



ICCF

INNER CITY CHRISTIAN FEDERATION

Blueprints

WINTER 2001

Finding Hope

It's often said that the eyes are a window to the soul. What do you see in Angela's eyes? Strength. Hope. Determination. Life is much more peaceful for Angela and her two daughters, Ashly and Tiffani, than it was several months ago.

The story of how Angela came to ICCF's Family Haven emergency shelter is one of great hardship. As Angela explained, "Six months ago I was a totally different person." Two years of unemployment and a difficult marriage took away much of her hope for a brighter future. She wanted to provide a better environment for her two little girls but did not have the means or opportunity to do so. When her unemployment benefits ended, Angela felt hopeless and emotionally numb, and she spiraled into a period of depression.

A bright ray of hope came the day Angela's caseworker referred her to Family Haven. Her caseworker knew that Family Haven was uniquely equipped to accommodate families. So Angela called the Haven. She recalled, "It was a Wednesday afternoon, and they got me in that Friday." Angela described the situation as amazing. "I could not believe how quickly ICCF's staff got me in."

First impressions are important, and Angela was impressed. "The facilities were very neat, very clean, VERY CLEAN!" she exclaimed.

Although Angela knew the arrangements at Family Haven were temporary, it was a place to find refuge and receive encouragement. "The staff was the most important part of my time at Family Haven," she said. "Lori, Debbie, and Gennifer



Angela with daughters Ashly (L) and Tiffani (R) look forward to rebuilding their lives.

were very friendly and considerate. They never let your spirits down." This source of encouragement and the safe environment of Family Haven helped Angela concentrate on finding a place to live. Hope began to show its face in Angela's life.

Angela and her two girls soon moved into a big two-bedroom apartment. At the same time, she began working again. But just when life seemed to be settling down, the economy began to falter, forcing her out of work again. While she is now back on unemployment, Angela sees it only as temporary and has been steadily interviewing for jobs. She is determined to succeed and to make a better life for herself and her family.

Family Haven staff continue to encourage Angela as she works to get back on her feet. Despite her present difficulties, the positive glow in Angela's eyes is a testimony to her upbeat, "can do" attitude. She speaks with great confidence in taking each day for what she can make out of it. "Things [disappointments] don't bother me anymore like they used to. I just keep moving forward and know that someday I'll get to where I'm going." Angela is no longer without hope.

Her future dreams include a place where she and her children can rebuild a new life together. She describes that place as "a happy, stable environment" for her daughters. "And right now," she adds, "it's looking pretty good!"

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Jonathan Bradford
Executive Director

Tell Them Your Name

In the September issue of *Blueprints* I wrote on this page about the search for “the good life.” In hindsight, it seems ironic that my thoughts centered on what makes “the good life” possible for the citizens of a community. In the smoke and grief of September 11, it almost seems absurd that I would have been thinking about the relationship of physical space and personal virtue.

Not that these things are inappropriate to pursue, its just that as our last *Blueprints* went to press, purveyors of evil were busy sowing seeds of hatred and terror in New York City, Washington, D.C. and Pennsylvania. Obviously we cannot build a just society and we cannot have communities of virtue that work for their residents if hate and terror prevail. Each of us in various ways has been looking for some kind of explanation for this unspeakable horror. Young and old, rich and poor alike, we have been scratching furiously looking for answers to September 11. Why did this happen, and what should be done in response? Four-year-old Laura Kulbacki (as quoted in *Newsweek* magazine) proposes that we “just tell them our names.”

We would do well to listen to Laura. Indeed, she has no idea about the centuries of religious bigotry and political treachery that historians and world leaders can point to. That’s okay—she is still onto something. Her world is uncomplicated by the mistakes of previous generations. The world of a preschooler is fairly basic, consisting of relationships that are formed by familiarity and love.

And out of familiarity come respect and trust.

The fiery explosions of hatred on September 11 are indeed born from years of disrespect and mistrust. At the risk of oversimplification, they are the result of a failure of community. When little Laura was advising that we tell them our names, she was saying simply, “Let’s communicate.” She was admonishing us to get closer to one another and to put a human face on the issues people are disagreeing about.

For more than 27 years, God has prospered the housing and life-skill services of ICCF. Each of us who has worked hard to make this ministry possible can rightly be proud of the impact it has had on thousands of families. But if the family is important to individual success and accomplishment, then the neighborhood and community must be very important as well. At these levels we often know each other’s names, and we can have relationships outside of our families defined by respect and trust.

The community-building efforts of ICCF are an antidote to issues that sometimes sadly lead to events like September 11. In building high-quality houses, in encouraging families to succeed, and in shaping whole neighborhoods to enhance human relationships, we are building communities the way God wants them to be. This is the message of love that the Christ child has given us. It’s only this message that will conquer bigotry and hate.

Best wishes to you for a very joyful Christmas and a New Year filled with trust and respect among you and your neighbors. Please continue your partnership of prayer and generosity. One community at a time, we will replace hate with love. And let’s always remember to tell them our names.

Volunteer Opportunities

ICCF has many volunteer opportunities for individuals and groups of all ages. Listed here are a few of our current volunteer needs. For more information, please contact Lori Fedewa, Volunteer Coordinator, at 336-9333.

Adopt-a-Family for the Christmas holidays. Pair up with a family who is unable to afford Christmas gifts. Volunteers receive a wish list highlighting specific information about their adopted family so that they can purchase gifts for the family members. The gifts can be given either in person or anonymously.

Reconstruction work. In January ICCF will begin a renovation project at 506 Sheldon Avenue SE. This house needs a lot of care, and volunteers (both skilled and unskilled) are needed for demolition, clean-up, framing, carpentry, interior/exterior painting, and landscaping.

Tax professional. We need a tax professional to facilitate a tax workshop for the Home Buyers Club and Home Management class.

Childcare. We need help with providing childcare during Home Ownership classes and workshops.

Church partnerships. Put your faith in action by helping to build or reconstruct high-quality, affordable housing for families. ICCF provides supervision and resident education and selection, and churches provide volunteer labor and financial support. Partnering with ICCF can offer meaningful volunteer opportunities for congregations and groups within a congregation while supporting ICCF’s mission to serve the underhoused in Grand Rapids.

ICCF staff additions

We warmly welcome these new staff members and wish them all the best in their work.

Mary Ayers

Mary Ayers is ICCF's new Financial Management Counselor. She has a secondary teaching certificate in social sciences and a bachelor's degree in psychology and criminal justice. As part of our Home Ownership team, Mary organizes and works with Home Buyers Clubs and offers financial management counseling and instruction.



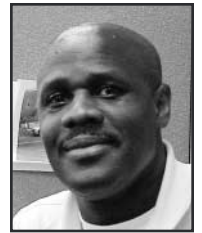
Don Fredericks

A licensed builder with 35 years of experience in the construction trade, Don Fredericks has joined ICCF's volunteer program as Volunteer Construction Supervisor. Ready to make a change in his career, Don felt called to serve in some type of ministry. When he heard about ICCF's opening, it was just the right fit.



Edward Grant

Edward Grant recently joined ICCF's rental department as a Service Technician. Born in Omaha, Nebraska, Edward moved to Grand Rapids as a child. He graduated from Ottawa Hills High School and received a certificate of completion in business administration from Davenport College. Edward's 15 years of experience in construction, in addition to his experience in public relations, is proving to be very helpful in his work at ICCF.



Paul Lobsiger

In September Paul Lobsiger joined ICCF as Development Associate. Paul grew up in Lansing, Michigan, graduated from Northwood University in Midland, Michigan, and received a master's degree in business administration with a specialization in economic and community development from Eastern College in St. David's, Pennsylvania. Paul enjoys research and looks forward to becoming an expert in grant research and writing.



A Home of Her Own

Betty Pimpleton bought her home on Lafayette Avenue SE from ICCF in 1999. It's a light-blue colonial-style home that stands out in a row of other newly built ICCF homes. Betty's personal touch is evident. The porch has a beautiful exterior carpet and fancy spindles and railing around it. The exterior trim work makes for an attractive accent, welcoming onlookers.

When asked about how she came to purchase an ICCF home, Betty said it all began when she met Jonathan Bradford at a Madison Park PTA meeting. Bradford was invited to speak on the subject of home ownership and affordable housing. Betty came up to him afterward and asked whether there were any available ICCF rental units. Bradford suggested she fill out an application for rental housing. Betty did just that and was able to rent a unit in ICCF's Pleasant Prospect homes. After seven years of renting from ICCF, Betty went for her dream, owning her own home.

As Betty explained, "I always wanted a house, but was not confident about owning a home." Sue Ortiz, ICCF's Home Ownership Program Manager, and Michael Remo, ICCF's Rental Program Manager, encouraged Betty for many years and told her she was a prime candidate for home ownership. "ICCF went the extra mile to support me. I did it all on my own, but they helped me and supported me," said Betty. In fact, Betty's good credit and rental history gave her solid credibility in the eyes of financial institutions.

So Betty went for it. She began the two-year Lease/Purchase program. During that time, a large portion of her lease payment

went into her purchase option account. At the end of the lease this account had accumulated \$6,000. To further recognize her commitment to home ownership, the City of Grand Rapids provided a grant of \$4,000. The \$10,000 helped Betty with her downpayment and closing costs. The remainder was used to reduce the amount of the purchase which is financed by a MSHDA/Fifth Third mortgage loan.

With a huge smile on her face, Betty described the closing on her home as a major family event. Her son came home from the Navy with the sole purpose of standing behind his mother at the closing and to celebrate the fulfillment of her dream.

With a tear of utter joy in her eye, she explained how much owning a home has meant to her. "It makes me feel good about reaching that goal you always dreamed of. It is rewarding. It is also nice to have a swing-set and lots of space for my grandkids to play around in."

Betty pays less in monthly house payments than she did on rent. "This has been very encouraging and good for the family budget. It makes everything in life more affordable," she exclaimed.

In her two years of home ownership on Lafayette Avenue, Betty, along with other ICCF homeowners, has made a huge difference in the community. They have organized neighborhood watches and have lobbied with the City of Grand Rapids to place speed bumps on their street. Because of people like Betty Pimpleton, her neighborhood—and our city—is now a stronger and better place to live.

Volunteer Highlights

Thornapple Evangelical Covenant Church

Carol Williams is interim chairwoman of Urban Ministries for Thornapple Evangelical Covenant Church. The purpose of this ministry is to educate, enable, and encourage the involvement of the congregation in the inner city of Grand Rapids.

The Urban Ministries committee chooses specific agencies to work with—agencies that reflect the principles of their ministry. Carol is the contact person for ICCF and has been leading volunteer activities throughout the summer and fall. Inspired by her faith and her longstanding interest in urban work, Carol is committed to “reclaiming the neighborhood” and narrowing the gap between the city and the suburbs. She believes that volunteering at ICCF provides a hands-on experience for folks and is a natural outgrowth of the gospel. Thank you, Carol and all the folks at Thornapple Evangelical Covenant Church!



Thornapple Evangelical Covenant Church volunteers take a break from landscaping.

South Christian High School

A group of 6 to 8 students under the leadership of guidance counselor Shawn Bultsma have been coming to ICCF to perform volunteer service every Monday afternoon since the beginning of the school year. The group has completed a variety of projects including clean-up at construction sites, painting, landscaping, helping out at Family Haven, and working in the administration office. The students have done a wonderful job, and ICCF is grateful for their help. We look forward to continuing this partnership with South Christian High School students.



South Christian Students get ready to deliver Thanksgiving baskets to ICCF residents.

Calvin College Streetfest

Every year freshman students entering Calvin College are sent out into the community to participate in various service projects before getting down to the serious business of studying. On August 30, 12 students spent several hours at ICCF learning about the organization and working on two landscaping projects. Streetfest helps students gain a wider understanding of the community of which they will be a part and encourages them to consider participating in volunteer activities while at Calvin. Not only is the experience beneficial to the students, but it is also a great help to ICCF. We have the fun of meeting and working with these students—with the added benefit of two completed landscaping projects!

United Way Corporate Day of Caring

On September 6, 23 employees from Bank One and Autocam Corp. spent the day volunteering at ICCF. Together the two companies donated 115 hours of labor cleaning the grounds at Family Haven, building a fence and painting. This labor translates into \$1,800 in savings for ICCF. The volunteers were part of The United Way Corporate Day of Caring. This annual celebration of volunteerism demonstrates that local businesses play a significant role in supporting our community. Over 1600 volunteers from 64 organizations participated, donating 4,800 hours of volunteer labor. This translates into a savings in labor and material costs of \$75,200 for local health and human service agencies. We are very grateful for the generous gift of time and energy from the Bank One and Autocam volunteers.

Bank One employees admire their clean-up efforts at Family Haven.



Blueprints

Blueprints is published by the Inner City Christian Federation to keep friends and supporters informed about ICCF's affordable housing ministries. Your comments and questions are always welcome.

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Mission of ICCF
In response to God's call to justice, the Inner City Christian Federation provides housing opportunities and services that encourage family responsibility and independence, thereby helping to build stable communities.

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2000-2001

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ICCF Wins Awards

Peterson Award

On behalf of ICCF, Jonathan Bradford proudly accepted the Peterson Award from the Michigan Capital Fund for Housing at a special luncheon held in Lansing this fall. ICCF was among three honorees recognized for their outstanding efforts in affordable housing. All award recipients received a \$10,000 check and a commemorative framed photograph of one of their developments.

The award is named in honor of Jeanne Peterson, former Director of Legal Affairs with the Michigan State Housing Development Authority, who was instrumental in the creation of the Michigan Capital Fund for Housing.

Urban Cooperation Board Award

The Urban Cooperation Board (UCB) awarded ICCF a grant of \$10,000 for the Wealthy-Jefferson Community Redevelopment Initiative.

The UCB is an offshoot of a water-sewer agreement between the city of Grand Rapids and six "customer communities" including Ada Township, the City of East Grand Rapids, Grand Rapids Township, the City of Kentwood, Tallmadge Charter Township, and the City of Walker. Together these units of government pooled a total of \$286,000 this year toward providing services to or promoting the metropolitan region, channeled through regional non-profit groups such as ICCF.

Steelcase Foundation Matching Grant

We are happy to report that we have raised \$175,000 in gifts and pledges for the Housing Capital Revolving Fund (HCRF) completing the requirement for a matching gift for the HCRF pledged by the Steelcase Foundation. ICCF funds much of its construction and predevelopment expenses through the HCRF. When a house is under construction, we draw from the HCRF to cover building costs. After the two-year rental period, the house is sold, and the sale proceeds are returned to the HCRF, where they become available for another house. With the addition of the Steelcase Foundation match, the HCRF is now worth over 2.4 million in debt and equity. We are very grateful to the Steelcase Foundation for their generous support!

From the Director of Development



As we enter this holiday season of joy and thanksgiving, we want to express our sincere thanks to all of you who support us through your financial gifts, in-kind gifts and gifts of volunteer service. God blesses ICCF richly through your generosity.

Your gifts directly impact the lives of hundreds of families and make it possible for these families to achieve their housing goals. This year many more families are celebrating Christmas in warm, safe and affordable homes because of you.

As you make your year-end charitable giving plans, please remember ICCF. Your support is urgently needed so that we can continue helping families help themselves.

Thank you so much. May all of you have a very blessed Christmas and a New Year filled with peace and joy.

Ina Vondiziano

Director of Development and Communications

Program Updates

Family Haven

Lori Folson, Family Haven Program Manager, reported that the number of referrals year-to-date has exploded. Between October 1, 2000 and 2001 there have been more than 1,024 inquires for Family Haven services as compared with 625 at the same time last year. That's a 164-percent increase in just one year! The downturn in the economy and the fact that ICCF's programs and services are well-known in the community are contributing factors to this dramatic increase in referrals.

ICCF Fleet of Trucks

This fall ICCF's construction crew and rental service technicians were proudly presented with a brand-new fleet of trucks paid for by funds raised during the 2000 Foremost Golf Classic. As one of two primary charities, ICCF received a total of \$60,000, which included a gift from the California office of Farmer's Insurance. The funds were used to purchase two trucks and a van—all in white with ICCF's name and colorful

logo on the sides. The construction and maintenance crew are thrilled with the new trucks, and they look forward to driving warm, safe vehicles, free of mechanical problems this winter. Thank you, Foremost/Farmer's Insurance employees!!



Construction

Houses currently under construction:

1059 Lafayette SE
122 Highland SE
126 Highland SE
1034 Madison SE
1037 Madison SE
433 Woodlawn SE
1034 Prospect SE
528 Woodlawn SE

Rehabs

338 Highland SE

Volunteer Projects

852 Alpine NW
730 9th St. NW

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Making places to come home to.