

Business Spotlight

The Path Of Citrus County

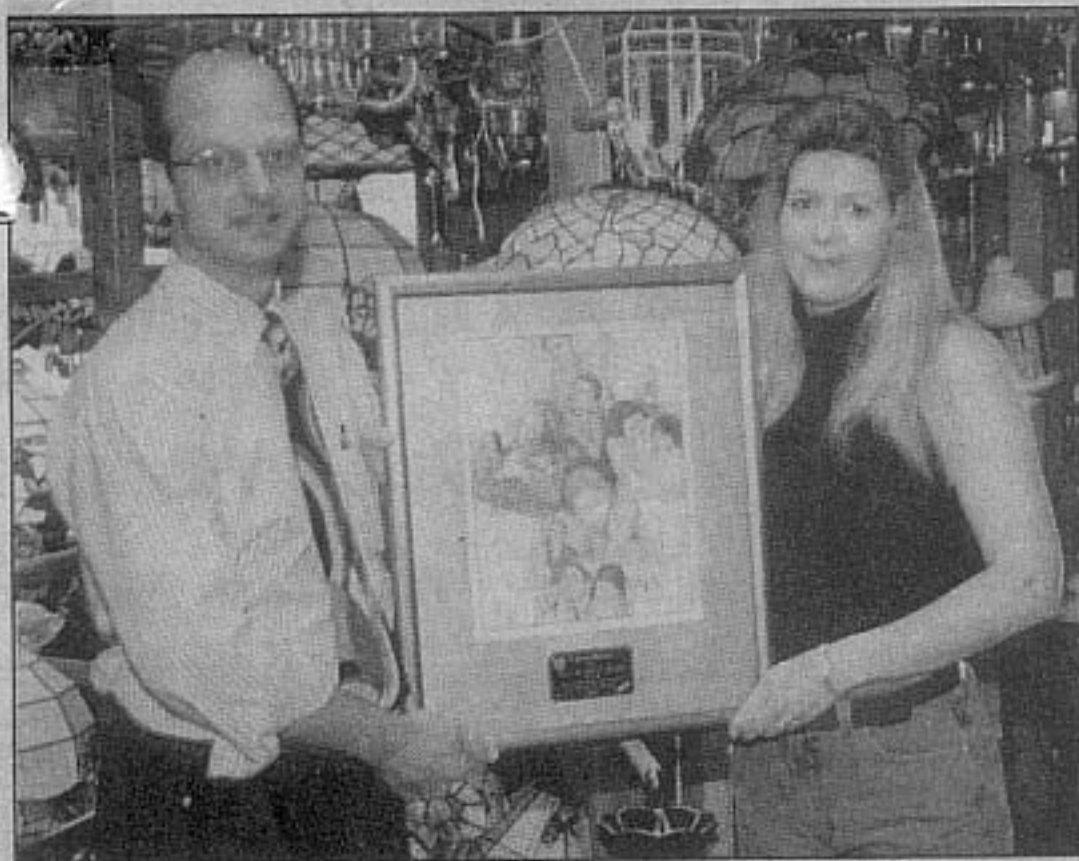
The Path of Citrus County is a Non-Profit, Inc. organization that is planning to build a Gospel Rescue Mission in Citrus County. This will be a place where anyone in Citrus County, finding themselves without a home for any reason, can go. The main focus of the shelter, even though the plan is to build it hurricane proof, is for long term rehabilitation through the study of the Bible and church fellowship. Any discussion is welcomed about a future site in the Lecanto area to build the shelter.

The Path of Citrus County will be opening their Thrift store on August 15, 2000. Located at 1760 N Hwy, 41 in Inverness, next to the Roller Barn. It is at the inter-

section of Hwy 41 and the Middle School road. This building is the location of what used to be the Scratch and Dent grocery store. The thrift store revenues will continue to help finance the building of a Gospel Rescue Mission in Citrus County. There are plans to run a Christian coffee house inside the store for ministry purposes and to have Bible studies and fellowship. The organization is looking for donations and volunteers to help with the ministry. Please call 341-0551 for donations or for more information, visit the web site at <http://www.pathofcitrus.org> www.pathofcitrus.org. Articles are available upon request.

The Path honors service

Aug 2000



Kathy Ditchfield/For the Chronicle

DuWayne Sipper, The Path of Citrus County executive director, recently honored John and Lorie Mayeau of Fans and Lighting for dedicated service as an employer. Pictured, DuWayne Sipper, left, presents the plaque to Lorie Mayeau. The Path's mission is to provide a Christian living environment for anyone living in Citrus County who finds themselves without a home. For more information, call 341-0551.

RELIGION



Getting started on the Path

■ A proposed gospel mission would address the lack of shelter for men in need.

By LISA PEEPLES
Times Correspondent

INVERNESS — When a local homeless woman or child is in need, whether suffering physical abuse or a lack of food and a warm bed, shelter is just a phone call away.

However, in Citrus County, a homeless man may have to look a little harder to find relief. So several members of the local Christian community are working together to start a gospel mission that will fill a physical and spiritual need for these men.

The mission is being spearheaded by executive director DuWayne Sipper. He is calling the proposed mission the Path of Citrus County.

"The Path is going to be a gospel mission with the long-term goal of discipling people in the Bible and introducing them to Jesus Christ," he said. "If a person comes into the shelter, we can clean them up and feed them for a day or two, but we want to help them spiritually most of all. The most blessed thing you could possibly do for someone is to help introduce them to the Holy Spirit."

To help get the non-profit, interdenominational mission started in the right direction, Sipper said that the Path has joined the International Union of Gospel Missions, based in Kansas City.

"Basically there are more than 200 other missions that have joined and who are basically doing what we want to do. We wanted to get the mentoring from those who have already been there and done it," he said.

Though independent of any one church, Sipper said, the organization already has seven local churches involved in

the project, including pastors, lay people and financial supporters.

Sipper and other organizers are seeking a donation of land in the Lecanto area that would offer a good location and the room needed to build a gospel mission. He said several local businesses have committed to donating building materials, but that construction can't begin until land has been committed to the mission.

"We can't wait to get started," Sipper said. "In the beginning, this will be an all-male mission, but if there is an emergency we will be prepared to take women and children and keep them separate from the men. As all of this grows in the future, we would like to have not only a building for the men, but also one for the women. We are starting with a building for the men, because raising money to help men is much harder than raising money to help women and children."

Sipper said that local churches who help a homeless person with a couple of nights' lodging at a motel could make their dollars go much further by sending that person to this mission.

"Instead of pastors putting up a transient in a motel, they can send them to the shelter, and we can find out what their needs are and help them. The pastors can take the same \$35 or \$40 they would spend for one night in a motel and send it to the shelter, where the money will go three times as far," he said.

"There is a great need here for this mission because when you look at it from the big picture, with at least 120 churches in the area, a lot of transients, a jail running between 300 and 400 residents and the surrounding prisons, there is definitely a need," he said.

"This also is not just for the homeless people in the woods or the transients, but for anybody who is in trouble, who is looking for a step up, a way to change their

life and just doesn't know how. When you look at the big picture here, if we opened five shelters tomorrow we could fill them."

The proposal calls for a 5,000-square-foot shelter, which would house 20 to 25 people. Sipper will be the live-in director of the mission.

Sipper said residents will be required to go to Bible study, attend church, either be working or looking for work and help maintain the mission.

"Also, there will be zero tolerance for drugs and alcohol," he said. "I didn't want people to get the impression that people will just come here and loaf. I want people to understand that this is serious business, when you are trying to help reform someone's life."

"The vision that God has given me for this is very big and I want whatever God's will is for this mission. Jesus gave us our marching orders to help others in Matthew 25:40, when he told us, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.'"

Sipper also sees the mission as a powerful information tool for the churches in Citrus County.

"These shelters turn into an administrator for the needs of a community. For example, with Christian e-mail, we can send out emergency prayer requests and communicate with other churches, whether it is a little church in Dunnellon that needs furniture for someone sleeping on the floor, or a big church in Crystal River that has something to donate to those in need but doesn't know where to send it. It will be limitless what God can do through this," he said.

— DuWayne Sipper invites anyone interested in the mission to call him at 341-0551.