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ICCF Announces Purchase of former Eastern Elementary School

GRAND RAPIDS, MI, February 22, 2016 – Inner City Christian Federation (ICCF) is thrilled to announce its purchase of the former Eastern Elementary School in late October 2015. The building, which is located in the Highland Park neighborhood of Grand Rapids, is just four blocks north of Michigan Street. The school has stood vacant since 2008. A number of development plans for the building have been proposed, but none have materialized.

“ICCF has great experience renovating large, historic buildings purposefully,” said Ryan VerWys, CEO of ICCF. “Our team is looking forward to finding a solution for this space that contributes to the health and vibrancy of the surrounding Highland Park neighborhood.”

Eastern Elementary School was constructed in the late 1920s and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The building has four floors and approximately 62,500 SF of usable space. It is architecturally noteworthy due to its intricate brickwork façade and glazed terra cotta exterior. The park adjacent to the building is owned by the City of Grand Rapids Parks Department and includes approximately 2.5 acres of green space, as well as a playground and ball field.

“Our intended use for this space is still unknown,” said Ryan Schmidt, director of real estate development and management. “But we do know that the use will match up with ICCF’s mission and vision for the greater Grand Rapids community as well as the City’s best interests in bringing new life to this long-vacant structure.”

ICCF has more than 40 years of experience in community development, including affordable housing and housing education and support services. The organization will begin community engagement efforts in Highland Park in March to discuss opportunities for the building and its surrounding land with neighborhood residents and stakeholders. These engagement efforts will help ICCF determine the highest and best possible long-term use for this property. Plans for financing an adaptive reuse of this important structure will follow.

Neighbors and other interested parties can sign up to receive more information on ICCF’s efforts at this building and notifications of future meetings by going to our website at www.iccf.org

All questions regarding ICCF or this building may be directed to Sandra Gaddy, Vice President of Advancement at 616-336-9333, ext. 408.

ICCF is the oldest non-profit affordable housing provider in the state of Michigan. Active in the Grand Rapids area since 1974, the agency serves more than 2200 families a year through its programs and services. Program offerings include Family Haven emergency housing located at 701 Prospect SE (Grand Rapids), 192 units of affordable rental housing, newly constructed homes for purchase, home ownership education and financial counseling. All services are provided in Spanish and English. Visit www.iccf.org for more information.

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