Interfaith Outreach

SPRING
2026

A NEW CHAPTER BUILT ON DIGNITY



Just over a year ago, Jessa came to IOCP as she was building a new life for her and her daughter.

"The hardest part is just asking for help to start with," she admits. Once she became a client, however, she found staff to be warm and welcoming. "Everybody just made it a very accepting environment."

As someone who has held a variety of volunteer roles and works in education, Jessa thought she understood what it means to help people in need. But experiencing services from the other side showed her how much dignity matters: being able to choose the food and clothing she receives for her and her daughter makes all the difference. "It's a wonderful feeling to be able to make that choice," she says.

Without family or friends in her new city, feeling welcome has also been comforting to Jessa during such a tough transition, and she credits IOCP's food shelf volunteers for making an impact on her experience.

"You get a volunteer who is sweet and caring and lovely...It's the nicest thing you could ask for, because you walk out not feeling quite as bad as you did when you walked in," she explains.

Jessa recently started working with our Employment Services team to explore new job and training opportunities, too. "I need to be around for my daughter; I need the financial income to support us...it's a bit of a catch-22." She wants to get to a point where she doesn't need support and can, once again, be donating instead of receiving.

Until then, she's grateful for the volunteers and staff who've made her fresh start feel a little less daunting, and a lot more hopeful.

This Spring: Go Green While Giving Back

In honor of Earth Day on April 22, here are earth-friendly ways you can make a difference at IOCP.

If you walk through our doors on any given day, chances are you'll see not just generosity in action, but sustainability, too.

Resale Select is a second chance for clothing, housewares, furniture, and more. Items are donated by community members who'd rather see their belongings find a new home than end up in a landfill.

But donations from individuals are only part of the story. Through partnerships with local businesses and organizations, the store also receives close-out merchandise and surplus goods that would otherwise be discarded at scale. Every item is something put back into the hands of someone who can use it.

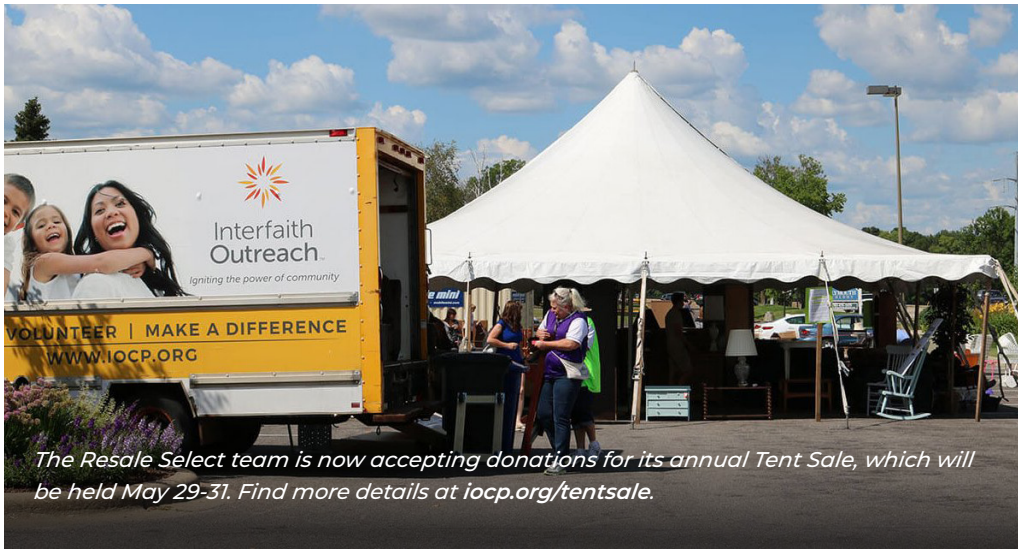
The food shelf operates on the same principle. Donors bring shelf-stable staples, fresh produce from their gardens, and items they simply won't get to before the expiration date. And businesses and organizations that provide rescued or surplus inventory bring volume: recovered food that would have gone to waste at the grocery or warehouse level instead travels a short distance to fill our shelves - and the tables of our neighbors.

SPRINGTIME SUPPORT

Your spring garage clean-up can serve a greater purpose: Resale Select's annual Tent Sale generated $19,000 in sales last year, and we hope to beat that record this May. Your quality donations give us the edge!

Here's what we're looking for:

- Lawn and garden items, including planters and garden accessories
- Patio and outdoor furniture and decor
- Plastic bins and containers for storage and organization
- Sporting goods in new and like new condition, including bikes and wagons
- Tools in usable condition
- Accent furniture



The Resale Select team is now accepting donations for its annual Tent Sale, which will be held May 29-31. Find more details at ***iocp.org/tentsale.***

Items should be donated during regular store hours. And due to limited space, indoor and outdoor furniture donations must be pre-approved by emailing photos of the times to **resaleselect@iocp.org**. Quality, condition, and style are all factors in the approval process.

The team is also holding furniture pick-up days April 24-25. Check **iocp.org/donate-at-resale** for more details.

Of course, there are also eco-friendly ways to support your neighbors year-round:

- **Donate quality items.** Clothing, household items, and non-perishable foods are always needed.
- **Shop with purpose.** Every Resale Select purchase keeps an item out of a landfill - and 100% of the store's net proceeds go back to IOCP programs and services.
- **Volunteer your time.** Both operations run on the energy and heart of volunteers. Whether you have two hours or two days a month, we'd love you to join our network! Find more information on individual and group opportunities at **iocp.org/volunteers**.
- **Spread the word.** Tell a friend, neighbor, or coworker about IOCP's work and encourage them to get involved. You can also show your support right from your front yard with a Support Your Neighbors lawn sign. Email Christina at **challquist@iocp.org** to coordinate picking up a sign. New donors, new shoppers, new clients, and new volunteers – every new face helps make the whole cycle work better for everyone.



WE'RE BUILDING ON A FOUNDATION OF TRUST



April is **Volunteer Appreciation Month**, and as we begin a new fiscal year, I find myself reflecting on what makes IOCP work, and it comes down to one word: *Trust*.

In a recent appeal, I talked about how IOCP is accountable to this community. That accountability flows both ways.

When someone comes to IOCP for help, they trust they'll be met with dignity and support, not questions or judgment. And when you support IOCP with your time, donations, and advocacy, you are trusting us to carry out our mission with integrity and care.

That trust has been especially critical in the last several months. Even before SNAP benefits were halted, we saw double-digit percentage increases in our basic needs programs. Then came weeks when so many families were overwhelmed by a new wave of uncertainty and fear.

Once again, you showed up. People like you who believe in this work made sure we could meet the moment. ***That faith in IOCP — in what we stand for and how we operate — meant everything.***

And once again, the need hasn't let up. Our latest reports show that service levels from Q1 to Q3 of the most recent fiscal year have already surpassed the whole year prior. More families are turning to IOCP each month, and the trajectory shows this isn't temporary.

As we begin this new fiscal year, we're building on that foundation of trust. We're expanding our capacity to meet increased demand. We're strengthening partnerships that help us serve more effectively. We're preparing for continued uncertainty by ensuring our operations remain stable and responsive — all while maintaining the dignity and respect every person who walks through our doors deserves.

This work happens because of trust that flows in every direction. Our clients trust us to be here when they need us. You trust us to steward your contributions wisely. And we trust this community to keep showing up for neighbors who need support.

Thank you for your trust. Thank you for believing in this work. ***And to our volunteers especially this month: Thank you for being the hands and heart of IOCP.***

Sincerely,

Kevin Ward
Executive Director

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Thank you for your continued support.

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GET INVOLVED: SUMMER FOOD DRIVES

Every March, our community shows up in a big way for the **Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign**, and we're grateful for that generosity. But by May, as schedules shift and school lets out, donations slow down drastically. Families have also been navigating an increasingly unreliable landscape of support.

It's our mission to help meet the community's basic needs - and your summer food drives and group donations keep our shelves stocked for families who depend on us year-round.

This especially matters now: IOCP's food shelf has seen a 38% increase in families served in the last year, distributing an average of about 84,000 pounds of food and goods to more than 700 households *each month*.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

A good place to start is by choosing items from our "most-needed" list (**iocp.org/most-needed-donations**). Staff update this list regularly based on current inventory and what clients are requesting.

"These tend to be items that are harder or more expensive for us to obtain through our partner network," says Al Farha, Food Shelf Manager.

Beyond supporting neighbors facing food insecurity, hosting a food drive offers your group a meaningful way to build teamwork, strengthen community connections, and create real impact together. **Find tips on how to host a food drive at iocp.org/donations/food-drives or email getinvolved@iocp.org**.

OUR MISSION To strengthen our community by meeting basic needs and equipping individuals and families for ongoing stability.

OUR VISION To build a vibrant community where everyone counts and all sectors and systems work together for the good of all.

WEBSITE iocp.org PHONE 763-489-7500 EMAIL info@iocp.org

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