

# Compassion In Action Good Newsletter

Trailblazer Edition 2021

*“Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; Unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.” Psalm 127:1*



Compassion In Action Inc.

## Special Points

- > Congressman Don Bacon's Trailblazer Award
- > History of CIA
- > People in PROGRESS
- > Vision for Generations
- > The More We Know

## HOW To Be A TRAILBLAZER!

Is there a formula, an art, a study or format to become a trailblazer? What exactly is a trailblazer? The dictionary says “a pioneer, an innovator, a person who makes a new track through wild country. Someone who’s willing to take risks and go in a path that is not already there. They blaze a trail and leave a path for others.” Sounds very impressive and we are certainly thankful to be



acknowledged by Congressman Don Bacon, who named Teela A. Mickles, founder of Compassion In Action along with Betty McDonald and Ella Willis as Trailblazers in Nebraska, in honor of Black History Month. We applaud and celebrate all recipients as we share the history of



our founder and where it all began for her. Compassion In Action officially began in 1994 when Founder, Teela Mickles diagrammed a program on a piece of paper, based on a letter from a woman who had gone back to prison for the 4th time. Now, she is called a ‘Trailblazer’ although that’s far from the picture above where she and her classmates from Franklin Elementary School are posing in front of her home at that time. She is seen with her little brother in the other picture showing the same sidewalk of the former Wesley House, now Compassion In Action Inc. That’s right, Teela has significant history as a child, in this neighborhood. Her parents sold their property when she was 10 years old for the Wesley House to be constructed. Now, it is the location for Compassion In Action and Mission Church with the rest of the best yet to come. A Community Mural on the Westside of Mission Church begins the development of more to come. In this special Trailblazer Edition, we are going to tell you how it all began .



## Inside this issue:

Unexpected Life Changes.....	2
Trouble to Triumph	2
Longevity Perseverance and LOVE	3
Bigger the Heart the Bigger the Vision	4
Icing On The Cake	5
Trailblazing from 2020 AND BEYOND	6

## Unexpected Life Changes Work Out for Good



Life for a wife and mother of five children was unexpectedly interrupted resulting in divorce and a new adventure was imposed upon them. Teela was a very religious and devout person at the time but was lacking the confidence, strength, hope and peace that would only come from a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. When she became 'Born Again' the experience was so profound, she was ignited to share the love and new found hope she had experienced with anyone else who would listen. Having no experience in any arena of life, other than homemaker with a high school education,



Picture above is family performance at the Open Door Mission. Below is a growing family at the Correctional Center for Women in York

### Beginning of a new life.

Teela pressed onto a new adventure of 'sharing hope' through music and song. She, along with her gifted children were invited to share the "Good News" with those in need. She later began a teen group called "Triumph" and continued the outreach. Her eldest son, Mark was the overseer of their activity at the tender age of 16, responsible for organization, sound and safety of the group.



Her son, Leland is a gifted musician, who could play any instrument he touched, is a song writer, composer, accomplished musician, singer and Praise & Worship leader. Her youngest son, Justin is a singer, gifted song writer and musician as well as a Mental Health Practitioner. Teela's eldest daughter, Aleet (Teela's name spelled backwards) is also a gifted singer, dancer and works with troubled youth. Her baby daughter, Natelina is a gifted chef, administrator and has her own business, Personal Chef and Catering Service "Tastefullydone" LLC. All more than 40 years in the making and so worth it!

## From Trouble to Triumph



With no experience other than her personal pain, the mission became people she served. CIA Inc., was creations, disappointments and failures confined in prison. At first the focus after several years, Teela began correctional facilities in the State of Nebraska because she documented real life experiences and shared in-



more clear as she listened to the stated to address the needs, expectations experienced by women and men was women with their children and working with men in all the correctional facilities in Nebraska. She became an expert in and created curriculum based on information from those confined.

# Longevity, Perserverence and LOVE



Joy came into Teela's life during the time she and her family were volunteering for Chapel Services at NCCW in York, NE. It was Joy's first time in prison and she needed someone to take care of her year old son to keep him out of the foster care system. Aleet, volunteered to care for him and he became part of her little family 30 years ago. During that time, it was obvious that chapel services and an invitation to church were not the best way to serve women in prison. There was so much more that needed to be in place. So, Teela was on staff at the initial beginning of COMPASS Ministries (Christian Outreach to Multi-



cultural People Assisting with Social Services) through Christ Community Church. She had hoped to expedite a more realistic method of serving from that assignment. Working with Joy was the experience necessary for a realistic approach to start an effective program to help people in prison. Yes, Joy is the founder/CEO of Scattered Joy Acres and the entire City of Omaha knows the rest of her story.

Once CIA was founded and a curriculum Douglas County (Jail) and came in conher a new hope. Teela assigned a vol- That was the first and most successful pant and her volunteer family. They for 8 years. Tracy, who was once very in college, book author, enjoying her ALL the Way Transitional Home for Tracy and Amanda all resided at differ- Teela during the early development of through a Family Support Grant and tional video. Amanda's journey was able to identify underlying, her time in the Military. an, living the life she only to run a transitional home man in this picture was a through his own life expe- rectional Facility. Years courage the young men ample of success he had



developed, Teela began teaching classes in tact with Tracy, who said the classes gave unteer "family" to Tracy and her three sons. connection CIA experienced with a partici- stood by Tracy, supporting her and her sons timid and reserved, became a spokes person new career and marriage. Teela ran CIA's Women from 2000 until 2010, where Joy, ent times. Amanda came in contact with the program when UNO provided funding Amanda was featured on CIA's first promo- difficult and CIA stood by her while she was unresolved issues stemming from Today, Amanda is a successful Veter- dreamed of for years. CIA attempted for men and the father of the young resident. Orlando was going riences at the Nebraska Youth Cor- later, he returned to NCYF to en- who were residing there by the ex- become. It is a "Family Affair".



Teela has learned the importance of expos- ing volunteers, students and professionals to the confined population to experience the 'other side' of their story. Bob Pelshaw, CIA board member, Teela and Mary along with volunteers here at NSP. In 2020, Teela ran for State Senator fueled by the needs, informa- tion, importance and voice of the men, women and young people "behind the wall".



# The Bigger the Heart, The Bigger the Vision



Along the trailblazing journey, Teela started “The Sister-To-Sister Leadership Program” for girls. It became a family affair with her daughter, Aleet and then her mother, Etta Mae assisting in arts and crafts. The program ran for 4 years until the expansion of CIA demanded more of her time. Mrs. Mary Barker (r) seen in this picture came in contact with Teela when she started the CIA “All the Way” Transitional Home in 2000. She stepped away after several years and came back on



staff after CIA relocated in the former Wesley House. Ms. Colette Kuegah (l) from Togo, joined the journey as a practicum student from Metropolitan Community College in 2013. She was hired the same year and is still working diligently with our population.

Dr. Joseph Jennings, founder of the RAW DAWGS Youth Corps Gang Prevention Program was at a community event in Omaha when Teela invited him to speak at her Youth Summit in 2011 and 2012. Dr. Jennings promoted gang PREVENTION for boys starting at a very young age. He wanted a location in Omaha for his program, which prompted Teela to look into the former Wesley House. She could also expand her services to people in prison and their families from that location. Teela took a step of faith and contacted Mike Maroney of Omaha Economic Development Corporation who owned the property. She expressed her desire and Mike graciously made it happen. The RAW DAWGS Youth Corps Gang Prevention Program was a new expansion of CIA services in the area of prevention. However, the same year CIA took possession of the building, in partnership with Dr. Jennings, he came ill and passed away unexpectedly in Atlanta GA. Even though Teela was not prepared to work with young boys, God made a way and her grandson Lucas, became the RAW DAWGS Commander, seen in this picture at an Omaha 360 meeting. Com- respect of his troop, their parents and munity awareness and Teela spoke to University, seen in the picture below.



CIA is also in partnership with Omaha Police Department and their annual Cops & Bobbers, showing youth the positive side of law enforcement.



# Icing On The Cake....



Like any transition, CIA experienced growing pains understanding the value and importance of the people we serve. However, the more we did, the more we saw to do and became vigilant about networking and establishing relationships with agencies who were serving the same population. Many hands really do make the labor light and when you have a passion for the mission given by God, He works many wonders to behold. When Teela relocated CIA in the former Wesley House, the church on the property went with it and she leased it to the Native Assembly Church for two years. It sat vacant from 2015 until 2017 in need of serious renovation and remodeling. Myron Pierce was looking for a location to plant Mission Church and as you can see from the picture on the left, he did exactly that.



When Myron started the church, with the support and TLC from Christ Community Church, great things began to happen and they happened quickly. The church building was renovated and remodeled over the summer of 2017. That same year, the CIA building was viciously vandalized but everything worked out better for the cause. When Mission Church opened for services in September of 2017, they quickly grew to two services in eight months. The hill became alive with the sound of music, singing, dancing, children playing and families gathering for summer fun. Mission Church outreaches and community events embraced all 14 different languages in this area, including Franklin Elementary School and families residing in the Yale Apartments. Teela's interaction with people confined in state correctional facilities was elevated to an new level



of morale support, spiritual empowerment and a 'sense of belonging.' Therefore when people were released from prison and in that difficult time of transition, Mission became that safe and secure place for them to reconnect into the community.

## HOPE Dealers

After all the years of service, God had supplied that need through Mission Church and Myron Pierce was the 'icing on the cake.' He had spent his own testimony time in prison and was still on parole when he planted the church. Myron represented the best of the best as far as Teela was concerned because she had high hopes for all the people she served, and always knew there was pure gold behind those walls. In her new location, the package for serving and ministry became complete and the rest of the best is STILL to come. With open arms, a heart of compassion and a mind that 'get's it', this young pastor has set a standard of transformation for anyone looking for a place to rest their weary head and broken heart. Mission Church Motto: "You Belong Here" where thousands of people and families are being served and given help, hope and unconditional love for their future.



# Trailblazing from 2020 and BEYOND!

Compassion In Action is on the move to expand and continue providing services for people in prison, Prospect Village and the surrounding area. Many changes have resulted from the world-wide pandemic, economic crises and a rise in the awareness of social injustice for many cultures. We are optimistic with hope for our future and generations to come. We are committed to be a positive, vibrant and active part of the progress and resolve in specific areas of need for all people. The following is the vision for the development of this property toward a productive, multi-cultural, prosperous center and historic tourist site in the City of Omaha:



- \* State of the art auditorium equipped for sports and community events
- \* Outdoor Theater to perform music, drama and the various cultural arts.
- \* Expansion of the parking lot to accommodate activities and events.
- \* Expansion of Mission Church to be determined by design.
- \* Installation of a Skate Park for youth with equipment shop and safety codes
- \* Commercial Kitchen—Café—Recording Studio—Esthetics—Information Site

## Compassion In Action Vision

The estimated cost of the development and expansion of the CIA property is \$20,000,000. Funders and investors who believe in providing for the community in the full measure of equity, inclusiveness and diversity in equality are being sought. If you are ONE or know ONE, please advocate on our behalf.

One project CIA has been working is the Memory Brick Wall, to be constructed on the East side of the building behind the flag pole that was donated by the Woodman Tower in 2002. It was the first flag pole to go up in North Omaha after 911. The bricks are \$100 each and will have the name of the donor inscribed on it. We have 1,000 bricks to sell. Please call the office for details on purchase and inscription.



Check out Teela's first book entitled, "What If?" a thought provoking, yet easy read for any audience, available for \$25.00 on Amazon and in the CIA Office.

	DONATIONS			
Monthly:	\$25	\$50	\$100	\$250
Quarterly:	\$200	\$400	\$1,000	
Annual	\$2,000 +			

Compassion In Action is a 501© Non Profit Organization and your donations are tax deductible. Thank you & GOD BLESS!



Compassion In Action Inc.

*"Embracing the Person,  
Rebuilding the Family and Breaking  
the Cycle"*

Compassion In Action Inc.  
2001 North 35th Street  
Omaha, NE 68111  
Or mailing  
P.O. Box 11483  
Omaha, NE 68111  
402-502-9890 office  
402-515-5277 cell  
Email:  
teela@compassioninactioninc.com  
WWW.compassioninactioninc.com  
Staff:  
Teela A. Mickles, Founder/CEO  
Mary Barker, Admin. Asst.  
Colette Kuegah, Program Mgr.

## Need a Speaker?

For a seasoned speaker,  
workshop, training seminars,  
lunch & Learn  
402-515-5277

\*\*\*\*\*

Volunteer Opportunity  
Community Hours  
College Study Projects  
402-502-9890