Lending a hand up to the homeless of west Orange County; lending a hand where we can, connecting resources and people. — Matthew's Hope Ministries' motto

The Rev. Scott Billue, founder of Matthew's Hope Ministries, offers help to those looking to get back on t

B oyce B. lived in his car for five years, until late February, w

Matthew’s Hope is located in a trailer that was restored by the homeless and other volunteers on ground

Grounded in the spiritual principles of helping neighbors in need, Matthew’s Hope was inspired by the Bi

Every Tuesday, Matthew’s Hope is open to the public. All people who enter the facility are treated perso

“Most agencies are impersonal, and you feel like you just take a number for service,” Billue said. “We lov

Those seeking assistance are warmly welcomed by volunteers. They then take part in a 30-minute interv

Help is offered to complete necessary paperwork. For a person without an address, it is impossible to ob

Each person is given a printed checklist to indicate what they need — clean clothing, blankets, tents, po
Every other week, a medical van stops on the premises and offers medical, dental and mental health as

“One-third of the people we help just became homeless in the past 90 days, and our fastest-growing pop

After viewing a TV segment on 60 Minutes about homeless families in Central Florida, many local reside

The reporter stated that one-third of U.S. families living on the street and in their cars are in the state of
According to Billue, the piece was helpful, because it “legitimized the homeless situation for us and mad

Ten years ago, Billue was earning a good salary in sales and marketing, when he said he felt called to th

“For years I’ve been going into the woods of west Orange County and to labor pool sites to give out food

Billue contacted many local churches without receiving any response. The Church of Christ of West Ora

Boyce B., who lived in his car for five years, now comes back to Matthew's Hope Ministries to volunteer

For many of the homeless who become stable with the help of Matthew's Hope, there is a desire to give

The Church of Christ of West Orange donated an 85-foot-by-75-foot plot of land on their property to be p

With the help of a local master gardener, Shonna Dannels of Ocoee helps coordinate volunteers. She ar

"We stayed overnight at the church, and being exposed to the homeless taught my children to appreciat

Regular volunteer Boyce B. had been hurt on the job seven years ago and ran out of unemployment ben

"Matthew's Hope helped me get the paperwork I needed, my birth certificate, discharge papers from my

"I am happy to be able to come back to Matthew's Hope to help out. They helped me, and I've met other

With its 47 church partners and other community groups, Matthew's Hope obtains donations and organiz

Over Presidents Day weekend, when many of their peers were taking it easy, high school and middle sc

"We all worked together to make this a clean and safe place for children and families to stay," said Joy T

Jason Castle of Next Community Church helped with the advanced planning of the weekend's activities.

"This is a chance for the members of different churches to work together as one, to do good and to help

Ryan Holden and his wife, Faith, of Ocoee were involved in the youth ministries but "took detours" to exp

"We walked away from serving others and just wanted to serve ourselves," said Ryan, who played bass

He played in a secular band, and the couple hung out with different people not involved in church activiti
frightening illness, Holden was led back to the church.

"There's something special that happens when you serve others and you're not in a state of selfishness,

Joel Jordon, a youth leader at The Crossings, is passionate about helping young people.

"We are all working together to love and serve others," Jordon said. "We get students engaged in helpin

Almond Tree Estates residents Amber and Katie Bednarski, ages 18 and 13, respectively, helped out du

"My motto in life is, 'I want my life to count for me and my generation,'" Katie said. "Instead of just hangin

"There is something about doing something for someone else that makes me very happy," Amber said. '

Shonna Dannels of Ocoee (center) helps coordinate volunteers at Matthew's Hope Ministries. Wallace F

For 17-year-old Adrenaline member Corbin Singleton, painting cabins for the homeless is one of life's "fu

"I feel great, because this was my second home when I was younger, and now I can come back to help

Other Local Sources for Help

Although there are many organizations and agencies providing services to the homeless, many people c
where to start. Matthew's Hope Ministries and a number of other groups in Southwest help connect peop

Stephanie Bowman is the founder of the nonprofit One Heart for Women and Children, an organization t

“We love to serve,” she said. “By connecting people in need with available resources, we can do our par

“It’s important not to judge people in this condition. Many of us who help this population have either been

Bowman makes presentations in middle schools to raise young people’s awareness about the homeless

“I can say that I once was there, and I couldn’t have made it alone,” she said. “I was hopeless and helple

Bowman is passionate about helping those in need.

“Right now, one out of four families in Central Florida is either homeless, has been homeless or is one p

Bowman’s daughters, Amber and Katie Bednarski, also believe it is important to give back to those less
“I want to help and serve others,” Katie said.

“I do this work to see the joy that I’m giving to others who don’t have as much as I do,” said Katie’s friend
Thomas of Courtlea Oaks. “We often don’t appreciate what we have, and when I see someone who doe

Matthew’s Hope Ministries is located at 1400 Daniels Road in Winter Garden. For more informatio www.matthewshopeministries.org