

For Immediate Release

From Inner City Christian Federation (ICCF)
Grand Rapids, MI
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**Ribbon Cutting at 920 Cherry Street SE
For Inner City Christian Federation (ICCF)**

Inner City Christian Federation (ICCF) will celebrate the completion of its 22-month *Pillars for Opportunity* building restoration project at 920 Cherry Street SE with a ribbon cutting ceremony, 1:00p.m. on Thursday, October 25, 2007. The State of Michigan Office of Historic Preservation has identified the project as the most complete terra cotta restoration project ever accomplished in the state. Funding was provided through charitable gifts and historic tax credits.

Guests for the event include Mayor George Heartwell; Ted Rozeboom, board president for the Michigan Magnet Fund; Sean Welsh, regional VP from National City Bank; and Jason Paulateer, VP of the National City Community Development Corporation. Additional speakers are Jim Preston and Michael VanGessel, who with their wives co-chaired the Pillars capital campaign, and Jonathan Bradford, Chief Executive Officer of ICCF.

The challenging project was managed by Rockford Construction Company. A blight on the neighborhood for years, the former D.A. Blodgett Home for Children had been largely vacant and poorly maintained for 30 years. It was only months away from demolition when ICCF purchased the building. In the time since then, both the interior and the exterior have been restored to their former beauty.

The \$9.0 + million dollar project uncovered the original terrazzo floor in the entrance lobby and the original quarter-sawn white oak woodwork on the main floor. Details on the century-old cast iron stairwells are carefully painted to highlight their design. The restored assembly hall on the third floor resembles a ballroom and will be available for rent to the community. The stage and catering kitchen add to its multiple functions. The terra cotta trim around windows and roof lines in addition to the four immense pillars in front of the building identify the neoclassical architectural style. The symmetry of the original gardens characterizes the new gardens recently installed. The brick and concrete path from Cherry street to the grand terrace of the building beckon the community to come in.

A dozen conference spaces of varying sizes, a training center, office space for current and future staff provide ICCF with room to grow its housing programs and services. ICCF is the oldest non-profit affordable housing provider in the state of Michigan. Active in Grand Rapids since 1974, the agency serves more than 2500 families a year through its programs and services.

ICCF operates the Family Haven emergency shelter at 701 Prospect SE, owns and manages 96 units of affordable rental housing, maintains 25-30 lease-to-purchase homes, constructs or reconstructs 12 -16 new homes a year, and offers home ownership education and opportunities. Its self-written curriculum has been adopted by Michigan State Housing Development Authority and utilized through the entire state of Michigan. All classes and counseling as well as home inspection services are provided in Spanish and English. A variety of mortgage options is available through Providence Home Mortgage, Inc., a subsidiary of ICCF.

How fitting that ICCF should occupy a building that was dedicated a century ago “to the children who may find refuge and protection beneath its friendly roof... to the relief of human suffering and to the promotion of human happiness...” The facility has a rich tradition of community care. After serving as an orphanage and a hospital, the building once more provides the refuge and protection of safe housing to economically vulnerable families in our community.