

CARING

Fall 2013 - Issue 1

CHECK
OUT OUR
NEW LOOK!



EAGLE'S
LANDING
A HOME FOR
VETS

THIS IS WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO...

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HIGHLIGHTING THE CHAIRMAN OF OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS, DONALD LANGHAM

Donald Langham was introduced to Volunteers of America Southeast (VOA) over 15 years ago by the late Mr. W.O. Mozingo. Working in the community through United Way, Mr. Langham was drawn to the service that VOA provided in the region. It was shortly after that introduction that he was asked to serve as a board member.

Mr. Langham is honored to serve as the current Chairman of the Board. He enjoys working with elected officials, community activists, clergy, and the employees of Volunteers of America to make a difference. "My favorite part of our mission is helping others that need assistance; the elderly, homeless, and mentally challenged," stated Langham.

Serving others is something that Mr. Langham does regularly. A member of Trinity Episcopal Church, he serves on the Vestry. He is a past Chairman of the Board of the University of South Alabama (USA) and is currently a Trustee for USA and sits on the Realty Board for the Research and Technology Park at USA.

Mr. Langham retired after 41 years of service as the International Vice President of the United Steel Paper and Chemical Workers International Union. He has traveled all over the country enjoying his two favorite hobbies – hunting and fishing! During football season, you can catch him at Ladd Peebles Stadium cheering on his Jags!

Married to Alice for over 54 years, they have two daughters and three grandchildren.

Caring Editor and Graphic Designer: Barbara Davis

Caring Photographer and Journalist: Keith Ferguson

Front cover features United States veteran Michael Dees, pictured with Eagle's Landing's mascot "Liberty Bell"



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We are excited to move to a new format, a magazine that will tell the story of Volunteers of America Southeast and one that we can all share with friends and family. These are great stories of lives that have been changed and blessed.

But behind these stories are people who are working to make a contribution for the betterment of all. Our Board of Directors is a dedicated group of people who work to make our services strong. We have a strong, capable board to which I shall be eternally grateful for their involvement in providing leadership for our ministry of service. The Board empowers and inspires the staff to achieve a quality level of service and then holds us accountable for the outcomes. These men and women have blessed me as they have stood alongside me during difficult times as well as times of celebration. I am grateful for each of our board members.

We have staff who are working every hour to serve a person in need. Many of our staff work from a sense of a spiritual calling...this is what God wants them to do with their lives. I am so grateful to be working with such a great group of people. And at the time of this writing, we are spending time recognizing our Direct Support Professionals. These professionals are the ones who are hands on in delivering services to persons with disabilities who we serve 24/7. And for sure, they could only do the work they do with God's divine hand upon them. We will honor one person in each region as the Direct Support Person of the Year, who will then compete in the national competition.

Yes, all of these stories are because individuals are doing what God has led them to do, and He is blessing the services provided. Celebrate and give thanks for those who labor in His kingdom.

"Whatsoever your hands find to do, do so with all your might..."
[Ecc. 9:10]

VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA SOUTHEAST

"REACHING AND UPLIFTING"

- ✔ Families Affected by Disasters
- ✔ The Elderly
- ✔ Veterans Services
- ✔ People with Intellectual Disabilities
- ✔ People with Chronic Mental Illness
- ✔ People who are Physically Challenged
- ✔ People who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- ✔ At-Risk Youth and Children
- ✔ Supported Employment
- ✔ People with Substance Abuse
- ✔ Home Ownership
- ✔ Faith-Based and Community Groups
- ✔ Housing Needs in our Communities

2,140 People Served Every Day in Residential Settings

**Listen to
Uplifting Moments**
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
7:30 am
LiteMix 99.9 FM
WKSJ 94.9 FM
WZEZ 92.1 FM
or visit www.voase.org

EAGLE'S LANDING

Eagle's Landing is a transitional housing community with wrap-around supportive services to meet the unique needs of homeless veterans who served in the active military and who now find themselves sleeping in shelters or other places on the Gulf Coast not designed for human habitation.



Pictured above at Eagle's Landing are four of our veterans (from left to right): Bolton Noys (US Air Force); Michael Stewart (US Navy); Cornelius Burrell (US Air Force); and Robin Lewis (US Army). Read their stories on opposite page.

Eagle's Landing Making a Difference

So far, 22 homeless veterans from different walks of life have entered the apartments at Eagle's Landing and begun to utilize the resources offered by Volunteers of America SE, Veterans Affairs, and generous volunteers. Nine

are now working full time and four are enrolled in school.

- Services are provided to assist in reintegrating homeless veterans into meaningful employment within the labor force by participation in employment training and educational enhancements.

- Veterans are assisted in establishing a steady income, personal savings plan, and receipt of entitlements they earned.
- Self-esteem is improved by providing access to community resources and involvement in volunteer opportunities.

GET TO KNOW SOME OF OUR VETS

Barth Kilburn entered Eagle's Landing after his mother suffered major health problems and was forced to relocate. Mr. Kilburn found shelter at a mission, where space was limited and demand for services was high. Eagle's Landing has provided transitional housing for Mr. Kilburn, a United States Army veteran, where he can live independently and receive personalized care. Mr. Kilburn explains, "Compared to where I was in March, it has been great ... living here gives me a sense of independence and also peace of mind."

Bolton Noys, a veteran of the United States Air Force, lived in the woods for four years before finding his new home at Eagle's Landing. As a member of the USAF, Mr. Noys' duties included acting as a cook for his division. Mr. Noys is taking full advantage of the job placement programs provided at Eagle's Landing and hopes to find employment as an institutional cook.

Michael Stewart, a United States Navy veteran, previously graduated from a one-year technical school with a degree in business management, where he finished third in his class. Mr. Stewart is currently using the opportunities available at Eagle's Landing to find employment in office administration.

Robin Lewis is originally from Mobile, Alabama, but recently relocated from Ohio. Mr. Lewis is a veteran of the United States Army and expresses his gratitude for the services provided through Eagle's Landing. Mr. Lewis is using his "fresh start" to attend GRE classes through Goodwill Easter Seals. After completion, he would like to continue his education and become an electrician.



Pictured at right is United States Army Veteran Aaron Nicholson, who is a talented musician, seen here playing his cello.

Aaron Nicholson, a young veteran of the United States Army, can eloquently express his struggle of moving from military to civilian life. For Mr. Nicholson, the transition has been a difficult one, but he is happy to find a home at Eagle's Landing. He played the cello in high school and has a real passion for music, so Mr. Nicholson is currently seeking work in the music industry.

Cornelius Burrell, a United States Air Force veteran, is extremely appreciative of his new home in Eagle's Landing. As a man of faith, Mr. Burrell views this opportunity as a gift. Mr. Burrell explains, "This is a refuge ... it has gotten me out of dire straits." Currently, Mr. Burrell is facing some serious health problems and is using this time to heal before taking his next, positive step in the community.



A REFLECTION ON EAGLE'S LANDING

Eagle's Landing is a blessing to the veterans who live in Volunteers of America Southeast's area of Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia. The majority of veterans in our country come from the poorest parts of the United States, which unfortunately tend to have the fewest resources available to help them when they are in need. If you were a homeless veteran in Mobile County before Eagle's Landing opened its doors, you only had two options for shelter; a one-night stay in a homeless shelter or perhaps a few weeks if you were also struggling with addiction.

Our U.S. veterans have come home to a poor job market and an economy that challenges even the most stable of families to stay afloat. Eagle's Landing is the type of opportunity that has never been available in our area ... an opportunity for veterans to receive daily support, housing, resources, and a sense of family.

The first group of veterans who have moved into Eagle's Landing have been accepted by our local community and have been showered with donated items to help them succeed. This community support has given our veterans a sense of hope for their future and a feeling that our community understands that they paid a huge price by leaving their families and homes to risk their lives for our freedom.

Eagle's Landing has welcomed twenty-two veterans into the program, all with no income or resources. Since their arrival, we now have nine working full time, three that are primed for success and on the cusp of employment, and four that are in school learning a trade. The opportunities available at Eagle's Landing are providing permanent, positive changes to a group of men who have served our country in the most honorable way one can serve.

Being a witness to this change is humbling and gives the Eagle's Landing staff members a sense of great satisfaction. It also gives us hope that the positive changes will never end as long as we work together and welcome the community into our veterans' lives.



Stephen Dahmer is the program director at Eagle's Landing. He is pictured here with "Liberty Bell", an attention-seeking boxer mix who loves attention and provides company to the staff, residents, and visitors.



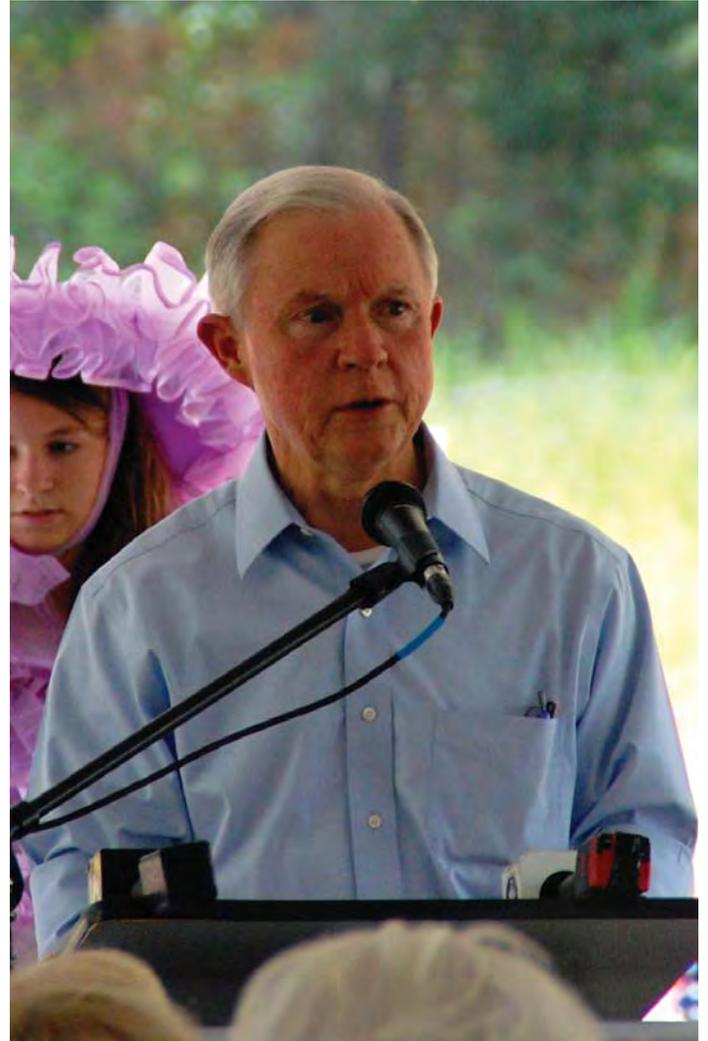
GROUNDBREAKING AND DEDICATION

Recently, on July 26th, United States Senator Jeff Sessions hosted a dedication of the first phase and groundbreaking ceremony for the second phase at Eagle's Landing. Dozens of community leaders and local politicians were on hand for the celebration. Senator Sessions presented Eagle's Landing with an Alabama state capitol flag, and Virginia Mayo of the Telephone Pioneers presented a flag that had recently flown in a war zone in Afghanistan.

According to Steven Dahmer, the program director at Eagle's Landing, a \$1.4 million grant from the county will aid in the creation of nineteen more apartments for homeless veterans. In the second phase, the residences will be open to serve women as well as men.

Volunteers of America Southeast looks forward to the growth and development of Eagle's Landing. It is clear that the residents are appreciative and taking advantage of the numerous support services offered. Thus, Eagle's Landing is successfully changing lives and making a difference in our community and in the lives of these military veterans.

"Simply put, Eagle's Landing is a great place to be."
– Ventura Perkins, Residential Director and U.S. military veteran.



Pictured at top left (l to r): John Tyson, Jr., Representative Victor Gaston, Clark Christenson, Don Langham, Commissioner Connie Hudson, Charles Story, Patsy Dow, Sen. Sessions (also pictured at top right), Wallace Davis, and Scott Hunter.

SEASON OF CARING 2013

Each year, Volunteers of America Southeast sponsors *Season of Caring* to give a hand UP to those in need throughout our area. The Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays mean many things to people. But for most of us, they mean sharing love and good cheer. Our Season of Caring focuses on two major campaigns: *Food for the Holidays* and *10 Caring Gifts*.

Food for the Holidays distributes food with the help of our faith and community partners, in an effort to feed those in need during the holiday season. This includes: children who often go without evening meals because there is no food in the home; the elderly who are in need; families struggling to provide basic nutritional needs; and individuals with disabilities right here in our own community.



Children from St. Elmo's School collected blankets last year for homeless people during our annual Season of Caring

FEED THE NEED

The number of families needing assistance with food has increased dramatically according to organizations in the south Alabama area operating food pantries. Recognizing the problem that organizations were having keeping their food pantries stocked, Volunteers of America Southeast began a year-round program: *Feed the Need*. *Feed the Need* provides local businesses and individuals the opportunity to donate non-perishable food or money to Volunteers of America. Volunteers of America will then partner with churches to help stock their food pantries.

To learn how you or your organization can help, contact Janet Hyde at jhyde@voase.org.



10 CARING GIFTS

Over 20 years ago, Volunteers of America Southeast began a partnership with WALA Fox 10 establishing *10 Caring Gifts*. A partnership began that would impact thousands of lives! *10 Caring Gifts* promotes the true spirit of the season by giving individuals, businesses, and school groups the opportunity to help those in need in our community.

With the beginning of the 2013 *10 Caring Gifts*, there will be many opportunities to make a difference. It is very simple. There are Ten "Gifts" to choose from. If your passion is to provide a Christmas gift for a child in need, a blanket to warm a homeless

person, help for a veteran to get back on his feet, or you want to donate to the greatest need--Volunteers of America will make sure your donation helps someone in need in our community this holiday season.

It is during the holiday season that the homeless and those who have suffered great losses feel the depth of their despair and loneliness. The holiday season is one of our greatest opportunities to give a "hand up" to those in need. The smallest gesture can make a huge difference in the lives of men, women, and especially children and the elderly.



Christmas is for children and for those in need of hope.

Pictured below is Volunteers of America's staff person Amanda Gonzalez with FOX 10's Lenise Ligon.



BE A PART OF 10 CARING GIFTS

Contact Janet Hyde at jhyde@voase.org or come by our offices at 600 Azalea Road and just tell us you want to make a difference in a person's life during our *Season of Caring*. You'll be glad you did!

"DEPENDABLE"

CAPABLE OF BEING DEPENDED ON; WORTHY OF TRUST; RELIABLE, STEADY; CONSISTENT IN PERFORMANCE OR BEHAVIOR

If you look up the definition of the word *Dependable*, you may also find the picture of Barnard and Dona Price.

Every month, without fail, the Prices take a full meal to all of the staff and the people they support in the home on Forrest Drive in Huntsville.

Every month, the Prices make a donation to Volunteers of America. They have been doing both for over 7 years, ever since their son Mace came to be part of the Volunteers of America family.

Mace grew up in a loving home with his father Barnard, his mother Dona, and older brother Barnard II. Spending his younger days at the Learning Tree, helping around the house, and walking to the neighborhood store up the road, Mace enjoyed good country living. Soon after graduating from the Learning Tree program, he moved to Huntsville to live in a Volunteers of America home.

"We love it when the Prices come," said Nakia Ross, one of the staff for the Forrest Drive Home. "They bring good food, enough for the people supported in the program and all three shifts of staff for two or three days. There are not enough words to express my appreciation for Mr. and Mrs. Price. They are caring and loving people."

One story illustrating the caring and giving spirit of Barnard and Dona Price centers on a Mother's Day a few years ago. The staff of the home wanted to treat the residents and the Prices to a Mother's Day lunch at a local restaurant. When Nakia attempted to pay the bill, she was told Mrs. Price had secretly paid for everyone's lunch.

The Prices are extremely pleased with the care Mace receives by the staff of Volunteers of America. "We know when Mace is happy, he rocks and smiles," said Barnard. "And every time we go to visit with him, he is rocking and smiling," added Dona.



A Note from the Prices:

"We are blessed to have our son in residence at a Volunteers of America home. It is not an institution or facility, but a home; and our son considers it *his* home. We feel that the Volunteers of America staff are a part of our family and make us feel that we are a part of theirs. We have peace of mind in knowing that Mace will be cared for when we are gone."

Volunteers of America Southeast contracts with Family Providers to provide support services in their own homes for individuals with developmental disabilities. This type of residential service gives individuals the opportunity to become part of a family and truly submerges them into community life.

Many of our Family Providers have years of experience working at state-operated facilities and other community providers serving people with developmental disabilities. Several of our Family Providers are licensed nurses who are able to provide skilled nursing care to individuals who may need daily insulin injections or require a feeding tube.

Family Provider homes give individuals a sense of familiarity and security with the continuity of their support staff. They are essential to Volunteers of America Southeast's mission, and we are very proud that they are part of our ministry.

Volunteers of America Southeast honored their Family Providers during the month of July with "Appreciation Luncheons" held in Mobile, Troy, Birmingham, and Tuscaloosa. Wallace and Barbara Davis, Iris Harris, and DeAnna Ferguson traveled across the state to meet with the Family Providers and thank them for their services.

FAMILY PROVIDERS



At our Appreciation Breakfast in Birmingham in July, some of our amazing family providers: From back, Danny Pickett, wife Sarah Pickett, and Elizabeth Moss.

YOUTH SUMMER CAMPS

Proverbs 22:5-7 tells us, "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." This summer we hugged, fed, and trained over 400 children who attended Summer Bible Camps! With 18 college interns and thousands of volunteer hours, Volunteers of America Southeast worked alongside the City of Bay Minette, the Light of the Village in Prichard, and with various churches and community groups at the three camp sites in Bay Minette, Prichard, and Chickasaw.



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For 117 years, we have taken on the most difficult tasks to help the most underserved.
This is why we do what we do.