



Annual Report 2016

Rental and Mortgage Assistance

Interfaith Neighbors provided \$445,514.42 in financial assistance to 367 family units or 654 individuals in 2016 with an average payout of \$1,668.59 per family. Funding came from state and county grants, private and corporate donations.

Security deposits continued to be a main need of families seeking to line up a place to rent.

Interfaith expanded the holiday program to not only get toys and gifts to the approximately 100 families assisted with housing during the year but also to a larger number than past years of local families in need. The Rental/Mortgage Department also assisted the Kula Café with its annual Need to Feed Holiday celebration.

Nutrition Division (Meals on Wheels)

The Meals on Wheels program in 2016 progressed on the same level as the previous year, serving approximately 300,000 meals to seniors and disabled persons in Monmouth County. The kitchen staff at the 810 Fourth Avenue headquarters in Asbury Park cooks and prepares approximately 900 to 1,000 meals a day.

Interfaith operates 70 routes to deliver meals, and in addition to paid drivers, has approximately 500 volunteers helping to prepare and deliver meals for people in their homes or at congregate noonday sites.

Those lunch sites are located at senior centers in Asbury Park, Neptune, Howell, Red Bank, Middletown, Keyport and Keansburg. Three additional sites – the Long Branch and Bradley Beach senior centers and Asbury Towers in Asbury Park --are auxiliary sites where volunteers pick up meals and deliver them to residents in their homes.

Interfaith delivered meals on Tuesdays to participants in a Freehold Borough senior computer class at the Rug Mill senior housing complex. We also partnered with Beacon Health and Social Services to deliver meals to their homebound clients.

We continued to serve 600 breakfasts a day to the most needy Meals on Wheels recipients, and deliver two meals on Saturday mornings to 25 percent of our residents who have reported having no one to help them on weekends and holidays.

And we continued the box lunch program for senior clubs at a cost of \$4 a meal which helped pay for the breakfast program. Allentown Senior Club signed on as the newest club to get the box lunches beginning in January 2017, joining clubs in Holmdel, Clifford Beach and Neptune.

Housing Development

Interfaith Neighbors completed three affordable homes at 13 and 17 DeWitt Avenues and 23 Atkins Avenue in 2016, bringing the total number of affordable housing units constructed in Monmouth County the past 20 years to 55.

In the pipeline for 2017 are a three-bedroom single-family house at 922 Mattison Ave. and the Turf Club Residences, a 20-unit, mixed income project on Springwood Avenue. Construction of the Turf Club homes is scheduled to begin in the spring of 2017.

Interfaith also is set to begin construction of the five-bedroom Rights of Passage transitional home at 522 Prospect Ave. for young men needing temporary housing while learning to live independently. Covenant House will operate the program. The project is being built with funding from the Monmouth County HOME program, Asbury Park Community Development Block Grants and the state Neighborhood Redevelopment Tax Credit Program.

Interfaith Neighbors applied to the Monmouth County Home program (HUD funds) to build a two family rent-to-own house at 147 Borden Ave that we will rent to families while they are preparing for homeownership. We continue to get inquiries for more affordable housing units, but because of a reduction in federal funding, there is less money at this time for building.

Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program (NRTC)

Interfaith Neighbors continued its projects funded by the NRTC and is finishing up Project V funding which includes money for the Turf Club Residences and the Rights of Passage transitional housing.

The funding, which for the first five rounds came in at close to \$1 million a project year, underwrites housing, economic, employment, recreation and family stabilization projects on Asbury Park's West Side and comes from corporations which commit the funds and receive 50 percent write-offs on state taxes.

Project VI funding of \$747,750, which is good through May, 2018, includes money for housing projects as well as the Community Affairs Resource Center job placement program, Big Brothers Big Sisters youth mentoring program, Asbury Park Music Foundation Summer Concert Series in Springwood Avenue Park, the Kula Urban Farm and the Business Development Center's Food Entrepreneur Program.

In a related development, Interfaith Neighbors is a lead partner working with the Asbury Park Housing Authority and City of Asbury Park to expand programs for the benefit of West Side residents and neighborhoods under a \$500,000 CHOICE Neighborhoods Planning Grant.

Business Development Center

The BDC and the Rutgers University Food Innovation Center launched the Food Entrepreneur Program to provide free business workshops for budding entrepreneurs in Monmouth County seeking to develop and market a food product. Four teams were chosen from applicants to begin the training sessions in 2017. Those with successful plans will then work with Rutgers staff at the Innovation Center to produce their product for market. The BDC is providing low interest loans to help pay that Rutgers program cost. Dean Nelson of Dean's Natural Food Market came on as a partner to the program to have his stores serve as a platform for products that meet Dean's ingredient criteria.

The BDC held its second Junior Entrepreneur Training program for middle school students from four Asbury Park schools, creating products which they sold for significant profits at the Made in Monmouth Expo in the spring of 2016. The program is being offered again in 2017.

The Asbury Park Chamber of Commerce once again is headquartered in the BDC offices at 1201 Springwood

Ave. The chamber had relocated to another site in Asbury but returned in 2016.

BDC Director Roger Boyce and Interfaith Neighbors Co-Executive Director Paul McEvily continued to serve as trustees of the popular Second Life Bikes community center at 21 Main Street. By the end of 2016, Boyce helped close a bank loan for Second Life Bikes and its new partner, the Cowerks high tech office space company on Lake Avenue, to buy the 21 Main Street building. That allowed the bike store to have a permanent home in the city and the Cowerks team additional room to expand its business. The two community mainstays now share the large space renamed Junction Hall.

Gillian Edgar joined Boyce's BDC staff.

Kula Café and Kula Urban Farm

The Kula Café restaurant and hospitality training program continued into its fourth year since the café opened in April 2013. Twenty-eight participants came into the program in 2016. According to an Oct. 15 report when the number stood at 22, four of those who had completed the training were attending college or advanced training programs, eight were working full-time and five were working part-time.

The café at 1201 Springwood Ave. saw an increase in sales, catering and special events, which in turn, required additional hours of staffing and allowed an increase in number of trainees.

The Kula Urban Farm adjacent to the café went into full operation in 2016 with the hydroponic towers operating and more space built out for microgreens in the year-round greenhouse.

Sales of produce to restaurants began in late winter, 2016 and steadily increased. The restaurants included: Langosta Lounge, Seed to Sprout, Cardinal, Watermark, Moonstruck, and Russell & Bette's.

Interfaith purchased a delivery vehicle for café food orders and farm produce deliveries with a grant from the Friends of the Spring Lake Five.

Produce grown in the outdoor beds at the front of the greenhouse were open to community residents to pick free produce on Saturdays.

The café and farm piloted Farm to Table dinners offering finer level dining on the farm site. The dinners gave training participants greater experience serving on that level and drew new patrons to the farm and café. Groups also came on tours of the farm followed by a buffet at the café.

The farm began a new program known as the Kula Farm Experience, giving people in the community the opportunity to work up to 60 hours at \$10 an hour. Participants were assigned to watering, weeding, planting, harvesting and specific operations in the greenhouse. That program is continuing and is funded under a grant from the Elizabeth and Baretts O. Benjamin Foundation.

The Green Thumb Farm to Table program, also funded by the Benjamin Foundation, continued with afterschool classes for students from Our Lady of Mount Carmel. The students had classes on farm and café operations, healthy snacks and meals, and growing their own plants and produce.

A special venue during the summer was the free Monday night concerts from late June through August in the newly opened Springwood Avenue Park across Atkins Avenue from the café. The concerts increased awareness of and business at the café, which also sold food and drinks at the park during the concerts.

Interfaith Neighbors' Co-Executive Director Paul McEvily, played a significant role with the Monmouth Conservation Foundation in helping the city to get the final piece of funding needed to be able to complete and

open the park in 2016.

One of the challenges during the year was that seven Kula participants were not able to complete the training program because they became homeless and either had to relocate or were unable to continue working. Interfaith is working to construct housing for young people who would live there under the jurisdiction of the Covenant House program.

Kula Café assistant chef James McNulty and participants continued the weekly Need to Feed afternoon take-home soup or sandwich meal for residents given out each Monday at 3 p.m.

The farm hired two managers in 2016: Lisa Bagwell and Thijs VanOsterhout.

Monmouth County Youth Corps

Interfaith Neighbors' Monmouth County Youth Corps program ended in July 2016 when the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce did not renew funding because there were not enough participants in the program.

Interfaith operated the program for 10 years for young people who did not graduate from high school. The Youth Corps program is comprised of GED instruction, life and job skills classes, job placement, community service and individual support.

We saw many successes with participants passing their GED exams, gaining employment, driving permits and licenses and continuing their education.