From Badge to Blessings:
SPECIAL AGENT KAREN ALEXANDER FINDS PURPOSE IN FURNITURE MINISTRY

Karen (L) with refinished table set and recipient.

Saturday furniture pick up.

If you were to ask Murfreesboro native Karen Alexander what one thing in her life has been most fulfilling she would definitely say, "my volunteer work at St. Mark's United Methodist Church (UMC) is at the top of my list!" Karen has been the coordinator of St. Mark's Furniture Ministry for the last 14 years, ever since her retirement from the TN Bureau of Investigation (TBI). Prior to her volunteer work in the Furniture Ministry, she was involved in many of St. Mark's' community outreach programs including the Support Our Soldiers ministry, the Disaster Response Team, and the Local Food ministry.

Special Agent

Karen's 38-year career in the TBI was both demanding and exciting, acting as Special Agent and later Assistant Special Agent in Charge. Because she was a CPA, she mainly investigated white-collar crimes, but also helped coordinate security for President and Vice President visits to Nashville and security for the 1996 Atlanta Olympics' white water venue on Tennessee's Ocoee River.

Special Saturdays

Karen explains that the Furniture Ministry is a wonderful blessing for victims of flood, fire, tornado, and domestic violence, as well as economically disadvantaged families, veterans, and the homeless who are starting over. Donors In the Murfreesboro area who have clean and unbroken used furniture (excluding electrical appliances) may call Karen at (615) 707-3166 to schedule a truck pick-up. The furniture is delivered later that morning to recipients. The 4 truck drivers and 10-12 other volunteers do their pick-ups and deliveries every other Saturday morning from 7 AM to noon. Karen welcomes any potential volunteers and adds that you need not be a member of the St.Mark's Church to help out. The number to call to volunteer is (615) 707-3166. Volunteers must be 16 years of age or older and able to help lift furniture with two or three other volunteers. Additionally, for details about what types of furniture are accepted and other important information, please go to https://www.stmarkstn.org/community

Have paint brush, will beautify

Karen is dedicated to helping others. Several years ago she and her sister personally refinished a table and chair set for one of the homeless women who was being assisted by the Furniture Ministry. Karen was delighted to form a special bond with this woman, who had just found a home and was starting over. They are still good friends today. (Unfortunately, the furniture ministry is no longer able to repair/refurbish furniture.)

Passionate about doing good

Karen sees an amazing amount of good done by the community service groups in her church and says, "I am very passionate about the Furniture Ministry and hope that it is around for many more years to come."

> **"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."**
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> —Winston Churchill