



ALGI

The Apartment Complex Initiative Companion



ACI: Companion



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Introduction

Who is Compassion Connect?

Compassion Connect is a network of people who love God because He first loved us. We believe that Jesus taught the people of God to work as a united front against the darkness, pain, and suffering we see in the world around us. God has called Compassion Connect to be a voice calling the churches to unite and serve. By carrying out this mission of proactive unity "the world will know that the Father sent the Son" and God's people will pursue a deeper walk with their Lord.

What is ACI?

In early 2008 the leadership of Compassion Connect was realizing that the Spirit desired more collaboration from churches to address major issues in the community. The Health clinics were effective at addressing primary needs, however as single day events they were limited on the impact they could truly make on peoples lives. People coming to the clinics were hurting and broken living in low income apartment complexes but there wasn't an effective way to reach them. The leadership wanted to take the values from the clinics and extend them into building bridges into communities.

Around the same time God began calling two young Portland residents to live out their faith in a more holistic manner. They no longer wanted to travel "to" and "from" ministry...they wanted to live ministry. Seeking a support network, God brought them to the Compassion Connect team. After discussing their shared values, including a strong emphasis on relocation and relationship, they began developing a collaborative model of ministry that would meaningfully reach into the lives of people living in low income apartment housing.

The Apartment Complex Initiative (ACI) is Compassion Connects pursuit to facilitate the transformation that can take place within a community when the love of Christ is experienced thru the power of committed relationships. It provides an opportunity for local churches to make a long-term investment into the lives of tenants thru on-going relationships.

ACI Goals

There are three key goals of the Apartment Complex Initiative. First is our desire is to see all hearts transformed by and for the love of Christ. By connecting residents to local church members, the ministry team serves as a catalyst for relationship to take place thereby deepening understanding of the Gospel.

Secondly, we want to serve as mobilizing agents to local churches as they unite around the common vision of investing relationally into the lives of residents, creating a holistic sense of community. To experience how God moves when communities are engaged and working collaboratively with The Church to make positive changes within their neighborhoods.

Finally, we desire to see this initiative grow in a healthy, faithful manner. The model has been created and led by God and He is changing hearts.

ACI Values

ACI offers the potential for individuals to get traction in living out the calling of Jesus in their whole life. This necessitates a relationship with Christ Body, The Church, as well as relationships with those in our community. The values of ACI are driven by this unique position in relationship in between the two.

1. Selfless lifestyle: Team members exemplify a willingness to invest time, energy, and resources for others, reflective of Jesus' incarnation.
2. Christ follower lifestyle: We submit to the Biblical values and guidelines of God's Kingdom. Acknowledging God has given all individuals an identity worthy of love; we actively seek the calling from Jesus to engage our neighbors in relationship.
3. Healthy and supportive community: Committed relationships build community. Catalyst teams are reflective of this joining together in fellowship, prayer, and support regularly.
4. Local Church: We cannot live out our mission as Christ followers apart from the Church.
5. Discipleship: Our mission calls us to make disciples of the nations, living life alongside others, following the example of Jesus.
6. Ambassadors: Team members are a bridge from The Church to the local community facilitating interaction, understanding and relationship.

The Model

Catalytic Site Selection

Ideal Qualities of a Catalytic Site

1. Management company is interested in partnering with the ACI and supporting positive changes within the complex
2. Located in a predominately under resourced community
3. Has a culturally diverse population
4. Within close proximity to partner churches
5. Has a communal interior space that can be utilized to host community gatherings; an outdoor area that can support games and summer activities is also beneficial
6. Owners are willing to provide a financial incentive to catalytic teams and/or contribute to community programming.

Approach with Owners/Managers

Relationships with apartment owners generally begin in three ways. The apartment owner pursues a partnership with Compassion Connect, Compassion connect pursues a partnership with an apartment complex or management company, or a team of individuals facilitate introductions between Compassion Connect and a complex they would like to pursue.

Expectations between C.C. and Owners/Managers

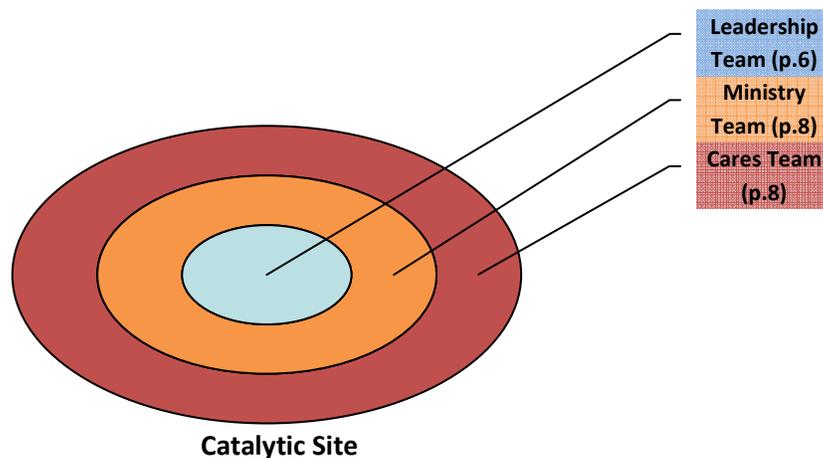
We recognize that partnerships with owners and managers will vary from site to site. Compassion Connect is committed to thoroughly explain the mission and values of the Apartment Complex Initiative prior to beginning events or programs within the complex. Expectations and policies that need to be followed by the catalyst team will be addressed at that time. Clear pathways of communication will also

be established between the complex management, Compassion connect and the leadership team. Teams living in the complexes are tenants first and are not expected to receive preferential treatment.

A healthy relationship between apartment owners, managers and the catalyst team is crucial to the success of the ACI. Team members are responsible for fostering a positive relationship and clear communication regarding all events and activities within the complex. The transformation of a community from a place to sleep to a home residents are proud of with supportive friendships and regular activities can become a source of resident retention as well as selling point to leasing agents. Community stories should be shared periodically to assist managers in recognizing positive changes within the complex and its residents.

Team Structure

An ACI team can be summarized in three levels. It is helpful to think of these three levels as concentric circles, one within the next, similar to a bulls-eye. If you stand in the bulls-eye, you are expected to engage in responsibilities and relationships with the second and third circle of which you are also a part of. An important focus is to be discipling individuals towards the center of the circle, which in turn necessitates replication.



Recruitment of Leadership Team

There are many ways an individual becomes involved with a leadership team. They may be recruited from local churches and universities. They may have volunteered with current catalyst sites and are now interested in making a more holistic investment. Some hear thru word of mouth or on-line research and contact Compassion Connect for more information.

Expectations between C.C. and Teams

- **Financial Oversight:** While Compassion Connect operates as the financial umbrella, each ACI team is responsible for maintaining a budget and communicating their financial needs to the ACI Program Director. Compassion Connect is committed to supporting fundraising efforts thru identification and oversight of revenue source relationships and accountability. Potential resource streams include: local churches, grants, fundraisers, and independent donors.
- **Budget:** The account for each catalytic site will be kept distinct within the accounting for Compassion Connect. Monies raised by the site and for the site will be solely for that team's use

with no administrative costs. The team must work out a reasonable budget and handle their finances in a christlike manner. To submit reimbursement requests the individual or team must fill out the appropriate form and have it approved by the ACI program director.

- Training: Compassion Connect is committed to provide training and support to catalyst teams across a broad range of topics throughout their ministry experience.
- Policies
 - Mandatory reporting/incident reports: As volunteers living within a community, we may be confronted with incidents of child abuse and domestic violence. All leadership team members are expected to attend Compassion Connect’s emergency policy training within three months of moving into the complex. The policy is attached in **Appendix I** of the Companion.
 - Boundaries & Accountability: Due to its relational nature it’s easy to lose sight of ones own spiritual and mental health, getting caught up in the “doing” of ministry. Compassion Connect is committed to assisting ACI volunteers in balancing the challenges of ministry within a healthy lifestyle. There will be times when healthy boundaries need to be established with residents and church volunteers. The team leader and/or ACI Program Director is available to advise if needed.

Leadership Team Roles/Expectations

This team is responsible for the development and implementation of the vision for the catalyst site. Depending on the size of the complex the team consists of 3-6 individuals, committed to the holistic vision and values of the AC.

Qualifications:

1. Committed Christian
2. Completed application and interview
3. Passed criminal background check
4. Signed statement of faith and commitment contract

Roles/Responsibilities

Each team will be comprised of individuals with various skill sets and gifts. It is the responsibility of each leadership team to determine how and by whom these roles are filled.

- *Communicate with Church partners:*
 - Notification of events, invitation for service opportunities, event follow-up, and thank you notes
- *Storytelling:*
 - Responsible for compiling ministry stories, newsletter and blog updates
- *Coordinate Events:*

- Includes the planning and implementation of events focused on creating relational space between residents and church members. Includes reserving the spaces, communicating to volunteers, etc.
- *Team building:*
 - Invest in the leadership team through encouragement, spiritual care, etc. It may include team dinners, prayer nights and team support

Expectations

- Attend bi-monthly leadership meetings
- Coordinate at least one community activity quarterly. This provides all members an opportunity to network with church volunteers and share in the leadership of the team.
- As representatives of both Compassion Connect and the ACI team, leadership teams are responsible for communicating with church volunteers in a clear and respectful manner. Follow-up communication should happen within one week of a volunteer's service activity.
- Support the ministry and cares teams in the understanding and fulfillment of their expectations
- Team members living in roommate situations should recognize that they are models of living in community for other residents. As such, they are expected to be accountable to one another for housing responsibilities such as paying bills in a timely manner, being respectful regarding household chores, identifying and upholding household rules, and agreeing to key budgetary responsibilities. It is recommended that these are discussed and agreed upon prior to moving into the complex.

Point Person(s)

A point person(s) should be identified by the leadership team and Compassion Connect staff within the first six months of moving into the complex. Depending on skill sets and availability this role may be filled by one or two individuals. This person (s) comes from within the site leadership team.

Responsibilities include:

1. Coordinates leadership team meetings including communication, planning and facilitation
2. Key emergency contact for catalytic site team
3. Key liaison to Compassion Connect staff, clearly communicating the needs of the team
4. Key contact for apartment management team and staff

Ministry Team Roles/Expectations

This team consists of Christians from both the neighborhood and partner churches committed to the ACI vision that are not able to participate at the level of the leadership. This team is crucial to the discipleship of both local residents and church volunteers.

Roles

- Serve as the liaison between church volunteers and local residents offering insight where needed. You will be seen as experts of both communities and should reflect both with dignity and respect.
- Build meaningful relationships with apartment residents. While the form may vary, these relationships should focus on empowerment and sharing the love of Christ thru all actions.
- Clearly communicate events to community and church connections.
- All concerns should be communicated immediately to the team leader in a manner that is reflective of the values of the team.

Expectations

- Contribute ministry stories to the team story collector on a quarterly basis.
- Live a life above reproach. We must be sensitive to the fact that we are living in close community with individuals struggling with a variety of vices and belief systems and our behavior should be reflective of our walk with Christ.
- Shepherd the Cares team to fulfill their responsibilities and expectations

Cares Team Roles/Expectations

This team incorporates all individuals in ministry and leadership teams as well as committed church and resident volunteers regardless of their belief system.

Roles

1. Support the Ministry and Leadership teams as needed
2. Provide suggestions and insight for activities and events
3. Care for neighbors (i.e. moving teams, welcome baskets, get well cards, etc.)

Expectations

- Regularly participate in catalytic activities including preparations and tear down.
- Share why they are involved and what is happening in the complex to residents and church volunteers.

- Facilitate conversations between residents and church teams.

Local Church Partnership

Recruitment of Local Church Partners

The Apartment Complex Initiative is a shared model of ministry. While local churches may have an understanding of the identity and culture of residents living within, it is often difficult to engage with residents in a manner in which they respond. The catalyst teams are, by nature small. The dedication of local church volunteers broadens the base of support and impact our neighbors receive by sharing knowledge and resources with residents in need of material, emotional, and spiritual assistance.

Compassion Connect is committed to developing healthy relationships with partner churches. Staff will meet with the church partner to thoroughly explain the ACI mission, vision and process. Prior to joint activities all parties will discuss expectations regarding areas such as communication, volunteer recruitment, and engagement opportunities.

We are asking churches for a commitment to the following:

- 1) Provide a point person who is part of the spiritual oversight board
- 2) Communicate regarding opportunities for collaborative events such as VBS or holiday programming in a timely manner
- 3) Facilitate recruitment for events, on-going projects, and programs in the community, encouraging ownership from church congregants (Bible study, cooking classes, etc.)
- 4) Provide opportunities to share stories of how God is working within residents and volunteers of ACI
- 5) Each church that considers a catalytic site to be part of their neighborhood ministry is asked to contribute to that team's annual budget. This shows that ownership is taken seriously and that the church is willing to reflect the importance of this ministry in their annual budget. There is no set amount delineated, the team merely asks the church to review the catalytic site's annual budget and determine in their heart what they can give as a congregation.

Access points for Local Church involvement

There are numerous access points for church involvement depending on volunteer interest and level of commitment. Single service opportunities, such as holiday events, provide an opportunity for church members to serve local residents and experience the ministry. Ongoing engagement opportunities, such as community meals, provide volunteers an opportunity to begin to develop relationships with residents at regularly scheduled events. Those wanting to invest one on one in the lives of individuals will be encouraged to begin scheduling regular meetings with the person focused on developing relationship. As church volunteers recognize areas of opportunity for ongoing ministry they are encouraged to discuss them with the leadership team to determine a best course of action.

Communication with Local Church

Clear communication is crucial to the success of the ACI. Pathways for communicating events, volunteer opportunities, and ministry reports should be determined prior to engaging with the community. We

have found that one of the best ways to understand how God is working within community is thru the sharing of stories. We are looking for creative ways to express all that He is doing in the community in a way that is appropriate for your church congregants.

Methods include:

- Newsletters
- Speaking to small groups
- Blogs

Spiritual Oversight Board

To see the church truly united in service to the catalytic site requires not only hands on ministry connections, but also spiritual togetherness. Each church that calls itself an adopting collaborator is asked to designate a point person (i.e. an elder, a deacon, or mature lay person) who can be part of the Spiritual Oversight Board which helps ensure that the site's leadership team is following after Christ's heart, has access to spread prayer requests, is not getting burned out, and finally is not straying away from the values of the ministry.

The Board gathers together with the leadership team no less than two times a year. This helps to create a deeper bond between the local churches and the leadership team onsite. It exemplifies that the ministry is a collaboration of multiple churches, not just the isolated work of one church. It promotes a healthy model of discipleship for the local church and the leadership team living at the complex.

Team Development

Compassion Connect is committed to supporting catalyst team members as they carry out the ACI mission. Training is a key component of both the preparation and development of team members, church volunteers and local residents.

Pre-Move in training

1. Compassion Connect history, mission and values
2. ACI Companion & model of ministry
3. Discussion of catalyst team expectations, including team member contract between Compassion Connect and ACI team member
4. Review emergency procedures and means of support
 - a. Compassion Connect's mandatory reporting policy
 - b. Incident reports
 - c. Emergency contacts

Ongoing training

1. Suggested readings & book study
2. ABCD biblical principles and helpful tools (neighbor surveys, prayer walks, miracle question, etc.)
3. Working with at risk communities
4. Volunteer management/building church relationships
5. How to build and maneuver relationships with apartment management

Team Building

Leadership meetings

Bi-monthly meetings focused on the development of the catalyst team. They offer a place to discuss their mission and deepen their understanding of how God is working in the community. They provide an opportunity to discuss current issues, inform members of upcoming events, offer a forum for development on pertinent topics, and provide an opportunity to network with churches, organizations, and civic resources as appropriate.

Bible Study/Fellowship

This bi-monthly time of fellowship, learning, and prayer is a key part of ACI team life. It is important that we continue to stay rooted in the Word as we are focused on expanding the Kingdom. Team members are encouraged to invite residents to learn about the Gospel and why we are working within the community.

Relationship building and support

It is vital that the leadership team maintains healthy, foundational relationships to sustain and uplift each other in the work God has called them to do within the catalyst site. Teams are encouraged to find times to fellowship together on a regular basis. Team retreats focused on team building and vision focus are held annually. Attendees are determined by the site Leadership team and Compassion Connect.

Relationship Building

Initial Outreach/Discovery (1st 3-6 months)

The first few months of activity within a community are crucial to establishing yourself. The posture in the early weeks should be one of observation and listening. The goal during this time is to begin to understand the personality of the complex and the people that live there. As we learn what residents want to see within the community, we will be able to equip the church to be more effective in sustaining relationships.

Activities include:

- Prayer Walks
- Community Profile
- Needs Assessment
- Life Histories
- Miracle Question
- Community Interest Surveys

Consistent Touch Points (on-going, begins after 4-6 months)

Activities provide a place for church members to take the first step of initiating relationship with residents. As neighbors see volunteers return week after week, trust begins to form providing a crucial foundation on which to grow.

Suggested Activities Include:

- Community Meals
- Holiday events
- Life celebration events (BBQ's, birthdays, births etc.)
- Work project teams (personal or complex needs)
- Beautification projects
- Welcome gifts

- Child care network
- School pick-up
- Automotive resources (i.e. rides, mechanical help, etc.)
- Weekly Bible Program
- Vacation Bible School
- Tutoring/Homework help
- Kids Club
- Sidewalk Murals
- Social Activities (i.e. hikes, game nights, dinner, shopping)

Quality over Quantity Policy

The development of committed relationship is at the core of the Apartment Complex Initiative. We recognize that, at times, this can be time consuming, vulnerable and messy. Often we feel as if we don't have answers and don't know where to turn. This is when God often makes an impact in surprising and powerful ways. When we commit to walking alongside an individual or family thru times of rejoicing and times of difficulty we are modeling Christ's unconditional love for us. When focusing on the quality of a relationship it may be necessary to minimize the initiation of new relationships. This is a good opportunity to facilitate church members' investment in these relationships.

Local Church relationship building

This is a collaborative model where each piece is interdependent on the next. It is important to find creative ways to build and deepen the relationship between churches, catalyst teams, and residents. Follow-up after speaking engagements and events is a crucial part of strengthening the relationship with church partners. Thank you notes from the leadership team or community members that include information on next steps and up-coming opportunities are effective. Appreciation events, such as dinners or barbeques allow apartment residents to serve church volunteers. Phone calls and coffee appointments allow for one on one relationship building and provide a platform to discuss questions and vision.

Resource Building

Compassion Connect recognizes the benefits that come from networking. We are committed to leveraging resources to build the kingdom of God. Involving apartment residents and church members in civic activities can be a powerful method of building community beyond the apartment boundaries. Leadership teams should have an understanding of what is happening in the neighborhood in which they live and what services are available to residents. Ministry teams have the ability to act as a bridge to civic leaders. They can be a powerful model to residents of how to effectively advocate for needs as well as serve as a voice to city leadership about the issues impacting its residents.

Community Involvement/Empowerment

The more we involve the community in the decisions and activities taking place within their neighborhood the more ownership they have regarding the transformation taking place. They have invaluable insight into areas of opportunity for engaging residents that the catalyst team may not.

Ideas for activities include:

- Life group/Bible study
- Prayer Box

- Nutritional/health classes
- Tutoring and educational assistance
- Financial literacy class
- Automotive service training
- Connection to resources (medical/education/job advancement)
- Home Visits
- Mentoring

Reflection

Team Member Reflection

This is a critical part of recognizing the lessons that God is teaching as we continue to deepen our relationships with both catalyst team members and residents.

We don't start by telling God where we are going. Very few times has a mission statement clearly led a person or team, who wasn't already being led by God. Reflection is a critical element to humility, faith, and trust. Reflection doesn't require that you know the entirety of what you are doing when you start, but rather it requires that you look backwards to ask God what, how, and why. Then you can move forward with great passion and faith knowing that God is leading and using you the way that He designed you for (Eph 2:10)

- **What:** What events, experiences, challenges have I experienced recently (last week, month, etc). What did they look like and what feelings did they produce in me? What were the people like when I treated them a certain way or didn't treat them a respectful way. ETC.?
- **How:** How has God used me in the recent past? How have I responded to those situations? How has my faith and trust that God is good and in control been tested? How am I putting to use what I'm passionate about? How have my gifts been used and in which situations did they feel most efficiently used?
- **Why:** Why did God put me in those situations? Why did God have me spending time with that person? Why did I feel so uncomfortable with that person? Why am I living here?

By answering some of these questions you begin to reflect on the purposes that God has created you for. Instead of our fast paced forward looking model of life, we stop and slow down to look backwards. At that time you can see where God was moving, how your gifts and passions were utilized, and then you can go forward, knowing how/where to best serve in line with God's calling on your life. This would be most helpful on a daily and/or weekly level.

Whole Team Reflection

This time is to be built into ministry meetings regularly. It is important for the whole team to reflect on recent events and experiences. This will help build the team and provide the necessary support and encouragement that will help fend off burnout.

Key questions to consider:

1. What is going well?
2. Where do we need to consider a different approach?

3. Are we being inclusive?

Once or twice a year it is encouraged that the whole leadership team goes on a retreat. This will be part of the site's budget. It is important to get a weekend away to enjoy each others company outside of the normal circumstances. This time can also provide the necessary team reflection time on a much deeper level.

Local Church Reflection

It is vital to the whole vision that the local churches who participate in and help minister to the apartment complex have opportunity to reflect and see how God used them and how He is calling them deeper into relationship with himself. There are two clear ways that reflection within the local church can be promoted

1. After each small group comes to serve at the complex provide them with an invitation to help them debrief/reflect on their experience. It could be questions that they discuss as a group the next time they gather, or a debrief session with the leadership team the day of their service.
2. On a larger scale their should be reflection with the leadership of the church to ensure a good relationship with the partnering churches and to see that the vision is still strong and properly "owned". This could be a meeting with leaders or it could be a presentation at the church that involves question/answer time.

Resident (Care Team) Reflection

To help disciple people at the complex it is necessary to give them tools that will offer opportunity to see how and where God is working in their life. Encouraging times of reflection will help with this process. After events and/or on a monthly basis it would be good to gather the Care Team together to discuss what they have seen in the community, what kinds of experiences they have had, how they feel about their community, what they would like to do more of, how they see themselves growing in the team....etc. This time of reflection with the Care Team will not happen unless it is intentionally sought and persistently carried out.