

# Grant will help group continue AIDS/HIV work

BY COURTNEY GAILLARD  
THE CHRONICLE



Fisher

Neighbors in Ministry of Winston-Salem has been awarded a \$13,000 grant from Philip Morris Companies Inc. to increase NIM's supply of food for those living with HIV/AIDS. The Philip Morris Positive Helpings initiative is part of a nationwide partnership with the AIDS Nutrition Services Alliance to address the nutritional needs of people living with HIV/AIDS.

Neighbors in Ministry was founded in 1996 to be an ecumenical outreach to neighbors in need. It was one of 52 organizations selected to receive a portion of the \$900,000 grant from Philip Morris that will allow NIM to provide a four-day supplemental food package to more than 120 individuals and their families as well as 20 HIV+ individuals and their families.

Jennifer Goodale, director of corporate contributions for

Philip Morris, commented on Philip Morris' response to the AIDS epidemic and the company's dedication to hunger relief in the country. "As one of the largest corporate funders of hunger-relief programs in the United States, we are committed to helping feed people living with HIV/AIDS and to finding solutions to their complex nutri-

tional needs."

Carla Fisher, executive director for NIM, said, "We are just terribly excited and look forward to utilizing the funds from the grant." She learned about the grant opportunity while attending a conference last year. She is thrilled that the Philip Morris grant will allow Neighbors in Ministry to almost double the amount of food it provides for its clients.

First on Fisher's list of things to do after receiving the grant is to contact a local grocer about supplying vouchers for milk and eggs to the organization's clients and to also increase the supply of fresh fruits and vegetables to be included in food bags.

The Triad has been defined by the Centers for Disease Control as an area of emerging HIV/AIDS infection. Fisher says this fact indicates that the rate of people becoming infected is rising.

Fisher started with Neighbors in Ministry just one year ago when the food pantry was servicing 95-100 clients a month. In October, clientele rose to 130 each month. The Positive Helpings grant could not have been granted soon enough as far as Fisher is concerned. Although her organization would never turn people away, the amount of food would be considerably smaller if more funds had not become available.

"(The grant) will allow us to go to the place to get the best deal (on food) and to make the funds go as far as possible," Fisher said.

Lack of money and lack of willing volunteers are constant struggles for Fisher at the ministry. Fisher is the only staff member and is grateful for the help and time offered by volunteers at NIM, some of whom are clients of the food pantry.

"We want as many people in Winston-Salem to know what

we are doing and know that the service is available," Fisher said. "We look to the community for support of the ministry and the outreach."

The ministry has operated its food pantry since 1998 and services the growing AIDS/HIV population in Greater Winston-Salem. Fisher said that because NIM services the HIV/AIDS population, NIM must be certain to provide higher caloric foods that fight off any toxic side effects of medication taken by most HIV/AIDS patients.

Neighbors in Ministry's food pantry is funded through the Northwest Care Consortium as a result of funds made possible through the federal Ryan White Dollars. Those funds pay for a good portion of the food. The rest comes from the Second Harvest Food Bank. Several area churches - such as St. Anne's Episcopal Church, Fairview Moravian Church and St. Leo's Catholic Church - provide sup-

port to the ministry financially and by donating food.

Food bags are given out four Thursdays a month between 2 and 4 p.m., and most of the clients are individuals who live off of incomes totaling \$500 or less a month. Food bags can contain \$75 worth of groceries. In the last month, more than 40 tons of food was distributed to NIM clients.

According to Fisher, a quarter of the NIM clients have no income at all and reside with family members or friends. While many NIM clients drop by NIM on a monthly basis, some are too weak and debilitated to carry any food bags to their vehicles. Thanks to transportation components that exist in other case management agencies, food bags can be delivered to extremely ill clients in need.

If you are interested in making a food or financial donation to NIM, contact Carla Fisher at 723-6651.

## Shooting

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whelmed at what I saw and what I heard. My neighborhood was being terrorized by a group of young black men. Upon walking on my porch I observed a large bullet hole through my storm door, and gun powder on my front door. I also observed shell casings on the inside on the floor. I immediately reported it to the Winston-Salem Police Department.

"As for me and my house, we will speak out against crime and violence in the community. This can happen anywhere and we all need to work together to fight crime everywhere. I truly believe that the devil meant it for bad but God turned it around for my good. I thank God that none of my neighbors or relatives was hurt in this ball of confusion. I'm a firm believer (in Psalm 91), which reads: 'He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty,' meaning that God had me hid. I hope the Winston-Salem Police Department will work hard to bring these people to justice.

"The management (of LaDeara Crest) was very insensitive to my needs. She compared my life to a maintenance problem by saying if it was a maintenance problem she could assist me, but since the problem didn't fall under maintenance, she didn't show any further concern about the problem at hand. If she didn't value me as a resident she should have valued me as a human being."

(Editor's note: Northeast Ward Alderman Vivian Burke told Mitchell early last Friday afternoon that management for LaDeara Crest had already looked at the damage to the storm door and front door at Mitchell's apartment and that management was in the process of taking care of it.)

"I'm not the only resident over here," Mitchell wrote in "It Happens Before You Know It." "I'm speaking out for the best interests of the children as well as the whole community. I'm not fighting for me, because God fought my battle: I'm only speaking so people will become aware of what's going on around them."

In an interview early last Friday afternoon, Mitchell elaborated on the shooting incident. She said she was standing outside, behind her apartment, talking with her niece. "I had just told my niece, 'Let me go home and sit on my front porch,' and ... that's when I heard the gunshots. If I had a-came home when I said I was going come, I probably would have been in the line of fire coming in the front door."

Mitchell's apartment is near the intersection of Pinedale Drive and Toddler Place. Mitchell said that a car stopped near the intersection, and two of the young men inside the car got out of the back seat. She said that at the same time there were three young men walking down the street.

"The three guys walking down the street evidently had some words with the guys who had stopped in the car," Mitchell said. One of the guys walking started shooting a pistol, and one of the guys who got out of the car started firing a pistol, Mitchell said. The guy who was walking shot about eight times, and the guy who had gotten out of the car fired six or seven times, Mitchell said.

All the young men then fled, she said. One of the bullets pierced the storm door and dented the metal front door at Mitchell's apartment.

Mitchell, 47, praises God that no one was at her apartment at the time of the shooting. Her three grandchildren - 6 years, 4 years and 6 months old - come to visit, she said. "And my daughter comes in and out. I have church friends and relatives who visit me frequently..."

"I don't do too much visiting. I don't know what made me go yesterday to visit my niece.... If I had come home like I said I was coming I would have been in the line of fire. I know that God is good and he'll take care of you anywhere. He'll put you where you need to be in the right place. He held me back there talking to

that girl because He knew if I had came this way what would have happened. God protected me. I just give God the glory."

"I didn't have no idea that something like this would happen yesterday.... That just goes to show you you can be here today and gone tomorrow," Mitchell said.

While Mitchell was talking, a concerned neighbor came in to check on her. "You all right? I seen it on the news. You all right?" the neighbor said.

Mitchell responded, "I was shook up a little bit, but I'm all right."

Alderman Vivian Burke and Lee Garrity, assistant city manager who works with public safety and police, also came to check on Mitchell.

Burke said in an interview that the city is taking the shooting very seriously. "...As public safety chairman for the city ... we are concerned about what took place up here. Ms. Mitchell called me late Thursday night. And after she called me, I did advise her that we will do everything we possibly could to help eliminate the problem about the door and about her safety and welfare. I was concerned that she had to stay in the house last night without knowing what the problem (was), why someone would (fire) shots into this house. First thing this morning I was in communication with our office about her welfare. My understanding, we have talked with the main office about the door being repaired. But the most important thing for me is the solving of this particu-

lar situation. She's here but she still doesn't know what happened. And that's where we are now, trying to get to the bottom of why someone shot in the door, what connections it had with her, if any. This is my priority, her safety and welfare and her family."

Mitchell said, "...The Police Department, when they came last night, they were very concerned.... They stayed here until everything was over."

Burke said, "We've (the city) spent a lot of time and energy to make it (LaDeara Crest, which replaced the Fairchild public housing project) a very nice place for people to live. So our biggest, No. 1 priority now is to eliminate the crime that has gotten in here that's dealing with drugs and cocaine.... Mitchell could just be an innocent victim. They could have just been shooting, ride by or whatever it is. And that's why we have to get to the bottom to see ... what is going on. It's also going to make residential management (at LaDeara Crest) ... stricter as they interview ... people to come in here to live."

Burke said, "We made this (LaDeara Crest) what we would consider first-class. We spent (millions of dollars on) acqui-

tion to make sure people have a nice place to stay, their children can feel good and parents can leave home to work in a place that's safe. So I don't want you to think this is something that I'm taking lightly. I'm serious as serious can be...."

"It's been like five years we have been working. We have been working to acquire and clean up. We have a group ... Liberty East Redevelopment Association, with volunteers and a good board who comes in and monitors programs and activities for these parents and their children, and not only the parents but also the elderly who live up in this area and also people of special needs.... We have a resource center that's open for that purpose.

"With the money we have spent, the money is important, but the people who live here are more important than the money. We want to make sure they are comfortable and that they feel good that when they get out of their car or they get off the bus, when they walk into their homes, everything is all right. We have full-time maintenance people who work (at LaDeara Crest); so a maintenance person is also on premises that is maintaining his living here..."

"...To us, this is an example, a model, of how you can turn around something that is negative and make it positive. I stand down there a lot of times. I watch the children coming from school. I see how parents are taking an interest in their children's welfare."

Mitchell said she phoned Burke several times last Thursday night after the shooting and that Burke showed great concern.

Lee Garrity said the city wants to "find out what happened and make sure it doesn't happen again. We're going to investigate it thoroughly and get to the bottom of what happened. The Police Department has an investigation going on."

LaDeara Crest is privately managed, he said. "The Police Department, if we find things for safety recommendations that we would make to the management company, we would do that. The city has invested a lot of money in this development. We are a partner with ... the property development company. If there need to be changes because of safety, we would make those recommendations."

Mitchell concluded, "I don't want this swept up under no rug. I want something done about it."

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