

FAITH COMMUNITY HOMES

inspiring hope changing lives

May 2019

Upcoming Events

Wine Tasting at Tuscan Market & Wine Shop

Please join us for an afternoon of tastings, appetizers, raffles and goodwill on Sunday, May 19th. Tickets are limited, so make plans now. See flyer (p. 3) for details.

Ford Drive 4 UR Community

Test-drive a Ford at Arlington Heights Ford on June 14th and donate back to Faith Community Homes. See flyer (p. 4) for details.

Giving Hope 2019

Mark your calendar for our annual fundraising event on Sunday, September 15th, from 3-6pm, at Rolling Green Country Club. Expect a fun afternoon with a few surprises along the way! Tickets available on August 1.

Message from the Board Chair



*Jim Mayer
Board Chair*

Happy Spring! Yes, the calendar tells us it's Spring, but our couple of April snow falls make us wonder. Shortly those late snows will be replaced by beautiful blooming flowers. As for our beautiful blooming followers, I want to thank you for your generosity to FCH. Your support and contributions allow us to work with and cultivate families to transform their lives with more hope, courage, strength and independence.

We all face challenges in our lives, but when we have family, friends and community standing alongside us, it helps to make those challenges just a little more manageable. We are the friends and community to our FCH families. We are the ones volunteering and contributing who help make the challenges our families face more manageable.

Just like in our lives, challenges for our FCH families pop up at the most unexpected times. Your continued support and generosity to FCH enables us to be better prepared to provide assistance and hope to our families when they face those unexpected challenges.

Thank you very much for your past support of FCH and with great gratitude ask for your continued support of FCH, "inspiring hope" and "changing lives".

Mentors Make All the Difference

by Kris A. Mainellis

When June Smith (name changed to protect privacy), a single mother, entered the Faith Community Homes program in 2016, she was earning \$10 per hour and carrying \$3,000 in debt. By the time she completed the two-year program, Smith had secured a new job, at \$15 per hour, and reduced her debt to less than \$700. This turnaround was possible, in large part, with the help of volunteer mentors.

"I am grateful for the financial assistance for sure, but most importantly the advice from my case manager and mentors," Smith said. "Sometimes the problems in your life can knock out all your confidence and make you feel low. It feels good to get that confidence back."

Each family in the program is assigned two mentors. The mentors build relationships with the family and provide encouragement and support as they work toward agreed-upon goals for education, skills training and job-related objectives.

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Mission Statement

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

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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.



Volunteer mentor Chuck Cooper meets with Sarah Harte, program manager for Faith Community Homes.

Mentors are critical to helping Faith Community Homes families realize the most important goal of the program — to become financially independent. “We establish trust. Once a family realizes we are not judging, and that we feel their pain, we are able to problem-solve together,” said Mary Weber, who has mentored three families. Mentors tailor their help to the needs of the family. “We set weekly goals by writing them together, and then we review our progress at each meeting.”

FCH mentors also assist families in dealing with challenges beyond finances, including

low self-confidence, concern about providing for their children, job insecurity worries, and the discomfort of mixed-income social situations, according to Chuck Cooper, who has mentored several families. Mentors help guide these families as they acquire the money-management and career skills they need to improve their circumstances and create stability for their families.

A major role for FCH mentors is to help build confidence. “One family member, in an underpaid position, was easily qualified to fill a better job opening. My mentor partner and I provided encouragement and confidence-building support, to not only pursue the position, but also to negotiate a fair compensation package that resulted in a substantial increase in the family’s income,” said Cooper.

FCH mentors work as a team to help their family, each contributing a needed skill set. Weber and her recent mentor partner were a good match. Weber used her background in teaching and school administration to help the family secure state support for child care. Her partner drew on his finance experience to help the family set up a budget and purchase a car. “I think the biggest impact of being a mentor is the support, care and love that we give to the family,” said Weber.

Serving as an FCH mentor is a humbling experience, and not without challenges. “I learned what poverty looks like. I think that was the biggest challenge; to fully understand the hurdles that these families have to overcome,” said Weber. Another challenge was to recognize that someone experiencing poverty may have different priorities than someone who is more financially secure. For example, Weber learned that although organization is one of her top goals, it was low on the list for the first family she mentored. Once she stepped back and realized that the family had bigger, more immediate issues to deal with, she “let go and just accepted what is.”

Cooper and Weber have found it rewarding to serve as volunteer mentors. “It allows you to make a difference through confidence-building, assessment and recommendations, actions that address specific family circumstances, and overall support,” said Cooper. “I love the friendships I have with the family and with my fellow mentors and case managers. There is nothing better than the hugs we receive from the children, being invited to a birthday party, or celebrating a tax refund and paying off a debt,” added Weber. “I have learned humility, tolerance and gratitude.”

Mentors serve a critically important role in the Faith Community Homes program. They are the not-so-secret ingredient to helping families achieve their goals to reach financial independence, a stable household and a better future. The investment of time and energy can be challenging, but the rewards, for all involved, are worth it. To learn more about Faith Community Homes or serving as an FCH mentor, contact Sarah Harte, program manager, at (847) 342-0846.

Faith Community Homes Urges Passage of HB2299

Having an eviction court filing on your record can be a serious obstacle to finding housing. Too often, people do not understand that an eviction filing does not mean that there was an actual eviction.

Illinois currently has an extremely strict standard for sealing eviction records. Under current law, an eviction record is generally publicly available even when there has been no judgment against the tenant. This includes cases:

- That were dismissed.
- Where tenants were able to successfully defend against the eviction.
- When tenants were evicted through no fault of their own, such as when they were renting a condo from an owner being sued for back-assessments, or when the building is being redeveloped.

A case in point: A recent family coming to Faith Community Homes, a single mother whose husband left her abruptly, was evicted because she did not have enough income on her own to meet family expenses. Virtually no one would rent to her and she was faced with having to live in her car or nightly shelters with her two young children. The eviction, in a real sense, was not her fault; her husband decided to simply leave and provide no further support for his family. After considerable effort, FCH was able to locate an apartment for which the private owner agreed to take a chance with this young mother with the assurance that FCH would help her for the next two years.

Under current law, this eviction court filing can be incredibly hard to get rid of, especially with so much data available on the Internet, which may or may not be accurate. HB 2299 would:

- Expand mandatory requirements to remove eviction filings from public record, including “not for cause” eviction cases, such as when the tenant didn’t violate the lease.
- Give judges more discretion in sealing eviction cases.
- Limit tenant screening companies from reporting on cases that are pending and hold tenant screening companies accountable if they report on sealed records.
- All eviction records created after this legislation goes into effect would be sealed after three years.

Contact your state representative if you would like to show your support.

FCH WINE TASTING EVENT

TUSCAN MARKET & WINE SHOP

141 W Wing St, Arlington Heights, IL 60005

SUNDAY, MAY 19TH • 3-6 PM

\$50 PER TICKET



**TO PURCHASE TICKETS
VISIT: [BIT.LY/FCHwine19](https://bit.ly/FCHwine19)
CALL FCH OFFICE: 847-342-0846
OR SEE A BOARD MEMBER**



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Faith Community Homes

302 N. Dunton Avenue
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FORD DRIVE 4 UR COMMUNITY

Ford

TEST-DRIVE A FORD AND EARN \$20 FOR YOUR CAUSE.*

WHAT
Take a spin in a new Ford vehicle. For every test-drive taken, Ford Motor Company will donate \$20 to Faith Community Homes, for a total of up to \$6,000 per event. A little drive could go a long way.*

WHO
Faith Community Homes

WHEN
June 14th from 3pm to 8pm

WHERE
*Arlington Heights Ford
801 W. Dundee Rd.
Arlington Heights, IL 60004*

forddrive4ur.com