

# FAITH COMMUNITY HOMES



August 2021

## Message From the Executive Director



Chuck Warner

As the pandemic has waxed and waned over recent months, we at Faith Community Homes feel like we are beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel. The past 16+ months have been quite an adventure for all of us. We have become experts at using Zoom, working from home much of the time, and working with each other and families from a distance.

Our mentors and staff have been able to effectively maintain connections with families and most have emerged from the pandemic successfully and safely, even though several family members became ill with COVID-19. We are grateful for the assistance of our entire community of supporters and partners.

### **Adapting to changing circumstances**

Even as we adapted to assist our current families, we made adjustments to serve the larger community. Difficulty in meeting with families face to face limited our ability to take in new families for our regular two-year program. In response, we shifted gears to make an immediate impact on local families by providing critically needed short-term help with rent to families financially affected by the pandemic.

Over the past 12 months, we have helped 27 families, frequently in partnership with townships, school districts and villages. These are in addition to the 21 families we have assisted in our two-year program. We will continue to adapt to meet the needs of our families and the larger community, and we look forward to actively adding more families to our program.

Another continuing emphasis is working to function most effectively under changing state and federal assistance programs, understanding and interpreting how these rules and benefits affect our families. Issues include the new child tax credit and its effects on low-income families, new Cook County ordinances governing rentals, and ongoing need for adaptive strategies to deal with the rise of COVID-19 variants.

### **Moving forward**

As all of this work continues, we are planning for an exciting future. We are moving ahead — as we always have — to find ways to help families in need. As you have been hearing, we have found a new name for ourselves that will be official this fall: **FamilyForward**. We feel this name embodies our work to move families forward in their lives. The name also seems fitting as we move forward to meet the new challenges after COVID.

## COMING EVENTS

### **Giving Hope Is Coming!**

Mark your calendars for Sunday, October 24. Turn to page 2 for details.

### **Time Is Running Out... Get Your Boomers Tickets Today**



### **Schaumburg Boomers vs. Lake Erie Crushers**

**Saturday, August 28 | 6:00 pm  
Boomers Wintrust Field, Schaumburg**

Round up your family and friends for the Boomers game benefiting Faith Community Homes. There will be fireworks! Visit [fchomes.org/stay-connected](http://fchomes.org/stay-connected) to learn all the details and get your tickets using a special link. Or call the Boomers Box Office at 847-461-3695. If you call, be sure to mention you are supporting Faith Community Homes through your ticket purchase! Hurry, time is running out! Thank you for supporting FCH families.

## Connect With FCH!

### **Get E-News**

Sign up to stay in touch and discover more ways we are making a difference, together, in the lives of local families. You'll also receive important news and advance notice of opportunities to support FCH through fun activities and special events. Simply send an email to [info@fchomes.org](mailto:info@fchomes.org) to subscribe. Please include "Subscribe" in the subject line. Thanks!

### Mission Statement

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

### Staff

*Executive Director*  
Chuck Warner

*Program Manager*  
Sarah Harte

*Case Manager*  
Pam Van De Walle

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

## Join Us for Our Biggest Event of the Year!

### Giving Hope

**Sunday, October 24 | 12:30 - 3:30 pm**  
**Chevy Chase Country Club, Wheeling**

Please plan to join us for an afternoon of in-person interaction and inspiration at our annual fundraising-and-fun event. We are delighted to be back in person this year. Tickets will be available soon: \$65 each. Mark your calendars, keep your eye on our Facebook page and website, and watch for your invitation.

P.S. *Giving Hope* will feature the Big Reveal of our new brand! (See back cover to learn more.)



## BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: Ted McGinn



Ted McGinn

Ted McGinn believes each of us has a duty to assist people in need. That's why he was all-in when he learned how Faith Community Homes helps low-income, working families in the northwest suburbs of Chicago. As both an attorney and a CPA, there was no doubt McGinn could make a difference through FCH.

McGinn is managing partner at Lavelle Law, Ltd., in Schaumburg. Since he joined the FCH Board of Directors in 2016, he has regularly provided valuable legal opinions and counsel to staff and the board. He and other attorneys in the firm also generously provide pro bono assistance to families in the FCH program.

It's all part of his mentoring attitude: "Collectively we have skills, time and resources available, and we are committed to sharing them with others who are facing challenges in their lives."

### **Providing financial training and help with legal challenges**

Serving at Faith Community Homes offers McGinn a targeted way to help people move past challenges. "It's our responsibility to assist, educate and provide hope for people living on the margins." Upon first getting involved at FCH, he put his fiscal knowledge to work, assisting families who struggled to map out their monthly financial plans.

He also suspected many FCH clients were dealing with legal problems but could not afford to seek counsel. It was then that he saw an opportunity to help families navigate their legal challenges.

McGinn finds it rewarding to participate in the work of FCH, adding, "it is a privilege to be a small part of the large and aggressive outreach mission of Faith Community Homes."

*Learn more about Ted McGinn on the Faith Community Homes blog, at [fchomes.org/blog](http://fchomes.org/blog).*

# Moving Forward With a Place of Her Own



Stock photo by Liza Summer

When single mom “Ellen” applied to Faith Community Homes in spring 2019, she was living in a doubled-up household with other family members and, following an expensive car repair, had no money in the bank. Her full-time hourly wage was not enough to keep her afloat and pay all the penalties and late fees she faced. She had recently taken out two payday loans.

## **Low, but not low enough**

Ellen falls into the category that describes so many of the families in our program: They make “too much” money to qualify for government assistance such as daycare subsidy, Medicaid or Food Stamps/Link Card. And yet their modest income is not enough to pay for all these expenses out of pocket in addition to regular living expenses. Very few people in this low-but-not-low-enough income bracket can afford to put any money into savings, let alone pay off debt.

After Ellen was accepted into the program, Faith Community Homes paid a portion of Ellen’s security deposit so she and her child could have a safe, stable apartment of their own. (Like many families, Ellen could not afford to put down a security deposit plus pay first month’s rent.) After moving into her new apartment, her grocery bills immediately decreased because she was no longer cooking for an entire house full of people. Things were already starting to look up.

## **Budgeting tools help prioritize debts**

Soon thereafter, Ellen began weekly meetings with her volunteer mentors. Her mentors introduced different online budgeting programs until they found one that Ellen liked. Getting into the habit of using the app took some time. But eventually Ellen was able to gain a stronger grasp of exactly where her money was going. She got on a schedule to pay her recurring bills on time and set aside a specific amount for savings from each paycheck. Because of the FCH rent subsidy, Ellen was able to put some money toward paying off old bills. When she finished our program in May 2021, Ellen had a few thousand dollars in the bank.

## **Overcoming life’s challenges while moving forward**

As with all FCH families, life presented Ellen with many challenges during her time in our program. This included more car troubles, a fluctuating childcare situation, and contracting COVID-19 (fortunately, she recovered completely). Despite all these circumstances, Ellen continued to live modestly and chip away at her debt. Securing her own apartment with the help of Faith Community Homes helped Ellen decrease her living expenses. Combined with her own hard work and perseverance, Ellen was able to improve her financial situation as she learned to use some valuable tools to help her move ahead toward a brighter future.

*This story has been abridged. Visit the Faith Community Homes blog, at [fchomes.org/blog](https://fchomes.org/blog), to read the entire article.*

## **What Items Are Most Useful for Families?**

We continue to be inspired by the many ways our wonderful community provides help and hope to Faith Community Homes families. If you are looking to pitch in, the most useful items we can give families (besides rent assistance, of course) are gift cards for Walmart and gas stations, in amounts of \$25 or less. In addition, families can always use paper goods and cleaning supplies. These items are not eligible for purchase using a Link Card (Food Stamps program). Contact Program Manager Sarah Harte ([sarah.harte@fchomes.org](mailto:sarah.harte@fchomes.org)) to help. Thank you!

### **Most useful household items:**

- Toilet paper, paper towels, facial tissue (e.g., Kleenex)
- Ziploc-style bags
- Kitchen/toilet/bath cleaning solution/spray
- Face masks — cloth or disposable — adult or child size





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## WE HAVE EXCITING NEWS!

### ***This fall, Faith Community Homes is becoming FamilyForward.***

Although our name is changing, our mission remains the same: Strengthening northwest suburban families to achieve financial stability and independence through mentoring, rental assistance and support services.

For the past 18 years, Faith Community Homes has been nurturing and building on the seeds planted by the churches of the Arlington Heights Ministerial Association. It was a bold idea to come together to support, mentor, and subsidize housing for low-income families. Recognizing the growing need in the northwest suburbs, our board of directors concluded that now is the time to refresh our brand and expand our sources of support.

- **FamilyForward** reflects how we've grown since our founding.
- **FamilyForward** encapsulates what we do.
- **FamilyForward** affirms our commitment to keep moving families forward.

Our new name captures the essence of what we do. **FamilyForward** seeks to welcome even more people, organizations and businesses to join our ongoing mission. **FamilyForward** is more identifiable to families who need help.

Visit [fchomes.org/exciting-news](http://fchomes.org/exciting-news) to learn more, and get ready for the Big Reveal of our new brand at *Giving Hope*, October 24!

