

## **“Bridging the Gap”**

In the fall of 2010 the Holland Rescue Mission (HRM) approached ASI Consulting for help in addressing the long-term housing needs and support for members of the “gap” homeless population in the Holland community. (A member of the “gap” population is defined as a person who is too high functioning to qualify for many government benefits or support from social service organizations, but too low functioning to live independently.)

In January of 2011 the HRM contracted with a four person ASI student team (Alex Day, Andrew Klinkman, Alyssa Richards and Adam Simon, advised by retired Hope College Provost Jim Boelkins) to develop a model for providing permanent housing and support utilizing integrated resources from local churches and social service agencies. During the spring term of 2011 the student team, mentored by local professionals:

- researched the problem
- met with members of the “gap” population
- evaluated existing housing models
- visited several local churches to share the problem and seek their interest
- met with several local agencies that serve the homeless.

By the end of the semester the team developed an initial model for providing permanent housing with mentoring support from local church members and the professional services of local agencies.

In the fall of 2011 a second team of four students (Alex Day, Katelyn Barry, Andrea DeVries, Araksya Mikaelyan)

- further refined the model
- located a group home to model the program
- developed a set of house guidelines and a client application
- worked with the HRM and ATLAS to hire a resident manager and case manager with the goal of admitting “gap” clients in January of 2012.

The team is currently developing visual and print media for educating local churches to the “gap” problem and seeking their support as mentors to the “gap” clients in the areas of financial, spiritual and daily living skills. As a result of the ASI efforts, the HRM secured a \$5,000 grant from the Holland/Zeeland Community Foundation to support the project.