



29 DAYS OF LOVE
2024

Relationships - meeting our neighbors in need...

Meet Carmen. At Love INC SKC, we got to know Carmen through a referral from a social worker through one of our community partners. This social worker asked if Love INC SKC could help a mom of 7 who was sinking financially, struggling to keep children in school and working to get into her own home. As a result of the connection between the Love INC partnership of churches and community partners, Carmen called the Love INC Connection Center. We had the privilege of listening to her and learning more about her family and situation. There were many complex needs in her life and the most pressing issue was getting her mobile home ready to move in. She was living with her father and the strain on family relationships while living in a small, shared space had reached its breaking point. Through the partnership of churches, Love INC SKC was able to deliver some clothes for the kids, provide 3 appliances for the mobile home she had just purchased, and offer some assistance moving. Carmen worked hard to get into her own home! And, what a blessing to get to know this mom who is striving to provide a stable home for her children.

FOLLOW ALONG DAYS 1-9...



www.loveincskc.org
616-816-5683

1

LISTEN

Listening is a difficult skill to practice. By taking the time to **listen** to Carmen's story, a door was opened for understanding and relationship. We grow in our ability to listen each day in the Love INC Connection Center. Today, practice listening to someone you love without asking questions or making comments.

2

CALL

What is your special gift? What is your unique ability? Did you know you can offer these assets to people like Carmen through Love INC? Love INC can be the connector to match up those in need with your specific gift. It was a gifted tradesman who helped Carmen with her appliances. **Call** us today and let's discuss it!

3

IMAGINE

Imagine a network of relationships where people no longer 'fall through the cracks'. Your church has a unique role to play in transforming our communities in the name of Christ. Call Love INC today to discuss how to link arms in providing care to moms like Carmen.

4

WORSHIP

Worship the Lord today by visiting another Love INC partner church. What a privilege to have 13 churches in our partnership. Be encouraged by what God is doing throughout His kingdom. Be a guest at Buck Creek Community or Cornerstone or Faith Baptist Church.

5

SERVE

Pray for and **serve** at local service agencies – Love INC partners with, and refers to, local agencies who are doing great work in our communities. Love INC does not 'reinvent the wheel' or undermine another ministry's work. We connect and communicate together - it was through an agency relationship that we learned about Carmen.

6

ATTEND

You can start getting more involved tonight! **Attend** a volunteer training class as the first step in joining our Connection Center team. Volunteer training kicks off tonight, February 6 at 6:30pm at the Pentecostals of Kentwood, 2627 44th St SE.

7

CONNECT

As Carmen learned, Love INC is not an emergency service agency; our ministry is to help churches help people. We do this by praying, advocating for deeper needs (not just the presenting issue) and then **connecting** people with relational ministry in and through the churches.

8

RALLY

Rally your small group to get involved with Love INC! You can engage with neighbors like Carmen and serve in the name of Christ. Volunteers are needed on teams for furniture delivery, for home repair work, for transportation support, and for mentoring.

9

JOIN

Join us in the Love INC Connection Center – our volunteers talk on the phone with individuals like Carmen every week. Volunteers are needed to listen to and pray for callers, help gather information, verify situations and serve on the follow-up team.

Mobilizing Churches - Transformational Ministry...

Through the partnership of churches at Love INC SKC, we are delighted to offer Transformational Ministry classes. One of these classes is Faith & Finance and we can now celebrate with over 30 graduates! During any Transformational Ministry classes participants we have met through the Connection Center are invited into the church where church volunteers provide a community meal and children's programming. During the Faith & Finance class, participants learn about basic financial stewardship, God's view of resources and are encouraged to take steps toward balanced budgets. Love INC trains allies to 'walk alongside' participants during these classes – meaning we get to provide support and build relationships. In our classes there is a delightful mix of organized chaos, learning and relationship building! Participants earn incentive points for attendance and participation which they can redeem for gas or grocery gift cards or to pay down a bill.

Remember Carmen from last week? Due to the relationship and invitation through the Love INC Connection Center, Carmen attended a Faith & Finance class! Think of it – here is a struggling mom with no one to turn to and no connection to a church who is now meeting with Christ followers each week in a church, growing a network of supportive relationships and working toward a better future for her and her children – what a blessing!

FOLLOW ALONG DAYS 10-19...

10

JOIN

Join the ally team for transformational ministry classes like the Faith & Finance class in which Carmen participated. Training is available for all Love INC allies. Serving as an ally in a class gives you the opportunity to both learn and build a relationship with a neighbor in need.

11

WORSHIP

Worship the Lord today at one of the Love INC partner churches. What a privilege to have 13 churches in our partnership. Be encouraged by what God is doing throughout His kingdom. Be a guest at Grace Reformed or Kentwood Community or Pentecostals of Kentwood Church.

12

SERVE

Love INC will have three partner church sites for Transformational Ministry classes throughout 2024. At each site, a hot meal is served to our neighbors in need. What a blessing for them to focus on what they are learning instead of what's for dinner! **Serve** on the meal team to support moms like Carmen.

13

TEACH

During Faith & Finance classes, women like Carmen can be at ease because they know their children are well cared for. Join the Children's Care Team at a Love INC transformational ministry site to support these hard-working parents. Don't miss this opportunity to **teach** children about how much God loves them!

14

SUPPORT

Happy Valentine's Day! Buy something sweet for your sweetie today and give financial **support** for transformational ministry at Love INC with a financial gift. \$25 will buy you a nice box of chocolates or can cover the cost of materials for one participant in our Faith & Finance class.

15

JOIN

Join the Love INC prayer team – both online and in-person options are available where we pray for the Board and staff of Love INC who desire God's wisdom. We pray for protection and blessing for our partner churches. We pray for provision and growth for our neighbors in need.

16

ANALYZE

Analyze the outreach efforts of your church. Are they transactional or transformational? How are we, as believers, engaging with others and their needs? Do any changes need to be made? Love INC can help equip churches to take steps toward relational, transformational ministry.

17

RESOURCE

All Love INC Faith & Finance students earn incentive points for attendance and participation. These points can be redeemed for practical needs like gas or grocery cards or for paying down a bill they are working on. **Resource** moms like Carmen by providing \$10 gas cards or financial donations toward the Incentive Program.

18

WORSHIP

Worship the Lord today at one of the Love INC partner churches. What a privilege to have 13 churches in our partnership. Be encouraged by what God is doing throughout His kingdom. Be a guest at Princeton, St. Mark Lutheran or The PIER Church.

19

PRAY

At each Love INC Transformational Ministry site we have a prayer room set up to intercede for neighbors in need and pray for those who are attending Faith & Finance or other classes. You can **pray** for moms like Carmen.

Deeper Relationships - on our journey...

Continuing our story with Carmen, she graduated from a Faith & Finance class and redeemed the bulk of her incentive points to put toward a car repair. She got a job and was making progress on her journey toward a more stable lifestyle. We continue to connect from time-to-time and it has been a privilege to continue to provide emotional support and process some decisions together. Where is Carmen now? Well, we're not sure...we know that she continued to struggle with her bills, made some unwise decisions, had some trouble with her kids at school, and her father had some serious health problems. She lost her mobile home, and last we talked, she did not have a plan for what to do next. It is through the relationship we had with Carmen that we know that continuing to help her financially would not help her and her children in the long-run, even if we could meet additional financial needs. She has made many decisions that have alienated her from her extended family leaving her with nowhere to go and no plan forward for her own family. It is heartbreaking!

Why are we telling you this story? Don't we all want to share 'success' stories? Yes we do - yet, the reality is there are many moments of heartache at Love INC. Carmen's journey is similar to so many others... families are struggling; poverty is complex and not alleviated by a single class or interaction. At Love INC we know that transformation is not 'one and done'. We continue to reach out. We remember that Jesus walks with all of us on our journeys. In our last conversation with Carmen she said, "you're the only ones who keep reaching out. Thank you for praying for me." We know God sees her and is still working in her life. Faith and a deep relationship with Jesus is built over time and by interacting in the midst of very real life struggles. Despite the heartache, we have hope and look forward to sharing that message each time we connect with Carmen and all our clients. We are thankful and privileged to be the Connection Center for our partnership of churches that reminds Carmen that she matters - to us and to God.

FOLLOW ALONG DAYS 20-29...

20 RECRUIT

Love INC is led by a volunteer Board of Directors, each one is a champion for transformational ministry through the partnership of churches. These leaders liaise with each church and guide Love INC's ministry direction. Help us **recruit** additional leaders for this team.

21 LEARN

Learn the principles of Redemptive Compassion which guide all we do at Love INC. These are the foundational principles we discuss in all Love INC volunteer training and involvement. It is these principles that guided us in our decisions with Carmen.

22 PREPARE

Prepare to be a mentor or ally. All Love INC volunteers are equipped with training and a life-changing class on how to serve our neighbors in need. One starts TODAY, Thursday, February 22 at 10:30am at St. Mark Lutheran, 1934 52nd St. SE. Join us!

23 PRAY

Pray for Carmen and so many moms like her - pray that God would strengthen them in their inner being, that Christ would dwell in their hearts, that they would be rooted in love and that they may have power to understand how vast Christ's love is (Ephesians 3:16-19).

24 EMPATHIZE

While it is uncomfortable to not be helping Carmen financially anymore, she is blessed by our continued attempts at building our relationship. The reality of life and ministry is not always peachy keen. Join us in our learning to **empathize** with neighbors in need and to "mourn with those who mourn".

25 WORSHIP

Worship the Lord today at one of the Love INC partner churches. What a privilege to have 13 churches in our partnership. Be encouraged by what God is doing throughout His kingdom. Be a guest at Together or True Vine Mission or Unity Reformed Church.

26 RESOURCE

Have Love INC talk with your church's benevolence team. Love INC can help equip churches plan their responses to requests from families in need like Carmen's. Love INC can **resource** churches with tools to help them serve wisely in their communities.

27 WRITE

Love INC exists only in and through the local church. We are so grateful for the support of your church and pastor. Today, do something to support your pastor. **Write** them a note of encouragement. **Pray** for them. **Join** the Love INC Prayer Team.

28 PLEDGE

During these '29 days of Love', we celebrate all God is doing in and through Transformational Ministry classes at our churches. Would you **pledge** a \$29 monthly gift to support Love INC of South Kent County? An online giving link can be found on our website: www.loveincskc.org

29 COMMIT

Working with neighbors in need through Love INC is a privilege. We have loved getting to know Carmen. This is also hard work. Will you join us? **Commit** with us to stay true to our calling for transformational, relational ministry.



**Love In the Name of Christ
South Kent County
A partnership of churches:**

Buck Creek Community Church
Cornerstone Church
Faith Baptist Church
Grace Reformed Church
Kelloggsville Church
Kentwood Community Church
Pentecostals of Kentwood
Princeton Christian Reformed Church
Saint Mark Lutheran Church
The PIER
Together Church
True Vine Church
Unity Reformed Church

**Love INC SKC....helping
people in need find
the church and
helping the church
serve people in need.**

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