



Love INC

Love In the Name of Christ



SUMMER 2013

VOLUME XXII ISSUE II

## “I Was Happy to Help — Even For a Short While!”

**L**ove INC has about two dozen clients who rely on the kindness of others to bring them food from one of the local church food banks once a month. Most are physically disabled, very ill, shut in, or elderly. One such gentleman, disabled with a chronic debilitating illness, used to own his own business in Charlottesville. Many availed themselves of his service and knew him personally. But then he developed a serious disease...

These days Robert\* spends much of his day in a wheelchair. His elderly mother comes by several times a week to sit with him. His teenage children attend school, sports and other activities. He does what he can to stretch his disability dollars and keep his household in order.

Despite Robert’s best efforts, he found that he needs food from the food bank to help extend his food supply for the month. But his mother has no transportation and is too elderly to get to the food banks. So he turned to Love INC for help.

To provide this food delivery, assistance for a person in need typically takes only an hour or

two each month; yet, regrettably, there are few volunteers for this vital ministry. Thankfully, the UVA medical student interns are sometimes able to take up the gaps in this department! At those rare times when the office work is slow (not very often, I can assure you), the intern will step up. But just as often, there is NO ONE available to help.

So when Jacob and his wife, Joni — from **Grace Community Church** — contacted Love INC asking for a volunteer job, the staff had just the opportunity! Jacob was connected with Robert to deliver food once a month from the Emergency Food Bank.

But, Jacob and Joni took a further step in loving their new friend, deciding that they would prefer to involve the whole family. So, instead of picking up the food box from the Emergency Food Bank monthly, they proposed going



shopping together, selecting the foods that Robert really

liked, and then visiting him as a family.

Joni shared their idea with the Love INC office with these words after receiving the go-ahead with their plan: “My family and I are very interested in helping with the monthly food delivery. Awesome!!! I’m so glad this arrangement works for you. I will get in touch with the client this week and see if he has any particular preferences from the list and then my family and I can run the groceries to his home. Thanks so much!”

After the third visit, Robert reported to us: “They have gone way out the way for me. The whole family came. Oh my gosh they don’t come nicer than that. They told me to call them for anything I needed but I like to take care of myself when I can, so I probably won’t be calling them extra. They’re nice people. Thank you so much!”

On another occasion early in the relationship, Robert called the Love INC office to tell us how delighted he was with his friendship with “that young student, Jason!!!” He really enjoyed his new friend. But, it took a little while before we realized that

“Jason” was actually Jacob.

Jacob reported that Robert talked about his initial diagnosis and how it came as a shock to the whole family. Together they also spoke about how other people had more debilitating aspects of the disease and how important it was to know that the Lord had a plan for each of us, recognizing the importance of an ongoing trust in Him, keeping the spirit alive within.

Robert had found an online support network for people with his illness and he had also made quite a few friends online. When

the weather allowed, he was able to get outside and talked about the need to stay active to keep his spirits up. With each food delivery, Jacob was able to speak a little more with this once hard working gentleman who was very appreciative of the support Love INC provided.

But Jacob had been job hunting, as are so many these days. Finally he landed a job in northern Virginia. Sadly, he let us know, that he would no longer be able to help Robert. He said, “I was happy to be of some help, even if it was for a short while.”

p.s.. Jacob is a veteran and not a college student, as Robert thought. And we certainly thank you, Jacob, for your kindness to our gentleman! Love INC is always looking for someone else willing to come alongside of those less fortunate — and longing for a friend who will care. Could it be you? Would you pray and ask whether the Lord would have you befriend a man or woman in need, perhaps helping in small ways to lighten their burden? ■

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

## A “God Match” Brings New Hope and Joy!

Nickie has seen some real life struggles that many women might not have endured. The man she has been married to for many years, the father of her daughter, has been incarcerated for more than half of the twenty years they have been together.

“He’s always ‘ripping and running’ with this deal and that one,” she explained. “Then he goes back to jail again. Then this last time there was another woman involved...” Her voice trailed off. She added, “This time when he gets out he will be staying at his dad’s house instead of with us. My home has Jesus at the head.”

Nickie came to Love INC looking for a car. She works with troubled teens and had been able to land a decent job in that field – IF she had transportation. She was also in ministry at her church and worked with teens and young moms there. A car

was essential for her to fulfill her obligations to work, self support and ministry.

And, at that very time, God was moving in the hearts of another family — on her behalf. This was a family in transition themselves, looking for another church home in their new location. They had been at **Maple Grove Christian Church**, but were in another area.

Their oldest son was leaving home for college and no longer needed the older car he had driven. It had new tires and a serviceable “bill of health” from Quick



Lanes here in Charlottesville. Could Love INC use the car? An easy question to answer!

Now, Nickie didn’t tell us the rest

of the story until later. She hadn’t told us how she ached to be all God wanted her to be, to reach out to the lost, to be an obedient wife and a good mother. Even as she talked on the way to pick up her ‘new’ car much was left unsaid as she talked about her hopes for her daughter and her love of her Lord.

The rest of the story is exactly what Love INC does every day. The donor and the person in need are linked, the necessary paperwork done. The Styer family has joy because they have been allowed to be the hands and feet of their Lord and Nickie has joy and hope once again that she will be able to be obedient to the Lord. And, all of this transpired because there is a God who cares, who works “behind the scenes” to show His love! ■

## Changing Lives — Why We Need Mentors

**H**ere at Love INC we have a host of different clients – some that come to us for emergencies only, some that rely on us for monthly food deliveries and others that seem to come to us over and over again. Our goal at Love INC is to empower the individual to learn to provide for their own needs. Yet we find many of our clients seemingly unable to do anything other than rely on us.

**As I — Susan — have pondered this, I have realized that this sort of systemic behavior is the result of a particular mindset being engrained through example and habit year after year. We have one family of women who is a sad example of this type of generational dysfunction. It is a whole clan of women: the daughters, granddaughters, great-granddaughters, with the oldest born in 1934 and the younger granddaughters in the 1980's. Some of them actually work, but most live off some sort of government assistance.**

The women in this family have many needs. Their mother has lived in public housing most of her life and most of them have as well. Yet they seem unable to maintain any sort of stability. Some were evicted for allowing “undesirables” to illegally live in their apartment (usually the father of one or more of their children). They fail to pay their rent or their utilities. They are evicted for completely trashing their apartment. They seem to move over and over again, often leaving behind all their furniture and belongings.

Almost all of them have serious health or emotional issues, or criminal histories. A number of the older ones experienced childhood trauma of abuse or rape. The younger ones have witnessed more than they ever should have. All of them have despair etched into their faces. Bitterness and anger are not far under the surface. They get by in life by asking churches and agencies for what they need. They have learned to excel at manipulation.

This came to a head for me recently when I was out of the office and three of these ladies came in. We had called one of the ladies to come in to pick up some clothing, but two of the other family members tagged along. When I returned the next day, the office WAS COMPLETELY CLEANED OUT!!! They had taken all the food, all the clothes, all the household items, everything! And this is not the first time this has happened.

At first I was angry that they would have come in and taken advantage of our intern and of Lauryn who cannot even see what they are taking. Then as I took this to the Lord in prayer, I realized that this is the only way of life these women know. They are actually very dependent on social outreach for meeting their needs. Sadly they have little self-reliance.

The honest fact is that they simply do not have any model for how to manage their lives so as to be self sufficient. The only thing they know to do is “beg.” They grow angry and resentful

at the system when their needs are not met, feeling that it is their “right” to receive help when they are in need.

The more I pondered the predicament of these women, the more I realized that what they need most desperately is an example – someone to come alongside of them and patiently show them a different way. Three of the women from this family have mentors to help them with their life issues, including how to manage their finances.



But I would contend that they, like so many others, need comprehensive mentoring rather than simply financial assistance from the churches and community that so many regularly rely upon. And this is only one family among a city full of dysfunctional lives.

Since these three women are all now professing Christians (yes, they have come to know the Lord), there is already a common bond between mentors and these women. But they need someone to model whole life behavior! How can we expect to break a lifetime of poor examples and engrained habits by simply meeting physical needs?

The only way to break the cycle is to teach them a different way and help them build new habits of self sufficiency, stability — and, hopefully, spiritual life in

Christ. These — and many other women and men — need committed mentors.

We pray that the Lord will send those mentors. Jesus told us, “The **harvest** is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord

of the **harvest**, therefore, to send out workers into his **harvest** field.” ■

## It Turned Out to be a Great Friendship!

**M**ax was referred to us by two of our partner churches, apparently after having called those churches to ask for assistance in writing out his monthly bills. Having moved from out of state, where he had been receiving assistance through the department of social services to write out his bills each month, he found that the same service was not available in his new home state. But Max would



definitely need the support, because — as a quadriplegic — he got much of his care here at the UVA Hospital.

Fortunately, Max has a great sense of humor and immediately it looked as though he would be a great match for a local volunteer. To give you a glimpse of his personality, in his intake interview, he said: “Tell them my disability is that I am ugly with skinny legs and I can’t sing at all.” And, sure enough, when the request went out, Lou from **Calvary Chapel** emailed the office saying that he would be able to take this assignment!

Later, Lou sent another email: “Hi Susan, “I just wanted to share with you and let you know that Max and I are having a great time. We get together at the beginning of the month to do bills and we visit from time to time, usually at least once a week. He loves Samson my phone GSD\*\* and we have plenty to jaw about.... He is an amazing guy. Just thought you would appreciate the update. Love ya, Lou” ■

\*\* GSD is a term techies understand. It relates to downloading files to devices, such as smart phones.

## The Stranger, the Widow and the Orphans Among Us

**I**n the scriptures, God’s people were told over and over to care for the powerless and disenfranchised people among them. Exodus 22: 22 prohibits God’s people from taking advantage of the widows or the fatherless among them. Deuteronomy 10:18 says that God Himself “defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing.” We find in Deuteronomy 16:14 that “The foreigners, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns” are to be allowed to find joy in the celebrations that God had instituted.

In Deuteronomy 26 we see that the tithes were to be used for

these very same people, “the foreigners, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns.” And so the prophets through the years would echo these commands. In the book of James, 1:27 the writer takes up the cry again as he writes “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.”

Love INC gets many requests from family and neighbors of foreigners and widows, asking for assistance for someone they know in our area. One such call came from a social worker who could not assist a cancer patient through her own department, but

was nonetheless trying to find help for her. This sick woman had come from a Russian speaking country a number of years ago with her husband.

“**S**he breaks my heart,” said the worker, who was close to tears. “What is she going to do? She has had two hospitalizations since December. Her husband abandoned them in early 2012 after she gave birth to another daughter. He wanted a boy. No one has seen or heard from him since.



“**S**o really, she has no one. I wish I had a house big enough to take them in myself. She won’t be able to get to any other

agency as she is too weak to drive. She begged me to take her children when she dies.”

This request was much more involved than many requests that we get for yard work or housecleaning or shopping once a month. Here was a woman with children, possibly dying, abandoned by her husband, without extended family and with few resources even among area agencies. Ray and Susan thought they might find help for rent for a month, if they pooled the resources of a number of churches.

Churches in her area were contacted. **Olivet Presbyterian** had assisted several years ago by sending one of their own as a translator for the family as well as providing many baby items through one of their outreach ministries. **Crozet Baptist** had already assisted for a utility bill recently. But the scope of this need was overwhelming for most Love INC volunteers and churches.

Then the emailed plea for help reached the desk of Joe, a quiet, thoughtful and prayerful man

who is our contact for the Mercy Committee at **Trinity Presbyterian Church**. He first sent an email saying he thought his committee might assist with rent but he needed to pray with the others for God’s leading.

A few days later he showed up at the Love INC office to report that in their prayer time, they felt strongly the Lord’s leading to assist not only with the rental need, but with the spiritual and social needs of the family as well.



This was an astounding answer to prayer for all of us in the office and for the others who had been advocating on the woman’s behalf.

Recently Joe wrote “Just wanted to let you know that I’ve paid the May rent for \_\_\_ and have committed to pay for June as well. I see her regularly and have a small group of women that have been assisting as well. We are getting details about the children and family and are hopeful to make some arrangements for them should that be necessary.

“I have some counseling people assisting me as well as a person with a social work background. A researcher/fact checker is also assisting so we can be sure that we have accurate information. Finally, a family law attorney at Trinity has offered his assistance. In the midst of all this we are indeed praying for healing...”

And what is a “research/fact checker” you ask? I wondered myself. Joe explained, “My researcher/fact checker is a young lady who has been doing medical-related research at the university. She asks the questions I don’t think of and thinks of details I would overlook. She is also familiar with Social Services and foster care — a perfect combination for the task at hand!” (I — Susan — agree. I need one here at Love INC!!!)

Truly this church is fulfilling what is written in James 1:27, practicing the “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless ...” So, thank you to all at Trinity Presbyterian Church that are assisting in this Biblically-mandated calling. ■



## A Scriptural Guide to Help You Know How to Respond

“He defended the cause of the poor and needy, and so all went well. Is that not what it means to know me?” declares the Lord” Jeremiah 22:16

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms” 1 Peter 4:10

“For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’” Galatians 5:14

“...walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God” Ephesians 5:2

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience” Colossians 3:12



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