



Love INC
Love In the Name of Christ



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VOLUME XXV ISSUE I

Humble Hands Help the Needy

In an isolated part of the county on a narrow country road, Mrs. Turner*, an elderly lady, lives alone trying to maintain herself in her retirement. She had been doing fairly well on her own until she had surgery that made it difficult to navigate around her property. In fact, the postal lady noticed that Mrs. Turner was having trouble getting down the driveway for the mail, but she came every day nonetheless.

However, the major problem was that she was going to her mailbox on the *other* side of the road. Her driveway came out to the road at a sharp bend, actually a blind curve. The postal lady took note that cars often sped around those sharp curves and she worried that Mrs. Turner would be slowly crossing the road to get to her mailbox and be hit by a speeding car.

So, she took the problem to the postmaster who awarded special dispensation to get the mailbox moved in order that the elderly lady wouldn't have to cross the road to get her mail. But that was only half the battle. Who would move the mailbox? The answer came when Mrs. Turner's friend, Dee, called Love INC with a request for help.

Dee shared that she is elderly herself and was completely unable to undertake digging a post hole at the end of Mrs. Turner's driveway. Could Love INC find someone to move Mrs. Turner's mailbox across the street from its present location?

In turn, a Love INC staff member spoke with Mrs. Turner, but found that she didn't want anyone to come to her home to put the mailbox next to her driveway! She flatly refused and thanked us — and dismissed us!

So we telephoned her friend, Dee. After much discussion with both Dee and Mrs. Turner, it came out that Mrs. Turner was fearful that someone com-

ing to her home would then know that she was alone and vulnerable. We explained that the work would be done by someone from one of the churches, a Christian group or person, and we told her that she need not be fearful of someone like that. She reluctantly gave permission for Love INC to find a man for the job.

A couple of weeks later Tim Markee, from **Maple Grove Christian Church** answered the call to help. Then, God provided a rainy weekend to soften the ground and the following weekend, Tim was able to complete the job.

Now we here at Love INC have generally found that the gentlemen who volunteer with us tend to have very little to say about the work they have performed. Tim was no exception! He wrote: "I completed the mailbox move on [date]. Thank you for the opportunity to serve God and meet Ms. Turner and Ms. Dee. Yours, Tim Markee." With his few words and humble efforts, Tim provided much-needed safety for one of the Lord's beloved who was unable to help herself. We are so grateful for you, Tim!



NOTE: Tim has also provided other assistance to far-flung county residents. We are so very grateful for folks like Tim who quietly go about the service of their Master. Perhaps you could be a similar servant to those in need. ■

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

The Red Boots

When Sylvia delivered some lovely winter coats, toys and hats to Love INC on a cold day this winter, she had no idea that her mismatched red rain boots would find a special home. But God knew! The boots were expensive, delivered from the manufacturer to her door.

When she tried them on, however, she was sadly disappointed with the product. Though the boots had the same size stamped on the bottom of each, they were obviously two different sizes. One of them fit, the other was too small. Sylvia called the company and they sent a replacement pair. “Just donate the other pair,” they told her. “What will we do with mismatched boots?” our staff and volunteers asked each other. One boot will fit, but the other will either be too big or too small.

In God’s plan, **Calvary Chapel of Fluvanna** was aware of a small farm tucked away in the county, where a family raises sheep, cows, and horses. Boots are required most days! Small family farming is not easy and there is rarely money for extras. Perhaps they might use the boots? So, a volunteer from **New Faith United Methodist Church** took them by the farm on the way home from her work in Charlottesville.

The family was ecstatic! It seems that the young teenage girl was born with one foot slightly larger than the other. As a result, she has had a difficult time obtaining shoes that fit. And, the family often could not afford to buy the two pairs of shoes for a good fitting pair for her.

“Hurry!” said her mother. “Try them on, Sara, and let’s see if they really fit you!” The sizes were perfect! Her smaller foot fit the small boot and her larger foot fit the larger boot. She danced around the muddy yard — as best one can in high boots! Her pet lamb and the two dogs came over to investigate. The cat ran away across the yard, unused to large red boots. But, Sara was ecstatic!



Thank you, Sylvia, and thank You, Heavenly Father, for providing for young Sara. ■

Patience Helps Us Walk the Extra Mile!

When Brenda first became a Love INC client, she lived in public housing where she paid a portion of her income for rent each month. She initially telephoned Love INC on occasion asking for miscellaneous small items, like yarn or a spiral notebook, but never came to pick up what she had requested.

Then, on an extra cold winter day, Brenda called us again, this time for financial assistance with her rent. It seemed that she had left her public housing apartment because of an altercation she had with a trespasser on the property, an individual she claimed had broken in. After that, Brenda had gone to live in a private apartment with a couple of her family members.

According to her explanation, while living in this arrangement, she went to visit and care for an elderly aunt in the country. But, when she returned, Brenda found that her family members had vanished, leaving her with all of the rent to pay on her own. Likely, they each had found another apartment and just left, using the rent money they

would have given Brenda to pay for their own apartments.

To her chagrin, Brenda had just paid all the household utility bills and had been counting on her relatives to pay her rent. Now she had nothing. She didn’t even have an income sufficient to pay her rent on-going, never mind her utilities or other expenses. As our Love INC staff tried to ascertain the whole story, it was clear that Brenda wouldn’t be eligible for help from any area emergency-funding agency. Even if she used her entire disability check, it wouldn’t cover the rent.

But Brenda did have community support. She had been seen at Region Ten and had a probation officer through OAR (Offender Aid and Restoration), so the Love INC staff set up a three-way telephone link with Brenda and her Region Ten worker – whom we discovered had yet to be informed that any of this calamity had occurred. Together they worked out a plan so that Brenda could stay in the apartment, which she had really grown to love. Appointments were set up for Brenda to file for employment

assistance and receive a roommate to help with the rent.

And then something wonderful happened in Brenda's life. Brenda told her caseworker that she had been to a new church over the weekend where the pastor preached right to her situation. She said that she had been filled with hope and felt that if she kept trying she could make it!

After church that day, Brenda had begun assessing her abilities and decided to focus on a very marketable skill as a hairdresser. Soon after our three-way conversation, she was able to set up some hair appointments with friends and acquaint

ances. Very grateful, she called Love INC saying, "I have been asking God for help over and over, but I have to be willing to meet Him half way."

So with all that in place, several Love INC churches decided to assist with this rental need. Today Brenda is still in her apartment. We thank each of those churches, plus we thank God that He spoke to Brenda through Pastor Liz Emrey at **New Beginnings Christian Fellowship**. What a confirmation of their ministry! We also thank God that Brenda has found a church home where she feels the love and acceptance of our Lord Jesus Christ. ■

Kindness Begets Kindness — Others Gave Loving Help

Rutherford was the kind of man who went about quietly helping others. He did "odd jobs" throughout the part of the county where he lived. A man of few words, he often helped the elderly and disabled — unpaid and unsung. But then Rutherford had a massive heart attack and, still in his 50's, was rendered disabled himself. Living in an older family home, where the primary source of heat is a woodstove, he was now unable to cut and haul his own firewood.

Fortunately, Rutherford has a good friend. Ginny has her own home as well and, like Rutherford, busies herself helping others. So, when she heard of his heart attack, Ginny became his chauffeur to and from medical appointments and an advocate to garner community support.

Early on, she was on the phone with the Department of Social Services (DSS) trying to get Rutherford food stamps and other emergency assistance. Ginny started calling churches for firewood, and that was how Love INC was put in touch with Rutherford. The kind folks at one of the local churches called to let us know that Ginny had asked them for wood. They were willing to assist, but wanted to make sure the need was legitimate.

After speaking with the DSS case worker, our Love INC staff realized that this was indeed a dire and emergency situation and relayed that information to the church. With that assurance, they provided the money to purchase wood for Rutherford, but \$100 worth of wood — a pickup truck full — wouldn't last very long during frigid conditions.

So, the Love INC staff asked the wood ministry from **Ivy Creek United Methodist Church** to assist, which they did — just in time before the massive storm hit this winter. Love INC also asked another local church to help and they purchased additional firewood for Rutherford. Yet another church called Love INC saying that a parishioner had some firewood to donate, asking who would be the best person to give it to. Without hesitation, the answer was Rutherford.

Ginny called back several weeks later to tell us how much Rutherford had appreciated the wood and then shared that the word had been broadly spread of his need. "All kinds of church folks have been bringing him wood now," she said. "He used to help them out, now they are helping him out." She said he had received FIVE loads of wood since the storm (probably enough to last through the season now).



Ginny was not able to tell our staff exactly where the additional wood had come from, but we suspect that it was from volunteers in the churches mentioned above, since some of them had known Rutherford for years. We thank all those kind church volunteers for all they have given back to him!

NOTE: We also thank Peter Easter from **St. Paul's Episcopal Church** in Ivy from whose properties wood is cut for the various wood ministries.

Looking at Furniture Delivery as a Ministry

A case worker emailed Love INC with a very important question: "If someone needs assistance moving a piece of furniture, how long are they typically on the waitlist?" Here is our reply:

Dear Candice:

Thank you for even *thinking* of this question.... If a Love INC client needs assistance moving an item of furniture, let's say, a queen-sized mattress and box spring from the donor's home to their home, that person can sometimes wait *months* before the three necessary issues are resolved.

First, the needed bed must become available. Second, the donor must be willing to store the bed until a mover is available — usually only once a month. Third, the mover, the donor, and the client must be all available on moving day, and coordination must be made between all parties. We wish it weren't the case, but there are so many points of coordination that the moving process can take a lot longer than we'd like.

To give you further insight, here are some typical obstacles to the grand plan. Donors are often unwilling to wait even a week for pick-up. Our current once-a-month movers — and we have *only one team of movers* — may have just one truck available. They may be short-handed or have someone with an injury. And the movers may find that they cannot assist in a given month.

It may also be that we have the donor and the movers, but the recipient cannot be reached any longer at the phone number given us, or the recipient's phone works, but the person doesn't return our phone calls. Worse yet, are agency caseworkers who are unable to return our phone calls in a timely fashion. Then another recipient must be found or we lose the opportunity to donate the needed items.

But there's more! Love INC clients who need an item and are able to pick it up themselves may still wait months before they are matched with that item. Here are some other similar snags we encounter: The donor may want items picked up within one or two days, which is not enough time to coordinate a pick-up. The potential recipient may have problems getting transportation in order or may not even answer our phone calls! Or the phone is no longer in service — clients sometimes get Tracfone that have only a limited number of minutes before the client must purchase a new phone. Of course, that means yet another phone number! The donor may not answer the client's phone call or Love INC's return calls attempting to coordinate.

Then sometimes when the donor does make an appointment for the client to pick up the furniture AND the client manages to get there, the furniture is found to be broken, damaged, or completely unusable. We have even had clients get to the donor's home in timely fashion only to find that the item has been "given to a friend."

As you can see, administering a furniture move can be extremely vexing. Ideally, we would like to have six different churches partnering with us, each with a stable furniture delivery team able to pick up and deliver donated furniture once a month, or once every two months.

NOTE: We are very grateful for the wonderful people who *do* help and serve in this ministry. For those of you who might be interested in reaching out with Christ's love to folks in our community, furniture pick-up and delivery is an awesome ministry where dedicated believers have the opportunity to pray with and minister to not only our clients, but our donors as well, some of whom are in the middle of traumatic situations themselves.

Bibles and tracts, food, and church invitations are all part of this ministry if the team chooses to gather and give these out. The Gospel can be shared. Lives can be won for Christ!

Would you and your church consider such a ministry? Here is what it will take: one pickup truck, a driver, a "praying person" and some able bodied individuals to lift furniture. One Saturday morning or Sunday afternoon — typically with 3 hours to spare once a month, or even every two or three months. A dolly may be helpful — and Love INC has one to share if needed.



The Love INC staff provides an itinerary with pick ups and drop offs, the directions, the names, addresses, phone numbers and helpful hints when needed. It is an excellent opportunity to pray, witness and invite to your church (you may even offer to go pick up for Sunday services).

Make connections for Christ! Email Love INC at office@loveincville.org or call 977-7777. ■

Motivated to Serve

As you read the love stories in this issue of LINC, there were gentle nudges for you to prayerfully consider areas of service that might fit your gifts, talent and time. But, more than allowing another's service motivate you to be involved, there is the Lord's command to do so. And a critical key to following Him is that He will give you the grace to obey and flourish. To that end, consider — pray, meditate and act on — these words from scripture, one of many such exhortations in God's word:

“Just as each one of you has received a *special* gift [a spiritual talent, an ability graciously given by God], employ it in serving one another as [is appropriate for] good stewards of God's multi-faceted grace [faithfully using the diverse, varied gifts and abilities granted to Christians by God's unmerited favor]” (1 Peter 4:10 Amplified Bible). ■



Have You Considered the Scars of Trauma?

Lynn Bell, Love INC Board Chair, shares words of encouragement in the hard places of life ...

When we answer the high calling of Jesus to build relationships with people in need, we will ultimately experience a blessing. The good feelings may not come quickly or easily, however, since we are not “rescuing” or “fixing” our neighbors, but giving them a hand up in a tough world. We must be committed to a long-haul relationship that is sure to include many personal frustrations.

Why does it have to be so hard, you might ask?

There are many reasons, but trauma might be one.

Not all, but many of our neighbors in poverty have experienced one or more life-scarring traumas: childhood sexual or physical abuse, parental neglect, abandonment, intimate partner violence, sexual assault, the violent death of a family member or friend, inhumane working conditions, military service during wartime. Growing up in extreme poverty can itself be a trauma.

Our neighbors experiencing these traumas without access to adequate emotional and spiritual support often find their own ways to cope and not always healthy ways. Depending on their biological make-up, personality, social networks, etc., their coping mechanism may look like amazing resilience.

Or their coping mechanisms may take the form of actions that make no sense to strangers like us who are just trying to help — ways that can look like contradictory behaviors, giving up, laziness (which may actually be depression), arrogance, aggressiveness, substance abuse, or indifference.

Before you judge your neighbor harshly or throw up your hands, consider what he or she may have experienced (or may currently be experiencing). Be patient, understanding and humble. Listen a lot. Empower your friend to make their own decisions as much as possible rather than being overly directive.

You might even want to check with the Love INC office about referrals to affordable or free mental health services.

Yes, every dearly loved child of God is responsible for their own actions. Stepping back and trying to empathize better with a neighbor's traumatic experiences is not a means of excusing them. It can, however, make us more effective allies in helping them achieve spiritual as well as material health.

Recommended Reading: *Helping Without Hurting in Church Benevolence*, the latest book by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert. ■



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Love In the Name of Christ

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Love INC is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit ministry that links people in need to volunteers from a network of area churches.

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