

Inter-Faith Council Committee  
Annual Report, May 2021 to May 2022

The Inter-Faith Council continued to meet the needs of low-income and vulnerable members of our community for housing, food, emergency financial support and social connection as the pandemic continued over the past year. This Annual Report describes changes in IFC programs in the past year, the Meeting's involvement with IFC, financial data requested in the Meeting's benevolence process, and the IFC's efforts to address issues of racial/ethnic diversity and equity.

The following Friends served on the IFC committee during the past year: Ronald Carnes, Emilie Condon, Asta Crowe, Ann Drake, Max Drake, Gwyn Hein, Dottie Heninger, Carolyn Stuart (clerk), Tori Toles and Carolyn White. Tori is new to our committee this year, and we welcome her energy and enthusiasm. We meet on a quarterly basis. Tori attends bimonthly meetings of the IFC liaison committee, comprised of members of area congregations supporting the work of IFC. We've not been able to serve as in-person volunteers this year, and we look forward to such opportunities opening up on a limited basis in the current year. More information regarding in-person volunteer opportunities are included in the report.

### **Program changes in past year**

#### Community Navigation

This new program assists community members in obtaining information regarding housing, transportation, employment and other services. Community members are assisted in using computers available at the IFC Commons to obtain this critical information. The new director of this program, Crystell Hinton, will begin to offer services as soon as IFC Commons is open to more residents being inside the building.

#### The Community Kitchen:

Much-loved and respected Community Kitchen manager, Bill Culton, retired this year, and a new Community Kitchen manager, Lance Dixon, was hired. Meals are served daily, with approximately 50 to 70 individuals served at lunch and 30 to 40 for dinner. No meals were served in the IFC Commons during the past year. Community members picked up to-go boxes and either took food home or ate in a socially distanced manner outside.

The IFC is beginning to offer volunteer opportunities in the Community Kitchen. Ten members of our Meeting toured the IFC Commons and were informed of these opportunities. Teams of no more than three volunteers may serve during a specific lunch or dinner period. Carolyn White is currently organizing us to volunteer at two meals monthly — lunches on second Thursdays and dinners on fourth Wednesdays. We're excited about actually working with staff, though at this point no community residents are being served inside the IFC Commons.

The Community Market: The Community Market remained fully operational during the past year. The Market provides community residents with fresh fruits, vegetables, meats, canned goods and hygiene products. Approximately thirteen hundred bags of groceries were distributed monthly. On April 4, the Community Market invited residents into the Market to select groceries. Limited numbers of shoppers are allowed in the Market at any one time. For those unable to shop in the Market, the IFC continues to fill grocery requests, which are picked up by community residents.

Homestart: Homestart, the shelter for women and families, provided housing throughout the past year. Fourteen single women and ten families are housed in this program. Funds from FEMA and other agencies are no longer being used to house single women in a nearby hotel. Since families have their own rooms, they've been housed at Homestart throughout the pandemic.

Community House: This residential program for men houses 52 men. As is the case with single women at Homestart, men are no longer being housed in a hotel. The IFC has not been able to continuously offer shelter for new men, however, due to Covid outbreaks. As a congregant living environment, IFC is required to have 28 days of no new cases after a positive case has been detected. This stipulation is required the Health Department to clear an outbreak status and accept new residents. This has created significant disruption in services at the Community House.

Emergency Financial Assistance: This program continued, as members had increased need for rent and utilities assistance and other funds for crises (emergency medicine, etc.). Staff and volunteers conducted telephone interviews with members to assist with distribution of funds.

Housing Support: IFC continued to advocate for affordable housing for members through town governments of Chapel Hill and Carrboro and the Orange County Affordable Housing Coalition. The IFC organized a "House Us Now!" rally on April 9 and continues to advocate strongly for dignified, safe, affordable housing.

REAL (Race, Equity, Action & Leadership): REAL includes three programs: Activate IFC!, Meeting of the Minds, and the REAL Transformation Team. Through the work of REAL, the IFC hosted a book discussion with William Elmore and Susan Simone of *Prison from the Inside Out*, documenting Will's experience as an incarcerated man and his transition to life in our community. REAL, along with Justice United and other organizations hosted a candidates forum for the two candidates for district attorney, Jeff Nie-man and Kayley Taber. Quinton Harper, in his new position at Activate! IFC manager is intent on providing community residents with skills needed to advocate successfully for their needs.

### **Meeting Support of the IFC**

We have supported the IFC in the following ways:

CROP Walk: The Church World Service and IFC annually sponsors a walk to raise money to address hunger world wide (75 percent of funds go to global hunger relief agencies) and in our community (25 percent goes to IFC to be used locally.) There was an in-person walk this year on April 3. Two Friends, Dave Curtin and Wendy Michener, walked. We had 20 on-line contributions, with total contributions of \$1,830. Thank you, Friends, and thank you to Dave Curtin who set up our meeting link for easy online donations.

Donation of Food & Hygiene Items: Since the meetinghouse opened for in-person worship in July 2021, Friends have brought contributions of food and hygiene items to the foyer on First Days. To provide an opportunity for Friends not worshipping in-person, the IFC Committee picks up donations brought to the meetinghouse porch on the last Wednesday of each month. Members of the IFC committee take all food and hygiene contributions to the IFC Commons.

Holiday Meals and RSVVP: The IFC Committee continued to encourage Meeting support for holiday meals and RSVVP. There were fewer restaurants participating in the RSVVP, a program in which ten percent of proceeds from meals eaten in their establishments on RSVVP day go to the IFC.

Forum with Jackie Jenks: The IFC Committee arranged for Jackie Jenks, President and CEO, to present a forum on March 27. The forum was well attended and Friends asked Jackie numerous questions regarding the challenges now facing IFC. We learned about the dedicated and resilient manner in which the IFC continues its work during these challenging times.

### **Financial Data**

As requested in the revised benevolence process, the committee collected the following financial data. The 2020-2021 Annual Report states that general contributions were \$5,536.019. The general contributions for 2020-2022 is \$5,245,809.

The 2020-2021 Annual Report states that twenty-five staff members are employed by the IFC, which includes full time and part time positions. A request was made regarding the number of employees for the past year, but that number was not made available prior to writing this report. However, as is the case with many employers, the IFC has faced challenges in maintaining the staff they would like to have. There are several new staff members over the past year: Mar'lisa Wooten, Community engagement Manager; Asia Fowler, Finance and Operations Director; Quinton Harper, Activate IFC! Director, Lance Dixon, Community Kitchen Manager. The IFC is seeking to fill additional positions: Shelter Team Lead (full-time); Community Kitchen Staff (part-time); Resident Advocates (substitute); Facilities Staff (substitutes). Staffing changes and the low number of volunteers who have been able to be inside IFC Commons are challenges, which the IFC staff is doing its best to address.

### **Racial Equity and Inclusion**

At Jackie Jenks' forum, she stated that transforming the focus of IFC from a "charity model to a justice based model" continues to be a focus. REAL (Race, Equity, Activism and Leadership) includes three programs: Activate IFC!, which works to increase the political engagement of low-income members; Meeting of the Minds, a group of community leaders and IFC members focuses on issues of affordable housing and racial equity; and REAL Transformation, which focuses on issues of racism and equity within the IFC. The IFC seeks applicants for employment from Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), people with the lived experience of poverty or homelessness, LGBTQIA people and those with disabilities. The IFC Board is representative of the diverse community it serves.

In closing, we are proud of the hard work being done by IFC during these difficult times and committed to continuing our support.

Respectfully submitted, Ronald Carnes, Emilie Condon, Asta Crowe, Ann Drake, Max Drake, Gwyn Hein, Dottie Heninger, Carolyn Stuart (clerk), Tori Toles and Carolyn White.