



Annual Report 2015

Rental and Mortgage Assistance

The Rental and Mortgage Assistance Program in 2015 provided \$424,553 in assistance to 326 families with an average payout of \$1,302.30 per family. Funding came from county and state grants, private and corporate donations.

One trend during the year was an increase in requests for security deposits for rentals. Our assistance helps with back rent, security deposits and occasionally utilities. Additional volunteers in 2015 benefitted department operations. The annual holiday program saw 100 families adopted by churches, organizations and families or receive toys and gift cards donated to Interfaith Neighbors.

Nutrition Division (Meals on Wheels)

Our Meals on Wheels operations served approximately 300,000 meals in 2015 to seniors and disabled persons in Monmouth County. The kitchen staff at the main office at 810 Fourth Avenue cooks and prepares approximately 900 to 1,000 meals a day.

Interfaith Neighbors administers 70 routes to deliver meals with 500 volunteers either preparing and taking meals to people in their homes or serving meals at our congregate noonday sites.

Those sites are the Asbury Park Senior Center, Howell Senior Center, Bayshore Senior Center, Keyport Senior Center, Middletown Senior Center, Neptune Senior Center and Red Bank Senior Center.

Three additional sites – the Long Branch Senior Center, Bradley Beach Senior Center and Asbury Towers – are auxiliary sites where volunteers pick up meals and deliver to residents in their homes.

We started delivering meals one day a week to participants in a Freehold Borough senior computer class at the Rug Mill senior housing. We also deliver meals to the Beacon Health and Social Services PACE senior day care program at the former Fort Monmouth hospital site.

We continue to serve 500 breakfasts a day for the most needy Meals on Wheels residents. We also deliver two meals on Saturday mornings to 25 percent of our recipients who have reported having no one to help them on weekends and holidays. A box lunch program for senior clubs at a cost of \$4 a meal helps pay for our breakfast program. Clubs in Holmdel, Clifford Beach and Neptune participated in 2015.

Affordable Housing

Interfaith Neighbors continued building affordable homes on Asbury Park's West Side in 2015. The number of completed housing units --nearly all single-family houses but also three two-family homes and eight rental apartments-- has reached 41 in Asbury Park, 10 houses in Neptune and 1 in Long Branch since 1996. In December, construction began on two new three-bedroom homes at 15 and 17 DeWitt Avenue with completion slated for the spring.

The concentration of Interfaith's new homes and those of other nonprofits in the Springwood Avenue neighborhoods are making noticeable inroads in stabilizing community life through the opportunity of home ownership.

During 2015, new houses at 38, 36 and 32 DeWitt Avenue constructed in 2014 under the Monmouth County HOME program were sold for \$125,000 each and are now occupied. A three-bedroom at 23 Atkins was completed in 2015 and at year's end was under contract.

HOME funds have been applied for to build a single family house at 922 Mattison Ave. in Asbury Park . Future plans still include building a five bedroom, five bathroom, single family home to provide transitional housing for homeless youth at 522 Prospect Ave . Covenant House is a potential operator of a program for that house where young people will learn to live independently.

Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program (NRTC)

Interfaith Neighbors carried out designated Project V initiatives under the state Department of Community Affairs program that in the first five rounds funded close to \$1 million a year for our housing, economic, employment, recreation and family stabilization projects on Asbury Park's West Side. Corporations commit the funds and receive 50 percent write-offs on state taxes.

The NRTC funding for Project VI came in at \$747,750, about 25 percent less than earlier years due to changes at the State level. In 2015, Project V funds were used for the two new homes under construction on DeWitt Avenue, the Kula Urban Farm at 115 Atkins Ave., a new Food Entrepreneur Program in the Business Development Center, and Big Brothers Big Sisters and Community Affairs Resource Center programs.

A significant portion of the Project V money was designated for two development projects in the Springwood Avenue Corridor. The first is the proposed Turf Club Residences –20 affordable high quality units in five buildings. The units would be a configuration of two-level townhouses over one bedroom flats in five buildings and marketed for sale to low-to-moderate and emerging market households. The second project is the proposed Asbury JAMS (Jobs, Arts, Music and Sciences) building at Springwood Avenue and Memorial Drive.

The designated uses of upcoming Project VI funds include the Community Affairs Resource Center job placement program, Big Brothers Big Sisters youth mentoring, and the Asbury Park Music Foundation Summer Concert Series in the summer of 2016 in the new outdoor park under construction by the city across Atkins Avenue from the Springwood Center.

Interfaith will also use the funding to provide matching funds for additional money the Monmouth Conservation Foundation plans to raise for the Springwood Park. There also is money for the Jazz Arts Project in the Asbury Park schools as well as funding to support the Kula Urban Farm and the Business Development Center. There are funds for property acquisition for future affordable housing development and for the Turf Club Residences and JAMS projects.

New Jersey Youth Corps

Interfaith Neighbors is in our ninth year of operating the Monmouth County Chapter of New Jersey Youth Corps, a 12-week program for young people aged 16 to 25 to attend classes and pass an exam to obtain their adult high school diploma. During the five-days-a-week program, corps members also perform community service and gain job-training skills.

From the fall of 2014 until the end of 2015, 8 members obtained their diploma and 17 obtained jobs. At least 8 of those jobs were with Wawa.

A new community service project focused on restoring the Crystal Stream Cemetery in Middletown, an ongoing project. The historic African-American burial ground dates back to 1851 in the Navesink section of Middletown. The cemetery's owner, Quinn Chapel AME Church in Atlantic Highlands, sought Youth Corps help because the church has experienced a financial strain the past 30 years with a decline in younger people to help keep up the cemetery.

Additional 2015 community service projects and sites included Meals on Wheels, the Springwood Center, IFN Affordable Housing, Atonement Lutheran Church and Trinity Church.

Kula Café

2015 saw us return closer to our full number of participants in the 16-week sessions. That number had decreased earlier in the year because of certain challenges in potential participants meeting grant requirements.

Assistant Chef James McNulty thus far has 30 of the 55 participants in the café's hospitality training program dating back to the beginning in April 2013. Of those 30, 26 currently are employed with such food service employers as Wawa, Popeyes, 7-11, Langosta Lounge and Arby's. A few graduates are working at the Excelsior medical packing plant in Neptune. Two of the 30 program graduates are in college. James is setting up a Facebook group page for participants to stay connected.

The café continued to build its catering business and also catered in-house to groups that meet at the café. Those groups varied but included the new KYDS talent showcase held on the third Saturday night of the month and an Asbury Park Police Junior Cadets Saturday brunch with the city's senior citizens.

Kula began delivering lunch orders, offering a promotion of a 20 percent discount for various government, social service, veteran, industry and healthcare groups on certain days of the week. The café also altered its menu, now offering new entrees such as burgers.

The café received a new joint grant award from the Elizabeth and Baretts O. Benjamin Charitable Foundation to implement joint programming between the Kula Café and Kula Urban Farm. A Farm to Table class was piloted with a group of 8 children from the Monmouth County Boys and Girls Club. Participants came to the café and adjacent farm site once a week for an hour for 10 weeks. They learned about the farm and café operations and planted, harvested and prepared their own healthy snacks and meals. A second class with 12 students from the Our Lady of Mount Carmel school started in January, 2016.

The café plans in 2016 to host farm to table dinners for groups and the public with the produce from Kula Urban Farm.

Business Development Center

The Kula Urban Farm at 115 Atkins Avenue adjacent to the Kula Café received its certificate of occupancy for its commercial greenhouse at the end of 2015. The greenhouse, once operating, will see quality produce grown using hydroponic and aeroponic techniques.

The farm is a social enterprise project growing fresh produce for area restaurants and providing learning and work opportunities for both our Kula Café participants and the

local community.

Raised beds outside the greenhouse flourished during the 2015 summer and saw a variety of eggplant, okra, cucumber and tomatoes. A second building known as the “barn” on the west side of the greenhouse received its final certificate of occupancy, and is used for storage, washing and packing vegetables.

Business Development Center

The Business Development Center launched the first Junior Entrepreneur Training program for Asbury Park middle school-aged children in February 2015.

Seventeen students met once a week after school at the Kula Café with volunteer community mentors under program director Charles Simmons.

The students learned how to create and market businesses –custom T-shirts and chocolate-dipped treats. Each team received \$200 to make their products and made back that money and additional profits at the annual Made in Monmouth Expo in April.

The JET program nearly doubled in numbers of students and mentors for 2016 and will operate at the Senior Center in the Springwood Center complex from February through April. JET is funded with a \$15,000 grant from the state Office of Faith Based Initiatives.

Also in 2015, the Business Development Center announced a new partnership with Monmouth SCORE, the organization that offers free business counseling to small businesses.

The BDC and SCORE worked together to offer classes for entrepreneurs, from financial planning to social and digital marketing.

General Information

Interfaith Neighbors has 48 employees (23 full-time, 25 part-time), and offers health and dental benefits, a 401 K plan with company participation and life insurance for its full-time staff. Its annual operating budget is \$5.2 million.