



Heart for Winter Haven

What's Happening at H4WH...

by **TERRY HENDERSON, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER**

Change is in the air. Like every living thing, organizations change and grow. We've experienced some of that lately. We said goodbye to Bee Gallison, Kharla Laguer, and Bree Serpenti recently. It's bittersweet. We wish these ladies the very best in their new adventures but will miss them dearly. We also had some changes on our **Board of Directors**. Bunny Reeves and Joe Simonds have stepped off, but both are still very much involved in the organization. We're incredibly grateful for their service and support.

You'll see in the rest of this newsletter that nothing has slowed down. We had two great fundraising events in March and May. Thank you to all our sponsors and attendees for your incredible support and generosity! **Jobs for Life** and **Faith & Finances** classes are going strong. **The Center For Well Being** is making a big impact on our community through counseling and training.

Our relationships in the community have never been better. Partnerships with local government agencies like the **City of Winter Haven** and **Polk County**, as well as local business and churches have deepened. Two local health care providers, **BayCare** and **AdventHealth**, have been amazing partners as we work together to meet the physical and mental health needs of our community.

We continue to be blown away by the generosity of our individual supporters, such as our Heart 100 partners. What a blessing to have friends who support us, pray for us, encourage us, and volunteer their time to help. We are humbled and grateful. Please continue to pray for us as we seek new ways to make an impact and be a blessing to our community. ❤️



Jobs for Life News

by **TABITHA KEITH, DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS**



So far this year, we have celebrated 7 Jobs for Life graduates, with 17 individuals currently enrolled in classes!

Earlier this year, participants took part in a Business Panel Night and Mock Interview session with local business leaders, doctors, nonprofit directors, and community professionals. Together, they shared honest conversations about work, growth, setbacks, and perseverance. The night served as a reminder that success is not reserved for one kind of person. A degree is not the only door. Time spent raising children builds real skills. Incarceration also does not define a person's future. Every person carries value, purpose, and potential.

In addition, 8 former program graduates received a combined \$3,641 in credentialing assistance to help remove barriers to mid-level careers and workforce advancement opportunities. Through the generous support of the **City of Winter Haven** and **Truist Bank**, graduates are able to pursue certifications and training that position them for greater income potential and long-term stability.

We are grateful for a community that continues investing in people and creating pathways toward stability and meaningful work. ❤️

2nd Annual Spring Event, Hearts in Bloom

by **TERRY HENDERSON, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER**

This spring, more than 180 attendees gathered in festive derby attire to enjoy Hearts in Bloom, a beautiful evening of fellowship, live entertainment, and meaningful support for families in need. Guests enjoyed exceptional food, lively conversation, and an atmosphere that reflected both elegance and joy. From creative hats and spring fashions to exciting auction moments and heartfelt stories of impact, the evening was a wonderful reminder of what can happen when a community comes together with a shared purpose.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of sponsors, donors, volunteers, and attendees, we far exceeded our fundraising goal for the evening! These funds will help us provide stable housing solutions and compassionate support for vulnerable children and families, advancing our mission to help end child homelessness in our community. Heart for Winter Haven extends sincere gratitude to everyone who participated in making Hearts in Bloom such a tremendous success. The evening was not only a celebration of generosity, but also a powerful investment in hope and a brighter future for local families. ❤️



Hearts in Bloom

Give Hope. Give a Future.



Faith & Finances Update

by TABITHA KEITH, DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS

Faith & Finances continues to be one of the most practical ways we see families move toward stability, and honestly, one of my favorite parts of the work. So far this year, 15 participants have graduated from Faith & Finances.

During the first quarter, classes were hosted by Redeemer Church, and we are incredibly grateful for their partnership and hospitality in helping create space for families to learn and grow together.

This first class of the year, adults participated in The Chalmers Center's Faith & Finances curriculum while children learned through Southeastern University's Managing Money for God's Glory curriculum. Turns out, kids can blow your budget almost as quickly as your ability to say "no" to yourself 😊 Which is why it helps when the whole household, no matter how young, is learning healthy money habits together.

Through the Match Savings Program, \$4,800 has already been distributed this year to help participants build emergency savings and financial confidence. Last year alone, nearly \$18,000 in participant savings was matched through the generous support of SouthState Bank and the LIFT Institute at SEU. That represents families who are now better prepared for emergencies and less likely to fall into crisis when unexpected expenses arise.

With 24 currently enrolled in ongoing classes, we know that financial education alone doesn't change lives, relationships do. Across our programs and Community Kitchen, volunteers have already contributed 218 hours of service this year, helping create welcoming spaces where neighbors can learn, grow, and be supported.

This is how childhood homelessness ends:
one stable family at a time. ❤️

"Life is about not knowing, having to change, taking the moment and making the best of it, without knowing what's going to happen next." - Gilda Radner



Best Wishes To A Dear Friend

by TABITHA KEITH, DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS

If you have been a part of the Heart for Winter Haven community for any length of time, you likely know Bee Gallison. Her story at H4WH is one of faithfulness, growth, and lasting impact. Over the past eight years, Bee has worn many hats, beginning first as a volunteer with a heart to serve her community. What started as a willingness to help quickly became a calling that shaped the direction and culture of Heart for Winter Haven in profound ways.

Throughout her time here, Bee stepped into leadership roles including Director of Programs, Director of Research & Development, and most recently Director of Care. In every season, she brought compassion, wisdom, innovation, and deep care for people. Her fingerprints are woven into every part of this organization, from the programs we offer, to the systems we've built, to the countless lives that have been touched through her leadership.

Bee has always carried a special ability to see people, not just their immediate needs, but their dignity, potential, and worth. She is the definition of a fierce advocate. She has helped cultivate a culture of care that reflects the heart of our mission, reminding both staff and clients alike that transformation happens best through relationship and community. While we are incredibly sad to see Bee move on from her role at Heart for Winter Haven, we are also deeply proud of her as she begins a new chapter with Raymond James. This transition is not a goodbye to the legacy she leaves behind, but a celebration of the incredible work she has accomplished and the ways she will continue making an impact wherever God leads her next.

Bee, thank you for eight years of service, leadership, sacrifice, laughter, creativity, and love for this community. Heart for Winter Haven is better because of you, and your influence will continue to be felt for years to come. You will always be part of the H4WH family, and you will be greatly missed. ❤️



H4WH 11th Annual Golf Tournament

by JENNIFER COWAN, CHAMPION RELATIONSHIPS SPECIALIST

On May 4th, 116 players gathered for our 11th Annual Golf Tournament at The Country Club of Winter Haven! Although we were ALL winners that day, thanks to the cold front that came through the weekend before, we want to congratulate our First Place Gross Winning Team: Ben Blasio, Ryan Chambless, Matte Diaz and Drew Swain! And congrats also to our First Place Net Winning Team: James Henderson, Ralph Jr Mahalak, Christian Clay, and Aaron Brown! Both teams this year gave us an unexpected blessing when they donated their winnings back to Heart for Winter Haven- wow!

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW EVENT PHOTOS!](#)

Presented by:



"Some old-fashioned things like fresh air and sunshine are hard to beat." – Laura Ingalls Wilder



Photos from the event are now available online (see link above), thanks to Lori Roberts with **Gold Heart Realty**, who served as our photographer this year!

We are so grateful for the businesses, fellow nonprofits and families that have gathered in support of our ministry by becoming event sponsors. Our special thanks to returning Title Sponsor, **SouthState Bank**, as well as **Alan Ulch Construction** and **The Extra Closet**, our Post-Event Party Sponsors. We are truly grateful! ❤️



Congratulations To Maria- Our New Director of Care!

by **TERRY HENDERSON, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER**

We're excited to announce that Maria Maldonado was recently promoted and has taken on the role of **Director of Care**. Maria joined Heart for Winter Haven in February 2025 and has already made a significant impact on our clients, partners and the team. She has extensive experience in care management with a focus on housing.



Determined to grow professionally and add even more value to Heart for Winter Haven, Maria recently completed her HUD Housing Counselor Certification. Through this, she will help support our clients in completing workshops toward home ownership and in accessing down payment assistance programs through city and county programs.

We're looking forward to Maria leading **Care Management** and being part of the H4WH leadership team. Welcome to the new role, Maria! ❤️

*Do not go
where the path
may lead, go
instead where
there is no path
and leave a
trail.*

*Ralph Waldo
Emerson*

BayCare and Heart for Winter Haven

BY **KIMBERLY SMILEY, DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR WELL-BEING**

We are proud to highlight our partnership with BayCare, a collaboration that has been instrumental in expanding access to vital mental health services across the greater Winter Haven community.

Together, we are addressing a critical need by offering a wide range of supportive services, including individual, couples, and family counseling, along with therapeutic groups, educational classes, and interactive workshops. This partnership allows us to reach more individuals and families with compassionate, high-quality care—helping people build resilience, strengthen relationships, and enhance overall well-being.

Beyond direct services, BayCare is also investing in the future of mental health care in our region. Through their support, we are able to provide clinical supervision for aspiring therapists—creating meaningful opportunities for training, mentorship, and professional growth. This not only equips emerging clinicians but also helps ensure our community has ongoing access to skilled, well-supported mental health professionals for years to come.

We are deeply grateful for this partnership and our shared commitment to cultivating a healthier, more supported Winter Haven community.

First Quarter Impact:

- 121 counseling sessions provided
- 31 individuals trained in Mental Health First Aid
- 14 hours of clinical supervision for interns

As we step into the second quarter, momentum is building—and so is the need. We appreciate your continued support and invite you to keep us in your thoughts as this important work continues. ❤️





AS ONE!

VISION BANQUET



SAVE THE DATE 11.10.2026

More details to come in July! For information & sponsorship opportunities, visit heart4wh.org/banquet.

Partner With Us!

- **PRAY:** For those we serve, our volunteers, staff and board of directors, community businesses, city leaders, area church partners, etc.
- **GIVE:** We are looking for **10** new monthly partners to join our Heart 100 giving family! Please choose "Ongoing" for your gift of any amount at heart4wh.org/donate.
- **SERVE:** We are seeking volunteers to serve in various areas of ministry, especially at our weekly Community Kitchen in Florence Villa (needs involve "prep" help on Fridays, and serving meals / clean up on Sundays). Please email Bree or Brian at info@heart4wh.org for information.
- **SPONSOR:** Want to sponsor an upcoming Faith & Finances or Jobs for Life class? Please contact Tabitha at tabitha@heart4wh.org.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

MENTAL HEALTH WORKSHOPS, CLASSES
& TRAININGS NOW AVAILABLE **HERE!**

JOBS FOR LIFE, FAITH & FINANCES,
AND OTHER WORKSHOPS **HERE!**