

FAITH COMMUNITY HOMES

inspiring hope changing lives

February 2019

Holiday Cheer for FCH Families

The holidays were a joyous time at Faith Community Homes. Through the generosity of our donors, each Faith Community Homes family (plus every family that has graduated within the past year) received a turkey and all the fixings for a home-cooked Thanksgiving dinner. Every family was “adopted” by a group of volunteers who shopped for just-right holiday gifts for all members of the family. The children had plenty of gifts to open on Christmas morning, and the adults were able to put their wages towards rent and other bills instead of towards holiday expenses. We were especially excited to receive so many gift cards this holiday season for groceries, gas, clothing stores, and Target and Walmart. These gift cards relieve a tremendous financial burden for the families in our program throughout the year.

The greatest holiday gift our families received was hope and encouragement. Working full-time, taking care of the kids, and keeping house, all the while worrying about every penny, can be lonely and exhausting. The holiday donations to Faith Community Homes gave these families much-needed support and affirmation during their journey to financial stability. Here is what some parents had to say:

“Words cannot compare to how our hearts felt on Christmas Day. Our gifts were amazing and just what we wanted.”

“My heart is overflowing with joy and gratitude for your wonderful act to my kids and me. It was such a blessing to see my kids’ faces full of happiness when they saw and opened all the gifts.”

Special thanks to these individuals and organizations who gave gifts or gift cards to our families for Thanksgiving or Christmas:

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Neighbors Club
Boy Scout Troop 166
Business Builders Group
First Presbyterian Parents Day Out
Forbici Salon, Arlington Heights
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St. John XXIII Community

St. Thomas of Villanova, Palatine
Pam Van de Walle and Brad Hargett
Women of First United Methodist
Church of Arlington Heights
Women of St. James,
Arlington Heights
Women’s Circle at First Presbyterian
Church of Arlington Heights



FCH Honored at Palatine Area Chamber Event

In December, the Palatine Area Chamber of Commerce presented its “Keys to Success” awards. We are thrilled and honored that Faith Community Homes was recognized as the Co-Community Organization of the Year! Chuck Warner, FCH Executive Director (pictured sixth from left), celebrates with other award winners.

Mission Statement

Strengthening northwest suburban families to achieve financial stability and independence through mentoring, rental assistance and support services.

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Faith Community Homes
302 N. Dunton Avenue
Arlington Heights, Illinois 60004
(847) 342-0846
www.fchomes.org
E-mail: info@fchomes.org

Special thanks to Elk Grove Township, Palatine Township, Wheeling Township, and the Village of Arlington Heights for providing significant financial and other assistance to our client families.

Poverty in the Suburbs

In an article featured in the Daily Herald in late 2018, Elizabeth Kneebone, research director of University of California-Berkeley's Terner Center for Housing Innovation, shared several surprising facts about poverty. Nearly one-fourth of children living in the northwest suburbs belong to low-income households, and they lack resources to address their needs. "It doesn't take a lot for many of us to slip below the poverty line," Kneebone said. "Our landscape has shifted, but our policies and programs haven't."

Other facts shared by Kneebone included:

- More than half of Chicago region's low-income population – 54 percent – lived in the suburbs in 2017, up from 39 percent in 2000.
- Nationwide, the suburbs today house three million more poor people than major metropolitan areas.
- The average poverty rate for the northwest suburbs is about 8 percent. Poverty rates have grown unevenly across the region – about 17 percent in Carpentersville, 15 percent in Elgin, 11 percent in Wheeling, 10 percent in Palatine and Prospect Heights, 6 percent in Schaumburg.
- Low-income populations have more than doubled since 2000 in many suburban communities including Arlington Heights, Buffalo Grove, Des Plaines, Elk Grove Village, Palatine, Schaumburg and Wheeling.
- Nearly half of the low-income population in the northwest suburbs are children and seniors.

On a related topic, Pam Van De Walle, one of our case managers, recently visited the Eviction exhibit at the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C. The website associated with the museum exhibit was developed by Matthew Desmond, author of *Evicted*, along with many other researchers and activists. The website (<https://evictionlab.org>) contains maps, statistics, and lots of other relevant data. The video is poignant.

For all of us involved in and/or supporting Faith Community Homes, the article and website are reminders that the work of our organization is more vital now than ever.

"Loads of Love" for FCH Families



At their annual holiday get-together, the Arlington Heights Newcomers and Neighbors Club donated "Loads of Love" - laundry detergent and quarters - to Faith Community Homes. Laundry is a necessity and an expense that all the families in our program have in common, and food stamps cannot be used to purchase laundry detergent. Thank you for this thoughtful donation!

Thanks to all the Generous Donors

Thanks to all the generous donors who helped Faith Community Homes in 2018 to provide the rent support, case management, mentoring and other services to the families we assist. With your financial support, we were able to help many families overcome obstacles and achieve newfound success.

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Wheeling Township

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Congregational United Church of Christ
Faith Lutheran Church
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First Presbyterian Church of Arlington Heights
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First Presbyterian Church Men's Club
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First United Methodist Church of Palatine
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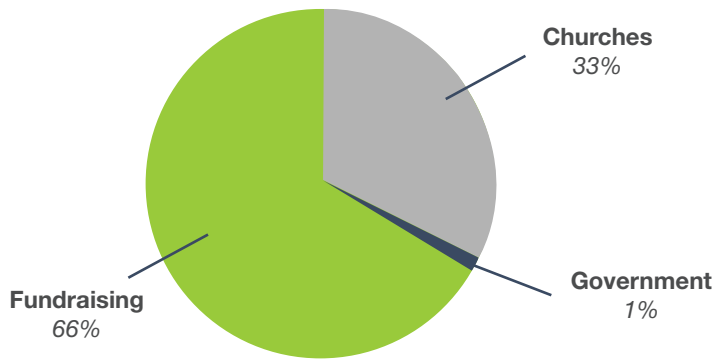
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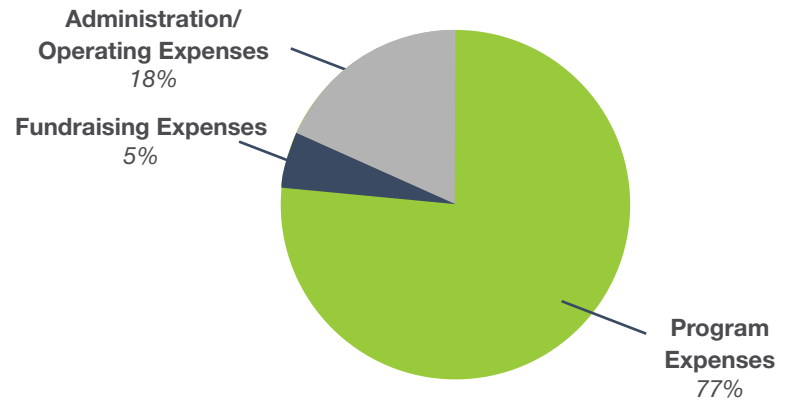
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How Money Was Spent



Volunteer Spotlight

In this edition, we are highlighting the efforts of four volunteers who participate in two of our standing committees, Fund Development and Marketing/Communications. While most committee members are also on the FCH board of directors, these individuals bring their talents to the organization with big hearts and hard-working dedication to the cause. Thanks to each of you for your significant contributions!

Mary Ann Laforet

Mary Ann has been on the Fund Development Committee since her retirement from teaching English in High School District 211 in 2009. She is responsible for the decorations at the annual fall Giving Hope Gala. Mary Ann enjoys traveling (especially to Disney World), exercising, gardening, and writing. She sends out her daily devotions to approximately 200 people five days a week. So far, she has written 1,500 devotions. Her writing keeps her focused on trying to see how she might implement her faith in her everyday activities. She is active in the programs offered by First United Methodist of Arlington Heights and also involved with Journeys, The Road Home.

Kris Mainellis

Kris joined the Marketing/Communications Committee in 2016. Kris has nearly 25 years of communications and marketing experience, mostly in the not-for-profit sector. She currently works for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as director of communications and event planning for the Congregational Vitality team. Kris is married to Scott and the couple have two boys, who are both in college. Kris enjoys running, hiking, reading and traveling with her family. "It's rewarding to use my skill set to help others, and I particularly enjoy serving with the talented and caring people on this great team!"

Annette Migala

Annette became a member of the Marketing/Communications Committee in 2016. She has taken on many responsibilities in the organization including the new brand design for Faith Community Homes, recreating and updating the website and social media outlets, and formatting and sending out eBlasts. Annette started a home organizing business serving the Chicagoland area, assisting clients with purging items they no longer need and organizing their home in order to transform their space into one they love. She also assists with packing and unpacking before or after a move. If you are interested in developing an individualized plan with Annette, visit her website at www.neaterhomes.com. In her free time, Annette enjoys traveling and photography.

Cathy Robertson

Cathy joined the Fund Development Committee in 2016. She has previously been a volunteer for PTA, Meals on Wheels, various church committees, bell choir, P.E.O., and other community outreach efforts. A graduate of Maine South High School and DePauw University, she coordinated programs and special events for the Arlington Heights Park District as Museum Program Coordinator for 15 years. Cathy is a Master Gardener, enjoys baking, cooking, wine tasting and her convertible during the summer. She loves travel in the USA and abroad, being outside in the sunshine and activities such as walking, biking and golf. A condo in the city provides great opportunities for exploring Chicago via public transportation and special events.

Faith Community Homes Partners with Illinois Spinal Care

Illinois Spinal Care opened a new chiropractic clinic in Palatine this past summer and they offered a unique partnership opportunity to Faith Community Homes. Basically, a new patient can donate \$20 to FCH instead of paying the full cost of their initial evaluation. The patient receives the evaluation regardless of whether they donate or pay the full amount. This is a great new partnership with the business community for FCH.



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Executive Director Message

In 2018 we celebrated our 15th year of inspiring hope and changing the lives of low-income families. It was a busy and eventful year for Faith Community Homes. The year has seen changes, accomplishments and challenges. The biggest change was finding a new Program Manager. As many of you know, Sr. Carrie Miller, who in many ways started Faith Community Homes 15 years ago, left us when she was elected to the leadership of her community, Sisters of the Living Word. Sarah Harte, our new Program Manager, is managing our program very effectively and cares deeply about families and the issues they face. She has brought new insights and organization to the task.

Another important change is our new “branding” with a new logo and more consistent presentation of material. This also includes new outreach for finding families in need. During the past year, we assisted 23 families to a brighter, more financially stable future. Families who recently completed our two-year program were able to increase their incomes by an average of 18%. Additionally, 24% of the parents were able to increase their education during the program term, leading to improved employment.

A significant challenge is the increasing cost of rental housing that is difficult for low-income families to afford. As a consequence, many families are “priced out” and have to find housing in areas other than where we have served over the past 15 years. So, we are now following the families and work with them throughout the northwest suburbs in addition to Arlington Heights and Palatine.

FCH also held two very successful fundraising events: “Fun and Games” in the spring and our annual gala, “Giving Hope”, in the fall. We very much appreciate the support of everyone at these events as well as the many generous supporters throughout the year.

Finally, the year ended with Faith Community Homes being selected as the Co-Community Organization of the Year by the Palatine Area Chamber of Commerce.



*Charles Warner
Executive Director*