

IFC Committee Annual Report 2023/2024

The Interfaith Council For Social Services (IFC) continues on the journey of becoming an anti-racist, liberatory organization whose ongoing vision is to create “a community that meets everyone’s basic needs, including dignified and affordable housing, an abundance of healthy food, and meaningful social connection.” They have a continued mission to “confront the causes and respond to the effects of poverty in our community”. Their vision and mission is upheld by their stated values of: Mutual Respect, Social Justice, Community Power, Self -Determination, and Integrity.

With these guiding principles, IFC works hard to meet the needs of low-income and vulnerable members of our community by offering housing, food, emergency financial support and social connection through a variety of programs and services. There are 2 shelters: the Community House Shelter for Men on MLK, Jr Blvd, and the Homestart Shelter for Women and Families on Homestead Rd. IFC headquarters, also known as the IFC Commons, is located on Main St in Carrboro. The main services at the Commons include: the Community Kitchen; the Community Market; the Community Navigation Program – which allows drop-in access to computers, phones and community resource support; Activate! IFC – which offers voter engagement, advocacy and leadership development; and Emergency Financial Assistance – which helps with rent or utility payments for households facing eviction.

IFC’s response to individuals and families in need has been phenomenal. In 2022/23, the IFC provided nearly 50,000 hot meals, over 11,000 bags of groceries, almost \$190,000 in emergency funds, and over 34,000 nights of shelters for adults and children. In addition, 200 households accessed the community navigation program, 200 community members were engaged in voting related programs and 14 local landlords partnered with IFC to offer lower than market rate rent. The IFC employs 50 staff members and benefits from the help of 150 volunteers coming from over 25 congregations. They have over 3000 individual donors.

Despite great success and the large number of donors, IFC’s financial position is not entirely stable. According to a recent Liaison Meeting communique, individual giving has leveled off and IFC reserves will be spent by the end of this fiscal year (7/1/2024). They are faced with making cuts until they can increase giving. Nevertheless, they are determined not to cut any of the programs mentioned above. However, there could be changes in frequency of services. No specific changes have been mentioned at this time.

The Friends IFC Committee continues to help support IFC in significant ways. The Committee meets quarterly and consists of : John Bell, Besty Brinson, Ronald Carnes, Ann Drake, Max Drake, Tori Toles (co-clerk), Carolyn White (co-clerk) and Lynn Wilson. We provide volunteers for cooking and serving at the Community Kitchen twice a month (second Thursday lunch and second Friday dinner.) We are grateful for all the folks who have volunteered, and we are looking for more volunteers! We solicit and collect donations to support the “Stock the Market” Campaign for the Community Market. Donated items brought to the Friends Meeting House are taken to the IFC Commons on a regular basis. The Friends Committee encourages donations that IFC has requested. These include: cereal, canned fruit, tea, canned proteins, as well as hygiene items. This past winter, Betsy Binson spear-headed a campaign at Carol Woods to collect coats, hats, socks, and umbrellas that were requested by IFC. Betsy and Carol Woods residents delivered several carloads of clothing to IFC. The Annual Crop Walk was in March, and Friends made a significant impact on the success of the Walk with both participation and generous donations. Fifteen Friends turned out to join the walk, and Friends raised close to \$1800.

In the next year, the members of the IFC Friends Committee will continue to attend the bi-monthly IFC Liaison Committee Meetings, composed of members from local congregations, as well as help to organize the Annual Crop Hunger Walk.

Finally, affordable housing is always on the agenda at IFC. Jackie Jenks, the President and CEO of IFC, is an active advocate for this issue in Orange County. According to a recent IFC newsletter, the Affordable Housing Plan was passed by the Chapel Hill Town Council calling for \$50 million for affordable housing – \$10 million per year over the next 5 years.

There are great needs at IFC, particularly financial, however, there are also great accomplishments. IFC continues to be a bedrock in our community for unhoused people, and lives up to its vision, mission, and values of responding to the effects of poverty by meeting people's basic needs with respect and integrity.

Presented to Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, May 19, 2024

John Bell, Besty Brinson, Ronald Carnes, Ann Drake, Max Drake, Tori Toles (co-clerk), Carolyn White (co-clerk) and Lynn Wilson.