

# SAINT STEPHEN'S WAY

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A Community for Homeless Families with Schoolchildren

Spring/Summer 2026

NEWSLETTER

Issue #22

## OUR MISSION

Saint Stephen's Way provides affordable housing, along with supportive services, to homeless families with schoolchildren in Brevard County.

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Saint Stephen's Way is an active non-profit 501(c)(3) Corporation, Federal Identification Number 45-5390085, providing affordable housing with supportive services to homeless families with schoolchildren in Brevard County, Florida.

## SSWay's Exceptional Case Manager

After 6 months on the job, Debbie Cobb's impact on the community is everywhere. **"I really love it! Residents are great and I love working with them. People are grateful to be here, very kind, and appreciate the assistance we provide."** Debbie leverages all available supportive services while implementing her own creative ideas.

By January this year, Debbie had met with every resident. **"I've done initial assessments with everyone for what they need and want, and every adult has at least one written goal.** Now I focus on getting each person to work toward their education and employment goals." **Currently Debbie meets monthly with 20 people to monitor progress toward their goals. "Other adults are already on track to achieving their goals, so I don't need to meet monthly with them."**

**In January and February, Debbie organized Financial Literacy Classes conducted by Destiny Collazo,** a SSWay Board member. With more to be scheduled, these classes cover budgeting, credit card management, savings, and investments. Destiny focuses on what residents are interested in. **Between classes, Debbie often meets residents to help with specific budget matters and shows them how to use tools like Credit Karma.**

Debbie helps residents with career assessment and research to help them find and apply for employment and education programs, whether training programs or full degrees, like nursing or marketing. **"We work closely through Career-Source with Dwyer Workforce Development who can provide up to \$9,500 per qualified person for school."** Dwyer works to help resolve the US healthcare workforce crisis. **"Two residents are about to take their Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) exam. Two others recently earned their Home Health Certification. Another person who is working as a CNA started nursing school to become a Licensed Practical Nurse."** Debbie is also available to assist with resume writing and interview practice as desired.

**"Residents know they can ask me for help with anything,"** Debbie emphasizes. **"I'll either help them if I know how or I'll find out how."** Some examples are applying for food stamps, Housing Authority paperwork, school applications, Social Security forms, and Florida's Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program. **"Basically, if someone receives a form they need to fill out, I'll help them with that."**

Now for something especially creative. **"On Thursday nights we have our 'It Takes a Village' support group,"** Debbie explains. *(continued on page 2...)* 1



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**“SSWay’s Exceptional Case Manager” continued from p. 1)**

Debbie started the support group in January, and attendance is typically from 5 to 13. “Someone brings food to share, and then we discuss topics of interest like focusing on the positive, grief and loss, parenting, and many others. **It’s a chance to interact with other adults.**” The meeting starts at 7pm and sometimes goes as late as 9pm. **We try to help each other work through day-to-day troubles.**”

**“Also in our support group meetings we plan party and game night events about every 3 months so parents can have some fun, too,”** Debbie smiles. “We had one in February where we sang Karaoke and played games. In the future, we may include celebrating recent birthdays in the group. **It helps create community,**” Debbie emphasizes, **“and shows people they all have more in common than they think they do.”**

SSWay’s first “Summer Camp” for kids began before Debbie joined the staff, but she will be involved this coming summer. More importantly, Debbie has begun a new effort to prepare older children for adulthood. **“We are helping teenagers develop an after high school graduation plan before they graduate so they can gain more opportunities to pursue a better future for themselves.”**

Debbie is also attentive to simple needs. **“I created a food and cleaning supplies pantry in my office for residents, so if they are in need, they can come into my office and pick out things they may not have money for right now”** (photo at right). “We’re going to keep it small, just a bookshelf in my office. I’m working to keep it stocked with generous donations from USHA Beachside in Melbourne.”

What does she like most about her job? **“The people, I love working with people!”** And that makes all the difference.



*Debbie’s small Food & Cleaning Supplies Pantry in her office helps with immediate needs. Supplies are donated thanks to US Health Advisors Beachside*

## **VOLUNTEER TEACHERS NEEDED**

Can you help prevent the *summer slide* from occurring amongst our children? Can you spare 1 to 2 hours a week from 1 June to 31 July to teach a small reading or math group of elementary grade students? **If you are interested in volunteering to teach in our Summer Camp program, please reach out to the SSWay Executive Director, Andrea Scott, at [andrea@ssway.org](mailto:andrea@ssway.org).**

## **SSWay Community Celebrates Easter!**

On Saturday, April 4th, a team of SSWay staff, residents, and other volunteers celebrated Easter season on the campus. **“We had a great turnout from the SSWay community,”** says Jeff Roselip, the project lead. “Volunteers helped with all the day’s activities, including one who played a great Easter Bunny!” (see photo) **Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School donated 140 beautiful Easter baskets, one for each child plus a few extras,** and some of their volunteers also helped that day.

The children were thrilled with the Easter Egg Hunt. **“We hid 1,500 plastic eggs filled with candy, and kids were divided into four groups by age for the hunt,”** Jeff explains. Participants also enjoyed hamburgers and hot dogs grilled by SSWay’s maintenance man, Mike. Everyone had fun playing games like cornhole and musical chairs.

**Thanks, everyone, for sharing such a joyful day with SSWay’s community!**



*Group from Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church assisted with Saturday Easter Activities on SSWay campus*

**Thank You Our Lady of Lourdes!**

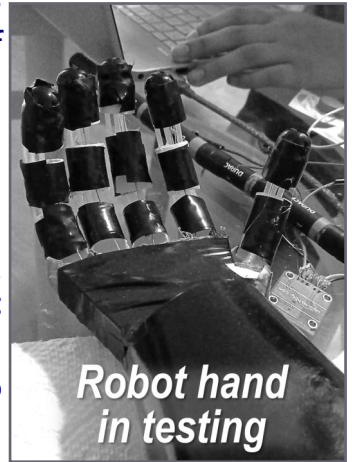


# 7<sup>th</sup> Graders Win at State Science Fair



At the end of 6th grade, Julia was invited to join two classmates at Ascension Catholic School to work a full year on a science fair project. **Julia and her teammates designed, built, programmed, and operated a robotic hand that won them 4th place out of 23 entries at the State Science & Engineering Fair of Florida.**

Julia, her brother, and their mom, Lily, live at SSWay. **“I’m so proud of her,” says Lily. “I told her, if you want to do it go for it, but I won’t be any help with**



**the science and engineering!” Julia did the wiring and wrote software to run the hand. “She researched everything,” Lily recalls, “getting all the information she needed to make it.”**

Because this was a team effort, whenever Julia needed to work on the project her Mom made sure the girls got together. **“Once a teammate spent the night with Julia so they had more time to work on it,” Lily remembers.**

**Their win at State earned them an invitation to apply to the “Thermo Fisher Junior Innovators Challenge,” a national level middle school competition (<https://www.societyforscience.org/jic/>). If their project is selected, it could mean an all expenses paid trip to compete in Washington DC. Congratulations to Julia and her teammates!**

## Coming Soon! Campus Outdoor Chapel

An “Outdoor Chapel” will soon serve as a sacred space for reverence, reflection, and spiritual support within the SSWay community. The design is “open” to the outside, hence “outdoor.” The roof will be tinted but transparent as shown in the 3D rendering below. **This spiritual space will honor the commitment made to Dr. Nellie Holman’s vision:** that SSWay’s property serve the local community and honor our Creator.

**“Significant contributions made this possible,” says Jeff Roselip.** These include work by **Tom Adams of Adams Engineering** and survey services

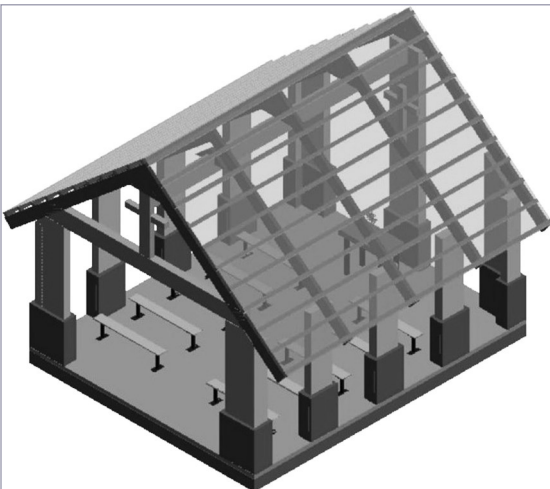


by **Chris Bowers of Morgan & Associates**, both gratis. Bud Mutterer’s very generous donation, along with other funding, met the need for the slab, columns, and roof.

**Chris Wright’s American Building & Contracting company** was awarded the contract based on the strong and trusted working relationship between SSWay and Chris and his company.

**“We still have a need for financial contributions to help pay for lighting and bench seats,”** says Jeff Roselip.

**To help us fund the lighting and bench seats, contact Jeff at: [jroselip@hotmail.com](mailto:jroselip@hotmail.com) or 321-536-3046.**



# Joy in Helping SSWay Children and Staff

Ashawna Kleiber supports SSWay children all year long. “I love working with the kids and see them smiling!” Ashawna became a SSWay resident in 2024 and was hired parttime in 2025 by Executive Director Andrea Scott to help with kids’ activities during the first on campus “Summer Camp.” But that’s not all.

During the school year, Ashawna continues to work with the kids. “I help them with homework from 3pm to 6pm every Monday through Thursday, and on Fridays if they need it. Some children have online-based classes, and I help with their research for science projects.”

Ashawna also assists the SSWay staff. “I help make flyers, do weekly events calendars, help with movie night, and I helped make an Excel sheet for kids’ Christmas wish lists.” She’ll soon be busy with Summer Camp activities, but hopes to assist actual teachers helping kids sustain their academic skills. “If volunteer teachers are available, I’ll work with them.” (See *Volunteer Teachers Needed* on p. 2.)



Ashawna Kleiber

## SSWay’s SPOTLIGHT SHINES ON ...

### Christmas Donations: Dinner Baskets & Toys!

For Christmas last year, SSWay families benefited from two generous gifts. Erdman Automotive donated 40 “dinner baskets” of food, one for each SSWay household. Each basket contained a turkey, ham, potatoes, fruit, canned goods and more, suitable for preparing a large family meal. The Rotary Club of Melbourne Beach donated many boxes of toys so each SSWay child ages 1 to 14 could receive one. Toys were selected to be age-appropriate for three age groups: 1 – 3, 4 – 8, and 9 – 14. Our heartfelt thanks for sharing these Christmas gifts with our community.



A Christmas dinner basket for each SSWay household

### Breeanna Romani, SSWay’s Property Manager



Bree Romani

Bree learned of SSWay in September last year when she saw the Property Manager position on the *Indeed* website. “When I looked into SSWay and their core values, I wanted to be a part of helping families overcome homelessness and achieve self-sufficiency.” She applied and by November was on the job.

Bree, a property manager in Merritt Island for 3 years and assistant property manager 3 years before that, explains, “My regular duties are connecting with residents, collecting rent payments, doing routine inspections, processing applications from new families, and screening applicants to ensure they meet qualifications.” She has daily contact with residents and enjoys working with staff members. “I really like helping people.” Thank you, Bree, for your hard work in support of the SSWay community!

## Golf Tournament: “Recreational Giving” is Fun!



1<sup>st</sup> Place: Tom Adams & Family with Debbie Strawhand, SSWay Development Director

THANKS to our Sponsors and Players in SSWay’s Annual Golf Tournament held 1 November 2025!

#### Top Sponsors

- Ivey Construction
- Rider Wealth Management Raymond James
- Debbie Strawhand Realtor, Avanti Way Realty

#### Tier II Sponsors

- Lourdes Sliwa Realtor/Branch Leader, Avanti Way Realty
- Moon River Café and Curiosities
- Harbor City Auto

2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Sizemore, Inc. 3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Ace Hardware 4