



Safety~Net

January 2006
Vol. 2, Issue 1

This issue's focus: Youth services A Monroe County vision for youth services

By Judge David L. Welch, Monroe Circuit Court VII

A recent review of Bloomington's The Herald-Telephone and its successor, The Herald-Times, revealed that Monroe County has been studying the needs of our youth since 1962! It is time for all good citizens to encourage Monroe County leaders to act upon what is needed to meet the needs of our youth.

My vision is to build a juvenile campus that includes agencies dedicated to enhancing the lives of our troubled youth. Due to the lack of space available in the Justice Building, I envision our new 2008 court being designated "the Juvenile Court" on the campus with a continuum of care and services to enhance our youth. The court would house the Juvenile Probation staff, an attached secure detention center, and offices of auxiliary agencies like the Department of Child Services,

GAL, CASA, Wrap-a-Round services and others. Locating such agencies together, we can improve communication and coordination while providing a new continuum of care that include referrals for local staff secure beds, non-secure treatment beds, and detention beds in addition to the existing Youth Shelter.

The campus should be located on land large enough to allow for recreational opportunities for the youth it serves. Such land would provide space for additional pods of services and offices to be built when they become necessary. This would save future county leadership trying to locate land to build youth facilities, at increased costs, avoiding neighborhoods who oppose the location. The failure to plan long-term for the county's future will result in the identical struggle our leader-

ship faced in recent decades.

A Juvenile Justice Task Force met for several years to offer specific recommendations. After lengthy meetings with a nationally recognized consultant, the Huskey Report was issued last spring which identified three options for the County's consideration. Some members questioned financial presumptions referenced in the report so the Task Force chose to explore new funding sources for "Option 2" which entails maintaining the existing 15 bed Youth Shelter and providing 10 assessment and detention beds and 20 residential treatment beds. They concluded that funding for the "bricks and mortar" of these 45 total beds could be financed by the County but that the operational expenses necessary to staff the additional facilities would require new funding

sources.

Recently the Task Force received an additional proposal tendered by the local Center for Behavioral Health, a quasi-public agency offering mental health care, and Meadows Hospital, a private local facility with inpatient care capabilities. They suggested utilizing existing private beds to be contracted for by the County in addition to the construction of a 12 bed group home at County expense but operated on contract by CBH professionals in an effort to reduce costs. This proposal would entail the county building and staffing a 10 bed detention center to be attached to the Juvenile Court.

Your County Council intends to consider these proposals in January of 2006. Contact your elected Councilperson and Commissioner to express your opinion!

Juvenile Probation implements new programs

By Christine McAfee, Juvenile Division Supervisor, Monroe County Probation

Training (A.R.T.). A.R.T. is a multimodal intervention program designed to alter the behavior of aggressive youth. The program encourages youth to modify behaviors by improving anger control, reduce the frequency of acting-out behaviors, and increase the frequency of constructive, pro-social behaviors.

A.R.T. is comprised of three components: Skill Streaming, Anger Control Training, and Moral Reasoning.

Students attend A.R.T. three days per week, one hour per day, for a period of ten weeks. Each week builds on the skills of the previous week, so regular attendance is mandatory. Probation staff also offers Parental Aggression Replacement

Training (P.A.R.T) to the parents / guardians of those students participating in A.R.T. P.A.R.T. is designed to instruct and motivate the parents to use the same skills their children are learning in order to further encourage their children's success.

Also in August 2004, probation staff began a new initiative focusing on truant youth. Chronic truancy and academic failure have long been recognized as risk

factors which increase the likelihood a young person will become involved in the criminal justice system. Additionally, these youth are at an increased risk of (1) drug use, (2) teenage pregnancy (or fathering a child), and (3) chronic under- or unemployment. (1999 Surgeon General Report on Youth Violence).

See "Probation," page two

301 North College Avenue
Bloomington, IN 47403
(812) 349-2645

Over the last 18 - 24 months, the Juvenile Division of the Monroe County Probation Department has modified the programming offered to youthful offenders. Both "Family focused" and "evidence based" programming have been integrated into the services available for youth and families experiencing difficulty with the law. As the juvenile division explores community based programs that meet these criteria, it has also turned attention inward.

In August 2004, the juvenile division implemented Aggression Replacement

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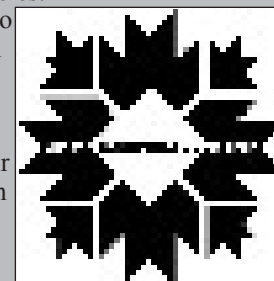
One of the important responsibilities that the Bloomington community has is to provide a safe, supportive, and educational environment for our youth.

The lead article on the front page written by Judge Welch explains some of his ideas on how the community might facilitate collaborative efforts between agencies that provide programs to better the lives of troubled youth.

In addition, the reader will find many articles that describe the wide spectrum of programs and activities available to the young people in our community. The reader will learn about City programs,

County programs, school programs, and youth programs provided by the local nonprofit agencies.

There are also articles written by young people who want to let us know how their lives have been changed because of the programs and help that they have received.



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YSB client speaks on 'life-changing' experience

By BG, Age 15

I would like to talk to you, the reader, about the Youth Shelter. I stayed there for a period of fifty days and it changed my life. I was one of the kids who stayed there for a longer period of time. I have decided to keep my name confidential, but the Youth Shelter is a place to stay if you need a safe place. What I mean by that is it's better to stay there than home if there are problems.

You can also stay there if you are on probation or if you are placed by another agency like the Department of Child Services. It's a place for youth ages 8-17 to go and feel safe, or in some cases even if you don't want to be there.

While I stayed there I got to know staff very well and there is always an adult to talk to there, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Because I was there so long I got to know them personally and found out that they were very guiding and gave me life-altering advice. I am involved with the Big Brothers and Big Sisters program and I actually met my Big Sister at the Youth Shelter. She is still my Big Sister and a huge role model for me, and we go together great.

Probation

Continued from page one

In conjunction with the focus on truancy issues, Project S.E.T. (Supporting Education Together), a probation based program, was designed to assist youth, who are receiving supervision services through the Monroe County Probation Department, in meeting their educational objectives.

The level of supervision and/or services available for habitual truants are as expansive and varied as the issues involved. All services however have a unified objective: to improve school attendance through appropriate identification, focus, and resolution of underlying issues. Ultimately Project S.E.T. hopes to support a relationship between the student, parent(s), and school.

Students participating in Project S.E.T. are eligible for daily tutoring services, provided at our Community Corrections site, free of charge. Students may be referred for remedial work, assistance in preparing for exams, or simply a quiet place to complete homework.

The Juvenile Probation Department continues in its involvement with Functional Family Therapy (FFT), a collaborative

"I look at it as a positive influence on my life."

- YSB client BG, on his experience with the YSB

Also at the Shelter there are counselors you can talk to about anything and everything. They're very warm and I grew to love them. I grew to love all the staff there.

They also have groups after school and talk about life issues that we as kids face everyday. While during my stay there I still did all my regular activities such as school and appointments and such.

The Shelter also has visiting hours and you may also get a temporary exit if approved by your counselor, or if you have one your probation officer. It is just a structured environment to live in and stay safe and out of trouble.

I'll always remember my stay there because it changed my outlook on life. Even though I had a bump in the road in life that caused me to stay at the Youth Shelter, I look at it as a positive influence on my life.

effort with the Courts, Probation, and the Center for Human Growth at Indiana University. This partnership is the cornerstone in our "family focused" philosophy.

None of these programs would be successful without the support and contributions made by the community. In mid-2005 a Juvenile Division Donation Account was established. The purpose of this account is to access funds for the purchase of incentive items for clients and families showing improvement in areas they previously struggled. The funds from this account have been used to purchase gas cards, food cards, clothing, electronics, and small gift items. The ability to reward positive change is essential to the success of making that change and continuing that change.

Individuals and businesses have been kind enough to donate incentive items, and sums for the purchase of recognition awards for these achieving A.R.T students.

If you would like to make a tax-deductible contribution to the Monroe County Probation Donation Fund, or learn more about the juvenile programming provided, please contact Christine McAfee, Juvenile Division Supervisor.

At a glance: The Monroe County Youth Services Bureau

By David Torneo, Clinical Coordinator

615 S. Adams Street

Bloomington, IN 47403

(812) 349-2506

www.youthservicesbureau.net

The Youth Services Bureau of Monroe County continues to offer their fifteen bed, fully handicapped accessible Youth Shelter. The Youth Shelter provides short term residential care and crisis intervention for youth ages 8-17.

The Youth Shelter provides emergency shelter for runaways, homeless, and youth in crisis or abusive situations at home. Accessible 24 hours a day, the Youth Shelter provides services such as counseling, education, supervised recreation, and transportation to and from school, as well as referrals to a variety of agencies when necessary. Referrals to the Youth Shelter can be made by other social service agencies, parents, or youths themselves.

Prevention and Crisis

YSB knows that the best way to deal

with crisis is to prevent it. In addition to crisis counseling, YSB runs Project Safe Place, a community-wide outreach service for runaways and at-risk youth in crisis situations. Youth in need of immediate assistance can go to locations displaying the yellow and black Safe Place sign, where a trained volunteer will come meet the youth to assist in diffusing the crisis.

The Youth Network

The Youth Network is a YSB prevention program in partnership with the Monroe County Prevention Coalition. It is an organization that helps to create and support student coalition groups in each middle school and one collective student coalition at the high school level. The mission is to promote a healthy teen community in Monroe County by providing fun, drug-free alternatives and spreading awareness about the effects and consequences of abusing drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.

About Safety-Net

David White
Editor-in-Chief

Pam Kinnaman
Photographer/Assistant Editor

Evan Wade
Page Designer/Assistant Editor

Safety-Net is a quarterly publication about our community's social service/non-profit agencies brought to you by the Shalom Community Center in collaboration with the social service/non-profit 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

Focus: There are a wide range of services and support programs that the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, and local social service/non-profit agency provide for our community's youth. The first portion of this newspaper focuses on these services and programs.

Agency reports: The second portion of the newspaper features updated reports from social service/non-profit agencies, and an Agency Reference Guide.

EARLIER ISSUES:

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

Harmony: A place to learn and a place to belong

By Barbara Backler, Curriculum Coordinator and Special Needs Advocate

bbackler@indiana.edu

Some educators from Japan once came and observed Harmony School for a day. When they shared their reflections afterward they said they especially loved what they saw after school. Students all over the building were pursuing various interests on their own and appeared to the guests to be totally engaged. Students at Harmony have the privilege of staying at school until 5:00. If they are younger than fourth grade they are required to be in the after school program for a small fee, but all other students can be in the building for a couple of hours after school. The teacher who is on duty has to virtually throw students out of the building at 5:00 or sometimes even later.

Recently students have been practicing for a play that was written and produced by students during class time with the help of David Christman, one of the high school teachers. Anyone could sign up to be in the drama class, so potentially anyone could participate. The play was actually designed to accommodate each of the students in the class. Talk about type casting. The students studied each person's personality and strengths and then created a part for that individual.

The Holiday Follies operates from a very similar philosophy. If students are willing to organize an act and practice it, they are free to create their own contribution to the show. Some have said it's a performance only parents can appreciate, but to me it's an opportunity for total self-expression. Students are so supportive of their peers as they get up on stage for the first time and sing or dance, do magic, tell jokes or act out a little drama piece. It's clear that students gain confidence as the audience breaks into enthusiastic applause after each act.

Harmony is small and because we believe in giving everyone a chance to shine, all students have many opportunities to participate without having to compete for limited chances. Consequently, students become experienced at expressing themselves and learn to communicate effectively.

Besides being small and honoring each child's interests and strengths we also seek diversity in our school. Our goal is to admit students from all ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, and we include students with a variety of special needs. Our goal is for all members of the community to learn to get along with people who are different from them.

Building community is an important part of Harmony's philosophy too. We want each person to enjoy a sense of belonging. There are many ways that this is accomplished. Every family works PIP (Parent Involvement Program) hours and chooses whether they will substitute teach, clean classrooms, drive on field trips - both day and overnight ones, help develop cur-



Photo by Barbara Backler

Students are allowed to express themselves in several ways at Harmony School.

riculum materials, etc. There are many all-school events such as the Holiday Follies, All-School Open House, The Extravaganza with music and a penny carnival, Family Night with play, potluck, contra dancing and karaoke, and an all school picnic at Bryan Park in May.

To support this building of community amongst the students and staff, Harmony teachers are very intentional about providing students with opportunities to develop skills in problem solving, conflict resolution, team-building, working independently and making good choices. Every year the middle school engages students in rock climbing, high ropes courses and other physical challenges that result in feelings of camaraderie and compassion for one another. The high school uses Student Advisory to offer additional support to students who need it. This organization is made up of students from each class and two faculty members. When a student is struggling over a long period the high school will create a circle of peers who offer to meet with a student on a regular basis and provide feedback on how things are going and give additional support.

All programs at Harmony hold Family Meetings. These are times when students work together to make decisions that affect them. Students lead the meetings, and, again, all students have an opportunity to facilitate family meeting. Someone observing the interactions that take place during family meetings would be hard pressed to guess which students were "at risk," since all students can learn to participate in a community and both contribute to and gain from the experience.

How Harmony School has helped

By Evan, Harmony School student

My name is Evan and I live a pretty typical life. The only difference is that I'm diagnosed with Schizophrenia. I won't go into detail, but my life was pretty difficult until July of 2004. That is when I found out I was going to go to Harmony School. By the end of October of 2004 I was in Heaven. I knew that the rest of my schooling would be a completely different experience than it was in 8th grade.

The first month was a bit difficult. That's the way it is for every new student at a new school. I only knew a select few people and almost everybody else had had at least one year to bond before I came along. However, I found it easy to make new friends and within two months I had at least 15 new friends. By the end of the first year I had met everyone in the high school and became friends with most of the people. I had bonded with the teachers in a way that I didn't know anyone could ever bond with a teacher. My English teacher had passed his knowledge of magic on to me, and my Social Studies and Math teachers had turned two of my least favorite subjects into two of my favorite. This is the way that I had always wanted to live - in harmony.

Harmony has made me into a happier person. I have been able to focus on things that I believe are interesting. I don't have to deal with large amounts of

people in which over half of the crowd either doesn't know me or doesn't like me. The teachers have helped me deal with my Schizophrenia and have comforted me in times of need. The students, my friends, have talked me through moments when I was mad or sad. They always have a funny comment or two up their sleeves. You never know when you'll be laughing next.

I have had many chances to bond with people that I would have never thought I'd ever meet. I have had the opportunity of becoming very close to more than 60 people. In a way, I consider the folks at Harmony my extended family. The school trips that we take twice a year have been the most fun I've ever had at school and gave me a chance to see new faces and make new friends. The people have really made me feel like I belong. I could never be happier in my school years than I am at Harmony.

I'll say this about Harmony - It's the best school I've ever been to. It's the school best fitted for my needs. I was never happy in middle school. Public school could never meet my needs. I almost committed suicide during middle school. I've been too happy at Harmony to ever even consider hurting myself. If I hadn't found Harmony I might not be alive at this point. The school has really met my needs.

Aurora provides a positive alternative for students

By Chanel Fisher and Cassie Harrell, students at Aurora

524 N Fairview
Bloomington, IN 47404
330-7837

Aurora Alternative High School is a gift to the student population since 1995. Started for the “alternative” student, it has created a positive opportunity for those on the track of failing or dropping out. The structure and environment has pulled in numerous students who weren’t quite making it in the larger, more traditional schools.

For a prospective student to attend Aurora they must go through an interview process. The interview team consists of three students and two teachers who collaborate to decide if Aurora would be the best place for the interviewee’s needs to be met.

Once a student is accepted they have to sign a contract with the understanding that these guidelines are not to be taken lightly. These guidelines provide for a safe and effective learning environment. It is these underlying principles of these guidelines that define Aurora.

Part of the incentive for going to Aurora is the belonging as a member of a family group (like a weekly homeroom) and town meeting (weekly school meeting). Both allow the students to have a voice and be heard. This voice gives them the opportunity to be more involved in the decisions of the school.

The respect between the students and

teachers is very distinct. The student to teacher ratio is so low that teachers are able to give more personalized attention to the student, which promotes an understanding between student and teacher that you don’t normally see at larger high schools.

Not only is there respect between student and teacher, the amount of respect between students is also well-defined. All the students are equal here and no one is ever treated as if they’re not. Being treated equally helps students feel more comfortable with themselves, so that they thrive and are able to work towards their personal goals. When the subject of ‘What Aurora Means’ was asked to students, one student said, “Aurora means a future for me that I didn’t think I could reach before I came here.” Another student said, “Aurora has given me a chance to succeed.”

Even though Aurora only offers the core classes, there are opportunities for students to develop independent studies on any subject they want. Students also have the chance to start their own clubs, for example, SAT study group, Aurora Service Organization, and a drumming circle.

Aurora offers a lot of freedom, but it comes with a lot of responsibility. The students here are serious about their education and are up to the challenge. Aurora presents a positive alternative to the traditional schools.

Aurora student shares her views

By Liz Irvine, student at Aurora

Through my eyes, a lot of things are wrong with the community, but this is coming from a high school senior. I come from the alternative, against the norm, and see the other side of society. I see that kids slip through big cracks in life, fall far from their dreams, and turn to drugs for love. I see adults ask every person who walks by for spare change. I see high school students out on the street because their parents are hateful or they just don’t have enough money. I see people wrongly put into jail, while the ones who deserve that jail cell walk the streets. I see innocent people get beat down, spit upon, and ridiculed because they did the right thing. I see no outlet for the artists who write on the walls because they don’t have the money for classes or just want to express themselves. I see hate and sadness all over this town. And it seems that there is no where to run for a safe place.

This town is a big little city, where the locals all seem to know each other and the IU students flock in every fall and don’t really know what this town is all about. This town is run by a university but the underground is run by drugs. It’s all about the money, and if you don’t have any then they don’t care and won’t listen. If you have been wrongly accused

of something you will struggle for the rest of your life just to have a bed to sleep in at night. “Put them on probation” is all I hear for kids who get caught, but then they struggle to get off of probation because they have no money or just don’t care because there is no support. You’re labeled a bad person and society will never support them. Put them away in a room behind closed doors so that no one as to think about you. Use hard working people’s money for jail cells and not for any kind of program/support or outlets. Just do the time, get out and struggle to make little money and still pay us off.

If you get put on probation, that stays with you the rest of your life. No student aid, no good jobs. Every application asks you if you have ever been in legal trouble. There is no place for kids to go to if they are addicted to something and need to talk to someone confidentially for free. There is no place to go and report harassment without getting the police involved, because if the police are involved, they are then a snitch and will be severely hurt or even killed. Maybe it’s time to re-evaluate what’s really going on and listen to the little people who struggle. It’s time give a voice to everyone who wants one.

Library programs offer literacy for the whole family

812 349-3100
303 E. Kirkwood Avenue
www.mcpl.info

“I read a book! I read a book!” These are the words of a child this summer who for the first time read a book...all by himself. Not much to be excited about? This child was a child whose economic and social circumstances had indicated that he might never be excited about reading a book. He marked a point on his summer reading guide and then ran back to get that same book, “so I can read it again.” “Thank you, ladies,” said his mother. She had tears in her eyes.

The summer reading program is just one service provided by the Monroe County Public Library Children’s Services Department...for free. Public libraries are

By Patty Callison, Manager, Children’s Services, Monroe County Public Library

one of the most democratic of public institutions, providing materials and services to everyone who lives in the community, no matter what their age, sex, beliefs, or economic circumstances-all at no cost to the patron. In addition to full library services at the Main and Ellettsville libraries, Community Outreach services bring the library to outlying areas of Monroe County via the Bookmobile and Outreach Van. The Children’s Collections provide appropriate reading materials for all levels of reading, from beginning young readers to young adults-all at no cost to the patron.

A variety of programs is designed to enrich the lives of our young patrons. All three agencies have embarked upon the Public Library Association’s “Every Child Ready to Read” initiative which works

with daycares and preschools as partners in promoting literacy. Not only is the Monroe County Public Library working with Head Start and Monroe County United Ministries in their buildings, but hosts Templeton/Shalom Family Resource Center in Main’s Preschool Exploration Center for “Say It in Spanish” and Summit/Banneker Center Family Resource Center for “Family Fun.” MCPL staff produces morning baby and toddler programs and several storytimes weekly and monthly. Regular family storytimes and special events are offered in the evening and on weekends for families who cannot come to programs during the day. Special Events, such as the upcoming “Lunar New Year Celebration,” “Seusspicious Behavior” and the ever popular

“Puck Players Puppet Theater” productions are examples of the enjoyable celebrations which can be attended by families-at no cost to the patron.

Children’s Services at Main and Ellettsville maintain the Children’s Reading and Math Team (CRMT), a group of Indiana University students who run The Homework Help Center Monday through Thursday, and Sunday afternoons. CRMT conducts a one-on-one tutoring program for children who are having difficulty with reading-at no cost to the patron.

The Children’s Services Department is a great resource available to families who may be in difficult social and/or economic difficulties. For more information contact Children’s Services at 349-3100 or via the web at www.mcpl.info.

MCUM provides subsidized childcare programs

By Rebecca Stanze, Developmental Coordinator

827 W. 14th Court
(812) 339-3429

www.bloomington.in.us/~mcum

Monroe County United Ministries (MCUM) has been providing subsidized childcare for Monroe County residents since 1939. Although the organization has been known by several names, including the Bloomington Day Nursery and the Christian Center, our goal has always been to provide safe, dependable, affordable childcare to Monroe County's working families.

For many families, the high cost of dependable, quality childcare can drain a modest budget and serve as a disincentive to work. Yet families benefit in the long-term when parents stay employed, have access to benefits such as health insurance and are eligible for advancement and salary increases. We work to address this issue by providing full-time care on a sliding fee scale. Our cost of caring for one child for one week is \$160, yet the average MCUM parent pays only \$45.

Once enrolled, the benefits of quality care to the child, and the family, are almost endless. One of MCUM's goals is to prepare children to enter public school, knowing that low-income children who start kindergarten or first grade behind

their higher-income peers will have great difficulty catching up. Our classroom staff work each day to develop the skills children are expected to have when starting school, from naming colors to following directions. For some enrolled children, MCUM provides their chief opportunity to learn English before beginning school. Developmentally appropriate activities, annual screenings, outdoor exploration, health services, socialization opportunities, parent workshops - the list of benefits goes on and on.

In addition to the financial and educational benefits, MCUM parents know their children will be in a safe, dependable and nurturing environment every day. As a licensed center-based childcare program, MCUM is part of one of the most regulated industries in Indiana, with hundreds of regulations governing everything from the maintenance of facilities to the qualifications of staff. In contrast, there are other types of care sanctioned by the state that cost far less to provide because they are so lightly regulated. These are licensed homes, registered ministries and legally license-exempt programs. Homes are subject to only 30 regulations and ministries have only 10. In addition, there are illegally run programs operating out of homes across the state.

See "MCUM," page six



Photos by Rebecca Stanze

Above: Students enjoy some time on the bus.

Below: Other students play Duck, Duck, Goose.



How MCUM helps

By December Hendrickson, Parent of child enrolled at MCUM

Monroe County United Ministries has been a great blessing to myself and to my son. I am a single mother with a full-time job. When I first started working after my son was born, I was on daycare assistance through the state. When the state cut funding for that program I lost all of my assistance. After paying rent and other bills there is no way I could pay the average rate for daycare, so I don't know how I would be able to maintain full-time employment without the help of MCUM.

There is another reason I chose to enroll my son in Monroe County United Ministries aside from the financial help that they offer. When I went to

tour MCUM, I was so impressed with the clean facility and how organized MCUM's daily activities were. I really feel like my son is in good hands when I go to work everyday. He always comes home with good stories about what his class or his friends did that day, and I think he will be better prepared for school when he starts kindergarten next fall.

Monroe County United Ministries is a wonderful organization that provides a much needed service to low-income families in our community, so that they can afford to work and/or go to school to improve their lives and the lives of their children.

Boys and Girls Club offers programs, camps

by Sarah Ward, Unit Director, Boys & Girls Club

311 South Lincoln Street P.O. Box 1716
www.bloomingtonboysandgirlsclub.org

What do you do after school? Do you participate in a clown troop, a cooking club, or a computer class? Do you play basketball, pool, or air hockey? Do you need help with homework or want a Big Brother or Sister to hang out with? The Boys & Girls Club of Bloomington offers all of these activities and more in their

after-school programs and camps.

The Boys & Girls Club offers six areas of programming: Education and Career Development, Character and Leadership Development, Health and Life Skills, The Arts, Sports and Recreation, and Technology. All Boys & Girls Club programs are designed to help youth develop valuable skills needed to make wise life decisions. Our programs are held in our Gym, Computer Lab, Library, Games room, Art room, Kitchen, Music room, and Teen

room. Trained staffs as well as a large number of volunteers work closely with club members in programs developing positive relationships. Boys & Girls Club staff and volunteers serve club members as mentors and friends.

The Boys and Girls Club serves local youth ages six to eighteen with a special concern for those most in need of services. Programs are targeted to multiple age groups to foster the physical, intellectual, educational, and social develop-

ment of youth of all ages. The Boys & Girls Club has so much to offer the youth of the Bloomington community. Visit us and see for yourself!

How do you become a member? It's easy to become a member at the Boys and Girls Club. Just stop in our main facility, visit our web site, or call and we will provide you with a membership form. Membership fees are only \$35 a year and scholarships are available. Transportation services are also provided.

BBBS: Having fun and making a difference

By Erica Hedrick, marketing assistant and Andrea Smith, director of operations, Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Central Indiana

(812) 334-282

amsmith@bloomington.in.us
www.bigssindiana.org

Eating is something that both Jim Schaeffer and his Little Brother Justin love to do together. Going out to eat is a way to try new places and bond at the same time. "We eat out most of the time, but occasionally we cook out on the grill," says Jim. Justin says that he really enjoys these times together and loves trying restaurants.

"Putt-Putting is another one of our favorite things to do together," says Justin.

"So are going to movies and just chilling," says Jim. "Even if we just watch TV or talk on the phone, it's a good time

together."

Justin, an eighth-grader at Tri-North, says that Jim is a great influence on him. "This keeps me from just walking around after school," says Justin, "It makes my mom feel a lot safer." Justin became involved with Big Brothers Big Sisters last year when his mom suggested the program to him. "I was just kind of bored before this," he says.

Now, Jim and Justin try to get together once a week. Jim, branch manager at Fifth Third Bank in Nashville, got involved with the program after hearing a co-worker speak of her own experience with Big Brothers Big Sisters. "It really just sounded like fun," says Jim. He says that being a Big Brother has reduced his

stress and worry levels. "It's made me see that there's a lot more out there than just making money and all those sorts of things," he says.

This year, Jim hopes to help Justin improve his grades. "I look at his homework and just encourage him," he says. This past summer Jim taught Justin a very important lesson through a unique way by working for hours on an old truck. Jim wanted Justin to realize how important it is to have an education so that you can make career choices, and not have them made for you. Justin took the lesson to heart and really understood Jim's message. "It was a lot of work, and it was such a pain," says Justin. "I'm definitely going to stay in school."

Jim's commitment to and enthusiasm for the organization is evident to all. "I want to tell people thinking about becoming a Big Brother or Big Sister to do it right away," he says, "Don't wait; don't even hesitate."

Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) is the nation's oldest and largest youth mentoring organization. BBBS of South Central Indiana serves children ages 6-17 in Monroe and Owen counties through a variety of mentoring programs. There are many volunteer opportunities available: many that take as little as a couple hours a month.

Become a Big Brother or Big Sister!

City Parks and Rec. offers several programs

By Paula McDevitt, Recreation Services Director

349-3713

mcdevitp@bloomington.in.gov
www.bloomington.in.gov/parks

The City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department provides a safe and well-supervised after-school program at Banneker Community Center for elementary-age youth interested in learning new games, experiencing different activities and having an all-around great time after school. "After School Adventure" also includes built-in tutoring time, crafts and a healthy snack. Banneker Commu-

nity Center staff pick children up Monday through Friday from Fairview Elementary at 3:05pm and the program runs until 6:00pm. "After School Adventure" is free, and not in operation on MCCSC half days of school or cancelled days.

Banneker Community Center also offers free drop-in activities Monday through Friday from 5pm - 9pm for children 8 years and older. Drop in activities include pool, ping pong and children's videos on a big screen TV. In addition, different nightly activities are available such as Mondays- Games Galore; Tuesdays - Tournament of Champions; Wednesdays -

Book Club; Thursdays - Arts and Crafts; Fridays - Movie Mania.

Free transportation is available to and from the Crestmont Neighborhood. Call Banneker Community Center for more information at 349-3735. Banneker Community Center is located at 930 W. 7th St.

After school program fun is also available for teen participants at Rhino's Youth Center. All programs are free and open to teens ages 13 - 18 years. Program choices include RhinoVision, for those looking for behind-the-scenes or in-front-of-the-camera video production experience. The Youth Journalism Project produces the

Antagonist, a monthly teen newspaper. The Youth Radio program is a chance for teen broadcasters to learn about the inner workings of producing a live radio show on WFHB 91.3 FM. The Youth Mural Arts Project offers an opportunity to create artwork for display around the Bloomington community. These programs are made possible with support from WFHB Community Radio, CATS TV, United Way, the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute, SBC/Ameritech, the Monroe County Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Coalition and Rhino's/Harmony School. Rhino's is located at 331 S. Walnut Street.

NETS: Helping our students to succeed

By Jennifer Staab, Healthy Schools Coordinator, Monroe County Community School

(812)- 330-7700

jstaab@mccsc.edu

Too many students are "left behind". The pressure is on schools with the Federal No Child Left Behind laws in place. Unfortunately, every year, many children do get left behind in the race for higher test scores. Those left behind are the students that drop out, get expelled, or transfer to be "home schooled" and often never complete their high school education. The double whammy for these students is that they don't even get counted in No Child Left Behind as they have prematurely left the educational system.

The NET program attempts to correct that. The Monroe County Community School Corporation (MCCSC) and The

Franklin Initiative are collaborating on a project called NETS which stands for Nurturing each to Success. The outcome of NETS will be much like a safety net-hence its name. The partners have held a series of focus groups within the schools and with community partners to better identify the indicators for students who are at risk for failure; what do we have in place to support these students and what do we need that we do not have.

A day-working session this Spring. The information from these focus groups will be compiled to identify the commonalities. In January, all of the groups will come together for a day-working session to identify the priorities and then task forces will work toward solutions this

Spring.

The goal is to move our community toward a NET of interventions so that failure is not an option. This is a first step in developing a systematic process for prevention and intervention before they get left behind. An intervention pyramid

MCUM

Continued from page five

According to the Indiana Family and Social Ser-

vices Administration of Indiana, 35 children died while in one of these less regulated care settings between May 1999 and November 2003. At least half of these tragic deaths were clearly the result of poor quality care, with causes including asphyxiation, dehydration, bodily trauma and homicide.

Knowing the potential consequences of

is a model most often used in the field of mental health for addressing patients. Schools have been applying this same methodology to build a coherent continuum of support to ensure all children get what they need to succeed.

See "NETS," page seven

choosing the wrong type of care, parents must be aware of the options that are available and pros and cons associated with each type. In addition, it is important to recognize that one of these less regulated - or non-regulated - care settings may be the only option available to low-income families without access to subsidized care. Families without access to a quality center may benefit financially by paying lower fees, but it could be at the expense of the child's health, safety, education and development.

What's going on with the Teen Action Program?

By Julie Geltmaker, Intern, City of Bloomington Volunteer Network

It is an exciting time for the City of Bloomington Volunteer Network, as we continue to see our youth actively engaging in our community. Through their volunteer efforts, youth are achieving awards, receiving scholarships, and working to make the city of Bloomington a desirable place to live, work, and go to school. Our most exciting development is the acquisition of the Points of Light Foundation's Service-Learning Impacting Citizenship Grant. The City of Bloomington Volunteer Network is among only twenty-six recipients in the United States; our goal is to provide education and experience in service and to raise the quality of civic participation by young people.

This grant will allow us to continue and expand the Teen Action Project (TAP) by not only providing the monetary means necessary for implementation but also a structured curriculum that covers a wide range of topics relevant to youth civic involvement. Youth will engage in activities that challenge them to think about their role as citizens and how they can use their individual interests and talents to make a difference in our community.

TAP participants will have the opportunity to work closely with Volunteer Network staff in developing and imple-

TAP to create a buzz in Bloomington

Young participants in the Teen Action Project (TAP), sponsored by the City of Bloomington Volunteer Network, will again participate in the Homeward Bound 5k Walk to fight homelessness by initiating the "B-Town Youth Brigade", an all youth walking team.

In 2005, TAP participants recruited 92 youth for the B-Town Youth Brigade, who helped raise over \$2600. In 2006, The B-Town Youth Brigade team will again help raise the consciousness of the community about the issues of homelessness and poverty while making it evident that young people have the vision, the voice, and the manpower to create change. We intend to recruit a large number of individuals under age 18 and to set an ambitious fundraising goal. The Brigade is not just for teens. All youth are encouraged to get involved and be a part of this awesome chance to act against homelessness. No

specific school affiliation, previous experience or super skills needed! TAP members want all types of youth from all types of places.

Throughout the spring, TAP participants will work on projects related to the Homeward Bound Walk, specifically focusing on recruiting for the B-Town Youth Brigade. They will be out and about in the community at their schools and clubs, giving presentations about homelessness and poverty. TAP will be the driving momentum in getting the word out and creating a buzz in Bloomington about the B-Town Youth Brigade. Young people are encouraged to join the buzz!

If you are a young person aged 18 or younger, or you know a youth who might be interested in acting out by getting in TAP or the B-Town Youth Brigade, please contact Julie Geltmaker, 349-3860 or Bet Savich 349-3472.

menting community service projects. Youth will be asked to identify needs that can be met through their efforts and the knowledge they gain through our program. They will be guided in their endeavors by local community leaders and individuals who model the idea of an engaged citizen. Many of our youth are already involved in various community activities; this program will afford them the opportunity to work as a team and work for the community on a large scale.

The TAP teens will once again form an

all-youth team for the 2006 Homeward Bound Walk to fight Homelessness, and will actively recruit youth for this event. Last year, youth rallied together under the banner of the "B-town Youth Brigade" to help raise awareness of homelessness in our community and around the United States. Youth participants raised a tremendous amount of money, and the Teen Action Project youth created the largest youth team to participate in this state-wide event.

Teen Action Project sessions will run

from January through May of 2006, and will be held every other week. TAP will take place at four different locations, on different days, so there will be multiple opportunities for youth with busy schedules. If you know of a teen who would like to be more involved, please send them our way! For more information please contact Julie Geltmaker (349-3860; geltmakj@bloomington.in.gov) or Bet Savich (349-3472; volunteer@bloomington.in.gov).

NETS

Continued from page six

Some important statistics. So far, some of

the data used in the focus groups has been very insightful. Locally, our schools have a higher than state average rate of graduates pursuing college (State-72%, MCCSC-87%); but have a higher than state average drop out rate (Indiana-10.2%, MCCSC-13.3%). So in the push to excel we lose approximately 100 students a year.

Partnering with NET. The NETS project is funded by the local United Way through a Workforce Preparation Network. The MCCSC and the Chamber of Commerce were obvious partners when you realize that high school is about preparing our youth for the future. As Carol Maloney, Director of the Chambers Franklin Initiative stated at a recent focus group "Building a skilled workforce is important to each and every business in Monroe County. While Bloomington is considered education rich, the 100 or so students who do drop out each year will remain in town, whereas, those that graduate from a University will likely move on. So it is important that the potential workforce that remains in Bloomington be as skilled and competent as possible for our business to succeed."

Serving the children of cancer patients

By Julie Bloom, LCSW, LMFT

www.campkesemnational.org/indiana.html

This past August, I had the privilege of serving as the "camp psychotherapist" at Camp Kesem (kesem is "magic" in Hebrew), an IU student-organized and run 6-day summer camp at Bradford Woods for children who have or had a parent with cancer. The idea for the camp originated with Iris Rave five years ago while working as a student with Hillel at Stanford University. After organizing a successful camp that summer five years ago, Iris took her idea to other college campuses, and today, nine campuses participate in Camp Kesem.

This year, Sigall Rave, Iris's sister, organized an IU Camp Kesem. Along with six other students, Sigall, a social work junior at IU, planned the camp, raised \$20,000, recruited 18 additional students to volunteer as camp counselors, and provided training for the staff prior to the start of camp this August. 21 six to 13-year olds came from Bloomington, Indianapolis, and surrounding areas for six days of great fun and companionship.

Janice Ross and I, served as the camp

nurse and psychotherapist respectively during camp week, a week filled with fun, camaraderie, and poignancy, and I wanted to share some of my impressions about this amazing camp because I believe the camp reflects some of the very best principles of volunteerism and altruism deserving out attention and support. The children attending Camp Kesem were children whose daily lives revolve around cancer. Six year old Molly's mother was recently diagnosed with breast cancer; Austin's dad had a glioblastoma, an aggressive form of brain cancer; twelve-year-old Daniel's mother died after a 10-year battle with breast cancer. Twenty-one children came together for six days because a small group of IU students chose not to remain indifferent to the unique problems affecting the least powerful in our society-children.

What I observed at Camp Kesem was an excitement and nervousness one normally sees in children going off to camp (especially those who have never attended camp before), the usual silliness during the camp talent show, the pride of hitting the bull's eye during archery, the enthusi-

asm of belting out the Camp Kesem song. I saw everything I would expect to see at any camp. And I saw more. I saw campers whose moods changed with the tides, who expressed (some for the first time ever) to other children how it felt to have a mom or dad with cancer, or what it was like when their parent died. I watched children connect with each other, comfort one another, encourage one another, challenge one another because they seemed to understand something about each other the rest of us could only guess at. I watched, too, as the counselors searched themselves for understanding; always mindful of the children's need for both empathy and limit setting. Each night before bedtime, "cabin chat" encouraged the sharing of feelings and thoughts. Relieved to be able to talk with children going through the same struggles, the campers opened the doors wide to their experiences inviting each other in to a world heretofore shared with very few. In fact, when asked whether they had any friends who had parents with cancer, almost every child said none at all.

See "Camp," page seven

Big Brothers Big Sisters makes an impact

418 S. Walnut Street; PO Box 2534
Bloomington, IN 47404
(812) 334-2828
bbbs@bloomington.in.us
www.bigsindiana.org

There are more than 200 local children waiting to be matched with a Big Brother or Sister. Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Central Indiana has a goal to match at least 145 youth by June, but this is not possible without the support of the community and additional volunteers.

Potential volunteers are encouraged to attend an information session to learn more about the various programs (please contact the office for an updated schedule). A wide variety of volunteer opportunities are available to fit anyone's schedule and interests. There are three programs offered at local schools, a program at the Boys & Girls Club, the traditional community mentoring program, and a program for our "Kids on Deck" (those on the waiting list for a "Big"). Some programs require a time-commitment of as little as a few hours each month. Volunteers are able to choose the program that best fits with their interests and schedules.

Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) is the nation's oldest and largest youth mentor-

By Erica Hedrick, Marketing Intern, and Andrea Smith, Director of Operations

ing organization. BBBS of South Central Indiana serves more than 1,000 children each year between the ages of 6-17 in Monroe and Owen counties through a variety of mentoring programs. In 2005, our agency served 730 kids in one-to-one matches, and provided additional programming for nearly 300 youth through our group mentoring programs.

Our one-to-one mentoring programs make a huge difference in the lives of local youth. Along with national research that demonstrates the positive impact of Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring, an annual local analysis of each of our programs showed that children matched with a Big Brother or Sister for a minimum of one year:

- *75% demonstrate improved relationship to family
- *75% improve their school performance
- *40% develop improved educational and career goals
- *95% show marked increase in self-esteem

"We want potential volunteers to know that they can make a positive impact on a child's life by just being there," says Liz

Grenat, Executive Director of BBBS of South Central Indiana. "It's not about the type of activity they do together, but it's the time spent together that really makes

a difference."

To learn more, please contact us at the information listed at the beginning of this article.

BBBS clients talk about experience

By Little Sister Katrina and Big Sister Kathy Zaleski

We have been matched for about 18 months, and we hang out weekly. During our time together, we have both grown and learned from one another. Our time together is always fun, and we are constantly doing different activities that allow us to explore Bloomington. One of our favorite places to visit is the YMCA to work out, and the best part is using the hot tub after we are done. Some other activities we enjoy are swimming (especially at Lake Monroe), hiking in the various parks, and teaching each other new dance moves.

Since being matched, Katrina's grades have dramatically improved. She has become more assertive and a better decision-maker (in fact now she plans some activities for us). Kathy has introduced her to new activities, places, and food. Katrina was able to try Thai food for the first time (and probably the last time!). We both really enjoy talking about our families, frustrations with school, and boy problems.

We have both helped each other mature and become more self-confident. When Kathy graduates, she plans on becoming a secondary education teacher. Katrina has helped her with this by improving her ability to connect with adolescents and understand their concerns and problems during the teen years. She has also helped Kathy have more confidence around adolescents.

One of our favorite memories together was the sleepover for Katrina's birthday in November. We ate pizza, gave each other pedicures, played with the Ouija board, and watched some movies. Katrina's friends attempted to show Kathy and her roommate how to dance (like 'pop it,' a dance move they still cannot do), but neither have any rhythm. We continue to help each other grow and learn and the time we spend together is always fun and great.

Prescription program has many problems

Tomilia Allison, Mayor, City of Bloomington, 1983-1985

If you are having trouble with the new prescription drug program, you are not alone. Let me say right away that the best advice you can get is in the Feb. 2006 issue of Consumer Reports magazine. Other useful sources are listed at the end of this piece.

Why is the new program so troublesome? The list is long. Individual drug needs can vary tremendously, and so can the 40-60 insurance companies in each state that offer drug coverage. The available plans can involve different

formularies (lists of covered drugs), different co-payments, different choices for brand-name drugs and generics, different monthly premium payments, different lists of participating pharmacies, and different provisions for persons traveling out-of-state or persons who have moved to a different state. They also vary in their reputations for service: Some make it notoriously difficult to ask a question of a real person. Comparison shopping can be a challenge: We are often told to consult the internet, but many seniors are reluctant

or unable to do so.

The new program has created a special problem for "dual eligibles", persons who receive coverage from both Medicaid and Medicare. These persons were assigned to insurance companies entirely at random, without regard to whether the company provided the necessary drugs. As a result, many persons for the time being are doing without the drugs they need. We need to know who in Monroe County are not getting the drugs they need. Many of them are old, frail or isolated. This problem is nationwide. Many states have stepped in to cover the drug payments until the federal snafu can be fixed.

The federal government is scrambling to clean up the mess it created. As a stop-gap measure, the Bush administration has ordered insurers to provide the beneficiary with a 30-day supply of any drug previously taken, and to charge seniors no more than \$5/drug. Did you know that? This is a broken plan that needs to be fixed. What

we must do locally is to canvass our dual eligibles to make sure that they are getting their drugs. Our government is not doing the job.

Other sources

Web Sites

www.medicare.gov

www.cms.hhs.gov

www.socialsecurity.gov

www.state.in.us/idoi/shiip

Publication

Medicare & You handbook

1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227)

Social Security Administration

1-800-772-1213

Indiana Senior Health Insurance Program

1-800-452-4800 (To talk with an actual human being say "Agent" any time during your call.)

WonderLab

Continued from page seven

Free Group Admission.

WonderLab's

Connecting to the Community provides free group admission through non-profit agencies that serve low-income families. Connecting to the Community is supported by grants and donations to WonderLab that are specified for this program.

Plus several others, located on this issues Calendar (Page NUMBER).

WonderLab is a resource for the entire

community, and there are many ways to come into contact with the science museum. Some people will visit the facility; others will become volunteers. Still others will be served in after-school programs, which WonderLab offers for at-risk children in partnership with the MCCSC. Whatever way WonderLab touches your life, we hope you can say, as one man wrote, "I love that it is so friendly at WonderLab. Five stars."

CBH offers child and adolescent services

By Cindy Houston, Director of Community Services Development

Center for Behavioral Health
645 S. Rogers Street
Bloomington, IN 47403-2367
(812) 339-1691
www.the-center.org

The Center for Behavioral Health (CBH) runs an active department for child and adolescent mental health and substance abuse issues. Services range from evaluations to individual-, group-, or family therapy-with or without seeing a psychiatrist. Work is done in the main CBH offices at 645 S Rogers Street, in families' homes, or in the community, i.e., in schools or other social service locations. CBH works hard to meet families where they are and develop a plan to improve what is going on within the family unit. That might involve therapists, case managers, a psychiatrist or nurse practitioner for medications, or a combination of needed personnel. At the Center, medication for children is often not our first suggestion. Most often, our psychiatrists and certified nurse specialists want to try therapy before drugs, though this is managed on an individual basis.

Center for Behavioral Health is commit-

ted to running quality programming for children and their families-whenver possible using programming that has been proven through research to be effective. An example is the newly begun Functional Family Therapy for teens and their families, where the work's initial focus is on helping the family as a unit rather than on the teen (who may be identified by someone as "the problem"). Our parenting program has also been vigorously researched and includes a group for parents called The Incredible Years that runs simultaneously with a social skills group for the children (the Dino Club). Research tells us the child's behavior changes the most when the parents participate in The Incredible Years, while a lesser change is seen when parents do not participate. Other examples of well-researched programs include work with sexually abused children, girls focusing on building self-esteem, children of substance-abusing parents, school problems and other phobias, mood disorders, and a strong continuum of substance abuse services for teens etc.

CBH is also able to provide significant case management services to families. This might involve the teaching of spe-

cific skills so a family can better manage itself-organizing household duties, getting kids off to school, figuring out how to budget with limited resources, or providing education about the impact of a child's/parent's mental health issues on the rest of the family.

The Center participates in several community collaborations. Team members are active with Wrap Around, working with families involved with the Department of Children's Services, with Probation, and a variety of other social service resources. CBH is also working with the community to solve the challenge of developing services locally so children can stay in the community rather than be sent to distant locations for specialized treatment.

Child evaluations are available by contacting Center for Behavioral Health at 812-339-1691, or 800-344-8802, and more information may be found at the CBH website: www.the-center.org.

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Life on Clark Street in the 1980s

A poem by Joan Foor White

The Lost Child Fund gives struggling parents money for child care while they are working. If you would like to contribute, contact Cindi Skoog at Monroe County Wrap-Around located at the Center for Behavioral Health. The following is a poem written by a parent who might have benefited from the Lost Child Fund if it had been available at the time.

Hey, I'm thin, but you won't like my diet,
'cause it's a not-enough-food diet,
not very creative, requires no will-power, like I told the welfare people when they came to play
the blame-game, (why ARE you so poor?),
I've got no coffee in the house, my cupboard is bare, my kid eats McDonald's, or macaroni
and cheese, or hot dogs.

Vegetables are expensive and he doesn't like them anyway,
he needs some comfort food, to fill up that hollow feeling 'cause
his mom is at work and he's all alone.

Working at a restaurant I eat the scraps that people leave, am delighted when they order the
shrimp tortellini because they never finish it.

Sure I smoke, but it's my only vice, well, vice to you, not to me, it's my lifeline, ironic? my
respite, sure, I'd rather smoke than eat, I'd rather do both but given the choice...

In line at Kroger with the eggs, bread, margarine, milk, and cigarettes I'm a nickel short, they
throw it in for me, I'm grateful, try not to let it happen again (it's the tax on the cigarettes that
throws off my calculation), but hey, I pay my bills on time, I'm not on welfare or food stamps
(I don't qualify, I tried), some days I put gas in the car a dollar at a time, (wouldn't work
today, would it?) I can count on both hands the times I've run out, my car runs on hope, or
not, there was a time I put air in the tire that I couldn't afford to replace, every day for two
months, till I found a cheap (\$35.00) used replacement. But I have a car. I have a house. I
pay the bills and nothing gets turned off.

The only thing...

Maybe it would have happened anyway, "things always happen for a reason" people say,
maybe if I had accepted Jesus Christ as my saviour, maybe if I had gone to work in a factory
so I could be home in the evening, maybe if I had continued living with my parents, maybe if
I had given him up for adoption, maybe if I had not screamed, maybe if I had not been afraid
all the time and passed that fear onto him, maybe if I had made him eat vegetables, maybe he
wouldn't have died of a drug-induced heart attack.

I cannot leave my son behind and I cannot have him either. I cannot change the past and
I cannot move ahead.

I'm thin, but you won't like my diet.

Calendar of upcoming events

HOMeward BOUND

This is a five kilometer fundraising walk conducted each year by local agencies providing services to the homeless. Sunday, April 2, 2006 at Third Street Park 12:00 am - 1:30 pm: Registration, food, and entertainment
2:00 pm: Walk begins
3:30-4 p.m.: Walkers return to Third Street Park for awards announcement of total raised

FAMILY SERVICE ASSOCIATION

Family Service Association will be hosting a fundraising lunch at the Outback Steakhouse on February 22, 2005. Tickets will be \$35 dollars and guests will have a choice of three entrees. All proceeds will benefit the programs of Family Service Association including CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates), Oak Tree Counseling, Families in Transition and Strengthening Families. For tickets or more

information call 339-1551.

SHALOM COMMUNITY CENTER

The annual Shalom Benefit Concert will take place the evening of April 29 at the Buskirk-Chumley theatre.

A public Open House will take place March 28 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at a new expanded facility of the Shalom Community Center. The additional facility is in the former Seratec building just across Washington Street from the existing location in the basement of the First United Methodist Church. The Shalom Center in the church will remain open for serving breakfast and lunch. The new facility will provide the necessary space to house the present counseling programs offered by Shalom as well as other agencies, and provide space for additional programs that are being planned.

FSS client wishes to share her thanks

By Shawna Dunne, Family Self Sufficiency client

My family and I were living in the housing authority and had our names on the section 8 list. Due to changes in my husband's employment and my own business going under we had hit rock bottom. It was a very humbling experience to lose everything. I was forced to use every government program available just to provide shelter, food, and medicines for my four children. I was mortified that I was now living on "Pigeon Hill".

After a few months working through the Housing Authority's community service requirement, I decided I could go out and do something. I tried a few temporary jobs that really boosted my confidence. During that same time we received a letter that we were going to get our section 8 voucher. I was elated but not nearly as excited as I was when I found out about the Family Self Sufficiency program. Section 8 is a blessing but to pair it up with a

program that gives you the opportunity to change your family's lives forever.

I had always wanted to buy a home and I knew if I could go to school or make a career for myself in the next five years I would have the money to pay off my debt and enough left over to put a down payment on our own home. This program was going to give me the opportunity to save in 5 years what would take most people in my situation 15-20 years to save. The thought that I could be making good money and own my own home at the age of 35 gave me just the drive I needed to finally do something with my life. My main goals have stayed the same but there were many other challenges and new goals I had to face along the way.

Within the first year of the FSS program I found a full-time position at an after hours call center. It was very difficult for me after not working for so many years

Family Self Sufficiency information

The Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) program is administered by the Bloomington Housing Authority. It is a Section 8 Program that allows a family to work with a counselor to become self-sufficient and to save money in the process. The following story was written by an individ-

ual for whom that program changed her life.

For information about the program, contact Robin Carrothers, Family Self Sufficiency Coordinator, Bloomington Housing Authority at 812-339-3491 ex 132.

to follow such a rigid schedule with no time off. I was struggling to work every day of the week and take care of four kids. Sandi, the FFS coordinator, kept me looking forward and encouraged me along the way as well as giving me the tools to help me through.

I am now at the end of my 5th year in the program. I have gone from making \$8.50 an hour to \$13.50 an hour with 3

weeks paid vacation. I have over 20,000 in my escrow account and I'm now working on cleaning up my credit to go into home ownership.

I'm so grateful for the blessing this program has brought to my life. I just wish I could have had the faith in myself to know I was capable of so much with or without it. Maybe it was the only way I would have ever found out who I really am.

CASA helps abused and neglected kids

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

(812) 339-1551

120 West 7th Street, Ste 210
www.monroementalhealth.com

Casa is the Spanish word for "house" but CASA stands for "Court Appointed Special Advocate." The Monroe County CASA program recruits, trains and supervises volunteer advocates to speak up for the best interests of abused and neglected children who are under the care and custody of the juvenile court. When a CASA volunteer is appointed by the court to represent a child, he or she will talk to everyone who knows the child and can provide useful information about the child. This includes parents, foster parents, case man-

agers from the Department of Child Services (DCS), doctors, teachers, therapists, grandparents or other relatives, and, of course, the child. The CASA volunteer then writes a report for the court and tells the judge what the CASA believes needs to happen or change in order for the case to have the best outcome for the child.

For example, if the child was removed from his mother's care because she was using drugs and she couldn't take care of him, the CASA would recommend that the mother get drug treatment. The CASA might also recommend that the child have visits with his mother while she is in treatment. If other relatives were interested in taking care of the child while the mother

is getting help, the CASA might recommend that DCS do a home study of the relatives to see if the child could safely live with them. In the beginning of a case, the CASA will focus on making sure that the child is doing as well as possible in the foster care placement and that the parents are doing everything they need to do so that the child can safely go home again.

CASA volunteers know that the best place for a child is with his or her parents. Sadly, many of the parents we work with have serious drug and alcohol problems. Successful treatment can take a long time and may include relapses. Children cannot wait for years for their parents to get sober and stay sober. Children need to know

who is going to be there for them today, tomorrow and forever. If a child has been in foster care for many months and the parents are not making needed changes, then the CASA will have to begin thinking about whether or not it would be best to look at other, permanent living arrangements for the child. This might include recommending that the child go live with a non-custodial parent; that a relative become the child's guardian; or that the parents' parental rights be terminated so that the child can be adopted. Whether a child goes home or goes somewhere else to live, the CASA's goal stays the same--to find each child a safe, permanent home as quickly as possible.

MHC pantry expands

By Libby Yarnelle, Director, Mother Hubbard's Cupboard (MHC)

The year 2005 was a wonderful and busy one at Mother Hubbard's Cupboard, a Bloomington food pantry that provides wholesome, healthful food to people in need.

We experienced a 30% growth in demand for services. On average, we served nearly 900 clients per week and distributed 7,000 pounds of food per week. Though it's hard to keep pace with demand like that, we were able to succeed thanks to the support of our volunteers, community donors, and the good work of the Hoosier Hills Food Bank, who provides our food supply.

In response to our growth, we are currently undergoing an expansion that will nearly double our pantry space. Our pantry facility, generously donated by the Perry Township Trustee, is located at 1010 S. Walnut Street, just south of downtown and on the city bus line. Our new expanded facility will allow us increased

space to serve our clients and be updated with new electrical and plumbing systems.

The renovation will also include a conference room, which we will share with our friends at Community Kitchen, Martha's House, and My Sister's Closet. The conference room will be a great workspace for meetings and nutrition education seminars. We will also have access to a private office adjacent to our food pantry facility. This renovation will be instrumental in helping us continue to serve our clients as best we can. Thanks to everyone at the Perry Township Trustee's office for making this possible and working so hard to make it happen. Please visit us in February to see the finished product!

We at MHC look forward to 2006 and the many patrons, volunteers and community members who will continue to teach and inspire us. May we continue to learn from all of you as we serve this unique and vibrant community.

About Meals on Wheels

By Erica Hedrick, Student volunteer

323-4982

<http://www.bloomington.in.us/~meals>

Meals on Wheels volunteers deliver meals to people in the Bloomington area who are unable to cook for themselves. For \$5.50 each day, volunteers deliver two meals to each client over the lunch hour: one hot meal, still piping hot when it reaches the door, and one cold meal for later in the day.

Christine Carver, chief clinical dietitian at Bloomington Hospital, knows how to make stuffed pork, rice, mixed vegetables, fluffy mandarin orange salad and blueberry crisp fit into a special diet. Carver creates the balanced menus for Meals on Wheels and says the meals offered are similar to what most nursing homes serve. Meals are based on diet orders from a client's physician.

Meals on Wheels delivers over 90 meals daily, Monday through Friday, even if it is raining or snowing outside. Clients look forward to these lunch visits, as do the drivers.

Many Meals on Wheels clients are over the age of 80. Meals on Wheels also serves people who are disabled or recuperating from an illness or an accident and need assistance temporarily. And, if you are a family member or caregiver who needs to be away for a while, Meals on Wheels can arrange to deliver meals in your absence.

With the help of great volunteers, Meals on Wheels is a 32-year-old service that continues to help people in our community live independently. As one client says, "Seeing everyone's smiling face means so much to me. Everyone who volunteers is lovely." We think so, too.

Crisis Pregnancy Center

By Jennifer Peterman, Client Services Director

808 N. College Avenue
(812) 334-0104
(812) 334-0055 (24-Hour-Helpline)
www.cpcBloomington.org

The Crisis Pregnancy Center is a Christian organization dedicated to providing life-affirming support to help meet the spiritual, emotional and physical needs of people affected by crisis pregnancies and parenting challenges. The free programs and services the CPC provides include: pregnancy testing and counseling, material support, doula services, and prenatal, childbirth, and parenting education. The Hannah House, a program of the CPC, is a comprehensive residential program for pregnant women and teenagers.

The CPC is open for pregnancy testing and counseling Monday 9-12 & 1-5:30 and Tuesday through Friday 9-12 & 1-4. This professional laboratory testing is available at no charge. In addition, our counselors assist clients in exploring their pregnancy options in a caring and confidential setting.

The Material Support Program assists parents with children up to six years of age with items they need. Families can earn Baby Bucks and receive essentials like clothing, diapers, baby food, and infant equipment. One of our ongoing material support clients has said on many occasions how grateful she is to us for being able to help out with items for her children. She has said, "My kids wouldn't

have anything if it wasn't for this place."

Parenting classes are offered at the CPC on Mondays from 11am-12noon. Topics include baby basics, infant nutrition, child development, discipline, car seat safety, and much more. Those interested in classes can contact the CPC for a complete list of classes and speakers.

Childbirth classes are also regularly offered at the CPC. A certified childbirth educator covers topics such as medication options, normal hospital procedures, and relaxation techniques.

The Hannah House Maternity Home, located next door to the CPC, is a residential facility for women who find they need extra support and care during their pregnancies and post-partum periods. The residents of Hannah House receive case management services to address their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. In addition to participating in the programs offered at the CPC, residents receive life skills training and assistance in achieving longer-term educational and career goals.

"Coming into the Hannah House as a real 'must' for me," said one Hannah House resident. "...I had to show my family that I CAN be a mom and that I CAN change. It wasn't until after my daughter was born that I realized that the Hannah House and CPC staff really wanted to help... The Hannah House staff really does love me. They are helping me get back on the right track."

Planned Parenthood

By Theresa M. Browning, Director of Communications

(317) 637-4324
www.ppin.org

Parents can use the news, music or other media to talk to their kids about sexual health topics, according to Planned Parenthood of Indiana educators.

Kathleen Baldwin, vice-president of education and training for Planned Parenthood of Indiana, suggests families take the following actions:

Students who get comprehensive sexuality education are better prepared for a lifetime of good decisions. Parents, grandparents or other guardians should work with their children's school to assure important sexuality topics are provided in factual and unbiased ways.

If you'd like to learn more about the Truth For Youth Indiana! campaign, a coalition calling for medically accurate, age-appropriate, affirming sexuality curricula, call Bobbie Summers at 336-7050, ext. 1500. Find it online at www.ppin.org/tfy/.

Families should talk together about sexual values, beliefs about sexual behaviors, and how that connects with vital information about avoiding pregnancy, disease and exploitation.

Parents can find information to help them talk within their families at Planned Parenthood of Indiana's Web site. The Family Pages can help parents discuss sexual health topics and provide comprehensive information so both teens and

their parents or guardians feel better informed on sexual health.

Planned Parenthood has a resource center in its Indianapolis headquarters with more than 2,000 books, videos, pamphlets and other tools available for parents and for children in a variety of age ranges. Resources can be mailed to anyone in Monroe county interested in reviewing them.

The agency also offers a quarterly newsletter for parents available online or sent free to their homes. To receive a copy, call 1-800-421-3731, extension 1142.

Planned Parenthood of Indiana served more than 22,000 women and men with education services last year. Planned Parenthood can help parents, teens, youth workers and social service professionals with their educational needs. A copy of our training guide is online as well.

Planned Parenthood provides direct outreach to most vulnerable populations through a variety of nonprofits including the Shalom Center. At Shalom, the agency offers twice monthly outreach with risk reduction information. Interns from IU's Applied Health Science program provide one-on-one answers to personal questions. Planned Parenthood stocks the center with risk reduction supplies.

Planned Parenthood provides annual exams, birth control of all kinds and information for parents, teens and professionals.

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

Amethyst House
Bloomington Meals on Wheels, Inc.
Big Brothers Big Sisters
Center for Behavioral Health (CBH)
Community Kitchen
Crisis Pregnancy Center
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)
Planned Parenthood
Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)
Rhino's Youth Center
Salvation Army
Shalom Community Center
Stepping Stones, Inc.
Youth Services Bureau

Service

Transitional housing, addiction counseling
Provides nutritious meals to homebound people who are unable to cook for themselves.
Matches adult volunteers and children
Behavioral problems, Mental health treatment
Serves meals, Monday-Friday, 4 p.m.-6 p.m.
Provides several services for expecting and new mothers
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
Various medical services
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

Olcott Cancer Center offers free information

By Erin Wyatt, RN, BSN, OCN, Cancer Educator, Olcott Center for Cancer Education

353-5669

www.statehealth.in.gov/programs/bccp

No one should have to face cancer alone. The Olcott Center exists to provide education, support, and advocacy to people in the community who have cancer and their families and friends. Two Oncology Certified Nurses are available for consultation. All services are free.

Cancer does not just strike older people. Young men and women are at particular

risk for both testicular and cervical cancer. Testicular cancer occurs in men between the ages of 15-35, and cervical cancer can happen to women as young as 18. This year in Indiana, 120 women will die of cervical cancer. Cervical cancer is preventable. By getting an annual Pap smear, doctors can detect cells that are precancerous and treat them before they turn into cancer cells. All women over the age of 18 should have a Pap smear done yearly, and women under the age of 18 who are sexu-

ally active should also be tested. The State of Indiana has something called the Breast and Cervical Cancer Program which pays for Pap tests and Pelvic exams for those who do not have insurance and meet certain income guidelines. For more information, contact the Olcott Center directly or speak with a nurse from the Olcott Center during biweekly visits to the Shalom Community Center.

A Cancer Educator from the Olcott Center is available for consultation every

other Thursday from 9:00am-11:00am at the Shalom Community Center. During each of these visits many people have been given information about cancer in the form of written materials or one-on-one counseling. People have learned about ways to decrease their own chances of getting cancer. Unfortunately we all are at risk for some type of cancer no matter what our ages are. Please protect yourself by learning more about what you can do to prevent cancer.

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

BBBS 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.

Bloomington Meals on Wheels, Inc.
www.bloomington.in.us/~meals
email: mow@bloomhealth.org

Bloomington Meals on Wheels, Inc. is a non-profit organization that provides nutritious meals to homebound people who are unable to cook for themselves. There are no age or economic restrictions. To find out more, and to enroll in the program call 323-4982 and leave a message. A volunteer will arrange for meal delivery and special dietary needs, explain the costs, and how payments can be made.

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. 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.

Crisis Pregnancy Center
810 N. College Avenue
(812) 334-0104; (812) 334-0055 (24-Hour-Helpline)

www.cpcBloomington.org

Free programs and services provided include: pregnancy testing and counseling, material support, childbirth and parenting education. CPC operates Hannah House, a residential program for pregnant women and teenagers.

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, and other services.

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.

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

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.

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

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.

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

Planned Parenthood is one of the leading providers of health care in Bloomington. Services that are provided include pelvic exams, breast exams, testing and treatment of sexually transmitted infections, HIV testing and counseling, pregnancy tests, various types of birth control, emergency contraception (the "morning after pill"), as well as abortion services.

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.

Rhino's Youth Center
325 S. Walnut Street

333-3430

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, and several other services are offered.

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.

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. 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.