Walk-in Cooler and Freezer
- Portable Roadside Sign
- 3 New Computers, estimate \$1,500 each
- Shopping Carts
- New A/C units
- Walk-behind Forklift
- Ceiling Tiles and Lights for the Thrift Store
- 10 Matching Ceiling Fans for the Thrift Store
- New Fixtures for Restrooms
- Wheeled Bins or Wheeled Trash Cans
- New 4-drawer Locking File Cabinets; 12 needed

What Will Be Your Legacy? Consider a Planned Gift to The Sharing Center

The Sharing Center is happy to accept all gifts that will help rescue children, elderly and families from financial crises and assist them to a more stable future.

- Charitable Gift Annuities
 - Stocks & Bonds
 - Certificates of Deposit
 - Real Estate
 - Automobiles, Trucks, Vans
- Contact Angie Romagosa, President/CEO at 407.260.9155 ext. 12 or Mark Romagosa, Director of Development at 321-945-2895.

100% of your contribution goes to The Christian Sharing Center, Inc. A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Division of Consumer Services by calling toll-free within the State 1-800-HELP-FLA. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the State. Florida State registration # SC-05583.



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Mission Statement

"Sharing the reality of God's love with those in need by providing material assistance and promoting Christian generosity."



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Ask your office to collect

- used cell phones
- empty toner cartridges and
- laser /jet printer cartridges

for The Sharing Center

Call 407.260.9155 ext. 18

I'm Not Afraid of Life Anymore'

'Standing Here Today' Program continued from Page 1

Kendra Sestile and Jean Matkovich met at work and became friends, discovered each had been through life-changing experiences and had a desire to help other women. Soon these two put their thoughts together and approached The Sharing Center with their idea of a program to help low-income women rise above their poverty and fulfill their God-given talents. The Sharing Center was asked to identify candidates with the potential to fulfill the aim of the mentoring program, which focused on building self-esteem through nurturing each other and education ("read, read, read" the women were advised). Community United Methodist Church, Casselberry, provided space for the twice-monthly sessions.

"What have you gained and what have you changed in your life in recent months?" the women were asked at the end of the session. Said Sabrina: "My 'mojo' is coming back! My attitude about myself has changed!"

Her exuberance was echoed by others expressing joy at learning to become more independent, pride in accomplishing goals, and a greater connection with God. "I have more faith in God and rely on Him," Karen said quietly.

Learning to visualize a long-term purpose to their lives, set goals and manage their time and finances has led the women to dare to dream and work toward a future in which they are capable and independent. With a new confidence and more positive outlook, they are eager to reach out a hand to other despairing women walloped with the fear and self-doubt of poverty. The most important thing Keisha realized: "I'm not afraid of life anymore."

Nancy Nolt
Newsletter Editor

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