



Safety~Net

November 2009

This issue: The audacity to act

Safety-Net is a quarterly multi-agency newspaper sponsored by the South Central Community Action Program (SCCAP) that addresses issues confronted by those in our community experiencing difficulties related to poverty, lack of or potential loss of housing, under-employment or lack of employment, inadequate health care, as well as other needs that can be addressed by a caring community. The goal of the newspaper is to foster a positive interaction within our community between people that have resources that they can share with those who have fewer resources and want to cross the bridge to a better life. Such positive interactions already exist in our community, and one of the goals of this publication is to increase awareness of what is being done, and what must be done, and also to foster more caring interactions between our community members.

Readers will learn what SCCAP and the other local social service/non-profit agencies, the city of Bloomington and Monroe County governments do to help those in need, and how you can volunteer to help.

Each issue has Focus Articles as well as Special Sections. The Focus Articles in this issue are concerned with poverty and homelessness in our community. The Special Sections in this issue are: Agency Reports, Youth Programs, Therapeutic Jail and Re-Entry Programs, Volunteer Opportunities, Voices Seldom Heard, and a complete Agency Guide. Comments from readers are most welcome. Please address them to white@indiana.edu as well as doug@sccap.monroe.in.us. Place Safety-Net on the subject line, and state whether you would like your comments printed in the next issue.

Homelessness and hunger: a community concern

By Mark Krizan, Mayor of Bloomington

A fundamental question for a community is how we are taking care of the people at the bottom of the economic scale.

In Bloomington, we often like to think of ourselves as insulated from many of the challenges faced by the most economically vulnerable. We often overlook the realities and the needs of those of meager means. Many in our community suffer the most when the economy suffers. These individuals and their families are impacted daily by poverty, hunger, and homelessness. Our awareness, or lack thereof, does not alter their need.

It is the responsibility of our entire community—the public and private sectors, community leaders and everyday citizens, city government and local nonprofit organizations and private businesses – to work collaboratively to provide a safety net to care for the most needy in our community. The City of Bloomington is very

involved in providing resources directly to address the problems of homelessness and hunger as well collaborating with other organizations and agencies to prevent and minimize its occurrence in Bloomington. Both the Community and Family Resources Department (CFRD) and the Housing and Neighborhood Development Department (HAND) play an integral role in pooling City resources for the implementation of initiatives aimed at providing assistance and guidance to help families regain their footing.

Just last month, the City formalized an agreement with a community organization to donate use of one of its downtown facilities as an overnight shelter from November through March, ensuring that all individuals in Bloomington will have a place to sleep during the cold winter months. This partnership is precisely the sort of community collaboration that needs to happen if we are to solve some of

these difficult challenges facing Bloomington.

The City also provides direct funding to agencies that offer important emergency services through the Jack Hopkins Social Service Fund and the Community Development Block Grant which are administered by HAND. In fact, the Hopkins fund is being increased to \$200,000 in funding for next year, and increase that was made a priority in a tight budget year. Direct financial assistance outside of these ongoing programs has also been made to assist community agencies address homelessness. Efforts such as the assistance provided through a grant to the United Way last year to assist with homeless services as well supporting the current interfaith effort to offer shelter during the winter months are examples of this.

See "Mayor," page three



Editorial cartoon by Joe Lee.

Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week in Bloomington

By Brooke Gentile, Executive Director, Mother Hubbard's Cupboard

Each year, one week before Thanksgiving, the National Coalition for the Homeless and the National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness co-sponsor National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week. During this week, a number of schools, communities and cities take part in a nationwide effort to bring greater awareness to the problems of hunger and homelessness. This year National Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week is Sunday, November 15th – Saturday, November 21st, 2009.

For the second year in a row Shalom Community Center, Martha's House, Stepping Stones, Mother Hubbard's Cupboard and IU INPIRG are collaborating to bring a week of events to Bloomington, IN, focusing the community's attention on issues of hunger and homelessness. The educational and fundraising events invite Bloomington residents to "see more, learn more, and do more", while showing the need in our community and the work agencies perform everyday to help people transition out of poverty.

The events of the week will highlight the unending need for the community to support these agencies in their tireless work and will culminate with a Bloomington special episode of "Are They Smarter Than a 5th Grader?" event on Thursday, November 19, 2009, featuring Pam Thrash (B97), Dr. Malone (Southern Indiana Pediatrics), and Myles Robinson (an Acacia Fraternity member) and three people TBD selected by MCCSC will take on the 5th graders.

See "Awareness," page two

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