

Interfaith Council Committee
Annual Report May, 2019 to May, 2020

The vision of the Interfaith Council is to work toward “a community where everyone’s basic needs are met, including dignified and affordable housing, an abundance of healthy food, and meaningful social connection.” The meeting’s Interfaith Council (IFC) committee supports the work of IFC, whose values we share, by promoting IFC programs and encouraging Friends to volunteer and support its important work. Members of the committee meet regularly with liaison committees from other faith and community organizations to learn and share ideas in regards IFC support.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the last few months have challenged the IFC to continue its essential work of providing food, financial emergency support, housing and community for our neighbors living in or near poverty levels. The poor have not gone away; their needs have been magnified by the pandemic that challenges all of us. Given this situation, the annual report will include a description of how the IFC has modified programs in response to the pandemic, as well as ways the committee has worked to support the IFC throughout the year. Please be mindful that Jackie Jenks, Director of the IFC, will present a forum via Zoom on May 24. She will provide information on the progress toward Food First (a program to consolidate food services in the renovated facility at 110 West Main Street, Carrboro) and update us more specifically on the ways the pandemic is affecting IFC operations. She’ll also let us know how we can help during this critical time. Please plan to attend.

The following serve as members of the meeting’s IFC committee: James Bartow, Ronald Carnes, Emilie Condon, Asta Crowe, Gordon Davies, Ann Drake, Max Drake, Gwyn Hein, Dottie Heninger and Carolyn Stuart (clerk). Our committee meets quarterly.

Ongoing Activities

Food contributions: Prior to the closing of the meetinghouse in March, Friends brought food donations, as well as checks, to the foyer. Members of the IFC committee took these items to the temporary IFC headquarters at 100 Rosemary Street.

First Thursday lunches at the Community Kitchen: Our meeting is responsible for assisting the kitchen coordinator in preparing healthy and appetizing lunches each first Thursday of the month. Not only does this service provide a good meal for people in need, but it also gives volunteers an opportunity to enjoy conversations while we chop, roast, sauté and serve. Asta Crowe, Ann Drake, Max Drake, Dottie Heninger, Nancy Martin, Paul Munk, Bonnie Raphael, Carolyn Stuart and Carolyn White are regulars in the kitchen on first Thursdays. When possible, Paul brings men from Orange Correctional Center to join us.

Holiday meals in November and December: Through contributions of Friends and other faith and community organizations, more than 800 holiday meals (Thanksgiving and winter holiday) were provided to those in need.

RSVVP: Approximately 74 area restaurants participated in RSVVP on November 12, 2019 by contributing 10 percent of their proceeds to the work of the IFC. Many Friends patronized these restaurants and contributed to this fundraising effort.

IFC During the Pandemic

Crop Walk: The Church World Service and the IFC sponsor an annual Crop Walk to raise money for world hunger organizations (75 percent of proceeds) and the IFC's Food Pantry and Community Kitchen (25 percent of proceeds). This year's Crop Walk, planned for March 29, was canceled due to the coronavirus. Although Friends were able to donate online, the cancellation contributed to a significant decline in funds raised. We raised only \$150 this year — much less than the \$1305 we contributed last year.

Community Kitchen: IFC continues to serve meals to as many as 225 people daily. However, no meals are served in the community kitchen. Clients now pick up to-go boxes, which are assembled by staff and a small set of volunteers, and distributed in the parking lot of 100 Rosemary Street.

Pantry: Prior to the closure, clients visited the pantry on a monthly basis to select food items contributed by individuals, congregations, community food drives, area grocery stores and UNC-Chapel Hill food services. Due to the pandemic, these food sources have significantly declined and the IFC must purchase more food. Clients can no longer shop in the pantry, but must call in an order. Staff and a small number of volunteers pack items in grocery bags and arrange for pick-up in the Rosemary Street parking lot.

Emergency Financial Assistance: No face-to-face interviews are being held currently for emergency funds for rent, utilities, and medication. All interviews are conducted by telephone. No clothing vouchers are currently being offered, due to closure of the Community Worx (formerly PTA) and Club Nova thrift shops.

Homestart: This residential program for women and families (women, men and children) provides housing for 14 women without children and 10 families. Social distancing in terms of bed placement and dining are being implemented. The IFC is also employing increased sanitization to maintain a safe environment.

Community House: The men's residents provides housing for 52 men. As with Homestart, the IFC is using social distancing and increased sanitization to the extent possible.

The IFC is a volunteer-driven organization. With many volunteers being older, and therefore more vulnerable to infection, the IFC is more dependent on staff and a much smaller volunteer group. Poor people remain in our community and their needs are increased due to the pandemic at a time with the IFC is challenged to meet those needs. *Please consider a financial contribution to the IFC — whose services are needed now more than ever.*

Our committee is aware that legacy organizations supported by the meeting's benevolences, such as the IFC, are being asked to provide financial data for two years in the annual report: general fund contributions, capital fund contributions, endowment contributions, operating expenses, endowment and reserve totals, and number of full-time equivalents. Given the challenges created by the pandemic for IFC staff and the lack of publicly available financial data, we decided not to include this as part of the annual report this year.

Respectfully submitted,

James Bartow, Ronald Carnes, Emilie Condon, Asta Crowe, Gordon Davies, Ann Drake, Max Drake, Gwyn Hein, Dottie Heninger and Carolyn Stuart (clerk).