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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Inter-Faith Council for Social Service Announces FoodFirst Capital Campaign**

 *Building Dignity through Food and Community*

July 3, 2018

**Chapel Hill/Carrboro, NC**–Inter-Faith Council for Social Service (IFC) is raising funds to transform its downtown Carrboro property by summer 2020 into a three-story community food hub. This new 16,000 square-foot facility will co-locate IFC’s Community Kitchen and Food Pantry in a welcoming and accessible space, making it possible for members to stop in for a meal and shop for groceries to sustain their families. The building will also house IFC’s Emergency Financial Assistance program, which was recently expanded through a partnership with Orange County Department of Social Services.

“Giving IFC members the power of choice will make the Food Pantry a place that cultivates dignity. Food from our new Pantry will be a resource for everyone who lives and works in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro community.” *Robert Dowling, FoodFirst Campaign Co-Chair and Executive Director, Community Home Trust.*

*FoodFirst increases IFC’s Impact*

* The Community Kitchen will have the capacity to serve 1,000 additional meals a month in a family-friendly building.
* The Food Pantry will implement a best practice, member-choice model, in addition to stocking more fresh produce, meat, eggs and dairy with the support of key partners like Weaver Street Market and Farmer Foodshare.

*IFC supports Food Security in Orange County*

* Open 365 days a year, IFC’s Community Kitchen currently serves almost 40,000 meals a year, in addition to 28,000 served through HomeStart and Community House, IFC’s shelters for people experiencing homelessness. As the only daily provider of free hot meals in the County, the Kitchen also

prevents food waste by accepting leftover prepared foods from university and community functions.

* The Food Pantry sends home almost 13,000 bags of grocery staples and produce a year, reaching more than 3,000 residents and workers. Members average two to three visits per year and receive approximately a week’s worth of groceries at a time. The Food Pantry is among the County’s largest and most accessible food security programs, with broad eligibility plus evening hours twice a week during the academic year to accommodate members’ work schedules.
* IFC is a distribution hub, funneling excess donations to smaller pantries and low-income senior housing communities.  The Food Pantry also distributes donations from fellow non-profits, when they receive food items that they’re unable to use.

“If we want to transform the health of our next generation, we must fight hunger with dignity by fostering equity and the power of choice. This, combined with access to fresh and nourishing food, is key to securing a healthier and prosperous community.” *Kevin Foy, FoodFirst Campaign Co-Chair and Professor at NCCU School of Law.*

*Campaign Progress and Partners*

The goal of the FoodFirst campaign is to raise $5.3 million, and IFC has raised almost 60 percent after completing a quiet phase and obtaining lead gifts from individuals, corporations, local foundations and faith-based organizations. The IFC Board of Directors and Campaign Cabinet have all made pledges. IFC plans to start construction in June 2019 for an anticipated completion in July 2020.

**Campaign Honorary Co-Chairs**: Don Boulton, UNC-Chapel Hill Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Emeritus and Robert Seymour, Honorary Life Member, IFC Board.

**Campaign Co-Chairs**: Robert Dowling, Community Home Trust and Kevin Foy, NCCU School of Law

**Campaign Cabinet Members**: Julie Byerley, UNC School of Medicine; John Dorward, IFC Executive Director Emeritus; Rabbi Jen Feldman, Kehillah Synagogue; Valerie Foushee, NC State Senate; Kathleen Herr, IFC Board Chair; Mary Beth Koza, UNC-Chapel Hill; Joseph Liegl, Retired Attorney; Mae McLendon, Community Activist; Gordon Merklein, UNC-Chapel Hill; Jay Miller, Shared Visions Foundation; Roger Perry, East West Partners; Bob Saunders, Brooks Pierce Law Firm; Keith Taylor, dentist and Sharon Van Horn, Chapel Hill Children’s Clinic.

For additional information on FoodFirst, please visit [www.ifcweb.org/foodfirst](http://www.ifcweb.org/foodfirst) For additional information on IFC, please visit [www.ifcweb.org](http://www.ifcweb.org).

**About Inter-Faith Council for Social Service**

In 1963, seven local women united their volunteer efforts to address the conditions of poverty in Orange County. More than 55 years later and with a robust network of more than 6,000 volunteers, members, donors and residents, IFC continues its mission to confront the causes and respond to the effects of poverty in our community.

IFC believes in a community where everyone’s basic needs are met, including dignified and affordable housing, an abundance of healthy food and meaningful social connection.

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