



Love INC  
Love In the Name of Christ



VOLUME XX, ISSUE I

SPRING 2011

## What is Love INC All About?

**L**ove INC is entering its twentieth year of ministry in the Albemarle-Charlottesville community, faithfully linking caring individuals from its network of churches with thousands of needy individuals who otherwise might have nowhere else to turn. And there is no doubt that many of those helped have had life-changing experiences.

Some have found new friends, some have found church homes, some have found the Savior and most have had their expressed needs met. But in a large major-

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ity of these cases, the encounters were one-time experiences. The material or physical needs were satisfied and the volunteer and needy individual — or family — returned to other pursuits. The Lord worked in the moment of need and His love and grace were displayed.

Indeed, we are grateful for every one who shared his or her gifts and talents to show Christ’s compassion over these many

years. But, there is a level of outreach that, thankfully, some have felt called to that reflects what Love INC is really all about.

It goes beyond meeting the initial expressed need. These volunteers keep their eyes and hearts constantly open to the Lord. It follows the model of “The Good Samaritan,” where an individual or group is willing to “go the extra mile,” to become involved in the needs of an individual or family at the expense of time, energy and resources — and self-interest. To give you a

picture of this kind of involvement, here is a report of just such a commitment:

“We first learned of the Youngs\* through Lisa, who is in my church small group at **Christ Community Church**. Through an e-mail from Love INC, Lisa had heard about the need for someone to take a sight impaired couple shopping at the beginning of the month. Because she and Ed had such a hectic schedule, she was reluctant to volunteer alone.

“It so happened that our home group had been reading a book

about ministries of mercy, and right here before us was an opportunity to put those words into practice. So, several of us in the home group decided we could help Lisa with the shopping and, as a result, we began taking the Youngs to the grocery store once a month.

“We have also given them rides to Wal-Mart and the DMV, as well as to get hair cuts. Ed and Lisa have helped them prepare taxes and challenged them to make a workable budget and live within their means. From time to time, the men have helped them move furniture and take out trash. The women have brought them meals following a hospitalization and helped them with cooking. Our latest project is helping them get rid of unwanted furniture.

“As we’ve gotten to know them better, we have become more aware of the difficulties they face because of their impaired vision. One problem has been in helping



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them find healthy ways to eat on a budget. They are limited in their ability to prepare healthy meals because of their impaired sight, and especially so as the most easy-to-prepare foods are high in fat and low in nutrition. We are still trying to find ways to help them eat better. Lisa has tried the Angel Food meals, but even those are challenging for them to prepare correctly.

“One really exciting aspect of helping them is that they are now interested in attending church with us, so we alternate giving them rides to church when their health permits. It’s been great to develop a relationship over the past couple of years and see them desire to be part of a church body.

“We have been blessed in serving this couple and thank the Lord that He brought them across our path.”

Tamsey ■

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

## And the Winner Is!

To most of our readers the name Mack Morris is a familiar one. After all, his heating and air conditioning business has been a fixture in the community for many years. But, not everyone is aware that Mack is a Christian with “a heart of gold” and a faithful member of **Calvary Chapel** in Charlottesville.

While Mack has not sought any publicity for what he did, we wanted to share how he used his company resources to reach out and touch a family in a wonderful way. Offering to provide a complete air conditioning and heating system installation for a deserving family, Love INC made the offer known and solicited nominations, receiving thirteen applications.

Several of those received were

very needy, but one stood out. Steve actually had no heat in the room he occupied of his modest house, as his heater was broken. And there was no cooling at all during the summer months. But those realities were just one ingredient that led to his selection.

The “biggie” was his health. Steve had a rare bone cancer and had recently been through two surgeries. Then, not long after the surgeries, his heart stopped and he now has a pacemaker. He is on disability and his physical condition is somewhat precarious.

Another factor that entered into Steve’s selection was the humility expressed in his application. For instance, he wanted “God to choose the right one for this if it be me or some other needy fam-

ily.”

And last, but certainly not least, as the father of a 13 year old son and 19 year old daughter, he is doing his best to keep his family intact. There is every indication that this father is attempting to diligently love and provide for his children. Now, thanks to Mack Morris’ generosity, Steve can do so from the comforts of a temperature-controlled home. ■



## Your Love INC is Alive and Well, But ...

It is with sadness that we tell you that the Love INC National Headquarters in Minneapolis closed its doors indefinitely at the end of January due to insufficient support funds.

In notifying the affiliates, Robert

Odom, the man who served as President over the past decade, wrote the following that, hopefully, will give you a sense of the value of the National Headquarters to local affiliates, such as ours.

“Despite the difficult circumstance the headquarters is currently facing, we know we have lots to celebrate and be thankful for ... Since the headquarters was formed in 2001, we have helped start 102 new affiliates, including beginning the process

of developing Love INC's first international affiliate in Nairobi, Kenya. The headquarters has provided vision and direction to the movement; upheld the integrity of the Love INC mission, model and identity; helped build the capacity of affiliates for effective ministry by providing training, technical assistance, best practices and support; generated international interest in and awareness of the movement; provided spiritual care to the ministry; and facilitated accountability and unity across the movement."

In notifying the local churches in our network, Ray Klein emphasized the worth of this support by saying "The guidance, problem solving, training, printed ma-

terials, the leaders at National Headquarters as well as the Annual National Conference... ALL...will be sorely missed. There's not enough space here for me to list the accomplishments of the National Headquarters."

Ray went on to say: "Several things created this 'perfect storm.' First, some major financial commitments did not come in. The economic times have hit us all. Next, the expense of opening the largest number of affiliates in Love INC's history (17 last year) created an unforeseen strain on their resources... example: I have been working with churches in the Shenandoah Valley who want to start a Love INC there."

Robert Odom did go on to say that "The Love INC national board of directors will continue to meet to keep the National Headquarters legal structure intact and to determine next steps. It is possible that the headquarters could reopen in the future. The board will be assessing all options and ramifications in the weeks to come."

So, we pray that there will be a new vision cast that may in time see the restoration of this valuable asset. And if the Lord would call you to join us in prayer, do remember Robert and the five other paid staff who lost their positions. ■

*"He is not here; he has risen,  
just as he said ..."*

*Matthew 28:6.*



**Word of Faith** is one of those churches that has chosen to look at the "welcoming smile" as an invitation to broach the subject of the residents' spiritual needs. Ben leads the team from this church that each year presents the gospel to all who will accept the message. Here is his report from this past holiday season.

"I looked over the families that we visited over the holidays. We found all of them very receptive. Only one turned down the op-

## Holiday Meals and More

The knock at the door is generally responded to with a welcoming smile and gratitude. Invariably, as the church volunteers reach out their hands and offer the meal to the residents, there is the sense that what they bear will make quite a difference in the holiday spirit of the family within.

Over the past Thanksgiving and Christmas season, scenes like this have been replicated over and over. Many of the churches in the Love INC network make it a point to take advantage of the seasonal emphasis on giving and thanksgiving to show the love of Christ.

Visiting the homes of those in need and offering food baskets and holiday meals has been a tangible way to do this very thing. And Love INC has been

able to receive, screen and link church volunteers for many such opportunities year after year.

Some churches view these referrals as tangible ways to show that Christians care for the needs of those who are hurting due to the lack of resources to adequately meet their basic needs. They reach out in Christ's name, responding to His words "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat." They seek to open doors to hearts by showing His love in action.

Other churches see the opportunity as a broader call to help satisfy not only the physical needs of those they serve, but also to view the entrance into the home as an "open door" to address the spiritual needs of those within.

portunity to receive prayer and it appeared that we had interrupted their sleep. There was one person that was said to have been cantankerous, but as it turned out, she was a very dear woman, just hard of hearing.

**“We** were able to share the gospel with those that were not sure they would be in heaven when they die. When we visited Beth, she opened the door and we brought the holiday dinner into her kitchen. Then, before leaving we asked her if she would let us pray with her and she said “yes.” When we asked her if she had any special needs, she conveyed to us that her husband was incarcerated.

**“Beth** went on to share that she

had just started attending church. We were not familiar with the name of the church and so went on to ask her that if she were to die tonight would she be in heaven. She said she did not know and added that she would like to know.

**We** took her invitation as the opportunity to share the gospel and, when we did, she accepted Jesus into her heart. We also prayed for her husband and for her growth in the Lord.



**We** also take these opportunities to pray with fellow believers in the Lord and such was the case

with an elderly couple we visited. Learning that the wife has some health issues, we laid hands on her and called forth healing in her body. Now, we are standing in faith that she will soon see the full manifestation of her healing.

**“We** shared the gospel with several others who were not ready to turn away from the life they were living and receive the Savior. We did not take that personally, recognizing that they did not reject the messenger, but the message.

**“Thankfully,** God gave us opportunities to sow, reap and water.

**“In His Service, with Best Regards, Ben” ■**

## All the Players Were in Need

**A**lbemarle County is home to many who fall well below the poverty line; dilapidated houses and run down trailers are tucked back from the main roads and can be rented for a fraction of the cost of nicer apartments elsewhere.



**Some** who live here always have their hand out for whatever they can get. Their work histories are spotty, their lifestyles are often destructive. They go from church to church trying to get money. And churches can be easy prey.

**With** this as one aspect of the scenario facing the community, Love INC was created to cooperatively engage a broad spec-

trum of churches to minister the love of Christ to those in need — even from time to time helping out financially. In some instances, this meant that Love INC had to set up connections between churches of very different denominations, churches that might have even had enmity between each other in years gone by.

In order to foster such cooperation, Love INC encourages pastors and mercy/benevolence coordinators of larger churches to stay in touch with the ministry to ensure that requests for food and financial assistance are met, but never duplicated. At times, large needs may be met by more than one church and once again open lines of communication are critical to avoid overlapping of gifts and services.

**At** the same time, there are other folks who are not so obviously needy. They may even own “rental” property in the area. Their yards are neat and houses kept up. But, they may be months behind on their mortgage. Rental property bought as a hedge against the future has become a millstone around their neck. One missed rental payment and the house of cards collapses. Often the churches don’t see this suffering knocking at the door.



**Kurt** falls in neither category — but his situation shows another aspect of the need for the cooperative venture between churches that Love INC helps to foster. Kurt and his daughter rent in the area and he works



with his nephews doing simple contracting jobs. While they work hard, with the economy in the doldrums, their ends just don't meet.

This past September, Kurt had paid a little over half his rent and needed help with the rest, so he came looking for help and two churches assisted. That should have been the end of it, but he came back in January for help again. He said \$200 would be all he would need to be paid up.

Naturally, the church was not thrilled to have him back on their doorstep, so Love INC contacted other area churches. As a result of that appeal, the benevolence chair of one church testified that Kurt had painted her house and had done excellent work. She also confirmed that it had not been enough for the entire rent. At this point Love INC decided to call the landlady, Allison, asking about Kurt's rental history.

As Allison responded, it turned out that she had a story that paralleled Kurt's. It became even more obvious that in this time of recession, those in obvious pov-

erty are not the only ones suffering hardship.

"Yes," she went on to say, "Kurt had an excellent rent payment history, missing his full payment only the past September and in January over the many years he had rented the property."

But Allison was full of fears. She and her husband had bought several properties over the

*Allison was encouraged to go back to her church (where she had not been in a while), to get back in touch with her Heavenly Father, and to seek His guidance.*

years as their 'retirement.' Then the economic downturn had put an extreme strain on the family finances. Her husband had not had decent work in two years. The bank was moving to foreclose on several of the homes, including their own home.

They had moved back in with her elderly mother, hoping to put their own house on the market. This missed rent would bring them even closer to disaster. She talked to the Love INC staff about her worries for nearly 45 minutes, then the staff person led her in prayer.

Allison was encouraged to go

back to her church (where she had not been in a while), to get back in touch with her Heavenly Father, and to seek His guidance. She was encouraged to go to her pastor and talk about her issues.

In the meantime, Kurt's rent was paid by the pastor, who met and prayed with him and then invited him to church.

As a result, Kurt was able to pay his rent in full and, in turn, a landlord in dire need was most grateful for a rental payment! But, even beyond that, both individuals were connected in new ways with the church — and the involved churches had a clearer sense that their benevolence funds were being wisely used to meet real needs without deceit or duplication. And both Kurt and Allison felt the weight of prayers offered on their behalf in their time of need. ■

**Sound Off is a Youth Project educating them about poverty in America. Order the FREE material kit.**

**434-977-7777**

#### *A Retraction ...*

*In the Spring 2010 LINC, we shared the story of "A Miracle Baby – Upheld By Prayer and Grace." Regrettably, there was a miscommunication in gathering the information for the story, which resulted in a distortion of the facts — and this recently came to light. In the story, it was stated "Sadly, the young mother could not handle the trauma. She decided that he could just die and then walked out of the hospital." While the child's grandmother did care for the child, as told in the story, his mother did NOT abandon him. In fact, she remained at the hospital with the ill infant. And, thankfully, the young child continues to do well. We apologize for not being more careful in establishing the veracity of the stated facts and are grateful that his mother did show this care. ■*





**Love INC**

Love In the Name of Christ

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Return Service Requested

**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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