



Love INC  
Love In the Name of Christ  
Of Muskegon County

# Love Letters

May/June 2011

## From the Executive Director, Gail Kraft



### Core Value #7

#### “We value building Christ-like relationships”

How do we value building Christ-like relationships? Over the past several years, our philosophy of ministry has evolved. While we once simply assisted people with their basic needs and sent them on their way, today we get more information about the situation that caused an individual or family to need us. We do that by treating people with dignity, respect and a non-judgmental attitude. We accept each person as a child of God and try to earn their trust. While this is not an easy thing to do, especially for those who call us on the phone, we do our best to make each caller know that God loves them and we want to help in a way that will impact their lives. Often times, the result is a referral to one of our New Directions classes such as Managing Your Money, Stress Management or Bridges to Motherhood. It's in these classes where our volunteer teachers and mentors can build a relationship that earns trust. It's in these classes where we can pray with and for them and learn more about their circumstances. Another item we ask in the initial interview is if they have a prayer request. Many do and often volunteers pray with them on the phone. That prayer often ends with tears and we've heard more than once that no one had ever prayed with them before.

We also encourage our pantry partners to do the same – to build relationships with the clients we refer to them for basic needs. Many tell us about follow-up contacts and relationships built.

We have many examples of this core value, but I can think of two that really stand out. You can read Caroline's story later in this newsletter, but what a perfect example of building a Christ-like relationship. Her mentors thought they were going to help her with her finances; they have done that but also much more, including sitting with her during chemo treatments. Another example is Scott. He and his mentor are opposites in so many ways and yet God has reached into that relationship and brought an unbelievable friendship. The last time I saw Scott, he told me his mentor was his best friend.

If you want to be a part of building Christ-like relationships, contact me at any time. Thank you for your support of this ministry. Gail Kraft

### Love INC Core Values

Love INC has 10 core values that define who we are and why we do what we do. The core values are:

1. We are **Christian**. Everything we think, say, and do is in the name of Christ.
2. **Prayer** is an integral part of who we are.
3. We follow Christ's example of valuing the **poor and needy**.
4. We value **unity** of the Body of Christ.
5. We value **transformation** in the lives of people and communities
6. We value **churches** living out the two great commandments to love God and love their neighbors.
7. We value building Christ-like **relationships**.
8. We value the **connectedness** of the Love INC movement.
9. We model **excellence**.
10. We value continually **maturing** in our capacity to meet people's needs.

*Our mission is transforming lives In the Name of Christ through the church*

## Caroline's Story

Caroline wrote, "I broke down crying with gratitude at Love INC, telling them how much help it has been, and how I've just felt this was a blessing and provision from God. I have thought about it everyday. God willing—there will come a day when I can give back to each and everyone of these charities who have helped me through. That is something I will be praying about and I have faith that God will make this possible." Thank you to all the people wrapping around Caroline and please continue to pray for her as she faces continuing health problems and surgeries. We first met Caroline when she came to our Manage Your Money classes and desired mentoring. Her family was accustomed to two incomes and with her illness, she had to go on medical leave and she wanted advice on how to manage on less. Her mentors not only helped her with her financial issues, but sat with her during chemo treatments as well. Her faith is a blessing to all who come in contact with her and we at Love INC feel privileged to be used by God to bring a little sunshine into her life. Caroline thinks we have blessed her, but she has been a blessing to us.

## Bridges To Motherhood

Although not a new ministry, Bridges officially began in January under Love INC. I am so happy to be a part of Love INC and look forward to seeing the plans God has for us! At Bridges Support Group we strive to meet some of the needs a single mother faces during the early years of parenting. The mothers are between 18 and 30 with infants thru pre-school age. They enjoy coming to the meetings for friendship, guidance and support. Being the coordinator of Bridges since it began, I have been touched in many ways. Recently while out to dinner with my husband, we did a quick glance at the table across from us. A young woman sat with a beautiful well behaved little girl. As our glances met, big smiles broke out on our faces. She quickly got out of her seat to come and greet us. She once attended Bridges and we stood in amazement to see the beautiful transformation that has taken place. Once, so broken in spirit and so much in need, now a beautiful, confident mother. She bent down to her little girl and said, "Honey, these are people who helped me a lot when you were a baby." She then told us how grateful she was for the help she received. I wanted to cry for joy to see her again. We felt really blessed to have been a part of her life through Bridges to Motherhood. There are always volunteer opportunities for those who have a heart to work with single mothers. If interested, contact Love INC for more information.

Veronica Murie, Program Coordinator

### Volunteer Banquet Huge Success!

On April 26th, over 100 volunteers and staff gathered at St. Thomas Parish Hall for a fun time of fellowship, great food prepared by the Knights of Columbus and wonderful music provided by Dave & Kate Habetler. As always, this event would not be possible without the fantastic support of our donors: Dave Hazekamp (meats); Excel Propane (Fruitport); Shoreline Insurance, Eagle Alloy, St. Thomas Parish and the Knights of Columbus.



We truly appreciate the hours our partner pantries put in to provide services and comfort to those in need in Muskegon County.

Great gifts were donated, allowing us to have drawings for our "special guests; each volunteer also received a Love INC tote bag.



*Thank you all for helping Love INC help others!*

### Volunteer Opportunities:

- Can you set a place for another child at your table for a couple of weeks? If so, be a host family for **Bethany Christian Services** Safe Families Program. Call Tim Nolan at 1-855-273.SAFE.
- Love INC Manage Your Money Volunteer Mentors, Call Alicia at 773-3448
- Love INC, Monday P.M. phone intake, Call Yvonne at 773-3448
- Love INC, Client Follow-up, Call Gail at 773-3448

### Welcome to our Newest Volunteers:

**Stephen & Norma Ring, First CRC of Muskegon, Bridges to Motherhood**  
**Patty Ann Thurston, Camino de Vida Church, Phone Intake**  
**Anne Smith, Whitehall Evang. Covenant, Phone Intake**  
**Nancy Peterson, Lebanon Lutheran, Phone Intake**

Volunteers are *always* needed! Please call 231.773.3448 and ask for Yvonne Ramos or Gail Kraft.

## FEED THE CHILDREN FUN BOX DISTRIBUTION

Once again, Love INC received 400 sets of “fun boxes” to give to families in Muskegon County. Donated by “Feed the Children” Organization, the sets were intended to provide a smile; each household received a 25 lb. food box, 20 lb. paper products box and a 10 lb. box filled with Avon products! Recipients were truly grateful:

**A Budgeting Client writes:** “Thanks for getting me those boxes! One box had food, the small Avon box was filled with Avon stuff and the other box had a mixture of Avon stuff, laundry soap and some books for my little girl. I have really appreciated everything that Love has done for me. I am really glad that I have you to work with as my mentor and you are helping me get on track of things and you are doing a great job. I know I will get there eventually!! The Budgeting class was awesome and the work that everyone does for this is very appreciated”.



**A Parenting Client states:** “Wow—what a great surprise to get not only things I need, but some fun items and stuff I wouldn’t have been able to buy for myself. I loved the purse and all the Avon and make-up. Thank you so much!”

## Love INC Board News

Welcome to our newest board member, Richard, (Dick) Morgan. Dick, now retired, held top management and human resource positions and is not afraid of sensitive issues. Dick has been a volunteer mentor in our “Manage Your Money” program helping our clients budget their resources. His desire is for Love INC to be one of the top service agencies in the county and he wants to contribute his time, talent, advice, influence, funding and prayers to assist Love INC and the people of Muskegon County during these challenging economic times. He is active at St. James Catholic Church of Montague. Welcome Dick!

## Project Ramp-Making a Difference

2010 was a good year for Project Ramp. Twenty-four ramps were built for those in need. Funding came from Mercy General Health Partners, City of Muskegon, Alcoa Howmet, churches, grants, Senior Resources, HHS, and others. This year grants are hard to get and funds are tenuous. Fourteen applications have been received and none of the applicants are able to pay for materials. (All ramps are built by volunteers.) Additional requests will continue to come in. Project Ramp needs funds and volunteers to build and draw the ramps that we secure funding for. Pictured below is a crew from Project Serve building a ramp last season.



Ron Hayward (pictured below; 2nd from left) has drawn ramps for this program for 8 years and would like to retire. Project Ramp so appreciates all of his hard work over the years. If you have drafting skills and could donate your time, please contact us at Love INC. Without someone to draw the ramps, they cannot be built.



Pictured above are Gail Kraft and Ron Hayward presenting a certificate to Amy Huisser and T.J. VanderLaan at Alcoa Howmet in appreciation of their dedication to this project. **Please call Gail Kraft or Chris Zeedyk at 231.773.3448 for more information.**

## Budgeting Love Story

**Blessings Outweigh the Work**  
By Chris Zeedyk, Budgeting Mentor

In 2004, Love In the Name of Christ was advertising in church bulletins for the need for Budgeting Mentors. Mentors meet with their clients that are enrolled in their budgeting program. My husband happened to see it, and thought that I should become a mentor. I prayed about it, and was soon signed up.

My profession has been in accounting for approximately 30 years, so I had a good background for helping others in the budgeting program. I was also blessed with parents who taught me to save for items that I wanted. These lessons help me to explain to those in our society today who think that you buy whatever you want with charge cards now, and pay for it later. Many of my clients have been in this situation where they kept charging until they had so much debt that they couldn't pay their bills on time.

My first client was a single woman who had a lot of debt due to being off work for so long due to medical reasons. She has since recovered and made many changes in her life to improve her financial position. She has also given back to Love INC by giving her witness at Budgeting Programs and Meetings.

Other clients over the past few years have had many different reasons for taking the classes. They have too much debt, or are struggling to pay their bills, or have lost their jobs. Each case is handled according to their situation. I've seen God work in miraculous ways as these people learn to budget and to make better choices with their money. Seeing each person gain knowledge, and make changes to their lives that allow them to live free of debt has been so rewarding. God has blessed me in so many ways as I've mentored for the budgeting program.

The budgeting program is always looking for caring people who are willing to mentor one on one with their clients. If you can spare an hour each week to meet with a client, you will also be blessed as much as I have been. Please contact Alicia Petty at Love INC today at 231.773.3448. You will be glad that you did.

## 2011 SUPPORTIVE CHURCHES

### March-April 2011

Allen Avenue CRC  
Bridge Bible Church  
Calvary Church  
Calvary Bible Church  
Calvin CRC  
Church of God United  
Evangelical Covenant Church-Whitehall  
Fellowship Reformed Church  
Fifth Reformed Church  
First Free Methodist Church  
First Presbyterian Church  
Forest Park Covenant Church  
Fruitland Baptist Church  
Fruitport Christian Reformed Church  
Gateway Church  
Harbor Unitarian Universalist  
Congregation  
Hope Reformed Church  
Life Change Church  
McGraft Memorial Congregational Church  
Mona Shores Baptist Church  
Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church  
Prince of Peace Parish  
St. Francis De Sales Church  
Westwood Reformed Church

### **Tremendous Feinstein Challenge Response!**

Cash donations for the Feinstein Challenge totaled \$14,111.87. Food items totaled 3,224. Thanks to all who donated money or food so that we could receive these matching funds.

We'll keep you informed how we did!

### **WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MILLENIUM PARTNERS**

James & Paula Rice  
Ronald & Catherine Aulerich  
Paul & Christy Vanderwall  
Verne & Janice Vanhouten

Thank you for your generous support!

# Love INC News



## Clearinghouse News by the Numbers March—April 2011

Actual Services Provided: 1,858  
 Number of individuals impacted: 3,563  
 Value of Services Provided year to date: \$ 213,729

### Breakdown of Services by numbers:

Food Requests Filled: 397  
 Clothing Request Filled: 54  
 Personal Care Requests Filled: 224  
 Household Requests Filled: 61  
 Baby Needs Requests Filled: 62

New Directions Class Participants: 291

Total volunteer time estimated at 8,197 hours to date!  
 Total value of Gift in Kind (non-cash donations, etc.): \$40,537

Love INC partners with area churches to provide 16 food pantries, 2 personal care pantries, a household goods pantry, 2 clothing closets, a crib ministry, a baby pantry, a layette ministry a twin bed ministry and Life Skills classes.

**YOU** make these ministries and more, possible!!

***“In Memory of” Gifts***  
*Joyce Dulyea* by Erdene McHenry  
*Dr. Ramesh Kakaty* by John & Jean Teets  
*Pauline Langlois* by Dr. & Mrs. James Nordhoff

***Don Egeler***

By

*Philip & Kathryn Carter*

*Andy & Dee Carter*

*John & Mary Moorman*

*Bruce & Judy Hoppe*

*Mark & Krista Sheroski*

*Corey & Kari Ruthig*



***“In Honor of” Gifts***

*Jeff & Shanon Aulerich & Family*  
*Jim Marciniak & Lisa Aulerich-Marciniak*  
*& Family*

By their Parents

*Ron & Cathy Aulerich*

**DONATE ONLINE** — [www.LoveIncofMuskegon.com](http://www.LoveIncofMuskegon.com)

**YOU** make a difference in the lives of people in need.

Each need brought to Love INC represents an opportunity to connect with one of God’s children, to bring a message of God’s grace. **We always urge everyone to give to their home church first.**

- I want to help with a monthly pledge of \_\_\_\_ \$50 \_\_\_\_ \$75 \_\_\_\_ \$100 \_\_\_\_ Other
- I want to become a Millennium Partner by donating \$1,000 or more annually
- I would like to donate \$\_\_\_\_\_ in honor of \_\_\_\_\_
- I would like to donate \$\_\_\_\_\_ in memory of \_\_\_\_\_
- I want to be a Prayer partner! Please send me the monthly Prayer Requests via:  Email  U.S. Mail



**Mail to:**

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 Suite A  
 Muskegon, MI 49442  
 231.773.3448

[www.LoveIncOFMuskegon.com](http://www.LoveIncOFMuskegon.com)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Church Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

### Board of Directors

Sherry Becker, Covenant Life CRC, Board President  
 Dick Nolan, Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church, Vice President  
 Megan Doss, Covenant Life CRC, Secretary  
 Tina Root, Covenant Community Reformed Church, Treasurer  
 Leon VanRees, Bethany CRC  
 Pastor Brian Kyle, Fruitland Evan. Cov. Church  
 Bruce Duiser, Unity Reformed Church  
 Geoffrey Nolan, Prince of Peace Catholic Church  
 Ron Nyenhuis, Calvin CRC  
 Cynthia Shyne, Beacon Light Community Church  
 Dick Morgan, St. James Catholic Church, Montague  
 Tedd Bryson, Forest Park Covenant Church, Ministries Chaplain

### Office Staff

Gail Kraft, Calvin CRC, Executive Director  
 Yvonne Ramos, First Free Methodist, Clearinghouse Coordinator/  
 Resource Developer  
 Alicia Petty, Greater Harvest Missionary Baptist,  
 Relational Ministries Coordinator  
 Chris Zeedyk, Unity Reformed Church, Administrative Assistant

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