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[www.mcivc.org](http://www.mcivc.org)

December 2009

**TO: Friends of the Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers**  
**FROM: Karyn Dombrowski Curro, Executive Director**  
**RE: Annual Holiday Appeal**

Dear Friend,

Each year during the holiday season, many of us take some time to count our blessings and reach out to those in need. Despite difficult economic times we still find a way to give, because we know that at these times there are many more who suffer. Because we believe that you may wish to help out a neighbor during this time of giving, we are asking for your support.

*. . . Imagine for a moment that you are eighty-five and now find yourself unable to drive, . . . or perhaps you are much younger, but a chronic illness has put you in the same situation. You need to see a doctor soon, . . . but your children live out of state now, and with a walker you are unable to board the senior bus. You are hungry and your severe arthritis makes it impossible to open that can of food on the counter today, . . . and now you notice that it is the last can. How will you get more? The yard is a mess from all the leaves and some trash that has blown in. The city has sent you a letter with a warning of a fine, . . . but you have no extra money in the budget for a lawn service, or the fine. Now the hall light has gone out and you have no idea how you will get up on a stool to change it, . . . so you feel your way down the hall each night, hoping not to trip & re-injure the knee you broke in the Spring. The kitchen faucet leaks & squirts you each time you turn it on now, . . . so you keep throwing a dishrag over it, wishing your husband was still alive to help. A cousin from far away sent you a birthday card last month, . . . but you haven't been able to read the print with your worsened eyesight. Few friends are left now, and the ones who are have problems of their own. Your sister watches over her husband twenty-four hours a day now since his Alzheimer's has worsened, and she is trapped in her own house, with her own failing health. The fear, panic & desperation settle into your mind and heart, and you sob. . . . Is there no one who can help? You helped others for years whenever you could, and now no one even knows how you are suffering. Where will you turn?*

Hundreds of our neighbors live this story day in and day out. Some have stories far more difficult and painful.

In 1992, the Macomb County Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers (MCIVC) program was formed to provide help to our older and disabled neighbors who struggle to remain in their own homes. **In the past 17 years we have been able to serve over 1,900 frail, isolated and physically challenged adults, many of whom have nowhere else to turn for the basic, but essential support they need.**

Many of these neighbors need just a bit of assistance from time to time -- simple help like picking up groceries or a ride to a doctor's appointment. The kind of help that IVC can provide -- help that is NOT readily available elsewhere. Although there are many fine programs in the community that help people with a variety of needs, IVC tries to fill in the gaps that so many people slip through. We are often a last resort, as people struggle to remain safe and independent. **Without our support many of our older and disabled neighbors simply could not continue to manage in their own homes.**

- *Our volunteers offer round-trip transportation, one person at a time, in their own cars, which allows them to help people whose needs cannot be met by other public programs. They can help someone who uses a wheelchair or walker, simply folding the appliance up and slipping it into their trunk or backseat. And if a client is confused or fearful, an MCIVC volunteer can stay with them through an entire doctor's visit, making sure they do not get lost in a big medical complex or fret nervously alone in a waiting room for the results of an important test. Further, our drivers often help people with early morning outpatient surgery rides, as well as late-night and weekend needs. We have even driven people as far as Ann Arbor for important medical care.*
- *In addition to medical appointments, our volunteers offer transportation for important errands, shopping, rides to visit family members in nursing homes, and other destinations that cannot be easily provided by local services.*
- *We provide a variety of minor chores and home repairs that are not available elsewhere, too – things like changing light bulbs & replacing broken locks.*
- *MCIVC volunteers are one of only a few options for in-home respite care. Oftentimes round-the-clock family caregivers are at the very end of their ropes, desperate for just a few hours of time to run errands or rest. Our volunteers offer a short break that allows them to keep caring for their loved ones at home.*
- *MCIVC is one of only a couple programs in the county that offer housekeeping help to those who cannot afford the high cost of professional service, or friendly visitors to help ease the loneliness of our isolated and homebound neighbors.*
- *Because our volunteers offer their own individual talents, we can often help people in unique ways, such as providing hair care to shut-ins, and helping with big group projects, like cleaning out a basement that has become a fire-hazard.*

**Because over half of the people we serve live near or below the poverty level, often having to choose between groceries and medication, we do not charge for our**

services. Instead we rely on the generosity of our friends – individuals, organizations, congregations and businesses who wish to make a difference in the lives of their struggling neighbors.

We are proud of the impact we have made thus far, but we must continue to grow. Though it is hard for most organizations to even maintain service levels in our current economy, we have worked hard to actually increase what we can do. **On a budget that is smaller than we had four years ago, we served 20% more people in 2009.** Yet we must do far more to respond to the 50% increase in new requests for help that we have seen. **Hundreds of individuals and families are currently waiting for help.** With our population aging, soon hundreds more will join them.

This December marks the 1<sup>st</sup> full year of our new **“Growing to Serve” Giving Program.** Through it donors can now contribute special gifts of cash, stocks & property, increasing the ways to help us grow while potentially taking advantage of various tax benefits for themselves. *(Details of these new opportunities are outlined on the back page of this letter.)*

Your support is especially needed this year as we try to serve more of our older and disabled neighbors right now AND plan for the future needs of our community. **It is only through your gifts that we have been able to help so many of our neighbors in need, and it is only through your support that we can help those who turn to us now and in the coming years.**

If you would like to volunteer a gift of your time, please take the opportunity to contact our office. We always have a waiting list for services, and just one or two hours of volunteer time each month could make a tremendous difference in someone’s life. For those of you who might be willing to serve on our Board or a Committee, or help us plan a fundraising event, the gift of your skills and enthusiasm could make it possible for us to touch many more lives in the coming year.

With Sincere Wishes for a Blessed Holiday Season,



Karyn Dombrowski Curro  
Executive Director

***If you are interested in honoring someone special for the holidays we will be happy to send a special letter for any donation that you make in their name.***

***🕯 Let your holiday gift bring many people joy! 🕯***

***A response form and envelope are enclosed for your convenience.***



## Macomb County Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers



## Introducing Our New Giving Program

### “GROWING TO SERVE”

“Thank you so very much for all the help you have given me. You sure have been a blessing. I pray more people will support this cause, for it is much needed by many people.”

—LG (MCIVC Client)

Macomb County Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers (MCIVC) has introduced the “**Growing To Serve**” Giving Program to provide a sustainable future of support for our client community.

We are asking friends of MCIVC to consider support through the following ways.

**Wills and Trusts** – Donors can name MCIVC as a beneficiary in their will, trust, life insurance policy or IRA. Donors can specify certain property or a percentage of their estate to benefit MCIVC.

**Real Estate** – Donors can leave their home or other real estate to MCIVC.

**Cash** – No gift is too large or too small.

**Securities** – Stocks and mutual funds may be donated with the potential benefit of a tax deduction.

**IRAs** – IRA owners 70 1/2 or older can make direct, partial IRA distributions to charity. The distribution is not included in the donor’s income but counts toward the IRS required minimum distribution (RMD).

Please contact Karyn Curro at (586) 757-5551 or Ken Prather at (313) 884-5961 with any questions. Thank you for your generous consideration.

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