

# FRIENDS IN DEED

Volume 20, Issue 4

Washtenaw Area Network of Congregations

Winter 2003

## Aid to family fills in gap

BY BETTY DAMREN  
FID Volunteer

**T**ake care of yourself or you can't take of others. Family first. In today's world so many of our oft-repeated platitudes and snippets of advice are contradicted by bureaucratic edicts that prevent help even when most desperately needed.

Such was the case with the family of four who received an eviction notice last April.



The young mother had to quit work because of a problem pregnancy which resulted in a premature birth. The new baby was born with extensive physical problems, which require round-

the-clock care.

To add to their stress, the father lost his job because his employer would not allow him to take time off for training classes for the care of his new baby. Caught between going to work or caring for his new daughter's medical needs, the father chose his daughter.

Prior to this emergency, the family's credit and payment records were good. However, the brief lapse in income caused their rent to be in arrears.

Application for emergency help to the Family Independence Agency was denied due to their past earned income. It was at this time that Friends In Deed and three other area agencies (Salvation Army, CSA and SOS) were able to step in and pay their rent so housing could be maintained during this critical period.

Helping families like this, who fall upon hard times through no fault of their own, is a critical part of FID's mission.

## Poverty rate grows in U.S.

**A**s reported in September 2003, the number of persons in poverty in the U.S. grew by 1.7 million in 2002, leaving a total of 34.6 million below the official poverty line (defined as an annual income for a single person of \$8,680 and \$18,800 for a family of four).

Another 12 million people live just above that poverty line. One-sixth or seventeen percent of U.S. children, and nearly that many U.S. adults,

live in poverty.

News abounds of worsening conditions for the poor and for our whole society.

Late summer story headlines reported "Health Insurance Cost Surges" [by 12% to 17% for both employers and workers with family coverage], "Gas Rate Hikes [of possibly 20% in the average cost of heating homes in the winter] a Worry for Poor" [and the "near poor"], and "Rent [and utilities costs for typical apartments] Up by [a

Third since [19]99."

As the heading for a reprinted *New York Times* editorial stated, "More Poor People Are Hurting More."

Increasing our awareness of poverty may help us to feel the pain of the hurting poor, to seek constructive ways (personal, congregational, and governmental) to better their conditions, and to avoid seeming to pray, like the cartoon figure, "to be worthy of consuming a disproportionate share of this planet's resources."

January 2004 is  
**Poverty in  
America  
Awareness  
Month.**

For information,  
visit [www.usccb.org/  
cchd/povertyusa/](http://www.usccb.org/cchd/povertyusa/)

◆ 30 N. Washington St. ◆ Suite 30-B ◆ Ypsilanti, MI 48197-2687 ◆  
◆ Friends-In-Deed@att.net ◆ www.comnet.org/friends ◆

◆ Administration (734) 485-7658 ◆ Help Line (734) 484-4357 ◆ Furniture Line (734) 484-7607 ◆

# Faith in Action

## Service Day produced meaningful experiences

On a sunny Saturday, October 4, eight men and nine women mobilized by Judy Spike of Knox Presbyterian Church delivered much needed furniture items to 11 families in our community.

In preceding weeks, Judy and others had collected many of the items from donors for this day. Volunteers ranged in age from 16 to 60 and came from various congregations including AA Christian Reformed, AA Friends Meeting House, First Christian of Ypsilanti, Knox Presbyterian, St. Andrew's

Catholic of Saline, and St. Francis Catholic.

Two trucks (made available by Lodi Farms and Tommark Inc., hearty thanks to both) plus a van and a pickup with trailers enabled four teams to make deliveries.

Some group members had their first direct encounters with poverty.

Particularly moving was an elderly woman, with age-related disabilities, caring for two grandchildren, aged 3 and 7 with next to no furniture.

One team, composed en-

*"God bless you, and women power."*

tirely of women and delivering mattresses and box springs, brought a twin bed to a woman with a toddler who exclaimed "I can't believe you women are doing this," to which a team member vigorously replied "Women power." As the team left, taking a crib the woman was donating, she said to them, "God bless

you, and women power!" A member of another team remarked approvingly that instead of merely making a donation, this was "practical Christianity."

Energized by such insights, the Knox group hopes to repeat this "delivery blitz" every two to three months. A delivery is in the works for December.

Other congregations or organizations interested in helping with this delivery or scheduling one of their own, are encouraged to call the FID office to make arrangements.

## 20 years of FID *The Prince Directorship*

During 2000, FID faced daunting challenges. Income lagged but requests for assistance increased. Staff turnover and the usual shortage of volunteers weakened program continuity. The death of Stan Harbison, a founding father and "permanent" Board of Directors member, deprived FID of his wise guidance, tireless advocacy, and outstanding leadership. While the Board avoided involvement in daily office operations and no staff team member had final authority, issues remained unresolved and sometimes festered.

To address these conditions, the Board restructured FID's staffing arrangements. It named Helena Prince executive director, and created three part-time staff positions reporting to her: program manager, casework manager, and



furniture coordinator.

Kirstin Jackson, experienced in both case management and fundraising, soon joined the staff as program manager and JoAnna Barnes, with a varied background in southeast Michigan social service, became casework manager and subsequently furniture coordinator.

Helena's directorship infused FID operations with new vigor. Ably promoted annual dinners attracted large attendance and significantly en-

hanced FID's income. Despite a challenging economic environment, donations received, grants and awards obtained, and direct assistance disbursed continued to grow. Recruitment of dedicated volunteers, enlarged congregational participation, and improved networking with other agencies enabled FID to meet more needs better. Malinda Waltz, an early FID volunteer with a dozen years of Board service and work experience at three local social service agencies, supplied knowledgeable and insightful leadership as Board president.

In celebrating our 20<sup>th</sup> year of being a bridge between congregations and persons in need, we've gained valuable inspiration from our past and deeper commitment to our future. We thank you for what

you've done, and what you continue to do. With that inspiration and dedication, as well as other necessary resources, we look forward to your ongoing support and encouragement as we work together to continue to help people in need in Washtenaw County to meet pressing needs and to achieve dignified self-reliance.

**FID WEBSITE**   
www.comnet.org/friends  
Site Designed by Gloria Murillo

**FRIENDS IN DEED**   
**Newsletter Contributors**  
Writer: Jim Waltz  
Designer: Peri Stone-Palmquist  
Copied by: Greater MI Plumbing & Mechanical Contractors, Knox Presbyterian  
Mailing: Claudia Larson

# BRIEFLY ...

---

---

## Thank you

J.F. Ervin Foundation recently awarded Friends In Deed a \$2,000 grant to be used to support our programs which provide for unmet emergency needs. Much thanks to this foundation for their continued commitment to Friends In Deed and the community.

## How to Help Seminars

Our annual "How to Help" seminar on October 23 at New Hope Baptist Church in Ann Arbor brought together a small but enthusiastic gathering.

Starting with FID's core emphasis on helping others move toward self-sufficiency, presenters Helena Prince of FID and Jennifer Brown of Salvation Army provided information on community resources and guidance for assessing needs of persons seeking assistance with emergency needs. Issues for congregations to consider and dos and don'ts for offering specialized help were also explored.

Attendees reported the sessions to be realistic, practical and immensely helpful. One pastor happily reported that due to the small group size, all his questions were addressed.

A heartfelt thank you to New Hope Baptist Church of Ann Arbor for hosting the seminar.

If your congregation is interested in having FID staff come and share resources and tips about how to help people in need, contact our office at 485-7658.

## Welcome new congregational partners

We welcome Knox Presbyterian Church, London United Methodist Church and Fellowship Baptist Church to the Friends In Deed network.

## Thank you

With great regret, we bid farewell to valued volunteer Richard "Dick" Stuber. For more than a dozen years, Dick has helped us and those we serve in various capacities, particularly with appliance repair. His willingness to make "house calls" often identified greater needs than requesters recognized (e.g., replacing rather than attempting to repair an unsafe range) and he frequently contributed the cost of needed parts.

People quickly learned that Dick could

be trusted to do the job with both competence and compassion. He has recently decided to invest his talents and abilities in the needy nation of Haiti.

Thanks, Dick, for what you've done here, and best wishes for success and satisfaction in your new field of service!

## Our thoughts are with you

As many of you already know, Birdie, wife of warehouse manager and Board member Bob Stevenson, died suddenly in late summer. Both have been significant members of our FID family, and she is sorely missed by all who knew her.

## Program hits record levels

This has been the busiest year since the inception of our Transportation/Car Repair Program five years ago. IFCC (Inter-faith Council of Congregations) has been instrumental in funding this program, as have several area congregations. Already this year, FID has assisted 37 families with more than \$8,000 for car-related needs. Repairs are done for those requiring a car for employment or regular medical appointments.

FID continues to be one of only three programs in the county providing help with car repairs. With the record number of requests for car repairs this year, FID is searching for additional sources of funding to help meet this critical need. If you know of potential resources, please contact Kirstin at 485-7658.

## Resource guide mailed to congregations

FID recently mailed our Resource Guide to Community Services to area congregations. This guide is updated and mailed twice a year.

It is also available by accessing our website [www.comnet.org/friends](http://www.comnet.org/friends) and clicking on "congregations."

## Urgently seeking warehouse space

FID is looking for donated warehouse space for long-term use for our furniture program. Please call 485-7658 or e-mail [Friends-In-Deed@att.net](mailto:Friends-In-Deed@att.net) with any suggestions or possibilities.

## FID Seeks Office Volunteers

FID is seeking office volunteers to answer phones at least one day per week for either the Help Line (9 a.m. to 1 p.m.) or the Furniture Program (noon-2 p.m.). Training is provided. Call 485-7658.

# MARK YOUR CALENDAR



---

---

## • SERRV SALE

5-8 p.m. Nov. 21, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Nov. 22 at First United Methodist Church in Ypsilanti. SERRV is a nonprofit that promotes economic and social justice by direct marketing of handcrafts made by people in developing nations. 15% of the proceeds from items sold at the SERRV Small World Shop will benefit FID.

## ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS MARKET

9 a.m.-2 p.m. Nov. 22, also at First United Methodist Church in Ypsilanti. The Alternative Market offers unusual gifts that truly give to others.

## • 8th ANNUAL HOLIDAY BED DRIVE

Nov. 16-Dec. 31

Beds continue to top FID's list of most requested furniture items. Each year's drive enables us to answer many such requests. See the flyer in this newsletter, and help FID provide someone with a good night's sleep.

## • BUC\$ TRAINING SEMINAR

Jan. 20-Feb. 24

FID and Washtenaw County MSU Extension are teaming up again to offer this popular seminar designed for people interested in becoming budget counselors. The six-week training seminar will be held from 1:00-3:00p.m. at St. Francis Catholic Church in Ann Arbor. Cost: \$35.00. Reservations required. Contact Terry Jones at 222-3943.

## • WINTER COOKING CLASS

6:30-8:30 p.m. Friday, March 5

Sponsored by Friends In Deed and The Seasonal Baker at Kitchen Port, 415 N. Fifth Ave. in Kerrytown, Ann Arbor, this class will teach participants about seasonal cooking. See the ad on the back page.

## • ANNUAL FUNDRAISING DINNER

May 4

The dinner will be held at Ypsilanti First United Methodist Church. The spring newsletter will provide more information about this event.

Whether you like to cook or just love to eat, this class is for you ...

# “Early Spring in the Seasonal Kitchen”

Presented by Friends in Deed and The Seasonal Baker



- Learn how to buy, store and prepare early spring fruits and vegetables in a number of surprising ways.

6:30-8:30 p.m. Friday, March 5  
Kitchen Port  
415 N. Fifth Ave. in Kerrytown

- Discover the joys and vast benefits of seasonal cooking.

Cost: \$25 per person (45 person maximum)  
RSVP: Kirstin Jackson at (734) 485-7658.

**FRIENDS**  **IN DEED**

◆ 30 N. Washington St. ◆ Suite 30-B ◆ Ypsilanti, MI 48197-2687 ◆

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 365  
Ann Arbor, MI