

connections

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Jackie Jenks

President and CEO

A growing number of community members have found themselves displaced in our towns as housing costs soar and the social safety net struggles to keep up. At IFC, we know many of you are concerned about neighbors who can't afford to meet their basic needs — those sleeping outside, people asking for money near our downtown businesses, and familiar faces whose health issues are visibly getting worse by the week. **We share your concerns and are tirelessly working toward housing solutions so all our community members can thrive.**

Some of you have asked important questions about the challenges you see and wonder how you can be part of the solution. Here are IFC's responses to a couple of common inquiries.

Why do we see more people sleeping outside?

More than half of the renters in Chapel Hill and Carrboro are cost burdened, meaning they pay more than 30% of their income for housing costs. As a result, many can't afford to cover other basic needs, like food, clothing, medications, and personal care products. Even a small life crisis can lead to loss of housing.

IFC offers the only year-round shelters in the county with 66 spaces for adults and 10 rooms for families each night. But there are many more people in our community who have lost their housing than we are able to accommodate. The solution is to provide a range of housing options at various affordability levels which, unfortunately, our community does not currently have. Even worse, budget cuts currently being deliberated at the federal level would be devastating to the housing we already offer and would limit further progress on affordability.

What should I do when I pass by someone asking for money?

At IFC, we know that every day people in our community ask their neighbors for money because they need it to make ends meet. If you are willing and able to support in this way, we encourage you to do so. If you give, understand that the recipient will use your gift toward what they feel they most need at that time.

If you are not willing or able to give cash, you can acknowledge the humanity of the person asking for money by making eye contact, speaking to them, and letting them know you don't have anything to give at the moment. If they are receptive, you might have a conversation or short interaction with them. If they respond negatively, try to understand the stressors they are experiencing and offer some grace.

Your active engagement is needed and appreciated. We hope you will continue to support IFC's work and increase your gift, if you're able. IFC receives funds from government and foundations, but the majority of our funding comes from individuals like you. We are grateful for you, our community, for fueling our services in so many ways. Our collective work is needed now more than ever.



Member Leader Darin Campbell marches in support of affordable housing for all our neighbors.

The Power of Community

By Tonya Adams-Ruffin

In August, I turned 55. Mentally, I like to say I'm 30 — my own little ancient Chinese secret, especially since I have a child who's now 32. With age comes reflection, and I find myself holding on to memories I can't take back. Choices I can't rewind. But every day, I wake up with the same determination: to keep going and to help others do the same.

Not long ago, I was homeless. I had just enough money to rent a room for two nights. But when a local homecoming weekend drove the price up from \$79 to \$219 per night, I couldn't keep up. I packed all my belongings into my wheelchair and headed to Jimmy's Famous Hot Dogs for something to eat. People in the drive-thru saw me sitting in the cold. Some offered money. I tried to turn it down — “No thank you, I appreciate you for offering” — but some were insistent. The kindness reminded me I was still seen.

I called a family member for help moving my things to storage. “I'm on my way,” they said. Hours passed. It got dark. It got cold. I was still waiting.

Eventually, somebody from the restaurant called the Holistic Empathetic Assistance Response Team (HEART) in Durham — a crisis response team that doesn't treat people like problems, but like people. I only had \$98 left, but they helped me find an affordable room, checked my vital signs, and arranged wheelchair-accessible transportation. That night, they were the reason I wasn't still out there alone. That night, I wasn't invisible.

Being in a wheelchair adds more complications than most people realize. The aisles in stores are too narrow. Buses often aren't equipped, or drivers aren't trained to help people with mobility devices. Sometimes I'm made to feel like a burden just for needing access.

Since arriving in Carrboro and receiving services through IFC, life has been a rollercoaster. I was the only woman sleeping outside the IFC for a while. One

morning, I witnessed a stabbing and became the first responder. We called for help, applied pressure to stop the bleeding, and waited with the injured man until paramedics came. That experience was terrifying. But it pulled me into something greater. It led me to IFC's advocacy program Activate! IFC.

I started with voter engagement and mutual aid. We served coffee and snacks and invited conversation. We created an art circle focused on positive affirmations, designing lotus flowers with encouraging words that we placed around the IFC Commons to inspire hope. I even used the petals to make cards for a dear friend who passed away, a small gesture of beauty during hard times.



I'm also part of the Safe Outdoor Living Campaign. We do mutual aid drops and advocate for a community resource center in Chapel Hill, something our homeless population urgently needs. We're petitioning for sanctioned land where unhoused people can be safe, and for warming and cooling centers during extreme weather. These aren't luxuries. These are lifelines.

After a long and uncertain journey, I finally have a place to call home. My personal safe space filled with peace, gratitude, and the warmth of my own touch. With the help of God, my community, and unwavering patience, I overcame homelessness and found stability. My dog KhemiKhari and I are no longer burdened by fear or constant movement. The road was hard and I'm building a future rooted in clarity, dignity, and the promise that things can only go up from here.

Being a part of IFC has reminded me of my worth. And it reminded me of the power of community, not just giving meals and shelter, but giving people their dignity back. I want to help others like I've been helped. I want to share safety resources, housing information, and human connection.

Turning 55 doesn't mean I stop dreaming. It means I dream bigger. For a world where people without homes aren't treated as less than. For a system that values compassion over convenience. For a community that sees all its members, especially the ones in chairs, on cold streets, or in hard times.

**Because we are here. We matter.
And we deserve better!**



Save The Date

**Next year's Chapel Hill-Carrboro CROP Hunger Walk will be held on
Sunday, March 22, 2026**

You can support IFC's mission in many ways!

Donate online at www.ifcweb.org



Donate through:

- Donor-Advised Funds
- Qualified Charitable Distribution
- Stocks
- Securities
- Planned Gifts
- Bequests

Donate by check made out to IFC and mail to:
IFC • 110 W. Main Street • Carrboro NC 27510

For more information, contact Stephani Kilpatrick:
skilpatrick@ifcmailbox.org • 919-929-6380 x2033

Volunteers are needed in our facilities to assist with painting, maintenance, repairs, and landscaping. Fill out an application today at www.ifcweb.org.



Thank You!



COMMUNITY IMPACT — FY 2024-25 —

KEEPING PEOPLE HOUSED *by stretching household budgets:*

\$83,589 IN EMERGENCY FUNDS
for utility bills, rent, & other essentials

60,338 HOT MEALS
enjoyed by people who were hungry



12,794
BAGS OF GROCERIES
taken home by members of IFC

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:*

27,474
NIGHTS
spent in our shelters
by adults and
children

44% OF PEOPLE
who left our shelters moved
into permanent housing



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



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

138 IFC COMMUNITY MEMBERS
ENGAGED
through voting related programs

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

179 PEOPLE REACHED
through training workshops
focused on BIPOC experience



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

150
VOLUNTEERS



36
STAFF MEMBERS

13 BOARD MEMBERS

30+
NON-PROFIT &
GOVERNMENT
PARTNERS



25+
BUSINESSES

25+
CONGREGATIONS



3,000+
HOUSEHOLD DONORS



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 5:00p-5:45p
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

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

IFC has lost several valued members of our community in
the past few months. They'll live on in our hearts.

Nathaniel "Pee Wee" Lee

Linda McCoy

Tynesa "T.C." Crumpler



I often
feel discouraged in
finding housing. It can be
overwhelming sorting out the
emotional roadblocks that get in
the way of the goal of housing.
Usually, all I can do is take it 24
hours at a time.

Antoinette Keys,
former HomeStart resident

We are homeless. We are
not helpless. We will help
save your life!! Please
help save our lives!

Sign held by
Tonya Adams Ruffin,
IFC member

Life is a
journey and has many
phases; the people in the shelter
are in a phase.

Tim Dugan,
former Community House resident



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.