

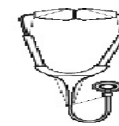


Safety~Net

October 2005
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Focus: Health Care



ABOUT SAFETY NET

Safety-Net is a quarterly publication about our community's social service agencies brought to you by the Shalom Community Center in collaboration with the social service agencies, and financially supported by the City of Bloomington. Please transmit comments and suggestions to the Safety-Net editor at shalom@bloomington.in.us and place Safety-Net comments on the subject line.

THIS ISSUE

The focus of this issue is health care in our community, including the availability

of health care services, existing insurance programs, and problems that should be addressed.

As with previous issues, the latter part of the newspaper provides updates on the many social service /non-profit agencies that provide services to the members of our community.

EARLIER ISSUES

Earlier issues of Safety-Net can be accessed at the Shalom Community Center Web site: www.shalomcommunitycenter.org.

Health care issues must be addressed

By Dan Lodge-Rigal, MD, Board President, Shalom Community Center

The enormity and complexity of the issues of health care are daunting. Our current so-called health care "system" has lumbered along for decades as an amalgam of entities: physicians, dentists, nurses and other health care providers, hospitals and institutions, government, the pharmaceutical industry, and insurance companies. This arrangement has tremendous momentum, largely driven by the huge numbers of dollars at stake, which discourages significant change. The growing crisis in health care, evidenced by growing millions of un- and under-insured lives is fueling renewed debate and discussion on possible solutions. Hope for truly curative measures will likely lie with fundamental change at a national level.

Sweeping change will be too slow to impact the lives of those currently suffering in our community. Local solutions are needed, and in fact are currently being explored.

Bloomington is fortunate to have high quality health care resources offering a wide range of services to the community. Measures of quality, however, are often focused on outcomes, adherence to accepted standards of care, and availability of state-of-the-art technology. A more elusive and troubling quality indicator for our community is whether all of our citizens are receiving the care they need. Those working in the front line of our community social service agencies witness daily the suffering of those who for a variety of reasons are not getting their health care needs addressed.

Efforts have been made to improve healthcare of the un- and underinsured in the community. An example is the Community Health Access Program (CHAP) clinic. CHAP has operated since 1993, and in 2004 had an enrollment of over 1500 patients and filled over 26,000 prescriptions.

See "Health Care," page two

Health insurance: More than a health issue

By Mark Kruzan, Mayor of Bloomington

As one of your favorite neighborhood politicians, a large part of my job entails communicating ideas.

When it comes to health insurance accessibility and affordability, just as with most issues, there are people who are already on board, those who do not want government involvement, and those for whom the issue isn't on the radar.

To stir action by decision makers (who are, after all, susceptible to public pressure), we have to appeal to the mass audience. The goal should be to communicate the idea that affordable health insurance isn't simply a health issue.

Affordable and accessible health insurance is an economic issue. It's an economic development issue. It's a quality of life . . . and a length of life issue. It's a children's, psychological, and spiritual issue.

We have to persuade our audience that addressing the issue of the uninsured is not only the right thing to do morally, but the right thing to do in pocketbook terms.

Some people who have insurance and are doing fine might believe this issue doesn't impact their lives, but it does.

For those individuals, our message should be a list of practical considerations:

*The uninsured are forced to use hospital emergency rooms as primary care provider - driving up health care costs for everyone.

*Job loss that results from untreated illness is a societal burden.

*Unnecessary and increased public assistance results when people cannot afford insurance.

*Small business failure escalates when owners or employees are unable to remain productive due to uncovered ailments.

*High infant mortality rates are an indictment of the failure of our insurance system - and of all of our failure to

demand change.

*Unimaginable lost productivity in the workforce is a direct consequence of uninsured and underinsurance in our country.

Maybe we should start to talk about "trickle up economics." What's happening at the lower end of the income scale impacts health care providers, medical services, the economy, and the rest of the societal structure that serves us all.

Certainly, the lack of insurance affects uninsured individuals and families with uninsured members. Less obvious but no less real are the ways uninsured affects the institutions that provide care, the people who provide care in these institutions, and the much larger mass of insured people who receive care in these institutions and from these providers.

As recently noted by the Institute of Medicine, "it is both mistaken and dangerous to assume that the prevalence of uninsured in the United States harms only those who are uninsured."

So our task is, in large part, combating public opinion. There tends to be a stereotyping by the media and therefore the general public that the uninsured is a "social service" issue.

Success will come when covering the uninsured is viewed as a political

issue that cannot be ignored by elected officials and when the business community is demanding solutions as forcefully as the social service community.

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This publication is made possible by the financial support of the City of Bloomington.

Hospital offers many services



Bloomington Hospital is located on Rogers Street.

By Amanda Runyon, Publications Specialist, Bloomington Hospital

(812) 353-9691
405 N. Rogers Street
www.bhhs.org

Access to quality health care is a growing concern across the nation, especially for those who have little or no medical insurance. Unfortunately, many families in Indiana and Monroe County share this worry. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 12 percent of Indiana's population is uninsured, meaning nearly 730,000 Hoosiers must self-finance their medical care.

As a community-based, not-for-profit organization, Bloomington Hospital understands these concerns and works continuously to provide services and outreach to all in its service area, including those with little or no insurance and in more rural areas of south central Indiana. Bloomington Hospital offers access to health care with more than 40 physical locations in six south central Indiana counties; 30 of which are in Monroe

County. In addition, the hospital's medical staff of more than 330 physicians offers medical expertise in 31 specialty areas of care. With services ranging from emergency care to primary care and state-of-the-art cancer treatment to advanced cardiac care, Bloomington Hospital brings health care to 365,000 people in south central Indiana.

Physician Referral Line

Referrals to a quality Bloomington Hospital physician are just a phone call away with the hospital's Physician Referral Line. By calling 353.5252, you can request information about which Bloomington Hospital physicians are accepting new patients, contact information for area physicians, and more. In addition, contact information and photos of all Bloomington Hospital physicians can be found by visiting the hospital's Web site at bhhs.org and clicking on "Find a Physician."

See "Hospital," page three

Health Care

Continued from page one

Physicians, dentists, mental health providers, and

others have also provided reduced-fee or free care to individuals in need. Despite these laudable efforts, with an estimated 15,000 people in our area living at or below the federal poverty level, and growing numbers of "under-insured" population, there is clearly a shortfall in the current "system". Answers to this problem will involve collaboration between multiple entities in the community, and are unlikely to come without education and

active discussion and debate among providers and other stakeholders, especially our citizens.

In this third issue of Safety Net, articles have been solicited from a number of providers of health care services in the Bloomington area. As with previous issues, there is important information about what services are available, and how to access them. Additionally, there are articles which will hopefully inform and spark discussion on some of the difficult issues we face in guaranteeing the fundamental human right of health care to each and every person in our community.



Bloomington Hospital employees serve a variety of functions in their quest to keep patients healthy.

Health insurance is important for kids too

by Nancy Woolery, Health Projects Coordinator, City of Bloomington, Community and Family Resources Department

The most rewarding part of my job is when a parent thanks me for getting health insurance for their children. For most parents, it is the first time their children have ever been able to choose their own doctor, a doctor who develops a relationship with that child throughout their childhood and teenage years.

Parents have enough stress in their lives without having to worry about how they will pay for a large doctor or hospital bill if their children get sick. Many times children don't go to the doctor for well child care, vision and dental check-ups, or even take medication when they are sick, because their parents can't afford to take them to the doctor or hospital, and can't afford medical care or health insurance.

While thousands of children have been helped through the State Children's Health

Insurance Program Hoosier Healthwise, thousands more are still eligible to receive low-cost or free health care coverage, but are not enrolled. Many working parents don't think their children are eligible for Hoosier Healthwise. Although parents are working full time, their employers may not offer health insurance to them or their families. Private insurance policies are too expensive for families on limited incomes; therefore many children go without basic health care coverage.

Children who have health coverage have better access to health care. The state of Indiana has provided a comprehensive health insurance program for children birth through age 18, if the family income falls within the monthly eligibility guidelines.

For example, a family of four (mother,

Monroe County Parents have said the following about Hoosier Healthwise:

"Thank you for having this service. Health Insurance is so expensive and is a real hindrance for people trying to make a go of it on their own. This service can really help people when they are trying to start their own business."

"I am extremely grateful for this program, thank you."

"Thank you for helping with medical costs."

"I feel very lucky to have these programs available to me. Since my job went to Mexico, my life has been crazy."

"Hoosier Healthwise is an awesome program and we feel lucky to get it."

"What a wonderful program. We were very fortunate to be able to have the insurance."

father, and two children) can make \$38,700.00 per year, and still qualify for the Hoosier Healthwise Program. This program covers well child care, sick care, prescription drugs, vision, dental, mental health and substance abuse treatment, podiatry, chiropractic care, hospitalization,

and many other medical services.

Please contact Nancy Woolery at 349-3851 or wooleryn@bloomington.in.gov to enroll or for more information about Hoosier Healthwise for Children.

MHA addresses mental health issues

By Donna A. Graves, Executive Director, Family Service Association / Mental Health Alliance

Mental Health Alliance
(812) 339-1551
120 West 7th Street, Ste 210
www.monroementalhealth.com

Mental Health Alliance (MHA) of Monroe County is the local affiliate of the National Mental Health Association. MHA strives to address mental health needs in Monroe County.

Our mission is to promote awareness,

acceptance and treatment in the prevention of mental illness through advocacy, education, support and delivery of the most effective and appropriate services to all persons affected by mental health issues. MHA recognizes the need for accessible, local support services for both persons with mental illness and their friends and family members.

MHA provides free community based support groups that allow community

members to form their own support network and to share the most current resource information. It is through these confidential and largely self-directed groups that members find peers who have shared experiences, hopes and fears. Members may identify issues that they would like to explore and then MHA staff members can help provide information and education.

At times, general training topics are

identified and then community wide trainings are offered. Often, it is the one to one listening, supporting and encouragement that are the most important to the group members. Having people who can truly empathize with the daily challenge faced by persons with mental illness and hearing true life solutions that have worked for families in our own community is a valuable resource.

See "MHA," page four

Hospital

Continued from page one

CHAP

While Bloomington Hospital provides millions of dollars in charity care to patients at the hospital each year, it also operates the Community Health Access Program (CHAP) to ensure those without insurance have access to quality health care.

Through multiple community partnerships and the support of the Bloomington Hospital medical staff, CHAP has served as a primary care resource for those without health insurance for more than 10 years. CHAP is located in Bloomington Hospital's Community Health Services department on Miller Drive and offers services such as prenatal care, health education, selected laboratory and radiology services, and an on-site pharmacy that provides low-cost medications. To qualify for CHAP, clients must earn less than 200 percent of the poverty level and must not have health insurance, including Medicare or Medicaid.

As the number of uninsured continues to rise in the coming years, Bloomington Hospital looks to further strengthen CHAP

and the services available for the uninsured. For more information about CHAP, please call 353.2901.

Financial Service Representatives at Bloomington Hospital

Bloomington Hospital understands that few patients are able to pay their medical expenses in full at the time of service. Because of this, financial service representatives are on hand to help you find a payment plan and schedule that fits your needs. Representatives can assist with your questions regarding insurance, self-pay options, installment plans, financing and financial assistance opportunities. To speak with a financial service representative from Bloomington Hospital, please call 353.5300.

Bloomington Hospital has been a proud member of the Bloomington and Monroe County communities for 100 years. As it enters its next century of medical excellence, Bloomington Hospital will continue to ensure all in the community have access to quality medical care through advanced services, outreach programs such as CHAP, and a staff of caring, expert physicians.

Community Wellness Guide

Bloomington Hospital offers many services, most of which are available at minimal or no charge. Some of these services are:

Prevention and screenings. These include blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol (353-9300), colorectal cancer screening kit (353-5669), HIV counseling/testing (353-2901), and immunization clinics (353-2901).

Resources. Assisted medical transport service (353-9232), Community Health Education (353-9300), Olcott Center for Cancer Education (353-5669), Physician Referral Line (353-5252), Congestive Heart Failure Center (353-9499), Diabetes Care Center (353-9258), Alzheimer's Resource Services (353-9299), Senior Health Insurance Information Program (353-9300), and more.

Health Services (353-2901). Commu-

nity Health Access Program (CHAP), Well child assessments, Positive Link (HIV/AIDS service).

Support Groups. Alzheimer's/Dementia caregivers (353-9299), Breast cancer, in treatment (353-5669), Cancer, in treatment (353-5669), Cardiac rehab (353-9811), Diabetes (353-9258), and more.

Growing Family Classes (353-BABY)

Nutrition Education. Cholesterol management program (353-9678), Nutrition counseling (353-9678), Women, Infants, and Children program (WIC) (353-2901).

Tobacco Cessation. Classes and individual consultation (353-5811).

CPR and First Aid (353-3388).

MCHD serves many purposes in Monroe County

By Robert M. Schmidt, Administrator, Monroe County Health Department

Monroe County Health Department I
19 West 7th Street
(812)-349-2542

The Monroe County Health Department was organized 40 years ago in 1965 and is governed under the provisions of Indiana Code (I.C.) 16-20. In that first year the Department consisted of one part-time Health Officer, two full time Registrars, three full time Sanitarians, and one part-time Sanitarian. Nursing services were contracted through the Monroe County Public Health Nursing Association.

Today the Department consists of 16 full and 2 part-time Public Health professionals serving a population that exceeds 120,000 people. (In Indiana the average number of Public Health workers is 46 per 100,000 people.)

Public Health nursing services are now

contracted through Bloomington Hospital's Community Health Services Department which is located at 333 E. Miller Drive. This relationship with Community Health Services gives the Department an exceptionally close partnership with Bloomington Hospital and the patient services that it provides.

As we enter the twenty-first century the Department's focus is centered on three core functions. The first of these is to assess the health of the community and investigate health problems. This is done by reviewing and investigating communicable diseases reported in the County. When the frequency of a particular disease exceeds expectations, the Department may issue a warning to the citizens about safety precautions that should be undertaken to protect themselves. The second core function that we focus on is to develop plans

that mobilize community partnerships to inform and educate our citizens. To that end the Department actively participates in the Monroe County Lead-Safe Coalition, the Monroe County Anti-Tobacco Coalition and various other health promotion partnerships.

The third core function is to assure the citizens that we will enforce the laws and regulations necessary to protect the health of the public and provide needed links to personal health services. These services are provided by the Monroe County Public Health Clinic and the Community Health Access Program (CHAP) which is managed by Bloomington Hospital. Some specific services offered at the Monroe County Public Health Clinic include immunizations, TB assessments, monitoring communicable diseases, performing lead screening, and documenting and

recording immunization data for the State Departments of Health and Education.

Traditional Public Health programs available at the Monroe County Health Department include the on-site waste water program more commonly known as the septic system program, the retail food inspection program, our health education programs, our disease intervention program, our environmental services programs and our vital records or birth and death records section. All these programs require close coordination with other governmental agencies and various community organization and they are designed to either promote or protect the health of our citizens. In many cases these goals are accomplished through on-site visits to locations throughout the county, but the daily emphasis is on empowering the community to improve the quality of life.

Lack of affordable healthcare linked to overcrowded jail

By Vid Beldavs, Secretary, Citizens for Effective Justice, member, Board of National Alliance for the Mentally Ill Indiana

119 West 7th Street
(812)-349-2542

Our Bloomington community is struggling to find local solutions to a national healthcare crisis. National data shows that over 80% of bankruptcies result from inability of the uninsured to pay major medical expenses creating a growing population of homeless people and broken families in desperate need. Over 70% of those in jail or prison have addictions problems. Over 20% of the incarcerated suffer from serious mental illness. Community-based care, such as provided by the Center for Behavioral Health (CBH), emerged to provide ongoing care for the mentally ill following de-institutionalization that came with the availability of increasingly effective medication in the 1960s and later. In recent years with restrictions on Medicaid funding poor people in crisis have been increasingly denied access to mental healthcare. Jails and prisons -- generally viewed as places of punishment -- have all too often become the mental health care providers for the poor.

Mental illness can strike anyone. The failure of our system of mental health

care has resulted in the criminalization of severe mental illness and addictions. Wealthy people who can afford care for their loved ones can avoid this problem. The same generally applies to poorer people whose care is financed through Medicaid and related sources. Poor people with treatable neurological disorders without sources of financing for care whose disease expresses itself in public are arrested and taken to jail. Over the past year we have listened to many horror stories about abuse in our criminal justice system. The combination of poverty and a neurological disorder has resulted in incarcerations in our County Jail that have extended for many months -- in some cases beyond one year for minor offenses sometimes without criminal charges. These abuses must stop. Such abuses are criminal acts against people with a treatable illness.

We believe it is exceedingly important that schizophrenia and other neurological disorders are treated as what they are -- medical problems and not moral deficiencies. The mentally ill should not be "customers" of the criminal justice system unless they have committed serious crimes.

We also know that treatment requires financial and other resources. The buck ultimately stops with the community and its taxpayers. Ways must be found to pay for treatment of the poor. The consequences of failure of treatment are unacceptable - miserable lives, suicide, avoidable deaths sometimes of officers called to deal with a crisis. Untreated mentally ill and or addicted people can become a danger to themselves and others. But, treatment works. Increasingly with improved medications recovery is becoming possible for those with severe mental illness. With effective treatment people with a disability can become productive, even tax-paying citizens.

We are encouraged by the commitment of city and county agencies and organizations to resolve the healthcare / criminal justice crisis facing this community. Clearly a communitywide strategy would be helpful. The jail diversion program ini-

tiated in 2004 by the FSA-MHA has been a positive step to help mentally impaired inmates and their families. The means must be found to continue this program. We applaud efforts by Captain Michael Diekhoff of the Bloomington Police Department to involve all law enforcement agencies in the community in the development of training and protocols for crisis intervention that are suited to our community. We are very pleased with Sheriff Steve Sharp's decision to send a deputy to the CIT training at Fort Wayne. We applaud Charlotte Zietlow's leadership of the Monroe County CIT Task Force. We are heartened by the effort to bring together all stakeholder agencies, particularly the mental health services providers with law enforcement, to assure that trained law enforcement officers have a place to take mentally disturbed people in crisis needing treatment.

MHA

Continued from page three

Available groups include:

*Together we

Learn to Cope (TLC) a peer-to-peer support, education and advocacy group for families and friends of persons with mental illness. They meet the first Monday of the month.

*Schizophrenics Anonymous (SA) is a confidential, peer-to-peer support group aligned with the National Schizophrenia Foundation for persons with schizophrenia or schizophrenia related symptoms. This

group meets every second and fourth Thursday of the month.

*Bi-Polar/ Depression Support Group is a confidential, peer-to-peer support group for persons with Bi-Polar and/or depression or symptoms of depression. This group meets the first and third Thursday of the month.

You may get more information about all of the groups by calling the Mental Health Alliance at 339-1551 and speaking with Donna Graves. You may also visit our web site at www.monroementalhealth.com.

LET program helps inmates

Harry B. Anderson, LCSW, CADACII, CEO/Program Director

Life Effectiveness Training (LET) is a Not for Profit agency that provides alcohol/drug, life skills and cognitive behavioral treatment to substance abusing adult male and female clients at the Monroe County Jail, located at 301 North College Ave., Bloomington, IN, as well as other jails in Indiana. The project in Bloomington began this year as a joint venture by the Monroe County Sheriff, Citizens for Effective Justice, a Bloomington group, and LET, with federal funding. LET is under the auspices of the Indiana Mental Health Division of Addiction Services. Classes are held at the Bloomington jail one day per week, in classrooms, where counselors are placed with approximately 10-12 clients for up to two hours.

The LET Program, started in 1967, at the Marion County Jail, Indianapolis, IN, and has offered classes each year through a government grant provided through Criminal Justice Institute (CJI) and matching funds contributions from LET. Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselors and or volunteers provide the programming for the clients. LET serves an approximate total 350 - 400 clients per year, in Marion, Monroe and Warren Counties in Indiana. Clients are appreciative of LET and the counties benefit from reduction in recidivism rates.

If you would like to learn more about the LET program in Indiana, contact Harry Anderson at HAnder5321@aol.com.

CBH addresses mental health issues

By Cathi Norton, CBH Community Relations Specialist

Center for Behavioral Health
(812) 330-2887
www.the-center.org

As you might guess, financial support is the key challenge facing mental health services.

Federal money supported mental health when President Kennedy established the "Mental Retardation Facilities and Community Mental Health Centers Construction Act" in 1963. Since that time, changes in funding have painted an increasingly grim picture for behavioral healthcare. The working poor are now caught in the middle of the squeeze as mental health organizations are required to demand larger co-payments from clients. Persons without subsistence-level jobs or insurance find it extremely hard to meet the costs of medications and care.

Center for Behavioral Health (CBH) continues to work at the legislative level to achieve parity of insurance (whereby medical insurance will pay for mental healthcare on an equal footing with physical healthcare). Currently there are so many "caps" on payment policies for mental healthcare, it's hard to get authorization for care, and services are not easily accessed. Last year, CBH donated nearly \$2 million worth of free care to those in need of services but unable to pay.

Another huge issue in behavioral health care is the substance abuse epidemic that shows little signs of abating. Although recent surveys show a gratifying decrease in drug and alcohol use by younger citizens, a frightening increase in methamphetamine abusers plagues our communities. Justice, healthcare, and social service systems are hard-pressed to meet the needs created by such active substance abuse. Of the 7,861 clients seen by CBH in Fiscal Year 2005, twenty percent of them sought addictions services.

CBH, Bloomington's major mental health center for 36 years, works hard to develop new funding streams to fulfill its goal of providing service to all those in need. As an outpatient provider, we provide home-based, and case management services to clients, maintain one of



the largest residential continuums in the mental challenges; worked closely with Working together with leading organi-

Former client speaks on CBH experience

By Jeff, former CBH client

I had been in alcohol treatment numerous times in the past, and was convinced I knew everything about the disease there was. My problem was that I just couldn't stay sober. The only difference this time (when I came to CBH) was that I truly had no more fight in me...I really knew nothing about myself or how to live, just how to die.

This letter is being written to each and every one of you who work hard every day, to help those of us who need to change our lives. I've seen you experience the anger, denial, and attitude of some of us who haven't accepted the fact that change is needed. All I see in return is patience, kindness, compassion and love...

To each and everyone of you who sacrifice so much for so little, it is with heartfelt sincerity that I say thank you for all you do...you've helped me attain a life that I can be proud of and I will never forget one of you. I thank and love each and every one of you. (P.S. This is NOT a goodbye letter...I'll be in regularly to bug you guys!)

state, assist clients in gaining and maintaining employment, provide an array of psychiatric and counseling services, and remain committed to helping individuals live as independently as they can. We also established a PATH program (Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness) to seek out and provide services for homeless persons with

school social workers to provide clinical services on site in schools; and became an active participant in the community wide effort to establish a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) with law enforcement to help officers recognize persons with mental illness and provide humane intervention instead of incarceration to those affected by illness.

zations, CBH stubbornly sticks to its goal to serve as a "safety net" for those in need of mental healthcare. The challenges are mighty, but so is our citizens' will to care for everyone with dignity. That's the true beauty of community.

Mental health issues: Searching for help

By Susan Schneider MD, Board Member, Shalom Community Center

I rarely end up where I was intending to go, but often I end up somewhere that I needed to be.

-Douglas Adams

Let's suppose that you are a parent, friend, or person who has questions about mental illness. It can be baffling and overwhelming to ask questions about medical health issues, and even more so about mental health issues. Where do you begin?

There are a number of advocacy organizations that provide excellent information, and sometimes support groups. One is the National Alliance for the Mentally

Ill (NAMI).

NAMI was founded in 1979. It has an excellent reputation as an organization that provides support and education to people with severe mental illnesses. (For example, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and major depression.) The organization's website is packed with resources and quite usable. Try www.nami.org. (No computer access? Just call 800-950-6264 and ask for information.)

Now let's assume that you have found a way to access the site. You might have questions about, say, an adult friend with depression. Go to "Inform yourself" on

the home page, then to "About Mental Illness", then to "By Illness", then to "Major Depression". Or, if you prefer not to use the links, use the "Find" box on the home page and type in "Depression".

The list of symptoms for major depression may be helpful, or the section on treatment, or the other links or resources. Skim the text, and consider looking through the links to: "Online Discussion: Living with Major Depression", or "Related Resources: Find Support".

There is a local chapter of NAMI in Bloomington. The president of the Bloomington chapter of NAMI is Jill

Bolte Taylor, PhD. Her email address is jill.taylor@insightbb.com. If you have a family member needing information or advocacy and must contact someone right away, then call Aris Beldavs at (812)-334-3785 or (812)-857-9826, or email arisbeldavs@aol.com.

Another source of help is the Center for Behavioral Health (CBH) in Bloomington. See the article in this issue of Safety-Net about CBH. It is important to write down your questions to bring to a professional if you do contact one. Persist in the search for the information that you need!

Stone Belt department offers new services

By Cheryl Paul, Publications Supervisor, Stone Belt

2815 E. 10 St.
(812)-332-2168

Stone Belt's Professional Services department has been given a new name: Milestones, Clinical & Health Resources.

The decision to rename Professional Services was made after the department started to include a diverse group of programs. The new name will better reflect these offerings which include: psychiatric and psychological services, counseling and psychotherapy, behavioral support services, speech and language services, nursing, case management, and consultation.

Milestones is a multi-disciplinary department that is a division of Stone Belt. Staff members have a lot of expertise in very specialized areas. With this in mind, one goal is to grow Milestones as a resource for the community.

Along with Milestones' new name comes a new building to call home. The new offices on 550 South Adams Street will play a big part in supporting future growth.

One of the biggest benefits of the new office space is that for the first time all Milestones staff members will be located in the same building. This will allow for much improved collaboration.

Another exciting change that is taking place within Milestones is the addition of a psychiatrist to the staff. Dr. M. Melinda Weakley started this new position January 31.

"By hiring our own psychiatrist we will be able to assure that our client's psychiatric needs are met," said Maureen Gahan, Milestones Program Director.

At Milestones, Dr. Weakley, a board certified psychiatrist, will treat individuals with developmental disabilities as well as children and adolescents. She will also continue to serve some of her current clients.

"Her focus is good for our mission. She

works in a collaborative model with counselors, therapists and behaviorists," said Gahan. "This is perfect for us because that is what Milestones is about: focusing on all facets of care. With all these resources pooled at one location there will be a lot of specialized talent to choose from."

Milestones hopes that as part of its growth it can target individuals with developmental disabilities who have been under served in their psychiatric needs.

If you are interested in any of Milestones' services or have any questions about the program contact Program Director Maureen Gahan at 333-6324, ext. 284 or email mgahan@stonebelt.org.

Medicaid: What is it and how does it work?

401 East Miller Drive
(812) 336-6351
www.in.gov/fssa

Medicaid Benefits and Eligibility

Medicaid is a federal and state funded medical assistance program that pays for approved and needed medical care for persons who meet specific eligibility requirements. Each state administers its own program within federal guidelines. In Indiana, Medicaid is administered by the Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA), Office of Medicaid Policy and Planning. The Monroe County Office, Division of Family Resources manages Medicaid services for residents of the Bloomington and surrounding areas.

Medicaid was created to provide health care to the following groups of low-income individuals:

By Lindsey A. Smith Director, Monroe County Office, Division of Family Resources

- *families with children
- *pregnant women
- *the elderly
- *the blind and the disabled.

To qualify for Medicaid, you must meet one of the categories stated above as well as the rules on being a resident of the State of Indiana and immigration status. There are income and asset limits for each of these categories. Indiana's Medicaid service package is one of the most comprehensive in the country.

Mandatory Services

- *Outpatient hospital services
- *Rural health clinic services
- *Nursing facility and home health services for those age 21 and older
- *Family planning services and supplies

- *Physicians' services and medical & surgical services of a dentist
- *Inpatient hospital services
- *Laboratory and x-ray services
- *Nurse midwife services
- *Nurse practitioners' services
- *Early/periodic screening & diagnosis & treatment for those under age 21

Relationship to Employment Status and Wages

Often, clients will inquire if their employment status affects the Medicaid benefits they may receive. Employment is evaluated with respect of the rules pertaining to the particular Medicaid category. Applicant may receive Medicaid benefits and still have a job. Employment does not preclude eligibility, but, earnings from employment is assessed in determining eligibility.

Relationship to Medicare

Many times people will confuse Medicare services with Medicaid benefits. Medicare is a federal health insurance program for people who are age 65 and older and for individuals with disabilities. Medicare individuals can receive Medicaid assistance, in fact, some Medicaid programs will pay for a client's Medicare premium.

How to Obtain More Information About Medicaid and Other FSSA Programs

More information on Medicaid and all programs administered at the Monroe County Office, Division of Family Resources is available at: www.in.gov/fssa.

Democratize medicine now

By Joan Foor White, Registered Nurse

I am an emergency department nurse and see a variety of people in my work. The thread of commonality among these folks is disenfranchisement of the "privilege" of medical care. In this privileged nation, shouldn't health care be a right for all?

Several of my patients are diabetics, unable to get their insulin or oral anti-diabetic medication because of prohibitive cost. Some of them suffer from hypertension and risk heart disease and stroke because they can't afford to see a family doctor. Still others are people beyond the retirement age who have gone back to work so that they can afford their medications. Most of them work at low-paying jobs that offer no insurance. They end up in the emergency department with conditions that often require hospitalization for lack of preventative care. One man refused to be hospitalized because he couldn't afford either to pay the bill or incur lost wages. When faced with the possibility that this could kill him, he said "Maybe it would be for the best."

I am constantly seeing people for whom disease or accidents present an insuperable burden. Even a relatively short hospital stay can be devastating to people living from paycheck to paycheck. Is this devastation necessary in a country as rich as ours?

It also seems that not providing across-the-board health care fosters a form of social schizophrenia that pits us against

one another. We scurry to find blame in rationalizing to ourselves the discrepancy in health care from one person to the next because compassion is an integral part of our national identity. Is it? The most common condemnation I hear from health care workers is "Well, they can afford their cigarettes, can't they?" referring to the "poor" who cannot afford health insurance. Shall we deny coverage to all who shirk their personal health responsibilities?

The examples of people who have fallen into the abyss of making too little money to afford their medical bills or medicines are endless. Luckily, the people of Monroe and Owen counties have the C.H.A.P. clinic. The people of Morgan County, where I work, have nothing comparable, except, of course, the emergency department which is invaluable in many ways, but doesn't have its own pharmacy and theoretically, doesn't give continuity of care for chronic illness.

To reiterate, are these problems not easily soluble? It is adding insult to injury when people are financially devastated because of health problems. The American people have to decide whether everyone is entitled to health care, or not. Some criticize the health-care system in Canada, saying "It may be months before...gets that operation" and I always reply "Many may NEVER get that operation in America."



Planned Parenthood: Health care benefits

By Theresa Browning, Planned Parenthood Health Center

421 S. College Ave
(812)-336-0219
www.ppin.org

"You helped me when no one else would," said one client about her services from Planned Parenthood. The staff hears this comment frequently.

Planned Parenthood is one of the leading providers of health care in the Bloomington area. More than 7,000 women and men received supplies and/or services at the Bloomington location last year. Having convenient hours makes it a little easier for clients with tough work schedules to get an appointment.

Services provided in Bloomington include: pelvic exams, breast exams, testing and treatment of sexually transmitted infections, and HIV testing and counseling, pregnancy tests and birth control of all kinds. More than 3,500 Pap tests were performed last year for early detection of cervical cancer. In fact, 13 percent of the Pap tests performed last year were abnormal, indicating early evidence of a possible cancer-causing virus.

Men can be tested and treated for sexually transmitted infections at Planned Parenthood. "Public health depends upon treating both partners," said Jane Spires, manager of the Bloomington Planned Parenthood Health Center, where 365 men received services in 2004.

Planned Parenthood services are no longer free due to reduced government funding; less than 25 percent of the agency's income is from government-funded programs. However, fees for services cost less than those of a private physician. United Way's assistance has been critical to providing needed services to Monroe County residents. Clients with private health insurance, or who otherwise have the ability to pay, help offset the costs of serving low-income clients.

It would be impossible to ignore the controversy surrounding Planned Parenthood because it provides abortion services. The Bloomington site provides abortions up to 12

weeks, and now offers the early abortion pill for the first seven weeks after a missed menstrual period. Bloomington is the only location in all of southern Indiana where women can go for an abortion. Women in Southern Indiana are traveling hours to Bloomington because they have nowhere else to go. Less than five percent of clients seek abortion services. For those who do, Planned Parenthood provides it in a safe setting and does more than any other agency to reduce the need for abortion with information, education and services, especially emergency contraception, formerly known as the "morning after" pill.

Assuredly, Planned Parenthood also provides referrals for women who choose adoption as an alternative to their unintended pregnancy as well as referrals for prenatal care, government assistance and other social services.

Educating Youth, Parents and Professionals

The most effective sexuality education begins at home. Parents often need help. Programs, packets and newsletters are currently available online with tips on initiating discussions. Peer educators are also available to assist youth one-on-one or for group presentations to correct misinformation and provide a peer perspective. Peer educators in Bloomington receive 40 hours of training on sexual health issues from contraception to rape to healthy decision-making. They become resources for correct information on sex and sexuality for their friends and acquaintances.

Planned Parenthood helps women and men achieve their dreams and goals by providing a future with honest information and helpful services.

For a complete list of Planned Parenthood services, topic briefs, fact sheets, trainings and other information, visit online at www.ppin.org. The Bloomington health center is located at 421 S. College, 336-0219. For education services, call extension 1600.

The whos and whats of Hoosier Healthwise

By Lindsey A. Smith, Director, Monroe County Office, Division of Family Resources

401 East Miller Drive
(812) 336-6351
www.in.gov/fssa

What is Hoosier Healthwise?

Hoosier Healthwise is an Indiana state health insurance program for low income families, for children, and for pregnant women. It is administered by the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA). The program has been operating since 1994, providing comprehensive health care services to Hoosiers at varying ages and varying income levels. The Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), a federal program, is part of Hoosier Healthwise for Children. To learn

more about the children's insurance package of Hoosier Healthwise, please see the article by Nancy Woolery in this issue entitled "Sign Your Children Up for Health Insurance Now!"

Goals

The goals of Hoosier Healthwise are to:

- *Ensure access to primary and preventive care services
- *Improve access to all necessary health care services
- *Encourage quality, continuity and appropriateness of medical care
- *Provide medical coverage in a cost effective manner

Who is eligible?

Adults eligible for Hoosier Healthwise include those receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), including pregnant women with incomes at or just above the income guidelines. The Hoosier Healthwise for children program was expanded in 1998 to cover more uninsured children in Indiana. Now all children, from birth through age 18 are eligible for the Hoosier Healthwise for Children program if their family meets the income guidelines.

Where One Can Obtain More Information and Apply for Hoosier Healthwise Insurance

Families can receive more information or enroll in Hoosier Healthwise by going to one of a number of enrollment centers located throughout Monroe County. Enrollment centers can be found at the City of Bloomington, Community and Family Resources; Banneker Family Resource Center; Center for Behavioral Health; Shalom Family Resource Center; South Central Community Action Program (SCCAP); Bloomington Hospital Community Health Services; Richland Bean Blossom Family Resource Center; Dr. Judson Brewer's medical office, and Dr. Phillip Crooke's medical office.

Community health care: Problems to address

By Charlotte Zietlow, Development Coordinator, Middle Way House, Inc.

The Uninsured: CHAP clinic

The only general medicine clinic for low income patients, the Community Health Access Program (CHAP) run by Bloomington Hospital, is specifically set up ONLY for those with no insurance at all. Currently ca. 1300 people are enrolled as patients at the CHAP clinic, or slightly over 10% of the uninsured. Why so few? Perhaps the waiting period is too long for people who need immediate care (can be weeks). Perhaps the hours are totally inconvenient for the schedule of working folks. Perhaps the daunting intake form and the requirements for registering are overwhelming-W 2's for several years, tax forms for several years, verification of unemployment or employment, proof of lack of insurance....????? Not a welcoming set-up, to be sure.

The Underinsured Avoid Medical And Dental Care

It is estimated that nearly 40,000 people out of the 120,000 population are "underinsured"-their coverage is minimal, their co-pay is high, their deductible is so great as to discourage them from seeking medical care from a doctor for anything but major events. So they don't have a regular doctor, and don't pursue on-going, preventive care. Furthermore, dental care is either not or inadequately covered, and poor dental health is endemic. This is a huge issue-national in scope, but certainly impacting thousands right here in Bloomington and Ellettsville and Unionville and out in the country.

Mental Health Care Not Dealt With Adequately

Certainly, access to mental health care continues to be inadequate, inaccessible and for many, not effective. Whatever the policy makers may say about parity, mental health care for non-psychotic episodes, depression, and other situations feels to many, many folks to be out of reach. It is evident that we seriously lack any place at all for individuals who are behaving in a manner which has prompted someone to call the police, but who do not really require hospitalization nor who have committed any jail-able offense. There is, in the words of the emergency room doctors who inevitably handle such situations, "nowhere to send them but out on the street", where they may or may not be able to function well. We need to address these situations as a community, and we need to find solutions.

Monroe County Health Department Clinic For Women

For years Planned Parenthood was the place women went to get professional contraceptive care, which entailed basic health screening, as well. Planned Parenthood continues to provide these services on a sliding fee scale. But for the last five years free contraceptive care for low income women was provided by the Family Planning Program at the Public Health Clinic on Miller Drive. This clinic was run by Bloomington Hospital, which recently decided not to re-apply for the Title X grant that funded it. The good news is that for the first time ever, Monroe

County Health Department will be opening a clinic with Title X funds to serve women throughout the county with a professional family planning program -- actually providing health services. Historically, the Health Department contracted out all of its actual health services, but with this it will begin delivering care. This is a big step. Perhaps it will lead to more direct care for low income people. Let's hope so.

The Hospital Emergency Room Is Not The Answer

Meanwhile, as we all know, the overwhelming bit of health care people get in this area is at the emergency room at Bloomington Hospital. However, as the Hospital says repeatedly, close to 90% of all activities at the emergency room are NOT emergencies. Emergency room care is the most expensive care one can get, particularly for non-emergencies. There has been no visible consideration of a sliding fee scale clinic that could divert the non-emergency emergency room patients to a more appropriate, less costly setting. Since it seems this would be a more economical approach it is beyond comprehension why it is not being pursued.

In any case, the emergency room option is not financially beneficial to those who use it. While many of the patients there have insurance of some sort, it is often not sufficient to meet the costs incurred. The bills for these services do not disappear-people are asked to pay, and to pay in a timely fashion. If they do not or are unable to pay, they will find themselves pursued

by a credit agency. This will more often than not lead to a poor credit rating, which will be difficult to improve unless one falls into a pot of money, and, as has widely been discussed nationally, the number one reason for personal bankruptcies is medical debt. Poor credit ratings make it difficult to rent or purchase real estate and cars, or even to access student loans. Enough said.

Income Cap For Medicaid Is Too Low

Indiana has one of if not the lowest income eligibility caps for Medicaid in the country-27% of poverty, or roughly \$5,000/yr income to qualify, unless you are on TANF, pregnant or disabled. Compare that to the cap in Minnesota, which is over \$32,000. Not surprisingly, the mortality and morbidity rates in Minnesota are somewhat better than those in Indiana. It makes a difference what state you live in as to whether or not you are well, are well-treated or accrue medical debt. There is something wrong with this picture.

A Strategy Must Be Developed

Surely it is time that the community took a really hard and realistic look at this picture, and began to develop a community strategy to address this critical issue. We have waited over two hundred years, and still see nothing adequate happening in Washington or Indianapolis that begins to address our local health care needs. We have to take matters in our own local hands and get to work here at home.

CHOICE program offers new options

By Peggy Welch, State Representative, District 60, Member, CHOICE board

The Community and Home Options to Institutional Care for the Elderly and Disabled (CHOICE) program, provides services to Hoosier elderly and disabled citizens so they may remain in their homes and communities. CHOICE was established by the Indiana General Assembly in 1987; and by 1992 had grown to serve all of Indiana's 92 counties. CHOICE was developed because of a growing recognition that Indiana's senior and disabled citizens had only two options for care—home with no or limited assistance or institutional care, such as care provided in a nursing home setting. In response to this lack of choice, the Indiana General Assembly passed legislation that enables citizens who are elderly or have disabilities to live independently in their own

homes or in community-based settings. The CHOICE program provides for community and home care services, which may include: homemaker services and attendant care, respite care, adult daycare services, home health services and supplies, home delivered meals, and transportation. These are services that may enable a person to eliminate or at least delay a move into a more expensive, institutional care setting.

Unlike many government programs that are provided for with a combination of federal and state dollars, the CHOICE program is completely funded by the state of Indiana. It is designed to provide services for those persons who may not qualify for Medicaid home care and do not have the financial resources to obtain the services

needed to keep them in a home or community setting. The CHOICE program is to be the funding source of last resort, meaning that there is no other funding source or options available to assist the citizen.

Eligibility for the program requires that the individual needing assistance be an Indiana resident; be at least 60 years of age or be an individual of any age who is disabled; have no greater than \$500,000.00 in assets; and be found to be at risk of losing their independence if unable to perform two or more activities of daily living (ADLs). Examples of ADLs are: ability to eat without assistance; ability to dress without assistance; ability to toilet without assistance.

The program is funded every two years by the Indiana General Assembly. Each

budget cycle there is a threat to reduce the funding of this important program. Though funding has not been reduced, neither has it been increased to meet the needs of the growing number of elderly Hoosiers. Thus, there is an extensive waiting list for CHOICE services.

The CHOICE program is directed by the Indiana Family and Social Service Administration, but the program is administered locally by the Area Agencies on Aging.

For more information on the program, especially about eligibility for services, you may contact: Area 10 Agency on Aging at the Endwright Center, 7500 West Reeves Road, Ellettsville, 812-876-3383.

Health care for all: It can be done

By Mary Mahern, MD

I have been a family physician for 16 years. It breaks my heart to learn that according to an Institute of Medicine report 18,000 people in the U.S. die each year because they don't have health insurance. When I was in Residency training there was talk of 35 million uninsured in the U.S. That figure now tops 45 million. And that figure doesn't even touch the millions more who have insurance that is woefully inadequate.

I have to admit I was a proponent of a national health program for all Americans, even before I went to medical school. I have never joined the American Medical Association because of its role in derailing President Truman's efforts to create a national health insurance system back in 1945. As an advocate of national health care, I was in the minority of physicians

back in 1988 but now the health care delivery "system" is such a chaotic mess that I believe a majority of physicians are now ready to sign on to a national plan that covers everyone. Certainly polls show that public opinion is in favor of a government-guaranteed health insurance for all.

How do we do it? We let the federal government take over and expand Medicare to cover all Americans. How do we afford it? We leave the insurance companies out of the solution, entirely. The profits that they have been making in siphoning off our resources can be used to provide care. It's really a fairly simple idea. It's an idea that works in so many countries around the world where health care is a right for all citizens that is simply taken for granted. Those countries do it spending 40% less than we are already spending per

capita!

How can we do this also? We must insist that every candidate running for federal office address this issue. We want the same great health insurance that members of the U.S. Senate and Congress have. Expand their plan to cover all of us.

I don't think I need to go into just how bad the current system is. It really isn't working for anyone anymore, except for insurance company investors and federal employees, that is. Years ago when I would warn patients about the high cost of certain sophisticated test or treatments I wanted to prescribe I would routinely hear people say, "That's okay I have great health insurance". I haven't hear anyone say that for such a long time that I was surprised when a new patient recently said that to me. I asked what kind of insurance

she had and she replied "My husband works for the federal government."

Apparently our federal officials aren't aware of how bad it is for the rest of us. We need to let them know! As a patient myself with a very expensive, high deductible plan, as a small business owner struggling to provide health insurance for my employees, as a physician trying to provide care for so many of my patients with inadequate or no insurance coverage and as a provider of health care, spending ever increasing amounts of money to collect less and less from insurance companies, I see on many levels just how broken our current "system" is. Its time for the Senate and Congress to stop listening to the insurance industry and to listen to the majority of Americans who favor "Medicare for all."

Upcoming community events

Shalom Center

November 14, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Open House at the former Seratec building just across Washington Street from the Shalom Community Center next to the bus stop. This new facility will provide necessary additional space for the many programs of the Shalom Center. There will be music and food provided, as well as information about the many Shalom programs.

Shalom Community Center will hold its second annual Hunger Banquet to raise public awareness of the issues of hunger and poverty, and to raise funds for its food and other programs. The event, which features a meal which varies according to the "class" each guest is assigned, as well as a short performance, will take place Dec. 2 at 6:30 p.m. at St. Paul Catholic Center

on 17th Street. Tickets will be available at the Shalom Community Center, at other locations in Bloomington, and at St. Paul Catholic Center at the time of the event. More information can be found by contacting the Center at 334-5728 or visiting the Shalom Community Center website:

Center for Behavioral Health

The CBH regularly holds panels on topics related to mental health. The following are upcoming events:

October 21: "Poverty's Effect on Mental Health" -- panelists TBA

Nov. 18: "Pain Medication: Use and Misuse" -- Michael Nagy, M.D. and Cindy Houston, LCSW, LMHC, LMFT, MAC

Dec. 16: "Anger Assessment & Violence Prevention" -- Matt Oliver, Ph.D.

Crisis Pregnancy Center

The Crisis Pregnancy Center of Bloomington will host their annual Hannah Gala on November 17, at Sherwood Oaks Christian Church. Dinner is at 6:30 followed by a multimedia presentation describing the work of the organization. For ticket information, please call 334-0104.

MCUM

Monroe County United Ministries's annual Winter Food Drive will be held November 1 - December 31. MCUM is in need of non-perishable foods to stock its large food pantry for the coming year. In 2004, the MCUM pantry distributed enough food to make 48,000 meals and expects to distribute even more in 2005. Please consider organizing a food drive at your work, in your neighborhood or

within your place of worship.

Mother Hubbard's Cupboard

Volunteers meet weekly through October to tend & harvest from our 3 organic gardens. A great way to learn about organic gardening and help provide high quality food to people in need in Bloomington. Locations: Banneker Community Center Garden (located at W. 7th & Elm Street), Tuesdays 9-11 a.m.; Hilltop Garden & Nature Center Garden (located at E. 10th Street & The Bypass), Tuesdays 6-8 p.m.; Harmony School Garden (located at E. 2nd & Woodlawn) Thursdays 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

There are also other opportunities for garden involvement. Please email us at mhc@bloomington.in.us if you're interested!

See "Calendar," page ten

Stepping Stones offers opportunities for youth

By Sheri Benham, Executive Director, Stepping Stones, Inc.

(812) 339-9771

www.steppingstones-inc.org

Our Supportive Housing Program located at College Mall Apartments has two new residents. One is a 17 year old young woman who is a student at Bloomington North High School and the other is an 18 year old young man who is working toward a GED. The student is looking for a part-time position on the east side and the young man is looking for full time employment. We are accepting applications and have space for four more resi-

dents.

Our Independent Living Program - Westside Apartment houses a 17 year old young mother and her 7 month old son. She moved into the apartment in June after our first resident decided to move to Indianapolis. This resident attends Aurora High School and is looking for a part-time job. She is in the process of transitioning out of the first "step" of our program, the foundation step. During the foundation step, residents are expected to become oriented and knowledgeable about the program, comply with program rules, and work toward the two main goals of educa-

tion and employment. Our resident has had a difficult time obtaining a job due to the dual limits of transportation and day care.

We are seeking employers to partner with us to provide employment opportunities for our youth. We offer job coaching to help them develop and hone their job skills, help with a transportation plan and daycare needs, and ongoing consultation with employers. Our goal is to provide stable, motivated, and committed employees to our employer partners. The end result will be residents who are self-sustaining.

Stepping Stones is hosting an Open House on Thursday, October 27 from 4:30-7:30 to showcase our four apartments at College Mall Apartments located at 2615 East Second Street.

Please drop by to meet our residents, staff, volunteers, and board members and to hear more about our programs. There will be a silent auction from a variety of local artists and businesses and you will have an opportunity to donate to our "giving tree." Oliver Winery will have a cash bar and light refreshments. Please join us!

SCCAP helps area families in several ways

By Isabel Piedmont, Board Member, South Central Community Action Program

South Central Community Action Program, Inc.

1500 W. 15th St.
(812) 339-3447

www.sccap.monroe.in.us

South Central Community Action Program, Inc. is a non-profit organization designated by the Indiana Division of Family Resources as the Community Action Agency for Monroe, Morgan, Owen, and Brown Counties. Community Action Agencies were established nation-wide as part of President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty in the mid-1960s. SCCAP was established in 1965, and we are celebrating 40 years of service this year. Our mission is to provide opportunities for low-income citizens to move toward personal and economic independence.

Below is a brief description of our programs.

The Self-Sufficiency Program is a coun-

seling program designed to help families with multi-dimensional problems become economically self-sufficient. Case managers work intensely with participants, providing life skills counseling, support and advocacy, decision-making and money management skills and reinforcement of positive self-esteem.

Individual Development Accounts were established to help low income Hoosiers build assets, become self-sufficient, learn personal financial skills and improve their quality of life. Through this program, the savings set aside by participants is matched through funds provided by the Indiana Housing & Community Development Authority. These savings may later be accessed to pay for education, a home purchase, or to start a small business.

The Section 8 Housing Program assists very low-income households pay for housing. This program allows households to find their own rental units within HUD's

guidelines. The household's rent is subsidized based on their income. Participants have an accumulative escrow account match rent based on earned income. Upon graduating from the program the matching funds plus interest is theirs to use as they wish.

Housing Programs: SCCAP provides affordable rental housing, and its units are rented to families who are at or below 50-60% of the area median income guidelines. SCCAP also provides funding for owner-occupied rehabilitation of older homes and organizes new construction of affordable homes for purchase.

The Weatherization Program aims to reduce energy consumption in low-income households and to insure that each client has a safe operating heat source. Each client receives a complete furnace inspection and an energy audit. Both homeowners and renters are eligible for the program.

Energy Assistance Program: Income-eligible households receive assistance in meeting the high cost of winter season heating. Emergency assistance is available to income-eligible households who are in danger of disconnection from their gas or electric service or who cannot obtain fuel delivery during cold weather without help. The EAP also provides educational workshops on energy conservation, enabling families to further reduce their energy costs.

Head Start: SCCAP runs the Head Start program for preschool-aged children and their families in Monroe County. Head Start knits together a blanket of services, including education, health, nutrition, transportation and counseling. Focused on the needs of low-income families, this nationally acclaimed program implements the latest knowledge about children's development. Families and children with disabilities and special needs will find a helping hand as well.

MCUM offers several services to community

By Rebecca Stanze, Developmental Coordinator

Monroe County United Ministries

827 W. 14th Court

(812) 339-3429

www.bloomington.in.us/~mcum

Monroe County United Ministries (MCUM) has been operating on the near west side of Bloomington since 1939.

MCUM provides affordable childcare

and emergency assistance to Monroe County residents. The Childcare Program provides full-time care for children ages 2-6 from families in which all adults are working. Childcare vouchers are welcome, but many families enroll on MCUM's sliding fee scale, which considers family size and annual income.

The Emergency Services Program pro-

vides assistance to individuals and families experiencing a short-term crisis by providing a supply of food from one of the largest pantries in the county, rent/mortgage/utilities assistance to prevent eviction or disconnect, clothing and household items. MCUM is located next to Tri-North Middle School and Mills Pool near the Crestmont Community. Call 339-3429 for more information about services or ways you can help.

MCUM is collecting cell phones and their batteries for refurbishing and recycling. Donated phone may be of any brand or age and do have to be functioning. In exchange for collecting the phones, MCUM will receive payment for each phone donated. Funds raised through this program will help MCUM provide subsidized childcare and emergency assistance to those experiencing a short-term financial crisis. Phones can be dropped off at MCUM or various collection sites around the county. Current collection sites

include:

- *TIS Bookstore
- *Opportunity House
- *The Ellettsville Journal
- *Several Monroe County churches, including First United Church, First Christian Church, Harrodsburg United Methodist Church, and Mt. Gilead Christian Church

MCUM runs one of the largest food pantries in Monroe County and usually provides 5-day food supply to families in need. Due to a steady increase in the number of families requesting food assistance, MCUM's pantry has reduced its distribution to a 3-day supply, in order to avoid completely running out of food. Food donations are requested from families, clubs, workplaces, and congregations. Donations can be dropped off at MCUM or pick-up can be arranged for a large supply of food. Call 339-3429 for more information.

Calendar

Continued from page nine

Stepping Stones, Inc.

Stepping Stones is hosting an Open House on Thursday, October 27 from 4:30-7:30 to showcase our four apartments at College Mall Apartments located at 2615 East Second Street. Please drop by to meet our residents, staff, volunteers, and board members and to hear more about our programs. There will be a silent auction from a variety of local artists and businesses and you will have an opportunity

to donate to our "giving tree." Oliver Winery will have a cash bar and light refreshments. Please join us!

ReStore

Habitat for Humanity ReStore

444 S. Patterson Drive

Open Monday-Friday 8:30am-4:30pm

(812) 331-2660

Gently used and vintage building materials accepted and sold.

Shop, Donate or Volunteer!

Agency reference guide

For more extensive articles about these agencies, see earlier issues of Safety-Net at www.shalomcommunitycenter.org. To learn more about the agencies, and how to volunteer, please access their websites. Several of the agencies described below provide multiple services.

Agency

Service

Amethyst House
Big Brothers Big Sisters
Center for Behavioral Health (CBH)
Community Kitchen
Family Services Association/Mental Health Alliance (FSA/MHA)
Martha's House
Monroe County United Ministries (MCUM)
Monroe County Wrap-Around
Mother Hubbard's Cupboard (MHC)
Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)
Rhino's Youth Center
Salvation Army
Shalom Community Center
Stepping Stones, Inc.
Youth Services Bureau

Transitional housing, addiction counseling
 Matches adult volunteers and children
 Behavioral problems, Mental health treatment
 Serves meals, Monday-Friday, 4 p.m.-6 p.m.
 Individual, family counseling, mental health treatment, CASA
 Emergency housing for women who are victims of abuse or in danger
 Emergency services to assist families, subsidized child care
 Assistance to families and children, a multi-agency program
 Food pantry for people in need
 Opportunities for persons 55 and over to volunteer in the community
 Community youth center
 Emergency shelter, transitional housing, food pantry, other services
 Serves breakfast and lunch, several on-site services, link to other agencies
 Transitional housing, supportive services for youths, aged 16 to 21
 Youth shelter

Amethyst House
 P.O. Box 11
 (812) 336-3570
www.amethysthouse.org

Amethyst House provides structured living environments, treatment, and recovery services for individuals with addictions. Amethyst House operates three transitional living facilities: (1) a men's 1/2 way house, (2) a women's 1/2 way house that serves women and their dependent children up to 6 years old, and (3) a men's 3/4 way house. Amethyst house also operates an outpatient treatment facility in Bloomington as well as in Evansville.

Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS)
 418 S. Walnut Street
 (812)-334-2828
www.bigsindiana.org

BBS matches adult volunteers with children ages six through seventeen in Monroe and Owen Counties. Volunteers mentor, bring support, and engage in fun activities with the children with whom they are matched. The "Bigs" meet with the "Littles" at school grounds and the Boys and Girls Club. For children who need and want a Big Brother or Sister, applications are available by calling 334-2828 or accessing the BBBS website (www.bigsindiana.org). BBBS welcomes calls from parents, teachers, and individuals working with youth and families who are interested in the mentoring programs.

Center for Behavioral Health (CBH)
 645 S. Rogers Street
 (812)-339-1691
www.the-center.org

The Center for Behavioral Health provides services for people with behavioral and mental health challenges, such as depression, stress, panic disorders, alcohol and chemical dependencies, phobias, child behavioral disorders, grief and loss, marital and family problems, and severe and persistent emotional disorders. Services provided include psychiatry, 24-hour emergency services, and vocational and residential services. CBH hours are Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Appointments must be made for services in the

evening and weekend.

Community Kitchen of Monroe County
 917 S. Rogers Street
 (812) 332-0999

Website: www.bloomington.in.us/~kitchen
 The Community Kitchen of Monroe County serves free meals Monday through Saturday 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Sit-down meals are served at 917 S. Rogers Street, and carry-out meals are served at the Express location, 1100 W. 11th Street. The Community Kitchen also provides meals for after-school programs at the Boys and Girls Club, The Rise, and Girls Inc. To volunteer individually, or as a group, for meal preparation or to help in serving, call the office manager at 332-0999.

Family Service Association and the Mental Health Alliance (FSA/MHA)
 120 7th Street | One City Centre
 (812) 339 - 1551

Website: www.monroementalhealth.com
 The goals of the FSA/MHA programs include promoting awareness, acceptance, and treatment in the prevention of mental illness, protecting children from abuse and neglect, and strengthening the quality of family life. The programs include Oak Tree Counseling (provides individual and family therapy), Ombudsman Program (assists people involved with mental health services with respect to arbitration and conflict resolution with those services), Jail Diversion (a support network for services to this sector of the community), support groups that provide education and advocacy for families and friends of persons coping with specific types of mental illnesses, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), who work with the Court to make recommendations for rehabilitative and protective services for children and families, and Families in Transition/Family Strengthening (provides parenting classes for both the community and for incarcerated parents).

Martha's House
 1010 S. Walnut Street
 PO Box 2115
 (812) 336-2597

Martha's House is an emergency shelter with

28 beds for homeless men and women. Services provided include case management, food, and clothing. If you would like to make a donation or volunteer, call the executive director at 336-2597.

Middle Way House

24 Hour Crisis Line: (812) 336-0846

Website: www.bloomington.in.us/~mwhouse
 Middle Way House is an emergency shelter that provides services to protect and help women who are victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, and women who feel they are in danger. Services include a safe place to stay, case management, in-house children's programs, legal advocacy. There is also a transitional housing program called The Rise which has self-contained apartments for families leaving abusive relationships. Women and their children can stay at The Rise for up to two years. If you are interested in volunteering or making a donation, call (812) 333-7404.

Monroe County United Ministries (MCUM)
 827 W. 14th Street
 (812) 339-3429

Website: www.bloomington.in.us/~mcum
 MCUM provides a subsidized Child-Care Program for low-income families in Monroe County, which includes a year-round program for children two to six years old, and a summer camp subsidized child-care for children ages six to ten, when school is out of session. All care-givers in the families either work full time or attend school part-time and work part-time. There is also an Emergency Services Program that assists families who are experiencing a short-term crisis. The Emergency Services Program includes a food pantry, a clothing program, and financial assistance for rent or utility payments. If you would like to volunteer, call (812) 339-3429.

Monroe County Wrap-Around
 645 S. Rogers Street
 (812) 337-2225

Monroe County Wrap-Around is a multi-agency committee that provides needed services to families with children. For example, a case is brought to a particular agency, then a representative from that agency can present the case

to Wrap-Around and all participating Wrap-Around agencies can play a role in coordinating help to the family in the most effective way. The planning process is done with the families "in the drivers seat". Each family identifies a "team" that works with them, and the team develops a plan based upon the strengths and needs of the specific family. Representatives from families also serve on committees that examine the policies and goals of Wrap-Around. This summer, the Lost Child Fund, which operates within Wrap-Around, is accepting funds to send children of working single parents to camp.

Mother Hubbard's Cupboard (MHC)
 1010 S. Walnut Street, Suite G
 (812) 355-6843

Website: www.bloomington.in.us/~mhc

Mother Hubbard's Cupboard is a food pantry that provides nutritious food to people in need. Most of the food is received from the Hoosier Hills Food Bank. MHC also operates a Nutrition Education Program and an organic Community Gardening Program. If you would like to volunteer, call (812) 335-6843 or view the website.

Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)

7500 W. Reeves Road
(812) 876-3383

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program of Monroe and Owen counties provides opportunities for persons 55 and over to provide a variety of services to the community, including: tutoring children in reading, helping to build houses, participating in neighborhood watch programs, delivering meals to the homebound, offering disaster relief to victims of natural disasters, and helping community organizations to operate more efficiently. RSVP assists volunteers in finding projects that match their interests and abilities. If you would like to volunteer, call (812) 876-3381 or email the Director, Shalini Sarin: ssarin@rsvp@area10.bloomington.in.us.

See "Agencies," page 12

Shalom Community Center is expanding

219 E. Fourth Street
(812) 334-5728
www.shalomcommunitycenter.org

When the Shalom Community Center was begun, it was a joint venture of the First United Methodist Church (FUMC) and Shelter, Inc. It began in one room in the First United Methodist Church (FUMC) with a computer, coffee pot, and BBC bagels. We had a vision. Our vision in those early days was to expand out of that one room in order to give the homeless a place to be during the day, offer nutritious meals, offer services that would help improve their lives, and serve as a bridge to other social service agencies.

After moving from one room in the church to the present facility in the basement of the church, we began the journey

By Shirley St. John, Former President of the Shalom Board of Directors

towards this vision. We now provide a place for guests to come during the day Monday through Friday (8 a.m. - 4 p.m.) where they can have access to telephones, laundry facilities, personal care items, diapers, formula, transportation assistance (including bus tickets and gas vouchers), and more. We serve breakfast and lunch Monday through Friday, and a weekly food pantry (FUMC Pantry) is held every Wednesday afternoon. The FUMC Pantry is not part of the Shalom Center, although it uses Shalom Center space. It is staffed by volunteers from the First United Methodist Church, and they offer bags of groceries purchased from the Hoosier Hills Food Bank using money that comes from FUMC. We also provide or are planning to provide the following services: employment assistance, including Job Counseling and Placement, Onsite

Training, Food Service Training Programs, Resume Assistance, Internet Access, G.E.D. preparation, a variety of tutoring opportunities, computer training, and parenting support.

There is also the Organic Meals Garden Project, or Omgarden, organized by Mylo Roze. It grows fruit and vegetables for the Shalom kitchen and uses local community garden plots.

Furthermore, we are a bridge to many social service agencies. The number of agencies coming to Shalom continues to rise, and at the present time Shalom collaborates with more than 20 other agencies in delivering services. However, more room is needed. For too long our staff has had to move out of its offices when the visiting agency needs privacy to deliver its service. Furthermore, exploring training options for people coming to Shalom

is not practical without more space.

As a result of the generous gift from Jim Regester, the ground floor of the former Seratec building just across Washington Street from the Shalom Community Center will house the Shalom Community Center programs beginning in October, 2005. In addition to continuing and expanding the present programs, we will also be in a position to start a new program in health care screening for adults and children. Shalom will continue food service in its present facility at First United Methodist Church.

The Shalom Community Center needs volunteers immediately in several areas. Anyone interested in helping is strongly encouraged to contact Volunteer Coordinator Pam Kinnaman at kinnaman@bloomington.in.us (email) or 334-5728 (phone).

COPSL bridges gap between students, community

By Stephanie Solomon, ACE/AmeriCorps Coordinator, Indiana University Community Outreach and Partnerships in Service-Learning

Franklin Hall 004
(812) 856-6011
www.indiana.edu/~copsl

Here in Bloomington, students from both Ivy Tech and Indiana University are getting involved in service in ways that complement their course of study. Service-learning is the instructional method of combining community service with academic curriculum. By meeting a portion of their course curriculum, service-learning students also meet a community need. The relationship between Bloomington and particularly the IU campus can be a difficult one. IU's Community Outreach and Partnerships in Service-Learning (COPSL) coordinates the Advocates

for Community Engagement (ACE) program to help create a meaningful affiliation between students and the community. The ACEs act to improve this relationship. This fall semester, 23 IU students act as ACEs, liaisons between the campus and community service organizations. Each ACE coordinates 6 to 300 service-learners and student volunteers.

IU students are oriented by COPSL's ACES into community agencies ranging from youth-serving agencies to animal welfare organizations. Through service-learning courses many students get to know the workings of the Bloomington community in a more meaningful, personal way. Although service work can be tedious, students see what it takes to con-

tribute to the quality of a community that 30,000 non-IU citizens call home. With guided reflection, students are able to connect their experiences in the community with their course work, careers and values.

Megan Smith, ACE for the Shalom Community Center, expresses the impact of service-learning on student volunteer retention: "As an ACE, I am able to help the volunteers and service-learners understand the bigger picture of what is happening at Shalom and in our community in regard to poverty and homelessness. This understanding is what keeps the students coming back and feeling connected to the Shalom Center." Students providing service as a portion of their coursework contribute approximately 500 hours of service

to the Shalom Community Center each semester.

Patti Cummings, Middle Way House Legal Advocacy Office Coordinator, commented on the importance of the role of IU students and service-learners for the Middle Way House, "IUB students are one of the most precious resources at the Middle Way House." As well as having IU-related volunteers at Middle Way House, IU students, faculty and staff also are served by the MWH. "About 30% of people seeking information on legal issues regarding domestic violence are campus-related," notes Cummings.

While the university is undoubtedly a resource to the region, its presence also inadvertently contributes to some of the challenges Bloomington faces. Over half of Bloomington's population is in some way affiliated with the University, and many Bloomington residents are students who rent property. With well over 19,000 rental units in the city, the proportion of renters vs. homeowners is greater than in many cities of comparable size. Pricing in the rental market is also driven up by student demand and ability to pay. When ACEs work with agencies such as Hospitality House, Stonebelt, the Rise and others that focus on housing for underserved populations, they seek to make students aware of issues impacting local residents. With this in mind, COPSL ACE/AmeriCorps staff member Heather Wild is organizing a Listening to Communities Symposium on Affordable Housing with Ivy Tech, funded through Indiana Campus Compact which supports the connections between higher education and service.

Listening to Communities will be held at Ivy Tech in the Student Commons on October 14 from 8:30AM until 12:00PM. The Ivy Tech Community College - Bloomington campus is located on the corner of State Road 48 West and Daniels Way on the west side of Bloomington.

Agencies

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Rhino's Youth Center
325 S. Walnut Street
333-3430

Website: www.rhinosyouthcenter.org

Rhino's Youth Center, which is a division of the Harmony Education Center, provides entertainment as well as other programs for the youth of our community in an alcohol, tobacco, and drug free environment. In addition to music and shows, Rhino's provides programs in partnership with the City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department through the week after school. Media classes and practical applications, art programs, classes, workshops, mentoring, tutoring, Internet access, community service, one on one informal counseling, service referral, and more are available. The Youth Video program produces a monthly television show in collaboration with the Monroe County Public Library's Community Access Television (CATS).

The Salvation Army
111 N. Rogers Street
(812) 336-4310

The Salvation Army in Bloomington provides a variety of services, including: food pantry,

food vouchers, emergency shelter, transitional housing, seasonal assistance, clothing, furniture, appliances, household items, hygiene items, rent/mortgage assistance, utility assistance, medical assistance, disaster relief, summer child care, after school programs, summer residential camps, adult programs, child care connection, nursing home visitation, gas vouchers, bus tickets, a place of worship, and a thrift store. All services are without charge with the exception of Child Care Connection, thrift store, and transitional housing.

The Shalom Community Center
219 E. Fourth Street
(812) 334-5728

www.shalomcommunitycenter.org
The Shalom Community Center is a daytime resource center for those experiencing homelessness and poverty. It is located in the basement of the First United Methodist Church at 219 E. Fourth Street, and is open Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Services include breakfast and lunch, mail boxes, telephones, laundry facilities, diapers and other baby supplies, job counseling, job placement, resume assistance, G.E.D. preparation, and computer training programs. There is a weekly food pantry (FUMC Pantry) every Wednesday afternoon.

Stepping Stones, Inc.
P.O. Box 1366

(812) 336-7196

Stepping Stones, Inc. provides a transitional housing program and supportive services for young people aged 16 to 21 years old who are experiencing homelessness, in conjunction with Family Solutions and the Youth Services Bureau.

Youth Services Bureau (YSB)
615 S. Adams Street
(812) 349-2506

www.youthservicesbureau.net

The Youth Services Bureau operates a Youth Shelter that provides short term residential care and crisis intervention for youths ages 8 to 17. Services are provided for runaways, homeless, and youth in crisis or abusive situations at home. Services also include counseling, education, supervised recreation, and transportation to and from school, as well as referrals to a variety of agencies for other needed services. The Youth Outreach Program, in collaboration with MCCSC, works with suspended and expelled middle school youth, and provides these students with intensive, one-on-one teaching to help them keep up with their education while they are out of school. The Youth Network is a YSB prevention program in partnership with the Asset Building Coalition, that helps to create and support student coalition groups in each middle school and one collective student coalition at the high school level.