

Direct from the Director. . .

Twenty short years ago we began Interfaith Neighbors. How the years have flown by! The organization has grown and the impact upon the people we have served defies all of our initial imagination.

I still remember that cold January day in 1988 when I visited homeless families living in motels. Seeing children in these awful living conditions called “home” made me quickly realize that they are the innocent victims of poverty. They didn’t ask to be born poor! In response to this overwhelming need, we began a rent subsidy program to prevent families from becoming homeless. We estimate that we have assisted over 2,500 working poor families (7,500 individuals, of whom 5,000 are children). Additionally, we began an Adopt-a-Family program that helps provide holiday gifts to hundreds of families throughout Monmouth County each year.

In 1991, we began operating the senior meal program in Monmouth County. We estimate that we have provided over 5,000,000 meals to untold thousands of seniors, most of whom are homebound and some who are disabled.

In 1996, we began a first-time home buyer program thanks to an initial donation of \$25,000 from our wonderful corporate partner, the New Jersey Natural Gas Company. We began renovating and building new homes with the volunteer efforts of an incredible general contractor, Bevin Irvin. We have recently completed our eighteenth house, with five more on the drawing board.

In 2005, our neighborhood revitalization plan for the west side of Asbury Park was approved under a new state program known as NRTC (Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit). This program has been designed to foster the rebirth of the west side through improved housing conditions, economic revitalization, improved community and recreational facilities, improved public

spaces and infrastructure, and improved social conditions and safety. The following corporations became our first-year investors for a total of \$1,000,000: New Jersey Natural Gas Company, Jersey Central Power and Light Company, PNC Bank, Selective Insurance, and Horizon Blue Cross.

In 2006, the New Jersey State Youth Corps asked us to assume the operation of the program in Asbury Park. The participants are youngsters who have not completed high school. To date, two Corps members have completed their GED (high school equivalent), one has enrolled in college at Brookdale, two have received driver’s licenses and two have obtained full time employment.

We are a “grass roots” organization, which means we are directly involved with the people we serve. We have no fancy expense accounts, leased autos or high executive salaries. Our organization still has 600-plus volunteers. Our supporting congregations number close to fifty faith communities.

I was once asked to describe the most difficult part of my job. My answer was then, as it still is today, “Asking for money.” We have no way to continue to serve people in need other than to ask for your support. These are scary economic times and the poor are usually the most affected. Our costs are increasing daily and we need you more than ever. Ninety-seven percent of every donated dollar we receive is used solely to benefit those we serve. Please don’t procrastinate, send us whatever you can and then know that you helped someone – your neighbor!

– Joseph Marmora

P. S. Remember our Twentieth Anniversary Celebration, scheduled for September 18 at Branches Restaurant in West Long Branch.



Community Members “March for Meals”



On Wednesday, March 5th, Interfaith Neighbors hosted its annual “March for Meals” event. This important campaign was originally designed by the Meals on Wheels Association of America to help increase awareness of senior hunger. This national campaign features community-based events throughout the month of March, during which numerous civic, community and business leaders are invited to help deliver meals to seniors.

Volunteers in attendance included Steve Morgan, President and CEO of JCP&L, and Roberta Sheridan, JCP&L Area Manager, as well as Freeholder Barbara McMorrow; Barry Johnson, Assistant Director of the Monmouth County Department of Human Services; Ginny Lennon and Vicky Briton of Sovereign Bank; Christian Bolte, Keyport Council Member; and Earl Stephenson, CEO of the Capital Investment Network.

Volunteers and staff gathered at Interfaith Neighbors’ Asbury Park headquarters at 10 AM. Each volunteer accompanied one of our drivers, helping them to deliver meals to homebound seniors. When asked what motivated her to volunteer, Ginny Lennon of Sovereign Bank said “I try to help out in the community. I would love to know that someone was around to help my parents if I weren’t able to.”

Nearly 4,000 seniors throughout Monmouth County receive meals through our Meals on Wheels nutrition program, which is partially funded through the Monmouth County Office on Aging. Interfaith Neighbors has been the sole operator of the Monmouth County nutrition program since 1991. This past year, approximately 400,000 meals were prepared, served and delivered to seniors and disabled persons living in Monmouth County. Interfaith Neighbors is supported by a volunteer unit of 600 dedicated individuals working throughout the county, recording over 75,000 hours annually in volunteer service.

Interfaith Neighbors’ Meals-on-Wheels Program not only addresses the nutritional needs of seniors, but their social needs as well. Participation in the congregate meal program can ease the void created when a person lives alone, and for the homebound senior, the meals-on-wheels program provides a vital link to the world. The senior can remain comfortably at home with the dignity of independence and the security of having someone visit once a day with a nutritious meal. By participating in Interfaith Neighbors “March for Meals” program, community leaders demonstrated their support for preventing senior hunger while having a first-hand look at what Meals on Wheels means to thousands of seniors who receive meals each day.

Interfaith Neighbors, Inc.

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Interfaith Neighbors Seeks Residents Opinions

Beginning April 12, 2008, Interfaith Neighbors, Inc. (IFN), with help from local residents, community leaders, and the City of Asbury Park, conducted a door-to-door survey of randomly selected households in the West Side Neighborhood of Asbury Park. The survey provided residents with the unique opportunity to express their views on important neighborhood issues such as affordable housing, public services, safety, school quality, access to businesses, public transportation, and sense of community. Information obtained through the survey will be used to inform decisions and aid in planning potential projects under the Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program (NRTC). In addition, where appropriate, survey results will be shared with community residents and leaders, and will be used to assist in planning specific projects in the West Side community.

Interfaith Neighbors' West Side Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Project is a ten-year plan approved by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs in order to benefit the West Side neighborhood of Asbury Park. The NRTC project seeks to support the existing community by revitalizing housing, social programs, encouraging business growth and helping to build a strong neighborhood. First year funding for the NRTC project has been provided by the New Jersey Natural Gas Company, Jersey Central Power and Light Company, PNC Bank, Selective Insurance, and Horizon Blue Cross/Blue Shield.

Interfaith Neighbor's Program Manager, Heather Schulze, coordinated the survey effort. The organization received financial support from the Wachovia Regional Foundation. Over 60 volunteers went into the west side community to survey residents, and feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Responding households were given a

"Chance to Win" a number of items including five \$100 Visa gift cards. In addition, responding households received a thank you bag containing information about Interfaith Neighbors and the NRTC program, social services available in Asbury Park, upcoming programs and events, and other items from NRTC funders. The West Side Community Center and the Boys and Girls Club of Monmouth County also provided much appreciated support by serving as launching sites for the survey teams.

Once the results are clear, Interfaith Neighbors will make this information available to all interested parties upon request, however, individual responses will remain anonymous. Interfaith Neighbors also plans to hold a series of meetings open to residents where results will be released. By talking to residents and collecting data about the neighborhood, Interfaith Neighbors will be ready to make plans and take action to directly benefit the west side community.

Have You Thought of Donating Stock?

If you wish to donate stock, we have the mechanism in place to accommodate your donation with relative ease. If you have appreciated stock, you can claim a tax deduction at the appreciated amount and avoid paying capital gains tax.

Call our director, Joe Marmora, at 732-775-0525 for details.

Bruce Springsteen Tix up for Auction!

What:

Two sets of two VIP concert tickets and two E Street Lounge passes

Where:

Giants Stadium, East Rutherford, NJ

When:

July 28th, 2008, 7:30 PM

Starting **July 1st**, please visit:

www.charityfolks.com/interfaith

to bid on these two great packages and help raise money for Interfaith Neighbors!

Auction powered by CharityFolks.com

Charity Folks is the leading online marketplace for nonprofit fundraising, corporate cause-marketing campaigns and celebrity-driven charity initiatives. Managing hundreds of successful charity auctions since its inception, Charity Folks has raised nearly \$10 million for nonprofit organizations around the world, all while offering consumers highly coveted auction lots donated by today's hottest celebrities, musicians, sports stars, high-profile personalities and top-tier brands. For further information, visit www.charityfolks.com.

We Get Letters. . .

"I can never thank you enough for the financial help you gave to me and my family. I was so frightened to ask you for help, expecting to be turned away. But the moment I met you I did not feel that I was being judged but rather that I found a kind person who was willing to listen and help." (Written by a single mother.)

[Continued →](#)



"Our newest house at 40 Norwood Ave. in Long Branch was completed in January, 2008. The Pothier family will be the proud new owners of this beautiful home!"

Save the Date!

Interfaith Neighbors, Inc.
**20th Anniversary Celebration
&
Annual Meeting**

Thursday, September 18, 2008

Cocktail Hour 6:30 – 7:30 PM

Dinner 7:30 – 10:30 PM

Branches Restaurant

123 Monmouth Road, Rt. 71
West Long Branch, NJ 07764

Tickets: \$35 per person

[We Get Letters... continued](#)

"Thank you for everything you have done for me to help me to reach my dreams and goals. I will never forget you." (Youth Corps member after being accepted into college.)