



## Just Thank Jesus!

**I**t was one of the hottest days of the season, making all of us long for the cooling thunderstorms that come our way this time of the year. And when Sadie\* Anderson called the Love INC office, she had just finished “wrestling” with her refrigerator that couldn’t “beat the heat” either.

She sadly shared that she had done everything she



knew to do – vacuumed under it, cleared ice away, and cleaned behind it — but it still wasn’t working properly. It was cold and iced on the top and too warm on the bottom. Her food was spoiling.

But Sadie didn’t just tell about her plight with the refrigerator — she went on to “unload” to the listening ear of the phone volunteer about her other problems. She was the only one in the house working. Her daughter couldn’t find a job and the granddaughter didn’t have a job because she was pregnant.

Sadie sounded both disgusted and discouraged. “No one will help me with the repair bill for the refrigerator,” she said. “It’s going to cost me \$125 at least just to

have someone come by here and look at it. I don’t have \$125. I’m sick right now and I’m supposed to be on medication, but I can’t afford that either. I was in the emergency room yesterday...” Her voice trailed off. She could be heard crying softly.

“Well,” said the unhopeful staff person, “I can try to see if we can find someone to come by and take a look.” The staff person went on to caution Sadie that the hoped-for-repair person might not respond right away, but it was agreed that an email would be sent out immediately.

The following e-mail was sent: “Is there anyone who has time or inclination to visit with an elderly woman this evening and take a look at her refrigerator? The woman is still working (only one in her family), but she is also ‘sick’ (she did not elaborate), was in the ER yesterday, and she does not have the money to have a repair person come. The freezer is frosting up while the frig part is too warm.

“I read to her all the suggestions you all so kindly sent to me the last time a frig was not working. She had “tried all” those ideas. And I do so hate to hear an elderly lady crying in despair...”

The next day, Paul Gaertner from **Crozet Baptist Church** called

and offered to have his own repair man come to the lady’s house. He would be glad to pay for whatever it cost.

With that good news, the staff tried to reach Sadie or her family and finally a young person answered the phone. When told about someone coming to fix the refrigerator, she said “Oh, no! Somebody already came last night and fixed the frig!”

Since Love INC had had no e-mails concerning someone coming to fix the refrigerator, the staff person was somewhat confused. “Who came to fix the refrigerator?” was the natural response.

“Well, he was a white man and he was cute and he had shorts on and a miniature dog in his white van.” She had nothing else to say about it. So this man “on his shining white steed” came and fixed the refrigerator. We have no idea who he was — and we did ask.

Sadie called the next day to say “Thank you” for the repair. She said she tried to thank the man, but he said, “Just thank Jesus.” I guess all of us should follow suit: “Just thank Jesus.” ■

*\* Names of those served have been changed throughout the newsletter to protect confidentiality*

## Loads of Love

Most of us have the convenience of a laundry room somewhere in our house or apartment. A few of us depend upon a periodic trip to the Laundromat and the expenditure of some change to renew the cleanliness of our clothes. But for a growing number of individuals the resources are just so stretched that, sadly, laundry often “takes a back seat” to other necessities.

With a sense of this need and a corresponding vision to make an impact for the Lord, **Belmont Baptist Church** launched the laundry program “Loads of Love,” with the doors opening for service the afternoon of August 7, 2010.

The value of this service to the underprivileged in our com-



munity was instantly confirmed as the available time slots were filled in no time. And, fortunately, an expansion is forthcoming as soon as a barrier fence can be built between the Bolling Avenue house where the clothing closet and the laundry are located and the school located at Belmont Baptist Church.

So now let’s “put some flesh” on those availing themselves of this new service. And to give you a better idea of the population drawn to this facility and how they struggle, here is a sampling of the folks who are presently using the “Loads of Love” laundry.

Christopher was employed by a large company in the area, but he

considered himself the object of discrimination and harassment as a result of some of his disabilities, not only by the management, but also by his peers. One thing led to another and Christopher was let go. Legal Aid has this case now, but Christopher remains unemployed and in need.

Elaine has serious heart problems. In fact, Love INC was instrumental in getting much help for Elaine last year when she had a major operation on her heart. Her husband is disabled and she has a two year old. They just moved into a new apartment and have great needs.

Sherry is a single mom with two high school aged children and one little guy. Our records with her go way back to 2003 and, over the years, she has received holiday meals and furniture. She has struggled greatly, having been evicted more than once. She is currently in a housing program and, on the positive side, is now going to church regularly. Still, she sounds quite discouraged and depressed when one talks with her.

Shania is also a single mom with two young children. She lost a baby to SIDS last year, was subsequently evicted from public housing, and is now living with her grandmother. While she has received many services from Love INC, she has not done well this past year. At the same time, at least she now has a roof over her head at her grandmother’s house.

Hahn is a refugee mom, single like so many, with two children.

Her English is strained at best, but she tries hard to communicate her needs and to understand the many unwritten “rules” in American culture. She has struggled to find employment in this unfamiliar country. Her brother helps her when he is able, but she is on her own most of the time. We know little of her background or how she came to be here and she is not forthcoming with that information.

Rosemary drives a school bus for a living, but she had great difficulty taking care of her older son and her two elementary children by herself. They spent some time being homeless and they are now in a housing program. She is not someone Love INC knows very well. She is outgoing and friendly and seems better able than most to fend for herself. She was extremely grateful for the privilege of being able to be part of the laundry program.

Now these six people, with their families, will be participating in the “Loads of Love” program. As noted, Belmont Baptist Church operates the facility, but they do so with soap and supplies furnished by **Lake Christian Church**. Yet this program is far more than the offering of a free laundry service.

Each family using the facility receives the undivided attention of the church volunteer in charge of that particular time slot. Those presently reaching out with Christ’s love include Gloria, Barbara L., Linda W., Shirley H., the Saunders and the Newman families, Tina S., and Becky B.

It takes about two hours to run through the cycle of loading, washing, drying, unloading and folding, precious time that could be spent in idle conversation or

otherwise wasted away. Instead, it is being transformed into a time to listen, to share about the love of Jesus, to mentor and guide. The children will receive

attention in the same vein.

So this is more than just washing clothes. Hearts and lives can be cleansed at the same time. ■

## New Life in Those “New” Easter Clothes

**M**aureen was born in the south at a time when African American ‘country’ girls were not really expected to attend school. Instead, they helped at home. While Maureen lived at home, and her parents loved her, they did not know how to protect her. As a result, she was the victim of abuse time and again in her community.

Her education experience was spotty. In fact, when the school system looked at first for her school transcripts, those documents were not even in existence – but we are getting ahead of the story.

In early 2010, Maureen showed up in Charlottesville. She has never given a coherent account of how or why that happened, but perhaps that isn’t that important in the overall story. Sometimes she says it was because she has friends here, but she also says she doesn’t have many friends. She has no fixed address and has mental and physical health issues. Still for all that, she remains cheerful and takes care to look pretty and presentable.

Maureen first telephoned our office looking for clothes and was mailed a voucher for the **Central Virginia Baptist Association** cloth-



ing closet behind Belmont Baptist Church on Bolling Ave., where she got some “church clothes” to attend Easter Sunday service at the **New Beginnings Christian Fellowship**.

While there she felt her heart “strangely warmed.” She spoke of the tears that flowed when she accepted the Lord in her heart for the first time on that Easter morning. Perhaps no one there on that Sunday morning noticed her, but God noticed her.

She said that nothing like that had ever happened to her before and that she had felt such peace for the first time in her life. “It was like a big burden came off of me,” she said. She started to pray that God would set her feet on a right path.

“God seemed to lead me back to Love INC,” she said. “I went up to DMV to get a Virginia ID, but I couldn’t get one with just my birth certificate. I just didn’t have the other things they wanted.” Maureen rattled off all the “acceptable” forms of identification that she didn’t have and had no hope of ever getting. And it was this problem that pointed her back to Love INC.

“They told me if I had a transcript or a graduation certificate, that would work, but I never graduated from high school. I never even went to high school.” Furthermore, Maureen could not

even remember what school she went to. She did manage to remember the county she lived in North Carolina.

Thank the Lord for the use of the internet. Within a minute or two Love INC staff had the name of the county school district on the screen and had left a message for someone to call back about obtaining transcripts.

It took several weeks to get an answer, and even longer than that to actually get the transcripts, which were from third grade until the eighth grade at age 15. She had a high rate of absenteeism, which was not surprising.

The intervention paid off. Shortly thereafter, Maureen was back in contact, all excited. “It’s good I finally got my ID,” she said. “It will be just in time since I have another operation next week and I wouldn’t be able to get the medication without my ID.”

Now Maureen has her identification and a new life besides. She said that she attends church whenever she can, but added that she always is praying. ■



Love INC

Love In the Name of Christ

## Jacob Michael Williams

**B**efore Love INC was formed in the Charlottesville-Albemarle community each church was confronted with a barrage of requests for financial, material and physical assistance. Many were legitimate, others were not. The dilemma was to discern the difference to make a clear, yet caring, value judgment, helping those truly in need and turning away those with spurious requests. The development of the Love INC ministry creating a clearinghouse make it possible to assure that all requests were funneled through a single source, as well as to provide the resources to make research-based value judgments.

The following account is not a “Love Story,” but is an example of the kind of requests those in your church office might experience, several times a month. As an introduction, consider a few words of scriptural admonition:

Some who call for assistance do not follow the wisdom set forth in the book of Proverbs. Instead, their “hearts devise wicked schemes” (Proverbs 6:18). They are out to get what they can get — with selfish and self-centered motives. In fact, it is for them a triumph of sorts to have pulled the wool over the eyes of a pastor to achieve their own ends — to pull the wool over the eyes of **your** pastor (See Proverbs 1:11-14).

This is where Love INC comes in. When your pastor, church secretary or mercy coordinator calls the Love INC office with the name of someone who calls for help, or when the church just refers the

individual caller to our office, the clearinghouse moves into action to take over the process. Here is a true story of just such a case.

“Jacob Michael Williams,” he said emphatically so everyone would know. He freely rattled off his date of birth and social security number with the ease of familiarity. But then we got to the address. He didn’t seem as sure about that. He gave 1400 17<sup>th</sup> St. in Washington DC, zip code of 27401. It was his grandmother’s house, he said, and he knew where it was, but was unsure of the address.

Then Jacob Michael Williams launched into his story. He had had a ruptured appendix and had to be flown to UVA via helicopter. He said he had spent two weeks in the hospital on 6 West floor and then he was released on to the streets of Charlottesville. He said no real discharge planning was done for him. He was over 100 miles from home and had no way to get home. He was looking for a bus ticket to get home to his grandmother’s house in Washington DC. Could Love INC find him a bus ticket?

Jacob was told that Love INC first had to verify his story, plus make contact with the grandmother to ensure that she could allow him to stay with her. Could Love INC have her name and phone number? Jacob had a complete loss of memory on this one. He had no idea what his grandmother’s name was and did not know the phone number. Obviously, the conversation came to a rather swift conclusion as Jacob realized that he was not

going to receive money for his bus ticket.

Just to make sure they hadn’t misjudged him, staff “Googled” the address. The street didn’t match the zip code. Then staff telephoned the hospital social worker but were informed no such person had been admitted or discharged by that name and that 6 West was not the floor for appendectomies!

The experience of the Love INC staff in knowing how to quickly probe and root out those whose “hearts devise wicked schemes” has saved our community churches many hours of labor and, undoubtedly, thousands of dollars of the Lord’s resources over the years. We are thankful that He brought this vital ministry into existence and we trust that with this little insight you are thankful as well. ■

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Love INC • Love In the Name of Christ

## Saints United in Caring

**W**ith the impending Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons not far away, we at Love INC begin once again to think of making these holidays more meaningful for the less fortunate. And we are not alone. God's people typically — and biblically — yearn to show His love in practical ways, to help our neighbors know that we care because He cares.

The following love story developed a year ago, but it never made it onto the pages of the newsletter. Yet, it is a worthy read, for it conveys several lessons that are instructive to the church in our community. A key one is that those who hurt view us as a united, caring body — the essence of what you are about to read.

Laura Pope, a member of **Laurel Hill Baptist Church**, knows from first-hand experience what it is like to be without. As a single mom, she raised her children on a shoestring, working, but never having enough for her children. There were many lean times.

So, when she heard that her daughter Amy O'Brian, from **Aldersgate United Methodist Church** (a story in itself!) was sponsoring a single mom for both Thanksgiving and Christmas this year, she wanted to do the same. Laura called Love INC and asked if she could be put in touch with a family.

Well, there was a family with four children, who would be without — Glenda and her children. Love INC gave Laura the information, but Laura was unable to reach

the family.

It was the usual problem with the phone numbers! Many Love INC clients have only month to month phones. They purchase a phone card at the beginning of the month and use that phone number until the minutes run out, often by the second or third week of the month. Glenda's phone apparently had run out of minutes and she probably did not even realize that anyone was trying to reach her.

But Love INC was trying, and trying hard. Without a phone number, no one would be able to bring her any gifts. We called all the neighbors listed in our system. We called all known relatives that might know. Then we e-mailed **Word of Faith Church** where Glenda's children attended the Wednesday night children's program.

The church office did not know either, but said they would ask around. After all, the office staff persons were the ones who had contacted Love INC about the children in that family in the first place. But, of course, God knew — and the church's e-mail was sent to just the right person. AHA! He had the right phone number and e-mailed it to Love INC.

We passed the number along to Laura who was able to contact the mom and find out what the children wanted and needed for Christmas.



A needy mom and her four kids would have a

taste of how the church not only sees their pain, but responds in tangible ways.

And behind the scenes — outside of Glenda's purview — was another example of how churches with somewhat different perspectives could come together to show the love of Christ to children and parents alike. How they did it speaks volumes to a watching world!

Just consider that the folks at Word of Faith notified Love INC that one of their families' Christmas needs would not be met. A lady set apart by Christ from Laurel Hill Baptist Church crossed denominational barriers to show the kindness to a family that Christ had shown her.

Then, by her words and her actions, she reinforced the love that God was already showing the family through Word of Faith Church. And she first got the motivation from her daughter who worships at Aldersgate UMC. ■

“And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.”

Galatians 6:9-10

## Two Summer Blessings!

**W**hen the warm days of summer approach and the school children look longingly out the classroom windows dreaming of vacation days ahead, the “grandmothers” in the Love INC office also begin to have other thoughts. Their minds will shortly shift to other responsibilities — the hours and days with their grandchildren over the summer months.

The impact is significant with fewer office volunteers at Love INC and the burden to keep the work flowing begins to fall even more heavily on Susan. So, one day this past spring, after a couple hours in the office alone, Susan started praying: “Father God, is there someone who would work with us over the summer?”

God, whose ears are always open to our cries, heard that prayer and began to move a young woman to be the answer to Susan’s plea. A few days later there was a phone call to the office and on the other end was a voice that proved to be “music to Susan’s ears.”

Crystal wanted to know about volunteer possibilities over the summer. She explained that she was a third year psychology student at Eastern Mennonite University. She lived in Charlottesville, went to **Maple Grove Christian Church**, and was looking for something meaningful to do over the summer. “I am a Christian,” she said.

“Come ahead!” said Susan, with a silent “Yes! Hallelujah!”

“Come to our Bible Study at 9 AM Monday and see how you like it!” And so Love INC was introduced to the beautiful, perfectly-suited-to-the-job, Crystal Brittain, who faithfully served as our intern for the summer of 2010.

She came in on forearm crutches, a little bit of a thing with huge brown eyes and a winning smile. “I have cerebral palsy,” she explained. “I see so many with cerebral palsy who are so much worse off than me. I was really blessed.”

Crystal came to personally know the Lord at the age of 13, being baptized at a Christian Youth camp shortly thereafter. Her graduation present was a mission trip to Nicaragua where she started some of her translation work. She was able to give food away and do some evangelism.

Growing up in a Christian family, she wanted to go to a small Christian college. Her first attempt was to try Bluefield College, but that did not work as well for her as Eastern Mennonite. Throughout her academic career, she balanced her spiritual life with keeping her grades up (She is still on the Dean’s list).

The petite lady of 19 years has brought to the office the ability to speak and translate Spanish (very important for us), training in mediation, Christian counseling experience, and a strong desire to help others. She is willing to use her car to assist others whenever she can.



We are hoping she can use this experience as part of an internship toward her degree. Her phone manner is excellent and clients often call her back for comfort and prayer. Crystal was also put in charge of all the donation thank you letters.

Furthermore, she has brightened up our whole office and all of our days here at Love INC. She is one of the sweetest, most loving young people we have ever been privileged to work with. God has truly blessed us.

But, the blessings didn’t stop with Crystal’s summer sojourn in our office. Another even younger woman filled the “empty grandmother shoes” in an amazing way — a fifteen year old who carries herself as one much older and “in charge.”

Like with many young people, she required almost no training on the ACCESS database. Surprisingly she needed little instruction about speaking with clients on the telephone either, a task she embarked upon with grace and confidence.

She has an uncanny ability, for one so young, to cut through the various fabrications our clients use for facts. In fact, we have all picked up tips from her!

Susan found it challenging to keep this young lady well supplied with special “projects” to keep her busy. She does each task so quickly (all the while answering the phones) and without labored instruction from Susan

that we have only a few projects left! We quickly realized that she would be able to run the entire office, if that were ever necessary. And helping to keep her in

spiritual shape, she and her family worship at **Olivet Presbyterian Church**.

So with these two ladies working

so efficiently, Sebastian and Susan have coped easily with the additional numbers of requests. Of course we wish we could hold on to them all year! ■

## The New “Typical” Month for Love INC

**W**e would like to invite you to join us for a brief “visit” to the Love INC clearinghouse to help give you a feel for the tempo of the office and for the resultant blessing to the churches of the community — and, in turn, to those crying for help from the followers of Christ in those churches. In fact, this summer accentuated what we want to share with you. So, let’s “take off” with the month of July as a snapshot.

With 358 requests logged for the month, the office was humming from early in the morning until someone turned off the lights and the phone at 5 or 5:30 each day! Throughout the typical day, the phone calls rolled in one after the next, after the next. Of the total, 202 were completed or referred to appropriate agencies.

On average, each request requires 3-4 call-backs, not to mention the many times each client calls back “just to check and see if Love INC has...” Of the total, 54 requests were outright denied, either because they came from out of the area or they were not even appropriate for making a referral (such as the gentleman who wanted a \$100 loan, but would not give us any personal information!).

For lack of an immediate match, 64 requests were put on the waiting list, bringing the active list to 275 requests. That is a typical

number for the waiting list. But, as the saying goes, “the hurrier we get, the behinder we get!!!” The more requests we fill, the more the news travels on the street and the more people in need call Love INC!

With so many calls, we were finding that we were sometimes overwhelmed, even with the two whiz-kid teenagers we had for volunteers during this summer. When we had to bounce Ray from his computer so many times in order to keep up with the flow, we realized we needed another volunteer station, with phone and computer.

Thankfully, a new computer and phone were delivered during August — and now we have an additional volunteer station before we head into the holiday season. And speaking of the holidays, we hope to have some evening volunteers this year!! Think about it.

Looking at the statistics from a different vantage point, we serve an average each month of 130 adults and 145 children. We log more than 300 volunteer hours and between \$9000 and \$10,000 worth of donations are given in a month’s time.

Furthermore, while your contributions average \$12,000 per month, we average well over \$21,000 in goods and services dispensed to our clients, not counting connecting them to the sources handling

their circumstances.

Refreshing your minds from some statistics previously published in the *LINC*, and once again pertinent to the subject at hand, in the year 2000, the Love INC office handled 635 requests. Reflecting the data for 2009, 10 years later, our office handled **4049 requests — an increase of over six times in the number of calls** for help!

At the same time, our budget in 2000 was \$88,000, while in 2009, it had increased to \$147,000. That is an increase of just over one and a half times. The mind-boggling observation is that **the cost rose one and a half times to handle over six times the number of requests!**

And keep in mind that all that has been said doesn’t even count the research hours we spend protecting the church by verifying for the churches the requests that come directly to them, as well as the tremendous effort Susan puts in to coordinate the holiday dinners and gifts for the holidays.

We hope that you enjoyed your “visit.” And we trust that you “leave” convinced that your financial support is critical to the ministry — and that your volunteer service is bearing fruit for the kingdom ! ■



Love INC

Love In the Name of Christ

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9 A.M.— 4 P.M.

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