

New Life Mission founder Stacia Glavas retiring after building organization, Amy Lyon promoted to CEO; buys former Hacienda Girls Ranch property

By Ken Datzman

Growing up on a farm in Oklahoma, Stacia Glavas learned about and honed her business and leadership skills. She was involved with 4-H and Future Farmers of America.

As a teenager, Glavas served as state president of Future Homemakers of America. That organization today is known as Family, Career and Community Leaders of America.

Through the Future Farmers of America, she showed prized Polled Hereford cattle.

Her grandfather was a John Deere dealer in Oklahoma and her family continued that business venture into the fourth generation. "We had four dealerships in Oklahoma. I sold John Deere equipment. I loved it. I grew up in an entrepreneurial family," she said.

Glavas' career has crossed many different paths, with her last venture being in Melbourne, where she founded Brevard Rescue Mission 15 years ago. It rebranded in 2020 as New Life Mission.

She has built the organization into a big success without government funding. Glavas rallied the business community around New Life Mission and its construction projects, bringing together both commercial and residential companies.

"It's been an exciting journey and I have been able to use my life experiences running New Life Mission," said Glavas, who is retiring as CEO effective June 30.

Amy Lyon, program director at New Life Mission, will succeed Glavas. "I'm excited about leading the team into the future," she said. "I'm stepping in at a very busy time for the organization."

After graduating from Oklahoma State University with a bachelor's degree in organizational management, it wasn't long before Glavas began her career on Capitol Hill as a legislative aide for U.S. Rep. Nancy Marcy of Ohio. Glavas handled international trade policy, agriculture, and women's issues. "My father had been a state senator," said Glavas, who earned an MBA degree from George Washington University in 1985 while working on Capitol Hill.

In the late 1980s, Glavas was looking for a business opportunity and purchased the Maid Brigade Inc. franchise rights for the Washington, D.C., metro territory.

She went on to build her residential cleaning company into a thriving enterprise, expanding into Maryland and Virginia with the brand, growing from three employees to more than 100.

She ran the company for 10 years before turning the reins over to her husband, Pete Glavas, an attorney and a former lobbyist in Washington. They've owned the Alexandria, Virginia-based business for more than three decades.

"Then I changed directions in life. We moved to Brevard from Alexandria," said Glavas, who received a Master of Divinity degree from Asbury Theological Seminary's Orlando campus in 2009.

After befriending a homeless mother in Rockledge in 2007, Glavas founded what is now New Life Mission.

"I started working at a church, using my background in business, politics, and farming. I had this calling, this vision. I knew what I wanted to do. I wanted to start a mission in Brevard. I saw a need to provide a holistic approach — from emotional and spiritual to intellectual



BBN photo — Adrienne B. Roth

Stacia Glavas, right, CEO and founder of New Life Mission, formerly Brevard Rescue Mission, is set to retire June 30. She's operated the organization for 15 years and has seen it grow without government funding. Amy Lyon, program director, will succeed Glavas as CEO. New Life Mission has purchased 25 acres from the Children's Home Society in Melbourne. The property, formerly known as the Hacienda Girls Ranch, will serve as New Life Mission's headquarters. The campus will be called New Life Village and will be able to house 100 families at one time.

and physical — to try to help homeless mothers with a child or with children be able to develop a life that otherwise just wasn't accessible to them."

She added, "When I was finishing my seminary studies, I flew to some of the missions around the nation to see what the best models were. I did a lot of research. What I learned is that the one- or two-year property approach where the mother lives on-site at a mission property works well. There is a lot of accountability and the program is challenging and structured. That seemed to be the best model."

At the time, Glavas was working as an assistant

pastor at an area church. One day Glavas announced she was going to leave her position to start a ministry, and spoke briefly before the church audience. "Someone that I didn't know came up after I spoke and said her husband wanted to make a \$25,000 donation to my ministry once we had obtained our 501(c)(3) status. He believed there was a big need for what I was going to start."

Two days later, Glavas received a call from another donor interested in supporting her new venture. "I was excited."

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The scarcity of affordable housing is a primary factor causing and perpetuating homelessness. Most people who become homeless have low incomes making it difficult to maintain stable rental housing.

New Life Mission works to permanently break the generational cycle of homelessness by providing housing opportunities, access to health care, transportation, education, nutrition counseling, job training, and life-skills education in a safe setting for women with children.

"This program is not for everyone. It's hard work. We have a lot of rules. The rules are in place to help the residents and to put them on a path to succeed in life," said Glavas, adding, "We have a 90 percent success rate with our program graduates."

New Life Mission's big push is individual accountability tied to results. The goal for the program participants is to become self-sufficient and contribute to society and the community, and that is happening.

Graduates of the program are working in all types of positions, including as registered nurses, physical therapists, pharmacy technicians, firefighters, child-care directors, mortgage processors, aerospace manufacturing, satellite manufacturing, salon owner, peer counselor, intake specialist, and property restoration team manager, for example.

"We have seen miraculous turnarounds in our graduates' lives," said Glavas. She said the first question asked to women coming into the program is: "Tell us about your dream in life." It seems like no one has ever asked them that question."

New Life Mission housed its first resident in October 2009, said Glavas. "The resident had two little boys when she came into our program. Today, one is in college and the other excelling in high school. They are doing phenomenally. This is what makes our work rewarding. And we keep in touch with our program graduates."

The mission is funded by private donations from individuals, community foundations, churches, and area businesses.

"From the outset, we wanted this to be a private solution to a public problem — homelessness," said Glavas. "In step with that philosophy, we were not interested in government funding. One of our core values is for the clients who become part of our program to be self-sufficient and not depend on the government for subsistence. This non-government-funded approach was also embraced by our supporters."

She added, "We are very transparent with our financials. They are posted on our website. Every dollar is stretched."

New Life Mission has seen strong support from the community, including many businesspeople. Glenn and Myla Outlaw, and Fred and Meredith Sutton have been involved since the beginning of the organization. "Meredith was our first board chair. She was integral to this whole thing," said Glavas. Glenn Outlaw sold property to New Life Mission, well below market value, for the organization to expand. Many volunteers have played a role in New Life Mission's success, too.

One of those volunteers was the late Holly Fadden, a two-time graduate of the University of Maryland. She passed away in 2020. Fadden volunteered as a tutor for New Life Mission student mothers.

"Holly gifted us \$100,000 to use as an education fund in honor of her mother (Anita Maria Fadden)," said Glavas. "Education is one of New Life Mission's core values. Holly was an amazing individual and volunteered with us for years. She made a big impact on many lives."

With help from the community, New Life Mission has grown its program to include four campuses throughout

Melbourne and currently has capacity for 23 families.

In 2019, when the organization launched the "Here We Grow" campaign to raise money for a new campus in Melbourne, many contractors and suppliers backed the project. They included Eau Gallie Electric Inc., Total Home Roofing Inc., MH Williams Construction Group, Slug-A-Bug Inc., MK Structural Engineering, Brooks Glass, Alpine Refrigeration Inc., and East Coast Architectural Glass LLC, among many others.

When the fourth and final campus, New Life Village, opens this year, the ministry will be on its way to housing 100 families at one time.

New Life Mission purchased 25 acres at the end of Croton Road in Melbourne from the Children's Home Society. The property, formerly known as the Hacienda Girls Ranch, will serve as New Life Mission's headquarters, called New Life Village. The purchase price was \$2.25 million.

"It's a unique property, exactly what we needed to accommodate more families," said Glavas. "We would like to serve women with addiction, victims of human trafficking, and domestic violence. But we can't do that without having a closed campus."

"Our board made the decision and we went ahead and purchased the 25-acre campus. It was the first time this organization has taken a mortgage. We needed \$450,000 for the 20 percent down payment, and that's exactly what we had left over from our last fundraising campaign," she added.

Four banks competed for the loan. "We got a great 15-year fixed mortgage. The goal is to pay off the mortgage in three years," said Glavas.

The plans for New Life Village include a Kids Academy, a child-care center for the youngsters of

families staying there and going through the program. "The plan is to be able to accommodate up to 35 children," said Glavas. "We are really excited about the potential of New Life Village."

Lyon will be steering the organization when New Life Village opens. "The goal is to have residents living at that campus in August. We are hiring additional staff, including case managers, Kids Academy teachers, someone to handle facility management, and a maintenance technician."

Originally from Minnesota, Lyon had a 20-year career in journalism, writing and editing for publications, before working in the nonprofit sector.

"I have a lot of experience as a community volunteer and worked with the homeless population in Minnesota," she said. "I learned about Brevard Rescue Mission when I wrote an article for an area publication. The work they were doing really interested me. I said, 'This is what I want to do.' I started working for the organization in 2018 as a case manager. I coordinated the facilities for the Melbourne property and also launched our social enterprise, the Transformed Shop. It's a sewing center for the women in the program. They learn how to sew. The products they make are sold to the public and the profits help support New Life Mission."

Glavas has created a solution to homelessness that is working in the community by using an entrepreneurial approach. The results are impressive. And New Life Mission continues to expand to help more people who are motivated to better themselves.

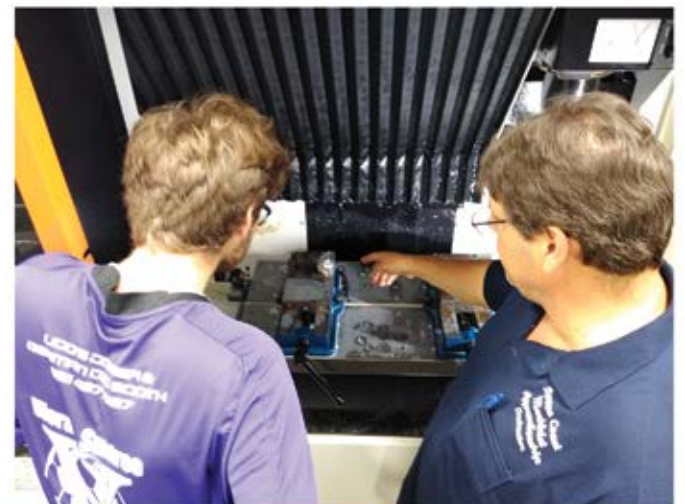
"I am proud of the people who have made it all possible," said Glavas. "I am proud of the residents. I am proud of the volunteers, the churches, the civic groups — all the people who see this as their own mission in life."

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