

Love INC links people in need to volunteers from a network of area churches. Our mission is to transform lives and communities, In the Name of Christ.

New Gap Ministry: CarePortal

Love INC is starting a new Gap ministry called CarePortal. It's designed to help struggling families stay together and not lose their children to foster care—a sad occurrence that happens more than some people realize. Love INC will offer the portal to participating churches that are working to keep the family unit together.

CarePortal is a connecting technology that lists needs for both children and families who are in crisis. The need is great. Currently, 7% of residents in Albemarle County and 23% in Charlottesville live below the poverty threshold; this affects more than 18,000 of our

neighbors. The Love INC CarePortal will connect churches to families in need through a vetted request process with local child welfare agencies and an online platform. The portal works perfectly with Love INC's already-established vetting practices.

Anyone in the community can participate financially or by gifts in kind to meet a CarePortal request, but the beauty is that participating church members are equipped to be the *direct providers* of care. In church training, they are encouraged to form relationships with these neighbors, pray with them, and follow the Spirit's leading. Church members not only meet physical needs, but have the privilege of speaking life into families who may not otherwise be treated with dignity. CarePortal will deliver more than just physical

needs—it will deliver hope.

Listing the needs on the portal simplifies how the church can help. A church can choose which needs it's best suited to address. The goal of Love INC's CarePortal is to empower and strengthen families through the local church, helping it

complete its mission by assisting neighbors in need. Keeping children with their families is a vital need in this community!

How the Love INC CarePortal Works:

A caseworker identifies a need of a local child or a family in crisis—maybe they need a bed for a child or maybe they need diapers, or maybe a mother

is trying desperately to reunify her family.

DSS submits a request through CarePortal, which immediately notifies the closest churches and community members who've joined the network.

Each church can respond directly to the caseworker to meet the need, or it can engage with other churches who want to help.

Whether it's one church that responds, or a community of churches, businesses, and individuals working together, CarePortal makes vital connections possible through an easy-to-use platform.

Every request presents the opportunity for churches to make meaningful connections that begin life-changing relationships.



The Light Behind the Cross

Our lives are full of everyday activities. Most people start the day by going to a job of some kind. In the evening we return to our homes, have dinner, spend time with our spouses and children then retire for the night in our soft, warm beds. In the morning we awake and do it all over again.

Of course, this is just a general outline of our lives. Everyone's life is made up of different routines and priorities. Perhaps we are so used to our routines and priorities that we overlook those who do not fit into our life's patterns.

Take, for instance a single mother raising a teenage son on a very limited monthly income. Would you recognize her need as she sits at the bus stop or stands in line at the grocery store? To help the "neighbor in need" requires personal contact and developing a relationship. Being a social worker requires that kind of attention.

A recent visit to this single mom by a social worker began the process of helping a "neighbor in need" out of her situation and planting her feet on more solid ground. When the social worker paid an "in person" visit to this woman some startling facts about her life were revealed. Her day-to-day existence on a very limited income left her unable to meet her financial obligations on a monthly basis until she was thousands of dollars behind in her rent and on the brink of eviction.

The mother's struggle to provide for herself and her son was further complicated by a diagnosis of late-stage cancer. How would she ever be able to even begin to get a foot up on the financial quagmire she found herself in while undergoing cancer treatments?

But, God! The social worker, being a mature Christian says that every day she "puts herself behind the cross and lets God's light shine through her." The scripture says in Ecclesiastes 3:1 "To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven." It was a single mom's time and a woman she barely knew would become God's light that shone

through.

The Mom's new acquaintance became her advocate to help resolve the back rent she owed. The social worker interceded on her behalf with the landlord. In an unprecedented move of mercy, the landlord proposed that if his tenant could provide an entire year's worth of rent the amount of the back rent she owed would be forgiven.



A momentous effort to raise thousands of dollars to help this mom was put forth by the social worker. She contacted various local agencies for funding which included a phone call to Love INC. The primary purpose of Love INC is to assist our "neighbors in need" through the local church. This opportunity to show the love of God was immediately presented to a number of local ministries. A number of churches responded generously to complete the total amount of funds needed.

As a result of the generosity of local agencies and churches the single mother and her son were able to move into a better more affordable apartment. The funds raised provided the required payment of an entire year of

rent. Without the stress of having to think about how to pay her rent each month she could concentrate on her journey to healing.

This endeavor to help a "neighbor in need" did not stop with funding to pay her rent for a year. The social worker went even further. She talked with utility companies to work out payment plans for electricity and water for the year as well.

Yes, there are heroes in our midst. But this social worker was not a hero as much as she was a person who allowed God's light to shine through for the "neighbor in need" among us. This story is about two women, one who looked for an opportunity to serve God and one woman whose need led her

A Wave of the Baton

*"I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.
Psalm 27:13*

Every once in a while, we can witness "the goodness of God in the land of the living." God orchestrates our lives as the conductor of an orchestra directs musicians.

We are all playing instruments and watching for the wave of His hand, while at the same time following the notes on the sheet music.

Volunteers have a significant role to play in God's orchestra. They step to the beat of the music as they go about their assigned tasks for the day. The Love INC volunteer who faithfully delivers groceries to elderly neighbors in need walks to the rhythm of God's orchestra. He plays his instrument at the designated time with one eye on the sheet music and one eye on the conductor.

Then one day, the conductor waves His baton in the volunteer's direction for a specific purpose, to play solo notes that are not printed on the sheet music. The volunteer takes the lead and the rest of the orchestra follows along to the different tune.



Such a turn in the music happened recently when a volunteer delivered groceries to a neighbor in need. We'll call her Judy. A tooth had broken off from her dentures, making it difficult for her to eat. The volunteer called the Love INC office to let us know that Judy needed dental assistance.

Our Love INC staff set aside what they were doing and followed the different tune, searching the Internet and making phone calls to find Judy some dental help.

Like a golden note in a musical crescendo, the answer to her need was simply a dental repair kit. The volunteer followed the conductor's direction. He was able to supply Judy with the dental repair kit, and he also made the

repair for her!

This change in the music by the conductor's hand and the volunteer's obedience to follow the Master Conductor brought about the fulfillment of a need for a neighbor and the perfect ending to the symphony. The goodness of God is reflected in everyday living, we just have to watch the Conductor to see it. ■

Transformation Ministry

Transformational Ministry is a series of sessions that teaches individuals to take control of their lives by relying on themselves instead of outside resources.

It begins with ***Affirming Your Potential***, a 12-week course that helps to restore their hope; requiring them to have an active hand in shaping their future.

Next comes ***Renewing Your Mind***, also 12 weeks, which opens the door for one to make peace with their past, leading to fulfillment for the balance of their natural existence.

Finally, other classes offered include but not limited to, Budget Counselling, Boundaries, Life Skills, Parenting, Omega Bible Study.

The next series of Classes will be begin in January..

Redemptive Compassion

Redemptive Compassion® is a study guide offering a biblical perspective on how the Church is called to holistically help people in need. This study guide is a great educational resource for individuals, groups, and churches to use as they work through how to live out the second greatest commandment in the Bible and answers these questions:

Why do so many of the commonly-used methods seem so ineffective in reducing or alleviating ongoing need? Why have good intentions to help others produced such devastating results?

The defining difference in Love INC's approach and most agencies is, they focus on the need, Love INC focuses on the person. At the end of the 7-week course, volunteers understand the strategy and philosophy of the Love INC method to approaching how we help our neighbors in need through our churches.

End of the Year Thoughts

I've been reflecting on the past year, one of rebuilding and focusing on our mission, because our mission remains the same; "to mobilize the local church to transform lives and communities, In the Name of Christ". We are reaching out to rebuild our volunteer base in order to help our neighbors in need.

We recently did a restart of our Transformation ministry, beginning with several classes of Redemptive Compassion, a 7-week course to prepare volunteers to become mentors to our neighbors that want to bring about change in their lives. Through our local churches, Love INC seeks to transform the lives of our neighbors in chronic need through caring, nurturing and empowering relationships through classes and training opportunities.

What happens, though, is that both the mentor (we call them spiritual friends) and the neighbors in need are transformed! Thus the name "Transformational Ministry". The result confirms the defining difference between Love INC and most other charity groups. They focus on the requested need. Love INC does not. We focus on the PERSON!

Volunteers:

Bill Mack
Elaine Callaghan
Isabel Coffin
Jane Deming
Beth Fraser
Dan Harris
Delores Hubert
Dave Kamienski
Susan Keeney
Carrie Kerwick
Martha Maltais
Jamie Miller
Vicki Morgan
Rebecca Morris
Ben Mosby
Barbara Murray
Chuck Ponton
Agnes Snead
Margie Thomas
Jonathan Watson
Emma Washington
Cheryl Weston
Valerie Young

Be sure to read the front page article about our newest Gap Ministry, CarePortal. The power behind CarePortal is that it is designed to keep families together and not lose their children to foster care. Churches interested should give us a call and we will set up an informational meeting in how the portal works.

As 2023 comes to a close, we want to thank all who have supported Love INC through the years. We thank you for your donations that we recycle to the needs of the community and for your generous contributions that allows us to serve our churches and they in turn serve our neighbors in need. ■



Blessings,

INSERT SIGNATURE

Raymond Klein

Executive Director



Staff:

Executive Director: Raymond Klein

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Jane Deming

Furniture Coordinator/
Intake Specialist
Patina Blakey

Transformation Coordinator
Jeff Cale

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Conner Brew
Beth Fraser
Susan Keeney
Raymond Klein, ED

LOVE INC Contact Hours

Monday through Friday
9 A.M.— 4 P.M.

Telephone Line

Neighbor Help Line:
434-977-7777