



Inter-Faith Council for Social Service

Help and Hope for Those in Need Since 1963

2005 TRENDS AND SERVICES

In 2005, the Inter-Faith Council provided nearly 76,553 hot meals; provided 7,301 bags of groceries to 6,932 members of the community; granted 3,596 requests for food, cash and help with utility and other service needs representing 6,726 people; and offered more than 713 people a place to sleep through its Community House and HomeStart programs. Throughout the agency, volunteers and interns worked slightly more than 34,000 hours.

It is a reality that hunger and poverty are interdependent: In 2003, the number of Americans living in poverty increased by 1.3 million and the ranks of the uninsured went up by 1.4 million. Since then, the North Carolina Justice Center reports that *median household income numbers have dropped by 6.7% across the state while poverty and uninsured numbers continue to rise, especially for children and families*. Of North Carolina's 1.1 million families with children, 49.2% earn too little to meet their basic needs. 2,000,000 North Carolinians cannot afford a decent place to live. Households must have yearly wages equaling \$60,000 to afford an average priced home. On October 28 the US Department of Agriculture announced that the number of "people living in households suffering from hunger without resources to purchase an adequate diet" dramatically rose to 38.2 million Americans for the fifth consecutive year. According to the New York Times, *wages for workers fell in 2004 even though the economy added 2.2 million jobs and corporate profits surged*.

In Orange County, with housing rent levels twice what they were in 1990, gas prices escalating, and "living wage" jobs hard to come by, many families are just one crisis away from homelessness. The IFC is fighting the growing threat of homelessness to the citizens of Carrboro and Chapel Hill. National economic conditions and social policies are leading many people across the country to the brink of homelessness. Our own community is no exception:

- Orange County has the highest standard of living requirements in all 100 counties of North Carolina
- The federal government says that a family of four must earn \$18,650; in Orange County the "living income" standard for that same family is \$52,788 or greater
- More than 15% of the citizens of Orange County have no health insurance
- Over 5,500 Orange County households pay more than 50% of their income for housing costs

Yet, in spite of economic conditions that are stacked against them, the majority of people we serve are working hard to help themselves:

- ◆ Carrboro/Chapel Hill households served last year had an average household income of \$810 per month
- Our clients had an average workweek of 29 hours
- IFC clients' annualized average income was \$12,667
- Approximately 51% of our clients lived in Chapel Hill, while another 42% were from Carrboro
- ◆ 29% of HomeStart residents said that unemployment or difficulty finding work was their primary reason for homelessness
- ◆ 39% of Community House men said their primary reason for homelessness was unemployment

The Triangle Point-In-Time Count conducted on January 25 revealed there are currently over 1,711 homeless men, women and children in the Triangle living on the streets and in homeless shelters. The one-night count conducted by outreach workers, police officers, housing providers and volunteers throughout Durham, Orange and Wake counties further revealed:

- 981 homeless in Wake County
- 493 homeless in Durham County
- 237 homeless in Orange County

“The intersection of poor mental health and homelessness is irrefutable. Untreated mental illness and disability coupled with lack of affordable housing contributes to homelessness and presents barriers to ending it,” said Craig Chancellor, President and CEO of Triangle United Way. *(February 16, 2006 Triangle United Way News Release)*