Inter-Faith Ministries (IFM) works on a very simple premise: **Every person matters. Every person struggles. Every person deserves a home and hope**.

IFM started in 1885 as the Wichita Council of Churches. We continue to bring together people of all beliefs to make the community stronger and better. IFM’s main emphasis is working with homeless and low income individuals and families to improve their lives.

IFM’s homeless shelters served 1,427 different individuals in 2017 for a total of 33,365 bed nights. That means that on average 91 people stayed at an IFM shelter each night last year.

Shelter clients find a place to sleep, meals, showers, and most importantly, case managers to help them understand the cause of their homelessness, establish goals and connect them with services they need to get back into their own homes.

With the help of Decker Electric and other partners and volunteers, Inter-Faith Inn will soon become the first pet-friendly shelter in southcentral Kansas. This is important for two reasons:

* Situationally homeless people who have been very recently evicted have already lost almost everything. By not forcing them to give up their pets they feel less unsettled, more hopeful that life will return to normal.
* Chronically homeless people refuse to enter a shelter or access medical or mental health services for fear of losing their pet. For the chronically homeless a pet is a responsibility which actually helps them with mental health issues and addictions. A dog can protect them, offer unconditional love and companionship.

While the number of homeless people with animals is small, it’s an important segment of the population. When we look at sheltering people IFM has a goal of sheltering all who need it. **Every person is included**. That’s why we operate the Emergency Winter Shelter November through March. This is a no-barrier shelter, meaning no one is turned away unless they’re violent.

In the coming months IFM will roll out initiatives designed to improve education and employment opportunities both for shelter clients and residents in IFM’s low-income apartments to help break the cycle of multi-generational poverty.

**Every person needs surprises**. IFM’s Operation Holiday has been surprising people each December for 60 years. 13,000-15,000 low-income people, more than half of them children, receive non-perishable food, a grocery gift card, toys, blankets, coats, winter accessories and pet food through Operation Holiday. This massive distribution is possible only with lots of volunteers and collection drives.

IFM knows the joy of improving lives. Because **every person matters**.