



# CLARA WHITE MISSION

JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA

**MISSION:** *To provide food, shelter and emergency services for disadvantaged residents of Jacksonville.*

**GRANTS:**     \$ 24,435    March 1992                     \$ 5,000    August 1999  
                  \$ 5,000    January 1993                    \$ 125,000   March 2001  
                  \$ 133,000   January 1993

In 1885, Clara White, a former slave, began serving hot soup from her back door to the hungry and homeless in Jacksonville. Soon, her daughter, Eartha M. M. White joined her in what the two called “mission work.” In 1928, some years after her mother’s death, Eartha founded the Clara White Mission as a memorial, and, four years later, she purchased the historic Globe Theater building to house the growing operation.

By the mid-1990s, the Clara White Mission had earned an impressive reputation serving the people of Jacksonville. Since incorporation in 1936, the Mission has assisted thousands of children, elderly people and mentally and physically handicapped people who have fallen through the cracks of established social services. In addition, the Mission has served as a refuge for unwed mothers, recovering alcoholics and orphans. During the Great Depression, the Mission housed WPA sewing and arts projects for African American women – including writing

workshops conducted by Zora Neale Hurston. It has operated a released prisoner rehabilitation program, a training school for domestic services, and instruction for the blind in Braille and basket weaving.

After the death of Eartha White in 1974, the organization continued to serve meals and offer basic services to the community. Miss White’s close friend and assistant, Grayce Bateman, became the second executive director and carried on the White family tradition of offering hospitality and domestic training.

But, as with many organizations that rely heavily on the influence and efforts of their founders, the Clara White Mission began to experience growing pains in the 1980s and 1990s. By 1992, the Mission was the only organization in Jacksonville that provided a noon meal for homeless individuals. It was feeding 125 to 150 people a day, but the number was growing, and serving the needs of those individuals was

becoming more complex. The operating budget consisted of United Way funding and a city grant for about \$19,000 a year. The volunteer base was seven or eight elderly people who had known Miss White. The increasing complexity of providing services for the community left the Mission's staff and board members (most of whom had served



Executive Director Ju'Coby Pittman (left) reviews plans for expansion of the Mission.

for 30 years or more) perplexed about how to position the organization for the future.

In 1992, the duPont Fund awarded a grant of \$22,435 that allowed the Mission to hire Tallahassee-based MGT of America, Inc., to conduct a management audit and begin a strategic planning process. The next year, the Fund awarded the Mission a \$5,000 grant to guide the board through a series of meetings focusing on its future. As a result of those deliberations, the Mission identified the need for new leadership and sought and received a third grant from the Fund. This grant, of \$133,000, supported the search for and hiring of a new executive director with experience running a nonprofit agency – Ju'Coby Pittman.

Within several months, the Clara White Mission developed a five-year plan that included diversifying and expanding the board, diversifying and increasing the sources of funding, establishing human resources guidelines, and increasing the volunteer base. In that same year, 1993, the Mission held its first annual “Miracle on Ashley Street” fundraiser. A local television news anchor, Deborah Gianoulis, chaired the event, and the Mission asked corporate and community “celebrities” to come serve the homeless – literally. The mayor, members of city council, heads of major banks, institutions, grocery store chains, hospitals and the Chamber of Commerce came out to serve lunch to the Mission's clients. Restaurants and hotels donated food or the services of their chefs. Corporations sponsored the event for \$500 each. That first year, the Mission raised \$7,000.

As more and more people heard about the Miracle on Ashley Street, interest in being a celebrity server grew.

“In the last few years we've had so much interest, we've had to start charging the celebrity servers to participate!” says Pittman. “It has become a very popular event.”

In 2000, the fundraiser brought in \$62,000 – a significant portion of the Mission's operating budget.

But even as the Mission was meeting the objectives of its strategic plan (it had expanded its board and staff and increased funding sources to include

city and state funding, public fundraisers, other foundations and even the Veterans Administration), it recognized that many of the needs of its clients were still going unmet. Volunteers at the mission began implementing a client survey that revealed valuable information.

“We realized that most of our clients were men – at least 90 percent,” says Pittman, “and a lot had skills. They were working in labor pools, but being abused. If the labor pool promised them \$25 a day, they would only end up bringing \$10 or \$12 a day after they paid for transportation, meals and tool rental.”

The board and staff decided to entertain the idea of adding a job training program to their repertoire.

“We wanted to be doing more than just serving food,” says Pittman. “We wanted to help people really get back on their feet.”

Recognizing that “food is what the Mission does best,” according to Pittman, the board contemplated whether it might be useful to start a culinary and food service training program. The duPont Fund responded with another \$5,000 feasibility grant in the fall of 1999 that would allow the board and staff of the Mission to research and study other nonprofit organizations that were running for-profit offshoots to train and serve disadvantaged people. Members of the board and staff visited two such organizations in New Orleans.

One of the organizations, the New Orleans Center for Successful Living (NOCFSL), served as an example of a large-scale community and economic development program that stemmed from a 501(c)(3) religious institution. While some of its participants had the same problems as Clara White’s clientele, others were more mainstream, middle-class members of the community. The scope of the participants and work pursued by NOCFSL seemed too broad for what the Mission was prepared to tackle, but the idea of partnerships with community and corporate partners seemed useful.

The other New Orleans site, St. Mark’s Community Center, struck another chord with the Jacksonville visitors. An extension of St. Mark’s United Methodist Church, the Community Center provides a variety of services to the low-income community in its neighborhood. One of its ventures, the Tremé Corner Café, is designed to train and educate clients of the Center while simultaneously providing income for program activities. The Café, located in a renovated historic property near the main program complex, trains young high school dropouts as waiters/waitresses, cashiers, managers and chefs. Program participants earn wages as they learn job skills and pursue a GED or high school completion (a mandatory part of the program). In addition to the restaurant, the Café offers catering services to generate income.

At the time of the visit, the Café was generating, at best, break-even income. But the Clara White visitors thought that the project was reflective of

the level of client participation that they might expect with a culinary institute. In addition, it seemed to have the same client focus that the Mission hoped to achieve.

In the course of its research, the board learned that running a culinary and food services training



**In addition to hot meals, Mission clients receive counseling with avenues to job training.**

program was not an entirely new prospect for the Mission. Eartha White had run a number of training programs in the past.

“Every time we think we’re coming up with something new, we find out that Miss White had already done it!” says Pittman.

During World War II, Eartha White trained African-American women to be hostesses at the dinners she would hold in her dining room. According to Pittman, she kept a Bible on the table and when her guests left they would slip a donation for the Mission into the Bible. White also ran a cab company and janitorial company from the Mission.

“She contracted with certain businesses in the community, and she trained her clients to go out and work for them,” Pittman says, “She was quite an entrepreneur.”

After some reflection and conversation about

the lessons learned from the New Orleans site visits, the board of the Clara White Mission approached the local community college – Florida Community College in Jacksonville (FCCJ) – about becoming partners in a culinary/food services training program.

“There is a lot of money available for nonprofit programs for homeless and disadvantaged people,” says Pittman, “but they are often located in facilities that intimidate our client base. So we asked FCCJ if they would come and develop a certification program that would take no longer than 12 weeks on our site.”

That possibility has blossomed into a major reality for the Mission and its clients. Together, the Mission and FCCJ have designed a training program and Clara White has raised nearly \$2.5 million to renovate its existing facility and build a new facility (adjacent to the Mission) for a culinary institute and transitional housing.

Since 31 percent of the Mission’s client base is comprised of veterans, the Veterans Administration agreed to send a consultant to evaluate the proposal, resulting in a V.A. grant of \$678,000 to help with facility expansion. In addition, the Mission secured \$385,000 from the Duval County Housing Finance Authority, \$190,000 in community development block grants, \$250,000 from the Northwest Trust Fund, \$125,000 from the LaVilla Fund (the historic neighborhood in which the Mission is located), \$100,000 from other governmental funds, including the City

of Jacksonville and an additional \$125,000 from the duPont Fund. The Mission contributed \$365,000 to the effort from fundraising and the sale of property.

The Mission will break ground for the new facility in 2002 and expects to begin the training program in the fall. When it opens, the facility will provide transitional housing for 35 homeless individuals, offering priority to veterans and ex-offenders (75 percent must be homeless veterans), and will serve as the training site for two classes of 20 students in the 12-week culinary/food service program.

“We want to provide a solid labor base for the hospitality industry in Jacksonville,” says Pittman. The need for food service employees is great because hotels and restaurants are beginning to prepare for Super Bowl 2005, to be held in Jacksonville.

With two small planning grants, the Clara White Mission has been able to retool itself for the 21st Century, so that it may carry on the legacy of Clara and Eartha White. Pittman says the two \$5,000 grants, though relatively small, were indeed great.

“Planning internally and having the right people involved who have a passion for what goes on in an organization can cause big things to happen,” she says. “These grants gave us the opportunity to plan to be better informed about the possibilities before we invested our time and energy into new ventures. A lot of people think small grants

don’t make an impact. But if they help you formulate a mission and a plan, they can be incredibly valuable.”

So with increased numbers (300-325 daily), expanded meal service (lunch Monday through Thursday and breakfast Friday through Sunday), a broader funding base, a food service school, and a transitional housing facility in the bag, what will be next for the Clara White Mission?

“More partnerships,” says Pittman. “The government is strained right now, and funding is becoming more competitive. Agencies whose mission is to serve poor and disadvantaged people need to work together and not be territorial about the people and ways they serve.”

*For more information, please contact Ju’Coby Pittman at 904-354-4162.*



# EASTER SEALS

DELAWARE AND MARYLAND'S EASTERN SHORE

NEW CASTLE, DELAWARE

**MISSION:** *To provide health and human services that create solutions and change the lives of children and adults with disabilities and their families.*

**GRANTS:**     \$ 5,000     MAY 1999  
                  \$ 109,770   MAY 2000

In the 1920s, Easter Seals (then called the National Society for Crippled Children) became the first national voluntary agency to speak and act on behalf of children with disabilities. In 1934, the organization conducted its first Easter “seals” fundraising campaign, with which it gained much public support and awareness. The organization broadened its mission in 1944 to include services for disabled adults. Since that time, Easter Seals has established more than 400 service sites in the United States and the world to help more than a million people each year gain greater independence and respect.

While Easter Seals has become a professional nonprofit entity, it still depends heavily on the generosity, creativity, spiritedness and humanity of a large base of volunteers to reach the individuals it serves.

In this spirit, Easter Seals of Delaware and Maryland’s Eastern Shore approached the Jessie Ball duPont Fund in 1999 to talk about the need

for a volunteer management system that would help it identify and screen new volunteers, place them in appropriate and well-defined jobs, and measure the impact they were making on the organization and its clients. At that time, the nonprofit was providing direct services to approximately 7,500 children and adults with disabilities in Delaware and Maryland. However, staff had identified an additional 3,500 individuals who required services, but were not served by either Easter Seals or another human service organization.

“We have always enjoyed volunteer support,” says Sandra Tuttle, president and CEO of the New Castle, Delaware-based organization.

“But we thought that if we could structure what we were doing, it might allow us to get more people involved and serve people with disabilities more efficiently.”

Despite Tuttle’s instincts that such a program would help Easter Seals tap new resources and

expand its outreach, she wondered about the effects that a new influx of volunteers might have on her paid staff and operations. Would it stretch the human resources director beyond her capacity? Would staff members begin to feel confused about the distinctions between their roles and those of the volunteers? How would it maintain



Volunteer Sonya Giannone teaches a cooking class for clients.

consistently high levels of quality from volunteers? Were there even volunteers out there to tap?

Rather than jump in head-first with a new program, Tuttle considered a feasibility study to begin to answer these questions and, hopefully, to design a better program proposal in the process. The duPont Fund awarded Easter Seals of Delaware

and Maryland's Eastern Shore a \$5,000 feasibility grant to do just that.

The study gave Tuttle and her staff a keener understanding of volunteerism and how it might pave the way to increased organizational efficiency and outreach.

The organization studied a 1999 report released by Independent Sector, entitled "Giving and Volunteering in the United States," which stated that volunteering had increased to an all-time high. According to the report, an estimated 109 million people, or 56 percent of adults ages 18 and above, volunteered an estimated 19.9 billion hours in 1998 – an increase from 49 percent in 1995. Their volunteer labor was valued at more

than \$225 billion. Easter Seals considered these statistics as further evidence for formalizing its volunteer program.

Through its feasibility study, Easter Seals researched and contacted a number of volunteer recruitment resources. Some of these included organizations that require service hours of their constituents, such as public and private high schools, colleges and universities and church youth groups. Other sources were organizations that attempt to facilitate strong volunteer involvement "matches" for their members, such as the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), Rotary, Lions Club and Kiwanis. This inventory of sources helped Easter Seals create an educated vision for the kinds and numbers of volunteers it might expect to recruit.

In addition, Easter Seals spent a portion of its research time obtaining the support of its staff for the implementation of a volunteer program.

"We perceived that some staff might feel that their jobs would be threatened by an influx of new volunteers," says Tuttle. "We wanted to assure them that their jobs were safe by encouraging their involvement in the design and implementation of the new program."

To that end, the nonprofit's director of human resources and vice president of development met with the organization's Executive Leadership Team at their monthly meetings over a period of six months. The team, comprised of 12 service

line and support directors, serves as the senior management of the organization.

The study group presented the idea of a more substantial volunteer program to the leadership team and facilitated discussion about how team members could assist with such a project. As a result, each team leader designated one person in each service line and support function to serve as the volunteer coordinator for his or her program. Coordinators would help interview, place and monitor new volunteers. Their efforts would be coordinated by a part-time employee who would be hired to oversee the entire volunteer program effort.

The study group also met individually with the program directors for Early Intervention, Independent Living and Information Systems to identify and define specific volunteer positions and to develop written volunteer job descriptions for use in the pilot program. As a result of these methodical and inclusive steps, the leadership team enthusiastically embraced the proposed volunteer program.

With all of this information and support, Easter Seals felt ready to apply for a grant to begin its pilot program. In 2000, the organization received a three-year grant for \$109,770 from the duPont Fund to implement the pilot. The organization hired Holly Titus to serve as its part-time volunteer coordinator.

In its first-year program report, Easter Seals

reported that the volunteer program had “had a positive impact on every program and service line in [the] organization.” In that one-year period, volunteers contributed services valued at an estimated \$122,200, as well as supplies and gifts valued at \$74,000. More than 167 volunteers gave of their time and talents on a regular basis, and more than 250 people participated in special projects or activities to enhance Easter Seals’ programs and facilities (decorating and hosting holiday parties, delivering meals, building wheelchair ramps, planting gardens, and so on).

The total number of volunteers increased from 118 in May of 2000 to 423 in May of 2001, during which period the number of volunteer hours also increased from 2,748 to 6,082 – an increase of 121 percent. In addition, the state rehabilitation accreditation commission, stated in its March 2001 survey report that the Easter Seals volunteer program demonstrates exemplary conformance to its standards.

Perhaps more importantly, Easter Seals reports that approximately 400 additional people with disabilities have received services as a result of the expanded volunteer base and programs.

But the numbers and statistics only say so much about the impact. The volunteers and their stories give a truer picture of the program’s success.

For example, Titus tells of a man named Wayne who had never volunteered before, but wanted to do something for the community. Wayne,

a technical engineer and triathlete, had gone through Pet Partners training with his boxer puppy, Bruno. Once Bruno was certified, Wayne began calling agencies to see where he and his pet could be of service.

“No one would speak with him except me,” Titus recalls. “I brought him and Bruno in for an interview, and he’s been coming once a week for more than nine months now. The participants in our independent living program love Bruno. Many of them don’t have opportunities for touch, and petting Bruno is a safe way for them to express warmth and love. He generates smiles and cheers – he lifts everybody up.”

Another volunteer, Cindy, went through the volunteer screening process and was placed in Easter Seals’ “Day Habilitation” program for adults with developmental disabilities. After her first visit, she shared her experience with her coworkers at the pharmaceutical firm AstraZeneca and has since organized three parties for program participants, each time bringing 10 coworkers with her to decorate, contribute food and provide entertainment.

In addition, her colleagues at work voted to forego their next quarterly perquisite (usually a logo baseball jacket or piece of travel luggage) in favor of making a contribution to purchase an

item on Easter Seals’ wish list: their gift of \$2,500 purchased a table designed for personal care of clients.

“The table [the employees] contributed is not very glamorous,” says Titus, “and it’s not something that boasts the company’s name for publicity reasons. The employees just wanted to make life safer and more comfortable for our participants and staff. It was a gracious gift.”

Tuttle explains that the connection between volunteer activity and Easter Seals’ relationships with the corporate community has been an unexpected and welcomed byproduct of the program.

“Volunteers bring their energy, they bring their expertise, and they bring their access to a nonprofit organization,” she says, noting that corporate giving has increased since the pilot started. “We have corporate sponsors who come to us as a result of their employees’ volunteer involvement with Easter Seals. And then we have corporate sponsors whose gifts are contingent upon our finding volunteer opportunities for their employees. Either way, everyone benefits – the sponsors, their employees, Easter Seals and most importantly, our clients.”

Even existing corporate partners find new benefits. The credit card company MBNA was a corporate sponsor and already had a volunteer program with Easter Seals, bringing several hundred volunteers to landscape an Easter Seals camp,



**Bruno (top) and his owner, Wayne Britt, volunteer their time visiting clients.**

lead cooking classes for clients, bring in pets and host events and parties.

Under the new program, an executive volunteer, Herb, began helping Easter Seals staff members reconfigure and update donated computers for distribution to people with disabilities. Herb recruited Gretchen, also an MBNA employee, but one without computer hardware experience. He trained her to rebuild computers and soon, they were volunteering every Wednesday evening. The program grew to have a weekly corps of 12 to 15 volunteers.

“It was essentially our first volunteer-led program,” says Titus, “because it was occurring after normal work hours. The MBNA folks started it. They received direction and support from staff, but eventually they became self sufficient and independent. And Gretchen – who became an expert computer technician – assumed leadership of the program. The program has built skills for her and cultivated her leadership abilities.”

In the process, these volunteers rehabilitated more than 300 computers that have been distributed to people in the community. Some of the computers are equipped with special devices or adaptive software, such as voice recognition. But e-mail and internet access have proved to be among the most valuable tools, giving some computer recipients the potential to work from home and to maintain better contact with others.

“The program has enabled Easter Seals to reach out to the community and to help bridge the gap between technology, a person with a disability who might not have the resources for a computer, and access to the rest of the world,” says Tuttle.

Tuttle says that the volunteer program has exceeded expectations in ways the organization never expected, such as increased public awareness of and comfort with people with disabilities.

“It’s exciting and encouraging to see volunteers working side by side with people with disabilities, and seeing them gain a new respect for and understanding of one another,” she says.

The organization also has learned a lot about how to build a strong program – from proposal to implementation. The feasibility study gave Easter Seals the opportunity to think more carefully about its goals and objectives, to make sure the organization and community were ready for such a program, and to connect with local partners who could help make the program a success.

Easter Seals Delaware and Maryland’s Eastern Shore hopes that the program will be self-sufficient by the end of the three-year grant period. It then intends to help replicate the volunteer program in other sites to increase its partnerships with the public, corporations and other nonprofit organizations.

*For more information, please contact Sandra Tuttle at 302-324-4444.*



## TRUSTEES

**The Right Rev. Frank S. Cerveny**  
*Chair and Clerical Trustee*

**Jean Ludlow**  
*Vice Chair*

**Stephen A. Lynch III**  
*Representing the Corporate Trustee,  
Northern Trust Bank of Florida*

**Mary K. Phillips**  
*Trustee*

The Jessie Ball duPont Fund is a national foundation that makes grants to a defined universe of institutions whose eligibility was determined exclusively by Mrs. duPont's prior personal philanthropic decisions. The Fund supports approximately 325 institutions, fairly equally divided among nonprofit organizations, religious institutions and educational institutions. The Fund has assets of \$300 million and has made \$200 million in grants since 1977. The Fund is headquartered in Jacksonville, Florida.

## STAFF

**Sherry P. Magill, Ph. D.**  
*President*

**Sally L. Douglass**  
*Senior Program Officer*

**Edward King Jr.**  
*Senior Program Officer*

**Sharon Greene, Ph.D.**  
*Senior Program Officer*

**Jo Ann P. Bennett**  
*Executive Secretary and  
Director of Administration*

**Geana L. Morrison**  
*Grants Manager and  
Data Entry Clerk*

**Helene Evans**  
*Administrative Assistant*

**Stephanie Robinson**  
*Receptionist and  
Administrative Assistant*

**The Jessie Ball duPont Fund**  
One Independent Drive, Suite 1400  
Jacksonville, Florida 32202  
800-252-3452  
904-353-0890  
Facsimile 904-353-3870  
[www.dupontfund.org](http://www.dupontfund.org)

## CREDITS

RESEARCH AND WRITING  
**Tracy Constantine**  
CCGI, Inc.  
Durham, North Carolina

EDITING  
**Mary Kress Littlepage**  
KBT & Associates  
Jacksonville, Florida

DESIGN  
**Laura Evans**  
Jacksonville, Florida

PHOTOGRAPHY  
**Laird**  
Jacksonville, Florida

**Monique Brunsberg**  
Wilmington, Delaware

ILLUSTRATION  
**Stephanie Shieldhouse**  
Jacksonville, Florida

PRINTING  
**Allied Graphics**  
Jacksonville, Florida