

From The desk of the ED:

The vision for Love INC 28 years ago has changed. The mission hasn't changed but the approach to that mission has. The Clearinghouse is still the foundation of the ministry because that is where we gather information (intakes) from our neighbors in need in order to determine the best approach to filling their true needs. Since I arrived 15 years ago, there has been a dramatic difference in the approach to helping the poor. We were inundated daily with calls for utilities and rent requests. The intakes helped us identify those who were making the church part of their monthly budget. Those calls have dramatically decreased thanks to the efforts of Susan and our staff.

We have seen that pure charity does not work. It only makes people MORE dependent. Instead of pure charity, we model "Developmental Charity", where charity is provided to assist those taking responsibility for their circumstances and being part of the solution. Whereas, many churches and most agencies focus on the requested need, Love INC does not. Love INC's defining difference is we focus on the person (human) not the need (stuff). When all we do is meet a need, aren't we leaving that person in a state of need?

Out of this change of focus is our change of approach called Transformational Ministry. The mission of Love INC is to mobilize the local church to transform lives and communities, In the Name of Christ. Transformation does that! It comes in two parts. First, we need

mentors to spiritually lead and guide our neighbors in need. We offer a 7 week Biblically based course called Redemptive Compassion, which when completed you understand the strategy and the philosophy of Love INC. You can become mentors to the program or use what you learn to help guide your church when confronted with those in need.

The second part, we call Affirming Your Potential, for our neighbors in need, again a Biblically based 12-week course designed to bring about change in their lives. If the testimonies at our recent banquet are accurate, it has been a success!

We are looking for churches that would like to join us in our mission by volunteering to take Redemptive Compassion, assist with food prep, childcare, transportation and join in teaching this concept to others. What happens is that BOTH the mentor as well as the neighbor in need are transformed!



Blessings,
Raymond Klein
Raymond Klein
Executive Director



TRANSFORMING FROM INSIDE OUT Love In the Name of Christ

Summer 2019
VOLUME 27 ISSUE II

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.

“Fear Not Tomorrow, Because God is Already There!”

We were overwhelmed by the outpouring of generosity for our June 7th banquet featuring Ruth Graham. Her message of hope and encouragement was mighty, touching hearts among her listeners, while the testimonies from mentors and participants in our Transformational Ministry brought many to tears. We were blessed to be able to



use the Covenant Church gymnasium and to have the Covenant Church group headed by Ellie and Ernie Deomampo serving the meal. We also had a troupe of young people from Cross Life Church and Covenant Church dressed in our purple Love INC T-shirts assisting with the parking lot, ushering folks to their tables and assisting with serving. Many thanks to Julie Harris, Worship Pastor of First Nazarene, for her special music!

Putting on a banquet can be a challenge, but God was gracious. The evening went seamlessly despite some surprise attendees resulting in a minor food shortage. We thought of Jesus with His mother at the Wedding at Cana of Galilee, but the glitches were resolved quickly. The tables were beautiful with fresh flowers provided by Quarters Farm in Western Albemarle County and the ladies of Lebanon Presbyterian Church who started picking them fresh at 7 that morning. Attendees reported having a wonderful time. We thank all those whose help in the background made our banquet a great success.

We Called Her the “Crying Lady”

In the beginning of our relationship with her, she wouldn't give us her name. She would only cry. Then one day, after several calls (which worried us), she *finally* gave us a name. “Meribeth,” we'll call her. In time we learned that she had lost her mother. We also learned that she spent most of her time in bed and that she ate very little. We spent hours listening to her in those early days.

Life was not easy for Meribeth. Her boyfriend was fed up with her depression, and she had difficulty managing her children. Most of our good, orderly direction fell on deaf ears. But we kept *ours* open...we listened—

that's a very important skill here at Love INC. Then we enlisted church help to bring holiday meals, though we worried over who would do the cooking. Kind donors brought furniture and other items that she might need. But we were alarmed at how emaciated she looked, so we brought as much food and as many gift cards as we could scrape together.

Then, adding more stress to her life, Meribeth's daughter had a baby at a very young age, so volunteers helped with diapers and clothing. Later, there was an accident involving the child, and many questions were

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Monday through Friday
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And the small army of wonderful
volunteers that get our mailings out
on time!

Crying Lady continued

raised about Meribeth’s fitness in caring for a grandchild. As a result, she descended into an even deeper depression. The one silver lining to the cloud was that Meribeth was forced to get help through Social Services and the local mental health agency. The doctor put her on a medication for depression.

After a while we realized that she had begun eating and putting on weight, and her “health” issues began to improve. She stopped crying! As she felt better, Meribeth was finally able to work toward competitive employment. We stopped hearing from her altogether.



But this past winter, after two years, we heard a bright, cheery voice on the other end of the phone. None of the staff recognized our Crying Lady! She was doing great!

Meribeth told us she was moving to another town with a full-time job and wanted to know if we had a sofa she could furnish her new apartment with.

We made note of the new information and asked more about her life, since her voice sounded so upbeat.

“Oh, I am doing so much better,” she said. “I used to wonder if I could ever be normal. But I’ve been working full time for the last two years now. All those health issues I used to have are gone. I remember

you used to talk to me all the time. I would just cry. Well, I am so much better now! You were so good to me. All I ever did was cry when I talked to you. I don’t know why you kept listening to me. God was so good to me by sending caring people like you my way.”

Grip! Gripe! Gripe!

Everybody complains a little from time to time. It’s human nature. And while most of the folks we work with are dear, humble souls, others seem to have advanced degrees in grumbling. Here are a couple of amusing stories we think you’ll enjoy.

“Selina” was calling us all the time! She wanted stuff. In particular, she complained that she wanted pretty much everything she saw others receiving from us. Selina lived on her disability money and sounded pathetic on the telephone. We suspected that her telephone voice was learned behavior.

The last time Selina called, however, we didn’t recognize the cheerful, enthusiastic person on the phone—even though she had a *real* problem. It turned out that a bureaucratic mix-up had resulted in rent subsidy being paid to her former landlord, so she still owed a month’s rent to the *new* landlord. In the old days we would have assumed we’d hear the usual complaints from her, but to our surprise, Selina said she had gotten a job, so she would be able to pay the extra rent in installments. She had called us out of habit, but figured out how to help herself!

So Selina has a job, and she’s working! More important, God seems to be *working* in her!

The second story involves an excruciatingly entitled man, “Rick,” who lived on meager disability while complaining incessantly about his life when he would ask us for things. After last year’s very rainy summer, he called to complain about mold in his apartment. We suggested that it might behoove him to apply some soap, bleach, hot water, elbow grease, and initiative to the problem. (Everyone had mold that summer!) Rick thought he should have new furniture instead. We declined to provide anything beyond our advice.

After the holidays, Love INC was on a trip to a local warehouse store when we came across Rick manning a food-cart! Rick was working for the first time since we had known him!!! He told us how fun it was to work and talk to all the people. The job got him out of the house and he enjoyed it. In the 15 years we have known Rick, we have never heard of him *working*, even to remove his own mold.

It is a joy to watch the changes in these folks—changes that we alone cannot make! The combination of God’s hand and your support is a powerful wellspring in their lives. We thank you so much for your help. Without it, we would have no uplifting (and sometimes kind of funny) stories to tell.

A Special Relationship

We have a dear volunteer who has worked with Love INC since its inception in the 1990’s. She came faithfully week in and week out, rain, snow, or hot enough to fry an egg on the tarmac parking lot - until cancer crept into her life unannounced. Now coming weekly is a struggle. She comes when she is able. Her faith is strong, but her body weak. What could she do to help? She decided to give her car!

A new model of SUV, we soon realized that the property taxes on such a vehicle would cost too much for our clients on the poverty line to afford. So we consulted with our volunteer...would she be willing to have us sell her vehicle and purchase three less expensive vehicles from Malloy Ford so that we could serve three families instead of just one family. And that is just what we did!

Red Flags Flying!

Sheldon’s mother was a beloved Love INC client. For many years one of our volunteers would go to help her with housework, specifically laundering her sheets and vacuuming her small apartment. We knew she had a daughter, but we were surprised to find out that she also had a son who had been incarcerated, then homeless for some time. “I guess you’d say he is a little slow,” she once told us. “He never did learn to read or write. I helped him as much as I could but he can’t come live with me.”

His mother helped him fill out an application for an apartment with public housing. Love INC found furniture for him and a volunteer delivered it. Sheldon had no transportation, nor was he adept at making phone calls on his own to facilitate a ride. He paid a portion of his small subsidy check for rent, his only expense, and lived there for five years without incident.

Then his mother died. Sheldon was left without anyone to care for him. That also meant that there was no one to help him obtain the rent money from his account each month.

Then one day, Love INC staff got a telephone call from a woman who said that she was “helping him out now.” She gave us her name and the name of the supposed agency she represented. The woman claimed to be helping Sheldon as he wrote out money orders to pay rent, but she said he didn’t have any money left and was now behind. Red flags began waving vigorously in our office.

One vehicle went to an Afghani refugee family. The husband had been turned down for job after job because he did not have transportation. His wife works close to their home and is going to college. The second vehicle went to a woman we have known for many years through Love INC. With a vehicle she would be able to take a second job so as to support her disabled son and make ends meet. This vehicle was a standard transmission and she was the only one on the list able to drive a stick shift! The last vehicle went to an employee at Heritage (assisted living) who lives in another county and was dependent on family to get her back and forth to work. Bill Heck of Heritage made up the difference in price on the third vehicle so that this woman could continue her employment. Thank you Bill Heck! Thank you, Virginia!

You see, Love INC has been extending Christ’s loving hand for years and years. In that time we have become wise to the ways of those who would abuse the system. Sadly, they are legion. The staffer answering the call immediately began to scrutinize. How, she asked, did this man run out of money when he was unable to get his money off an EBT card? The woman turned coy as soon as it became apparent that Love INC was suspicious and might not be giving her the money she wanted. She hung up. Our staff called Adult Protective Services immediately and explained Sheldon’s situation.

A month later, Love INC received a letter from the Department of Social Services. “The investigation has been completed and there is a preponderance of evidence that [Sheldon] is in need of protective services. Available and appropriate services will be offered.... Thank you for your report and for your interest in the safety and well-being of vulnerable adults.”

We are appreciative of their letter—and thankful for Social Services’ intervention—but we remain wearied and saddened at the necessity to verify such cases, having to be so vigilant against scammers. But it’s all part of the job. As the saying goes in Christian circles, “Mercy is messy.”

Nonetheless, we at Love INC are tremendously appreciative for your help, the financial assistance that affords us the chance to bring the love of Christ in unseen ways to these dear, at-risk members of our community.