

connections



Fall 2024 • Volume 45, Number 2



SAFE SPACES

FOR ALL.



Jackie Jenks
President and CEO

Ever since the early years of IFC, you - our community of supporters - have made it your mission to do what you can to provide our neighbors with what they need. Whether it is groceries, prepared meals, funds for our neighbors' emergency expenses, space at local churches for shelter, or contributions to build our own spaces, you have provided. When the county water system was compromised during an ice storm some years back, you brought cases of bottled water to the shelters. During the pandemic, you sewed face masks, brought special cleaning supplies, and dropped off extra testing kits. Still today, when you shop for your family's needs, you think about your community at IFC and pick up extra cans of food for the market or meat for the kitchen. **We're here in our spaces, doing the work every day. And you are, too.**

In this issue of Connections, we celebrate the community we have created together, the critical goods and services you bring every day, and more. **We also celebrate the spaces we have built together — and those we aspire to build.** The physical structures in which magic happens every day at IFC are the beacons of hope our community counts on — to come in out of the cold, to get sustenance from that hot meal, to lie down in that soft bed, to take in that warm smile and that encouraging word. Our physical structures might be less exciting to talk about, but they serve as the foundation for our services.

In these pages, you'll find our plans for ensuring we have spaces that serve our mission into the future. We'll celebrate together our partnerships that have led to additional cold weather shelter in our community when temperatures dip below freezing. And we'll share our aspirations for locating and designing the safe outdoor living spaces our community so desperately needs.

Your continued engagement sustains us as we work together to preserve and build the structures that will hold our community into the future. Thank you for all the ways you support IFC's work!

IFC STAFF TEAM

ADMINISTRATION, OPERATIONS & DEVELOPMENT

Jackie Jenks, President and CEO
Asia Fowler, Deputy Director
Jennifer Bowden, Finance Director
Stephani Kilpatrick, Development and Communications Manager
Allan Rosen, Facilities Manager
Gunzo Bethea, Facilities Advocate
Chris Horton, Facilities Advocate

ACTIVATE! IFC

Nate Jones, Activate! IFC Director
Paris Miller-Foushee, TAP BIPOC Project Lead
Alyssa Hinton, Voter Engagement Project Lead

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Kristin Lavergne, Community Services Director
Crystell Ferguson, Community Services Manager
Joseph Adams, Kitchen Team Lead
Nat Flow, Food Resources Team Lead
Katina Welch, Community Services Advocate
Bk Hart, Kitchen Advocate

SHELTER AND HOUSING

Jessica Aldavé, Shelter and Housing Director
Tracey Hagan, HomeStart Manager
Ka'Tiera Truett, Community House Manager
Natalee Atwater, HomeStart Team Lead
Tra'Von Outlaw, Community House Team Lead
Bernestine Austin, Community House Case Manager
Linda Ellison, HomeStart Case Manager
Debra Vestal, PSH Team Lead
Tom Bainbridge, PSH Case Manager
Carmen Johnson, PSH Case Manager
Angela Clapp, Resident Advocate
Annette Clark, Resident Advocate
David French, Resident Advocate
Charlotte Horton, Resident Advocate
Anna Kenion, Resident Advocate
Ronnie Kimble, Resident Advocate
Rhonda Lee, Resident Advocate
Kaneesha Person, Resident Advocate
Scherrie Smith, Resident Advocate
Algin Wiley, Resident Advocate
Rayneesha Meadows, Resident Advocate



COMMUNITY IMPACT FY 2023-24

KEEPING PEOPLE HOUSED *by stretching household budgets:*

\$146,893 IN EMERGENCY FUNDS
for utility bills, rent, & other essentials

52,690 HOT MEALS
enjoyed by people who were hungry



11,494
BAGS OF GROCERIES
taken home by members of IFC

BUILDING COMMUNITY POWER *through voting, leadership development, and community safety:*

200+ IFC COMMUNITY MEMBERS
ENGAGED
through voting related programs

83 NEWLY REGISTERED VOTERS

600+ PEOPLE REACHED
through community safety cyphers
and conversations, phone banking,
and door-to-door canvassing

150+ PEOPLE REACHED
through training workshops
focused on BIPOC experience



FUELING THE WORK EVERY DAY *to create a community of belonging:*

150
VOLUNTEERS



37
STAFF MEMBERS

15 BOARD MEMBERS

NAVIGATING THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER *for resources that build resilience:*

200 HOUSEHOLDS ACCESSED
OUR COMMUNITY
NAVIGATION PROGRAM
during an average week



PROVIDING SAFE SHELTER *when someone loses their home:*

30,423
NIGHTS
spent in our shelters
by adults and
children

54% OF PEOPLE
who left our shelters moved
into permanent housing



12 LOCAL LANDLORDS
partnered with us to offer
lower than market rate rent
for permanent supportive
housing members



30+
NON-PROFIT &
GOVERNMENT
PARTNERS



25+
BUSINESSES

25+
CONGREGATIONS



3,000+
HOUSEHOLD DONORS



IFC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Donna Carrington, Chair
Tom Fenn, Vice Chair
Dow Williamson, Treasurer
Darin Campbell, Secretary
Susan Laidlaw, Past Chair

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Lynn Allen
Don Arbuckle
April Scales Barber
Laura Batts-Thomas
Michelle Hamilton
Mariela Hernandez
Jay Miller
John Ring
Rachel Waltz

PUBLISHED BY IFC



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Coming in from the cold

"Being in a warm place gives a sense of survival, a sense of confidence. I can hold my head up and know I don't need to sleep on the concrete on a very cold night. I can maybe get to a better place."

- Tanya, Community Member

Autumn is by far one of the most popular seasons, and for good reason. Pumpkin spice, hot beverages, and comfort foods are abundant. Leaves change color, and bonfires blaze. The crisp, cool weather provides respite from the stifling heat of the summer months. At IFC, we wholeheartedly embrace these joys of the season. And for us, the fall weather signifies another predictable reality: The need to plan for the winter months.

As far back as we can remember, winter at IFC has always meant pulling out those floor mats from storage, unpacking extra blankets, and preparing our meeting rooms for expanded shelter. Between Community House shelter for men and HomeStart shelter for women and families, we squeeze in 20 extra sleeping spaces each night during the winter months – and on dangerously cold nights, sometimes even more.

Of course, IFC's expanded shelter capacity no longer meets the need of everyone seeking shelter in our community, so folks still have to set up tents in the woods and shelter under blankets wherever they can. *We despise this reality.* While weekend camping is a fun outing for some of us, we know that the human body is not built to live unsheltered on a regular basis and that the stressors of homelessness decrease life expectancy over time. Even worse, when temperatures drop below freezing, sleeping outside on a single night can be life-threatening.

As the numbers of people experiencing housing crisis in Orange County have increased since the pandemic, IFC has worked with our community partners to open "pop-up shelter" during extremely cold weather when the temperature drops to 32 degrees or below. On these nights, our government partners provide logistical support,

overnight staffing, and transportation assistance, and IFC helps with snacks, set-up, break-down, and outreach to community members who need access.

This year, our coalition is excited to have another partner at the table - University

"There are two things University Baptist has in abundance: space, and a desire to help. Add to that the asset of living in a place with such amazing leaders and organizations who sincerely care for the vulnerable, and the pieces all came together to make this possible. We're honored to host, as it gives us a chance to live out our faith by practicing hospitality, but what's most beautiful about this is how it is a true expression of community; our church is one piece of the puzzle, and alongside partners like IFC, the Town of Chapel Hill, and the Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness, we can all make a real difference for our neighbors in need."

-University Baptist Pastor Paul Burgess



Baptist Church, a partner congregation that has graciously offered to host the pop-up shelter this season. "Senior Pastor Paul Burgess and congregation quickly answered our call and worked with our Town staff to find a way to properly accommodate 20 people when it's dangerously cold to be outside," said Chapel Hill Police Chief Celisa Lehwew, who led the charge on securing a suitable host site.

One of the winning features of the church is its location, which is central to where people work, receive services, and handle personal business during the day. "Being downtown, it's closer for people. You don't have to worry about when the buses stop running, and you don't have to walk as far -- especially people who have disabilities," said Tonya Adams-Ruffin, IFC Member and Voting Ambassador.

Orange County will declare cold weather shelter pop-up nights based on twice weekly weather forecasts received by Emergency Management Services. Community members accessing shelter will arrive in the evenings, settle in on a cot with a warm blanket, and leave in the mornings. Daily services, including meals at Community Kitchen, will be available at IFC Commons in downtown Carrboro.

Community members are excited and grateful that additional shelter will be opening up again this winter, if only on the very coldest nights. Tonya shares, "Being in a warm place gives a sense of survival, a sense of confidence. I can hold my head up and know I don't need to sleep on the concrete on a very cold night. I can maybe get to a better place."

There's a place for everyone in the pop-up shelter partnership! We need volunteers to lend a hand with set-up, check-in, breakdown, and laundering blankets. We also need donations of blankets, snacks, and other supplies. If you'd like to be added to the volunteer call list or have items to donate, contact Jackie Jenks at jjjenks@ifcmailbox.org.



IFC Community House
Cold Weather Space Setup

Caring for the Spaces that Care for Others

IFC spaces are more than just places of refuge.

They're beacons of hope for people facing some of the most difficult circumstances in life – homelessness, hunger, and poverty. Yet behind every meal served and every bed offered lies an often-overlooked factor that determines the quality of services: the upkeep of the facility itself.

For someone without their own safe place to live, walking into a run-down building can provoke feelings of neglect and undervalue. As Gunzo Bethea puts it, "If you walk into a place that's unkempt, your mind goes into a negative place." Gunzo has a 13-year history working at IFC, first as a Resident Advocate at Community House shelter, and now as Facilities Staff at all IFC locations. He says, "It's not just about fixing a screw, it's about the people. Everything you do affects people's morale."

Moreover, sustainability is at stake. IFC operates on a tight budget, relying on our community to support our operations. We can't afford to spend precious funds on preventable repairs. John Ring, IFC Board Member, explains that it's really about stewardship – "being a good steward of IFC resources so those resources can reliably serve the people who need it most and confirming for donors that we appreciate what you give us and we're going to be deliberate about how we spend it." John and IFC Facilities Manager Allan Rosen have been working since summer 2022 on analyzing data to create an Asset Stewardship Plan and an Asset

Stewardship Committee of IFC's Board to manage the upkeep of our facilities. The plan uses software to gather information to manage work orders for repairs, as well as craft a reliable maintenance budget and an accurate asset capital plan for how to maintain and upkeep fixed assets like refrigerators and washing machines. John says, "We're working on creating a culture that acknowledges there is a cost associated with every doorknob and communicates that to stakeholders." Dow Williamson, IFC Board Treasurer and Asset Stewardship Committee Member, notes that having a plan "helps the agency's budget, because we're prepared for expenses instead of being surprised by them."

Then there's the impact on community perception and involvement. A clean, well-run facility is far more likely to attract staff, volunteers, and donors, which are the lifeblood of IFC's services. When staff and volunteers see a space that's taken care of, they're motivated to return to work. Keeping the buildings in shape "frees staff up to do other important things on their shifts," said Chris Horton, Facilities Staff and former Community House Resident Advocate. Staff members explain that neglecting a seemingly small thing can lead to something major. For example, a broken bathroom door can cause privacy issues for a person who is already traumatized by poverty and homelessness. Don Arbuckle, IFC Receptionist Volunteer and Board

"It allows us to quickly, efficiently work with the shelter residents – so we can flow."

Bernestine Austin



Volunteer Blair McConnell takes it upon himself to walk around and spot-sweep whenever he has down time, acknowledging that people feel better with a tidy space.



Allan Rosen, Facilities Manager and Asia Fowler, Deputy Director, lead IFC's first full Facilities team.



Chris Horton, who's worked at IFC for over 15 years, says "As we help the community, we also need help keeping our facilities nice and clean."



Member on the Asset Stewardship Committee points out, "The plumbing being out of order means members can't take showers or use the bathroom – a need for people on a day-to-day basis – and volunteers can't do their job of helping people access the resources." Conversely, a well-maintained facility communicates professionalism, commitment, and care. As Bernestine Austin, Community House Case Manager puts it, "It allows us to quickly, efficiently work with the shelter residents - so we can flow."

The upkeep of IFC facilities is not just about fixing what's broken—it's about building spaces that nurture safety, dignity, and community. When we care for the spaces that care for others, we create a ripple effect of mutual respect that touches everyone involved.



Receptionist Volunteer and Board Member Don Arbuckle asserts
"We have to be proactive and address things ahead of time."



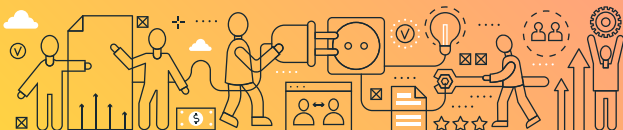
Gunzo Bethea, Facilities Advocate: *"I always think, 'What if I was out here, what if I was in your place? I would want to sit on a clean bench.'"*

IFC Spaces Need You!

Seeking Facilities Volunteers for:

- Interior painting
- Maintenance and repairs
- Landscaping
- Minor renovation projects
- Administrative support for purchasing research and data entry
- High-level consultation in commercial property management

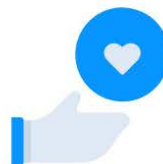
Go to **www.ifcweb.org** and click on the **Volunteer Tab** to fill out an application.



GIVE TODAY
 and help IFC support our community

ONLINE

Use your credit card at ifcweb.org and schedule a recurring gift.



DONOR-ADVISED FUND

Recommend a grant to IFC on a timeline that is comfortable for you.

QUALIFIED CHARITABLE DISTRIBUTION

If you are 70 1/2 years old, designate your RMD to IFC with the use of a Qualified Charitable Distribution.



STOCKS or SECURITIES

Complete a transfer electronically by contacting Stephani Kilpatrick at skilpatrick@ifcmailbox.org or 919.929.6380 x2033

PLANNED GIFTS:

Will, Trust, Life Insurance Policy or Retirement Account

Name IFC as beneficiary of a planned gift and ensure a lasting legacy. Contact Stephani Kilpatrick at skilpatrick@ifcmailbox.org or 919.929.6380 x2033 to discuss.



CHECK

Mail a check made out to IFC to the address below.

Donations are tax-deductible. IFC's EIN is 59-1224041.

IFC | 110 W. Main Street, Carrboro, NC 27510
 919.929.6380 | ifcweb.org | info@ifcmailbox.org



PROGRAMS @ IFC COMMONS

LOCATED AT

110 W. Main Street, Carrboro NC 27510
919.929.6380
J Bus Line

Community Kitchen

Free hot balanced meals daily, open to all
M-F 11:15a-12:30p and 5:15-6p
Sat, Sun and Holidays 11:15a-Noon

Community Navigation

Drop-in access to computers, phones, and
community resource support
Showers available by appointment M-F
Call the number below for locker availability
M-F 10a-6p
919.929.6380 x2025

Community Market

Fresh food, pantry staples, and hygiene items
M-F by appointment
919.929.6380 x2000

Emergency Financial Assistance

Tuesdays leave a message at 9am to schedule an
appointment during the week
919.929.6380 x2024

Activate! IFC

Voter Engagement, Advocacy, and Leadership
Development
919.929.6380 x2030

SHELTER & HOUSING PROGRAMS

Contact the Housing Helpline to explore
housing options, including shelter. M-F 10a-4p at
919.245.2655 or housinghelp@orangecountync.gov.

Community House Shelter for Men

1315 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd, Chapel Hill NC 27514
NS, HS, and T Bus Lines
919.929.6380 x3000

HomeStart Shelter for Women and Families

2505 Homestead Road, Chapel Hill NC 27514
HS Bus Line
919.929.6380 x4000

Permanent Supportive Housing

Housing and case management support in units
throughout the community. Access by waiting list only.

In Memoriam

Patricia Fernandez
Jeremy Massey
Lyn Petrochuk
Caroline Pringle

Danny Foushee
Francesina Whitted
Tanya Williams

TEAR
HERE

I believe in a community that meets everyone's basic needs.

Please complete, detach coupon, and enclose with your check made out to IFC.

Mail to: IFC • 110 W. Main Street • Carrboro NC 27510

You may also make a secure donation at www.ifcweb.org or by calling 919-929-6380 x2033

Card #: _____ Security Code: _____ Exp. ____/____/____

Name on Card: _____

Billing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Signature: _____

Here is my one-time gift.

☐ \$1000 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$50 ☐ Other: \$ _____

This gift is in ☐ honor ☐ memory of: _____

Please send news of this gift to: _____

I want to be a sustaining donor.

Please charge my card ☐ quarterly ☐ monthly
in the amount of: ☐ \$500 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$25

☐ Other: \$ _____

- ☐ I prefer not to be listed publicly as an IFC donor
☐ My employer will match my gift; contact me

IFC is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization. All donations are tax-deductible.

THANK YOU!

FN2024

A Case for Safe Outdoor Living

In June 2024, the United States Supreme Court ruled in favor of criminalizing homelessness and punishing the impoverished. According to the court's majority opinion on *City of Grants Pass v. Johnson*, issuing civil and criminal penalties against people camping on public land does not constitute "cruel and unusual punishment" under the Eighth Amendment. As a result, municipalities possess the constitutional authority to fine and arrest people for sleeping in public spaces regardless of whether affordable alternatives exist in that area. In other words, "vagrancy laws" have been made legal again.

Then, in September 2024, a petition was submitted to Chapel Hill's Town Council that called for more "quality of life policing methods" to address "quality of life violations" such as "loitering," "vagrancy," and "public intoxication." Activate! IFC mobilized a group of members and community partners to express opposition and urged the council to continue funding community-led alternatives that emphasize care, not control. We were successful, in that no further action will be taken on the petition. However, **it is clear that a national movement to criminalize homelessness has arrived at our doorstep**; and we must counter its solicitation with an alternative of our own design.

In the prophetic words of Katina Welch, "housing is the foundation." Without it, folks are thrown into the harmful cycle of poverty and punishment that is part and parcel to the maintenance of racial capitalism. Although there are plans to develop affordable housing in the coming years, it takes time, money, and land to build; not to mention the additional time and money it takes to apply, move, and then finally feel settled into a home. As discouraging as it is to admit, it could be years before some of our members secure their foundation. To do nothing in the meantime would be a tacit endorsement of racial capitalism.

Therefore, **IFC is creating a coalition to secure a sanctioned sleeping space to meet people's basic needs** (including sanitation and safety) without the constant threat of displacement, criminalization, and incarceration.

A Safe Outdoor Living (SOL) Task Force, led by our members, staff, board, and ad rem community partners, will convene to secure the land and infrastructure necessary to



IFC members gather for a Black August event where they talk about their experiences living outside.

establish a safe outdoor living space. **The SOL Task Force will accomplish this by (1) researching the efficacy of other efforts around the country to do the same, such as those in Austin, Seattle, and San Francisco; (2) identifying land that is available and suitable to use for this purpose; (3) interfacing with county and town staff and elected officials; and (4) providing mutual aid to address members' immediate needs.**

Activate! IFC and Safety Vanguard will be leading the mutual aid aspect of SOL, providing supplies such as food, contraception, naloxone, personal hygiene products, and survival kits to members. At other points, this may look like small-scale de-escalation, self-governance, and outdoor living training(s). However, **regardless of the shape it takes, it will always be determined by the expressed needs of our members.**

What can you do? A few things:

- 1)** Drop off that land! If you know of any plots in Orange County that could potentially be utilized as a sanctioned outdoor living area for our folks, feel free to call Jackie Jenks at (919) 929-6380 ext. 2011.
- 2)** Donate snacks (protein bars, jerky, dried fruits, etc.), water bottles, contraception, naloxone, masks, personal hygiene products, first aid supplies, hand warmers, tarps, and trash bags. You can drop these off in Community Room #201, located on the second floor of IFC Commons, also known as Activate! IFC's headquarters.
- 3)** If you're a business owner, get to know the people who are sleeping in-and-around your storefront; offer them water free of charge; let them use the restroom; and don't be so concerned with the impact of their presence on your image or bottom line. If you're a community member at-large, keep bottles of water, cash, and some extra snacks in your car to give out to folks panhandling around town, or maybe a few hand warmers and dollar store mittens, too, for when the temperature drops. Learn folks' names, offer your own, and say hello whenever you cross paths. **If you can't spare the change, be a part of it.**

The first Southern "vagrancy law" was enacted in 1866. After the civil war, thousands of formerly enslaved people, as well as soldiers, both Union and Confederate, were roaming the country and riding the rails in search of work and refuge. Primarily about free labor, these laws equipped municipalities with the constitutional authority to fine and arrest people for, like the precedent set in June, sleeping in public spaces.

Inter-Faith Council
for Social Service
110 W. Main Street
Carrboro, NC 27510

WHAT DOES SAFE SPACE MEAN TO YOU?

SAFETY FOR THE
OPPRESSED, NOT
JUST PRIVILEGED
CLASSES

ACCESS TO
HEALTHCARE AND
MENTAL HEALTH
SERVICES

A ROOF OVER MY
HEAD, A PLACE TO
SLEEP AT NIGHT

A PLACE YOU CAN
GO AND NOT GET
HURT PHYSICALLY
OR EMOTIONALLY

AN ENVIRONMENT
NOT SUBJECTED TO
HOSTILE SYSTEMS OF
DISCRIMINATION



vision

A community that meets everyone's basic needs, including dignified and affordable housing, an abundance of healthy food, and meaningful social connection.

mission

To confront the causes and respond to the effects of poverty in our community.

values

Mutual Respect We all have equal value and are worthy of honor, dignity, and security. Respect for one another is both a right and a responsibility.

Social Justice We advocate within political, economic, and social systems to promote justice as to the distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges in society.

Community Power Everyone benefits when those experiencing the problem lead us toward solutions.

Self-Determination People have a right to make choices about how to live their lives and work toward their goals.

Integrity We are authentic, ethical, and transparent.