



For Carol Ann Richardson, devotion to God and community is what life's all about. In fact, she was recently presented with a Community Service Award by the Noon Exchange Club of McMinnville along with a Volunteer Award by Tennessee Opportunity Programs, a private nonprofit agency.

The busy, 67-year-old pastor founded the Hope Center of Warren County in 2014 to provide encouragement and a place for people released from jail. Through classes, counseling, and support groups, Carol believes recovery can be achieved and former inmates can rejoin society with improved life skills.

"I chased a pretty rough path myself and had come from a bad situation when I first moved here," Carol readily confessed. "You know when people say I know how you feel? Well, I really do know and there is nothing like having a support group of people who truly understand."

Carol is originally from Scotland and became an American citizen just three years ago. Her first visit to the United States occurred when she was 7 years old. She and her family took a trip to California. Thirteen years later, after vacationing for two weeks in Tennessee, she felt she was meant to stay.

Even though Carol has retired from her position as director of the Hope Center, she cannot contain her pride for the good that has and will continue to come from the organization.

"When I see people get their children back or when they've been sober and gotten their life together, it makes me incredibly proud,"

said Carol. "However, I am probably proudest that the Hope Center is financially supported by the community and we've never had to have a fundraiser."

Currently, Carols spends her time in focusing on her pastoral duties at Martin Chapel Fellowship United Methodist Church. She can also be found at Saint Thomas River Park Hospital offering comfort and spiritual care to patients as a volunteer chaplain. Carol also finds time to be involved in the Warren County Ministerial Association and the Greater McMinnville Ministries Association.

"Both of these organizations consist of pastors from different denominations," explained Carol. "We come together to fellowship and hold services and any offering goes back into the community."

When asked about the future, Carol is excited to discuss a new program unfolding in McMinnville called Transformation Project of Warren County, a national nonprofit organization affiliated with the United Methodist Church. Each chapter partners with its local United Methodist Conference and is responsible for building relationships with partnering churches and recruiting volunteers and young adult interns to implement the program.

"Next week, we will have life coaches available," said Carol. "This program is offered to anyone in the community and is designed to form meaningful relationships with local families. Project Transformation also focuses on helping children with literacy needs."

Carol and her husband Lou have been married for 12 years. She has two children, Natasha Shipe and James Passmore, along with three stepsons Michael, Brian, and Steven Richardson. Her hobbies include sewing, camping anywhere not wet and rainy, and reading.

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