

SecondFirst Church
Second Congregational UCC/First Presbyterian Church PC(USA)
318 N. Church Street, Rockford IL 61101
(815)963-8431
www.secondfirst.org
www.facebook.com/secondfirstchurch/

Non Profit
Organization US
Postage PAID
Permit No. 3734
Rockford, Illinois

NOVEMBER 2019

THE TOWER

SECOND CONGREGATIONAL UCC/FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PC(USA)

Energizing downtown Rockford and beyond with God's grace



A LITTLE BIT FROM BECKY E

True letters children have sent to their pastors:

Dear Pastor, I know God loves everybody but He never met my sister. Yours sincerely, Arnold. Age 8, Nashville.

Dear Pastor, Please say in your sermon that Peter Peterson has been a good boy all week. I am Peter Peterson. Sincerely, Pete. Age 9, Phoenix

Dear Pastor, My father should be a minister. Every day he gives us a sermon about something. Robert Anderson, age 11

Dear Pastor, I'm sorry I can't leave more money in the plate, but my father didn't give me a raise in my allowance. Could you have a sermon about a raise in my allowance? Love, Patty. Age 10, New Haven

Dear Pastor, I think a lot more people would come to your church if you moved it to Disneyland. Loreen. Age 9, Tacoma

Dear Pastor, Please pray for all the airline pilots. I am flying to California tomorrow. Laurie. Age 10, New York City

Dear Pastor, My father says I should learn the Ten Commandments. But I don't think I want to because we have enough rules already in my house. Joshua. Age 10, South Pasadena

Dear Pastor, Are there any devils on earth? I think there may be one in my class. Carla. Age 10, Salina

Dear Pastor, I liked your sermon on Sunday. Especially when it was finished. Ralph, Age 11, Akron

The world media is constantly reminding us of our troubles. It's nice to have a church where people can find comfort, love and acceptance, and even a little well-needed humor.

See you in church!
Becky E

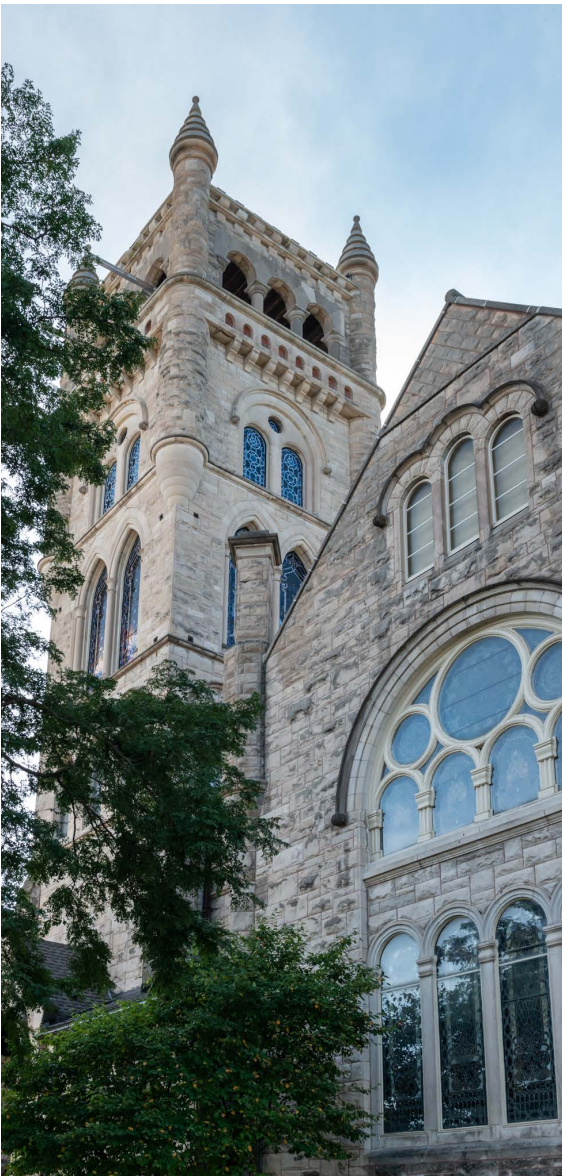


A beautiful, fresh pop of red! We are pleased to share the Gordon chapel doors have been restored!



SAVE THE DATES

- December 8: Bell Sunday
- December 14: "A Very Carly Christmas" Handbell Concert
- December 15: Wassail and Caroling
- December 22: Pop Up Pageant and Potluck Fundraiser
- December 24: Christmas Eve Service



NEWS FROM OUR DENOMINATIONS

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST UCC FORGIVES MILLIONS IN DEBT IN CHICAGO, ANNOUNCES NATIONAL EFFORT



Almost 6,000 families on the South Side of Chicago have had their medical debt forgiven through a collaborative effort of local, Conference and national bodies of the United Church of Christ and other partners. UCC leaders announced Oct. 20 that church donations have wiped out \$5.3 million in medical debt for 5,888 Chicago families. They invited participation in a similar national effort being planned for Giving Tuesday, Dec. 3.

Thanks to a campaign led by UCC Justice and Local Church Ministries and Chicago's Trinity UCC, qualifying residents in three Chicago neighborhoods are now receiving letters telling them that their medical debt, averaging \$907, has been forgiven. **Read more: www.ucc.org**

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) MENTAL HEALTH MINISTRY SURVEY NEEDS PRESBYTERIAN PARTICIPATION



The Presbyterian Mental Health Ministry is currently conducting a church-wide survey, seeking input from as many people as possible. "Feedback so far suggests people are glad the surveys are in the field promoting conversations about mental health," says Donna Miller, Associate for Mental

Health Ministries. "The surveys have been designed not just to gather data, but also to raise awareness about resources available at the new Mental Health Initiative website."

The aim of the surveys is to take a broad look at mental health ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and identify strengths and areas for improvement. Results will be reported to the 224th General Assembly in June 2020, helping to inform future recommendations and initiatives.

COMMUNITY MURAL PROJECT

Update: We did it! With your help, and the help of our amazing community in Rockford, we reached our goal of raising \$30,000 to fund our community mural project.

Donations from more than 100 people, business and organizations raised \$15,000, and an anonymous sponsor matched that amount!

Muralist Tia Richardson has now begun the design process. She held three community workshops during October to gain feedback and insight for her final design.

We will continue to keep you updated as this project as it continues to develop.

Thank you for your ongoing support!



The kids provided great suggestions during the workshop on October 22nd.



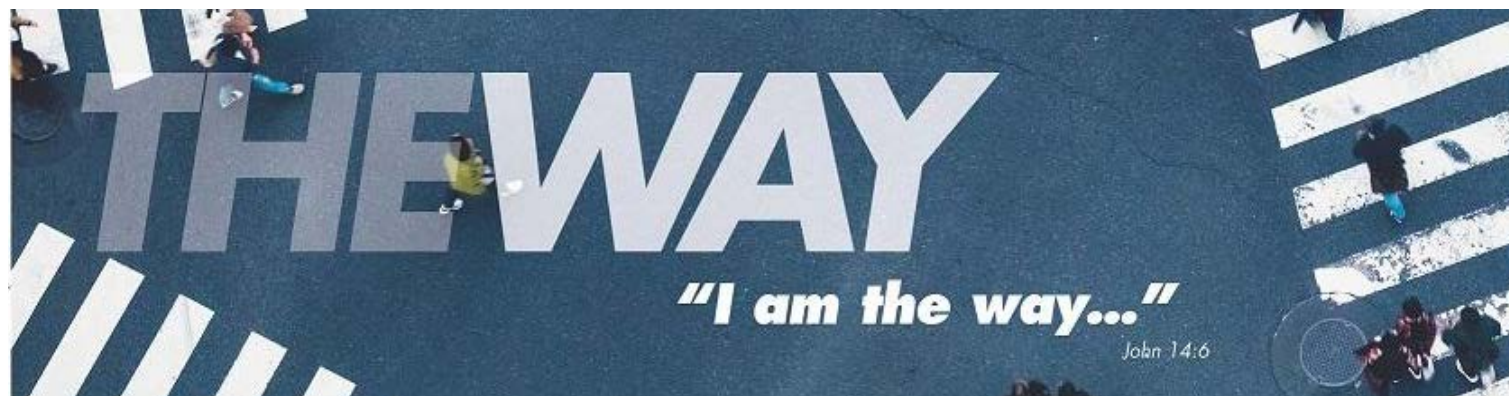
WHAT ARE WE CELEBRATING THIS YEAR?

by David Jones

That was the question raised by a member of your Trustee's Stewardship committee as it met in September. Another asked 'if our building were destroyed would it be missed?' All agreed the answer is - yes.

Why? Because, besides worship and Christian education each Sunday our building provides Serious Soup, Bridge Clinic, The Thrift Shop, Fair Trade Store, Men's Prayer Breakfast, KFACT, overnight winter shelter and more.

This is The Way our congregation 'does Church.' It is how we are "Energizing downtown Rockford and beyond with God's grace." Our Stewardship Season this month offers you the opportunity to celebrate the way Second First does Church by renewing your financial support. Be a participating steward of our 'body of Christ' in Rockford's city center. Contact: David Jones 815-540-3703



JEREMIAH CARES HEALTH FAIR

SecondFirst Church: Saturday, November 2, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm

On November 2nd from 10 am - 2 pm, Jeremiah Development in partnership with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois is hosting its first Jeremiah CARES event. There will be free health screenings, free flu shots, representatives from many community and government agencies, the BCBS Blue Bear, face painting, balloon artist, a turkey giveaway to the first 200 households, and insurance navigators from BCBSIL, Crusader Clinic and independent volunteers to assist you to sign up for Marketplace insurance during this open enrollment period. Can't wait to see you there! Contact: Sue Kanthak sue@jeremiahdevelopment.org



BLACKHAWK PRESBYTERY MEETING

SecondFirst Church: Tuesday, November 12, 8:00 am

SecondFirst will be hosting the Blackhawk Presbytery meeting on Tuesday, November 12, starting at 8:00 am. We will need volunteers to help set up tables, direct parking, greet, and work at the Registration table. The kitchen staff will need help with coffee and refreshments by 8:00 am for around 70-90 people. The lunch count will be for 100-120 people, along with serving and cleanup. A sound technician will be needed along with using the projector.

Volunteers are an important part of the church. Everyone will be needed for this event. Please consider helping us welcome the Blackhawk Presbytery to our church to make it a memorable day for all. If you can help, Contact: debbie.wise@secondfirst.org



PILGRIM POTLUCK

November 24, after church

Food, friends and sharing a tradition. The Fellowship ministry team invites you to an early celebration of Thanksgiving at the Pilgrim Potluck on Sunday, November 24 right after church in the dining room. Turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes and gravy will be provided. Bring one of your favorite dishes to share. Table service will be provided. Please join us! Questions? Contact: Linda Mohaupt, mommoh54@gmail.com

CROP WALK RECAP

The 34th Annual Rockford Area CROP Hunger Walk raised just over \$28,000 turned in by 235 walkers from 30 congregations and schools, which exceeded the \$25,000 goal. \$10,000 of that was raised on line, nearly doubling last year! **You can still help us beat the \$30,000 mark by donating to <https://www.crophungerwalk.org/rockfordil/Member/MyPage/3556018/STANLEY-CAMPBELL>**

Sunday October 20 could not have been a more beautiful day. The walkers were decked out in "Indian Summer" fare, and, at 2 pm, stepped-off from the Riverfront Museum Park, 711 North Main Street for a 4 mile walk to raise funds for world and local hunger relief.

Rev. David Jones, CROP Hunger Walk Chair, announced the corporate sponsors (see below) and thanked the participants of the Walk.

Donations will still be accepted by calling Rev. David Jones, (815) 540-3703 or Rockford Urban Ministries. CROP stands for "Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty." Donations are raised through cash sponsorships solicited by the walkers themselves, based upon their completion of the 4-mile walk.

Local food pantries will receive 25 percent of the money raised to help feed hungry people. The remaining 75 percent will go through Church World Service (celebrating 50 years of Walks) and other international relief agencies to provide food and disaster relief in more than 80 countries.



Pastor Rebecca sits with the kids during the Early Word.

REMEMBERING OUR LOVED ONES
Sunday, November 3

We will remember those we have lost from our congregation in the past year. It is also a time to remember non- members, family and friends. During our Remembrance portion of the service family and friends will be invited to come forward and light a candle. Please join us for this special Sunday. Contact: Becky Erbe

FALL CLEAN UP DAY SATURDAY
November 9, 8:00 am to 11:00 am

Please mark your Calendars for our Fall Cleanup Day for the church grounds. The more people who help the more we can accomplish. There are many areas that need a lot of attention. Please bring landscaping tools and gloves if you have them. Hope to see you all there. Contact: Ron Schaad 309-846-8230.

NEW MEMBER CLASS
Sunday, November 10, after worship

If you would like to be received into membership at SecondFirst Church or would just like to learn more about us, please join us for the dates and times listed below.

- Sharing Our Stories of Faith
Sunday, November 10 after worship with light refreshments.
- Sharing Our Collective Story of Faith
Wednesday, November 13, 5:30-6:30 pm for dinner.
- Living Into Our Faith
Sunday, November 24, meet at 9:00 am in the dining room then received into membership during worship.

To register, contact Debbie Wise: 815-963-8431.

SERIOUS SOUP
Mondays, 11:30 -12:30

We will be welcoming guests each Monday for Serious Soup. We would love people to stop by, either to help, bring soup or just to see what it is like and to meet some of our neighbors. Join us for food and fellowship. If you want to help another way, we are collecting saltine crackers, salsa, BBQ sauce, and salad dressings. (Ranch, Italian, Thousand Island, and French) Contact: Becky Erbe



FRIENDSGIVING CELEBRATION
Friday, November 22, 6:00 pm-8:00 pm

The Friendsgiving celebration for those who are 10 and older. You are welcome to bring a friend for a night of “Chopped” games. Inspired by both the TV show and the giving spirit of the holiday, we will celebrate together over an evening of deliciousness. Please RSVP to aubrey.barnett@secondfirst.org by November 20th if your child plans on participating.



Members of SecondFirst Church worked at Stronghold in preparation for their Olde English Faire.



Work begins on the rehab of old Nursery room for the new Gathering Place.



Stonework on the tower is almost complete!



Becky Erbe, Pastor Rebecca, and the choir!



JOYFEST! RECAP
by Paul Laparde



Dr. Donald Dumpson, a close friend of Pastor Rebecca’s and a professional acquaintance of mine, led the experience that came to be called ‘JoyFest’. The intent of the event was originally to bring people from different cultures and from different parts of the city together to sing music--all in the hope of creating a new community and build bridges. Five people from our church participated in this event, as well as several people from out of town, and a few people from other churches in our city. Together they learned music and ate together over the course of an evening, a morning, and afternoon; the fruits of their experience, interaction, and guidance from Dr. Dumpson’s leadership resulted in a Concert at 4:00 pm, Saturday, October 5.

One of the most beautiful moments of the event was when Miss Betty Pumphrey and Bonnie Spurling were given awards from the church and honors from the city of Rockford for their contributions to our city and to the musical life of our community. Upon receiving this award, Miss Betty exclaimed, “Alleluia!”. I noted the tears of joy in Ms. Spurling’s eyes when receiving the Mayor’s proclamation from Alderman Frank Beach.

So many people need to be thanked for making this event come to life. Bill Baskin’s adept planning of the initial meal was perfect; Liz Dickinson’s assistance in so many ways helped to make the second day mini-breakfast and check in work; Pastor Becky Erbe was amazing in all she did to care for the award recipients, second day lunch, and other people visiting the church; Debbie Wise was a key part of organizing the information from people who registered for the event; Nancy Yoeckel was instrumental in paying all of Dr. Dumpson’s bills; and, of course, Pastor Rebecca was the visionary and key contact who brought in the participation of all the African American churches she contacted. Many other people have not been mentioned in this brief acknowledgment, but please accept my gratitude for all you did to make this event come to life.

In peace,
Paul Laprade

SAVE THE DATE FOR “A VERY CARLY CHRISTMAS” HANDBELL CONCERT
By Julie Cook Ramirez, Director of Handbell Ministries



The power of music to change the world has been a motivating factor for many major musical events. Live Aid, Farm Aid, the Concert for Bangladesh, Concerts for the People of Kampuchea, and the Concert for New York City rank among the world’s biggest benefit concerts. We’re about to add another to the list. Maybe our attendance or funds raised won’t be as massive, but the spirit of the event will be just as heartfelt.

“A Very Carly Christmas: A Handbell Concert Benefiting Miss Carly’s” will take place on **Saturday, December 14 at 3:00 pm** in the SecondFirst sanctuary. All of our handbell/ handchime ensembles will be here, presenting an array of old and new Christmas favorites, with an assortment of guest musicians and vocalists adding to the festivities. Miss Carly herself will be here to tell everyone about the myriad ways she and her fellow volunteers are blessing Rockford’s homeless population with food, clothing, rides, help getting into substance abuse treatment, and most importantly, the knowledge that somebody cares. Learn more about Miss Carly’s by visiting their website: www.misscarlys.org.

Please join us for this wonderful afternoon of music and mission. Admission is free, with an offering taken to benefit Miss Carly’s. Questions? Contact julie.cookramirez@secondfirst.org or 815-543-9739



NOVEMBER CALENDAR

Friday, November 1
No Scheduled Activities

Saturday, November 2
10:00 AM – Jeremiah Care Health Fair
10:00 AM – Bridge Clinic
10:30 AM – Jubilee Soup Kitchen

Sunday, November 3
Remembering Loved Ones:
Rev. Kathy Lawes
8:30 AM – Koffee Klass
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:00 AM – Fellowship Hour
11:15 AM – Fair For All Shop

Monday, November 4
11:30 AM – Serious Soup
6:00 PM - Fellowship Team

Tuesday, November 5
7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop
9:30 AM – Free Showers

Wednesday, November 6
9:00 AM – Hospitality Team
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
6:30 PM – Martin Ringers

Thursday, November 7
9:30 AM – Carillons
9:30 AM – Free showers
5:30 PM – JD Meeting
6:00 PM – Bellcantos
7:00 PM – Choir

Friday, November 8
No Scheduled Activities

Saturday, November 9
8:00 AM – Fall Clean Up Day
10:00 AM – Bridge Clinic

Sunday, November 10
Carillons
8:30 AM – Koffee Klass
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:00 AM – New Member Class
11:00 AM – Fellowship Hour
11:15 AM – Peanuts
11:15 AM – Family CE Ministry Team
11:15 AM – Fair For All Shop

Monday, November 11
11:30 AM – Serious Soup
5:00 PM – Deacons

Tuesday, November 12
7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
9:00 AM – Presbytery Meeting
No Thrift Shop
No Free Showers
12:00 PM – Adult Ed
5:00 PM – Foundation
6:00 PM – DVT

Wednesday, November 13
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
5:00 PM – Trustees
5:30 PM – New Member Class
6:30 PM – Martin Ringers

Thursday, November 14
9:30 AM – Carillons
9:30 AM – Free Showers
6:00 PM – Bellcantos
7:00 PM – Choir

Friday, November 15
No Scheduled Activities

Saturday, November 16
10:00 AM – Bridge Clinic

Sunday, November 17
8:30 AM – Koffee Klass
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:00 AM – Fellowship Hour
11:15 AM – Peanuts
11:15 AM – Music Ministry Team
11:15 AM – Fellowship Ministry Team
11:15 AM – Fair For All Shop

Monday, November 18
11:30 AM – Serious Soup

Tuesday, November 19
7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop
9:30 AM – Free Showers
5:00 PM – Missions Ministry
6:00 PM – Executive Committee

Wednesday, November 20
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
6:30 PM – Martin Ringers

Thursday, November 21
9:30 AM – Carillons
9:30 AM – Free showers
5:30 PM – No Governing Council
6:00 PM – Bellcantos
7:00 PM – Choir

Friday, November 22
Friendsgiving Event

Saturday, November 23
10:00 AM – No Bridge Clinic

Sunday, November 24
8:30 AM – Koffee Klass
9:00 AM – New Member Class
10:00 AM – Worship Service
10:20 AM – Sunday School
11:00 AM – Pilgrim Potluck
11:15 AM – Peanuts
11:15 AM – Fair For All Shop

Monday, November 25
No Serious Soup

Tuesday, November 26
7:00 AM – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
9:00 AM – Thrift Shop
9:30 AM – Free Showers
6:00 PM – Earth Care Committee

Wednesday, November 27
Office Closed

Thursday, November 28
Thanksgiving: Office Closed

Friday, November 29
Office Closed

Saturday, November 30
10:00 AM – Bridge Clinic

NEIGHBORHOOD NUMBERS
(Sept. 30 through Oct. 24)

SERIOUS SOUP
Sept. 30: 96 people served
Oct. 7: 94 people served
Oct. 14: 86 people served
Oct. 21: 91 people served

Showers: 11
Diaper Closet: 3
Bus tokens: 4
Clothing help: lost count

UPDATE FROM TRUSTEES

KFACT is at home in Emerson Hall and Church Teams continue to settle in to their new locations.

KFACT held a ribbon cutting ceremony on October 25 with the City of Rockford to announce their move into Emerson Hall. Many of us attended this happy event! Shamika Williams, Executive Director of KFACT presented the Adult Ed Koffee Klass on Sunday morning before church, October 27. After Church we were invited by KFACT to come to an open house in Emerson Hall. We were amazed and happy to see how this beautiful historic space has been transformed into a home for KFACT, their girls, and staff. A big thank you to all who helped this happen.

We are putting finishing touches on the spaces in our building that are supporting ministry teams who have moved to make room for KFACT. The former nursery is now ‘The Gathering Place’ and is home to Adult Ed, Bride’s Space for weddings and other meetings. This area is getting new paint, carpets, storage, plumbing upgrades to make it work for its new functions. The 4th floor chapel is now the Bell’s Chapel and will get new paint and carpet and music file space. Storage areas are being created to accommodate special events materials, that were moved from Emerson Hall. Music Team will have new shelving and paint for storage space for their wonderful collection of sheet music. The beautiful doors outside Gordon Chapel are renovated and painted their original red color and the brass handles are polished! Another set of windows will be replaced this month as we complete more of the rebirth of this wing of our building.

Let Trustees know of any areas that still need attention to finish the relocation of our Ministry Teams and storage as we make all these moves functional and pleasing to us all! Contact: Roger Greenlaw: Chair Trustees. Cell 815-262-1776, rgreen97@aol.com

JEREMIAH DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

By Sue Kanthak Executive Director of Jeremiah Development

With the support of the SecondFirst Church we have had a noticeable impact on our community this year. With your support we were able to:

- Touch over 600 lives with LOVE Rockford.
- Get 15 properties improved in the Coronado Haskell Neighborhood.
- Deliver a monthly newsletter door-to-door establishing a two way conversation with the residents of CHN.
- Host a Movie in the Park night that brought together neighbors, Jeremiah supporters, church members, and anyone walking through the park that got caught up in the movie and community.
- Provide about 275-300 pounds of garden-fresh vegetables to anyone who was hungry with any excess going to Jubilee Center for meals.
- Hold monthly meetings with resident leaders in the CHN, the Community Service Officer, the City of Rockford neighborhood engagement specialist and members of the JD neighborhood committee to address and find solutions to the issues most pressing to the residents.

With two months of the year left we will be:

- Hosting a Community Health and Wellness fair in partnership with BCBSIL.
- Hosting a neighborhood safety night with the residents where the Community Service Officer for the Jeremiah area will speak, and if we receive a grant from the city (we find out after the 24th of October), a Light the Night event where we will be putting motion sensor lights on the exterior of houses in the neighborhood to help deter crime.

It has been a year of amazing growth for Jeremiah Development and we have plans to do all this and more in 2020.

- We will be applying for a grant to create program that will teach small motor repair for lawn equipment to young adults. At the end of which they will own the lawn equipment they worked on so they can care for the neighborhood and hopefully make some money!
- We are in the process of applying for a Community Revitalization fellowship to do creative space-making in the neighborhood that would bring people from all over the city.

With the help of the three supporting churches, (SecondFirst Church, Court Street United Methodist, and Emmanuel Episcopal) we can make a real and visible difference in the CHN and the lives of the residents who live there.

