Interfaith Outreach

FALL
2026



The Need Behind the Need

For years, we've talked about the number of neighbors coming to us for help — up 23% in the last year alone, most of it people needing food and basic essentials just to get through the week.

But lately, our housing support team is seeing something harder to capture in a percentage. More and more, the working families in housing programs aren't just stretched thin — they're out of room to stretch.

Many are working lower-wage jobs and still can't keep up, even with rent that's considered affordable, says **Lindsey Mahrer, IOCP's Housing Services Manager**.

"When our team offers to help a client with their household budget, we're hearing that they don't even have enough money to budget," she adds.

That's not a failure of planning. It's what happens when income simply doesn't cover the cost of staying housed — and it's a sign that for so many families in our community, the need has moved past "help me stretch what I have" into "I've stretched as far as I can."

And that's what we're building toward. Our employment services program is at full capacity, helping people grow their income, not just manage it. We're expanding access to our Food Shelf so no-cost groceries reach more households before they get to a breaking point. And we continue to offer service navigation and case management that connects neighbors to benefits and resources they may not know they qualify for.

It all ties back to our mission: *To strengthen the community by meeting basic needs and equipping individuals and families for ongoing stability.*

Even as the need in front of us grows, this fall we're also marking two milestones that remind us why we keep building for the long haul: 15 years of our Resale Select thrift store, and 20 years of Caring for Kids preschool scholarships and family support. ***Turn the page to celebrate with us — and to see what's next.***

Meaningful Milestones

Preschool scholarships and a thrift store: This fall, join us in celebrating two very different ways this community continues to show up.

At IOCP, we've always believed that when one part of a household's life gets a little easier, the whole family can move forward on their path to stability. That's why we offer integrated services around the whole household.

This year, two milestones show exactly what that kind of breadth can do over time: 15 years of Resale Select fueling our mission by turning our community's generous donations into thrifted treasures, and 20 years of Caring for Kids (CfK) opening doors to early childhood education and care that families might not otherwise have.

Our managers shared their thoughts on the lasting impact of their programs — and your support.

"In the early days, CfK used the wagon as a symbol. Today, with 60 scholarships, we would need a bus," shares **Sarah Johansen, Caring for Kids Manager.**

The program began as a group of volunteers, but now has a full-time case manager and embedded mental health support.

"CfK's founders invested in making the case for why early education and support matters. Our longevity and success show this message got through and our impact is significant," Sarah says. "Despite this progress, policy changes and other events have shown our work is more important now than ever."

Resale Select Store Manager Sonja Carr has been with the store since its earliest days and says the store has driven meaningful change ever since.

"Our humble beginning was an annual revenue goal of $80,000 and 250 pounds of daily clothing donations," she says.



Caring for Kids (CfK) provides early childhood education scholarships along with case management services, parent education and support, and more.

Today, the store has an annual goal of $850,000 and processes about 3,000 pounds of donations each day. We're diverting tons of waste from landfills and raising funds that go right into local family services.

"As community demand rises, we stay committed as ever to supporting it," Sonja says. "We look forward to the future of the store and extend our thanks to the staff, shoppers, donors, and volunteers who have shared our journey!"

Thank you for making it possible for our store and programs to support our neighbors, year after year.



Treasures Needed for December Shopping Event

Have designer jewelry, handbags, clothing or unique collectibles to donate? **Resale Select** is now collecting high-end items for our annual **Breakfast with Tiffany's** event, with 100% of net proceeds supporting IOCP programs and services.

Through the end of November, you can bring donations to the Resale Select cashier during store hours. Be sure to save the date **Thursday, Dec. 10** for the event, too!

The Need is Real. So is Your Impact.


Kevin Ward
President & CEO

This fall, as we prepared this newsletter, our housing team shared something that's stayed with me.

Families coming to us for rent help aren't just behind — many have nothing left to budget. When our team offers to sit down and work through a spending plan, the honest answer we're hearing more and more is: there's no plan to make. There's no money left to move around. They're already in the red.

That's a hard thing to sit with. It's also exactly why IOCP exists.

The scale of what families are up against right now, and what it takes to help someone find solid ground when they're starting from below zero is not an easy story. But it's an honest one.

Even in a hard year, however, there is real reason to celebrate. This year marks 20 years of our Caring for Kids program — two decades of making sure a child's earliest learning isn't determined by their family's income. It also marks 15 years of our community thrift store, a place that has quietly funded programs and provided affordable goods to neighbors for a decade and a half. Both are proof of what steady, long-term commitment can do.

We also just published our **FY26 Impact Report**, and I'd encourage you to take a look. It lays out what our community is facing and what we're building toward to meet it. View it online using the QR code or URL below.

As we head into the season when so many of you make your most generous decisions of the year, I wanted you to have the full picture first: The need is real, and it's deeper than numbers alone can capture. So is this community's capacity to respond.

We've seen it for decades, and we're counting on it again this year.

With gratitude,



Kevin Ward
President & CEO

iocp.org/annualreport

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Thank you for your continued support.

Interfaith Outreach

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GIVE TO THE MAX BEGINS NOV. 1

Minnesota's **Give to the Max Day (GTMD)** returns for its 18th year on Thursday, Nov. 19, and this year we're setting our sights on *raising $100,000* to keep pace with our community's growing needs.

In the last year, we saw a 23% increase in families who came to IOCP for support. Because of the generosity of our community, we were able to respond by adapting quickly and compassionately as needs evolved.

This year, days of giving like GTMD matter more than ever.

Early giving opens Nov. 1, and each donation through our GiveMN profile qualifies IOCP for additional grants from the Give to the Max Day prize pool, thanks to the continued generosity of the Bush Foundation.

Give online at **iocp.org/gtmd** to help us meet our goal — and show what's possible when our community comes together to support our neighbors.

gtmd
november 19, 2026

Give online starting November 1 to help us meet our goal — and make sure our neighbors can continue to count on IOCP when they need support most.

iocp.org/gtmd

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.

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