



Safety~Net

January 2008
Vol. 4, Issue 1

Venerate our veterans... do we?

Safety-Net is a free quarterly community newspaper about programs and services offered by the many social service/non-profit agencies in the Bloomington community as well as by the City and County. The articles are written by representatives from the agencies, the City and County government, and by individuals who

have benefited from the many available programs. Each issue also features articles with a focus on a specific topic. This issue has focus articles about veterans. Past issues have focused on: Housing; Poverty and Homelessness; Health; Jail and Re-entry Programs; Increasing Employment Opportunities; Youth Services; Hispanic/

Latino Outreach; and Sustainability. These issues, as well as others, can be accessed at www.shalomcommunitycenter.org. In addition to the focus articles there is an extensive **Agency Guide** pointing out where services are available (p. 11). **There are also Special Sections.** These include Criminal Justice (p. 15), Volunteer (p.

16), Voices Seldom Heard (p. 17), Youth (p. 18). Safety-Net is produced by the Shalom Community Center, a daytime shelter for those experiencing homelessness and/or poverty, with the cooperation of the other social service/non-profit agencies. Printing is funded by the City of Bloomington.

Having a blast at Stepping Stones



Photo submitted

A group of teens ham it up for the camera at Stepping Stones. For more information on Stepping Stones, please see page six.

Vets' mental health deserves attention

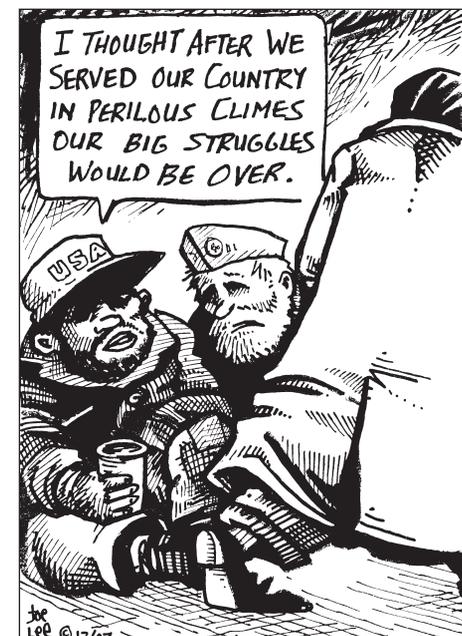
By Cathi Norton, Community Relations Specialist, Center for Behavioral Health

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Recent news has been filled with stories about our Veterans and their struggles after serving our country. Data from the 2005 Census estimated that 194,254 homeless people out of 744,313 (which only measures homeless men—doesn't count women and children) on any given night were veterans, many of them battling addiction and or mental disorders. This growing problem is one that must be addressed as great numbers of veterans return from combat.

The New England Journal of Medicine is one of many publications seeking to help the public understand the impact of combat on veterans' mental states.

See "Mental Health," page two



Editorial cartoon by Joe Lee.

Quiz time! Test your knowledge

1. How many homeless veterans are there, and what are their needs? See the articles from the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans and the article from the local Center for Behavioral Health on p. 1, and the article from the VA Medical Center in Indianapolis on p. 5.
2. What do the veterans who come to the Shalom Center have to say about their own situations? See the interviews on pages 3, 4, and 5.
3. How might the new Healthy Indiana Health plan provide insurance for low-income people? See p. 8.
4. What do we know about the Bloomington adult homeless population and what can be done about it? See the article from Martha's House on p. 7.
5. What programs are there for homeless youth in Bloomington? See the article about Stepping Stones on p. 6.

6. Why is the Shalom Community Center such a community treasure? What happens there? See the article on p. 10.
7. How does the Monroe County Public Library provide for homebound individuals? See the article on p. 6.
8. What is the role of Big Brothers Big Sisters in our community? What do the Bigs and Littles have to say? See p. 20.
9. Why is Aurora Alternative High School so important in our school system? What do the Aurora students have to say? See p. 18.
10. How can you volunteer and make a difference in our community? See the Volunteer Opportunities section on p. 16.
11. What is being done in the jail and outside of the jail to reduce recidivism? See the Criminal Justice Section, p. 15.

Homeless vets: The facts

The following information was derived from the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans website; www.nchv.org/background.cfm. See also www.nchv.org for more information.

How many homeless veterans are there?

Accurate numbers community-by-community are not available. Some communities do annual counts; others do an estimate based on a variety of factors. The Urban Institute, in conjunction with the National Survey of Homeless Assistance Providers and Clients (NSHAPC) done in 1996, projected that each year, 2.3 million to 3.5 million people experience home-

lessness in America, and 23% of these people are veterans. Therefore, there are between 529,000 and 840,000 veterans who are homeless at some time during the year. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) estimates that 400,000 veterans are homeless at some time during the year.



See "Vets," page two

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

Mental Health

Continued from page one

Their study's general conclusions were that there is a significant risk of mental health problems and that veterans report important barriers to receiving mental health services. The organization "Veterans and Families" agrees, citing four main reasons for treatment avoidance: a) fear of being stigmatized by peers and superiors; 2) fear of having documentation in their medical records that could prevent future advancement or civilian employment opportunities; 3) personal pride in one's self-reliance that is ingrained from military training and can imbed an aversion to asking for help; and 4) a discomfort or aversion to counseling and sharing/reliving difficult experiences, especially if the counselor is a non-Veteran or non-Combat Veteran. In fact, of those veterans whose responses were positive for a mental disorder, only 23-40 percent sought mental healthcare. The disorders found were major depression, generalized anxiety, and PTSD.

PTSD (Posttraumatic Stress Disorder), is an anxiety response to trauma. It can occur following the experience or witnessing of life-threatening events such as military combat, natural disasters, terrorist incidents,

serious accidents, or violent personal assaults like rape or battering. People who suffer from PTSD often relive the experience through nightmares and flashbacks, have intrusive thoughts, difficulty sleeping, feel detached or estranged, and exhibit hyper-vigilance—an exaggerated startle response. These symptoms can be severe enough and last long enough to significantly impair the person's daily life.

PTSD is marked by clear biological changes as well as psychological symptoms. PTSD is complicated by the fact that it frequently occurs in conjunction with related disorders such as depression, substance abuse, problems of memory and cognition, and other problems of physical and mental health. PTSD is also associated with impairment of the person's ability to function in social or family life, including occupational instability, marital problems and divorces, family discord, and difficulties in parenting.

Symptoms of PTSD usually start soon after the traumatic event, but they may not happen until months or years later. They also may come and go over many years. About half (40-60%) of people who develop PTSD get better, but about 1 of 3 who develop it will always have some symptoms. Untreated, these veterans lose the threads of their lives, suffer needlessly, and can often end up

How CBH helped save a life

By a former CBH client

Over five years ago my life was spiraling downward as I found myself binge-drinking alcohol and using pain medications excessively. My addiction to pain medication in particular led me to write illegal prescriptions so I could get drugs. Eventually I was caught three times and taken to jail. Each time I managed to post bond, only determined not to get caught again.

The last time I was caught, I pleaded with the police officer to let me go home to take care of my dog, promising him that I would turn myself in. Upon returning to my home, I took the last few pain pills I had left and drank all the alcohol I could. Out of fear and desperation I called Center for Behavioral Health (CBH) and spoke with the therapist on duty at the time. He suggested I go to the hospital to detox.

With the help of an encouraging friend, I reluctantly went to the hospital. Little did I know that would be the last time I would drink or abuse pain medication. After a week I was taken to jail and charged with my third felony for obtaining a controlled substance illegally and was denied bail. I spent a month in jail before I was allowed to participate in Drug Court treatment.

See "Client," page three

homeless across our nation.

There are effective treatments for PTSD. Instead of keeping feelings bottled up, therapy can help. CBT—Cognitive behavioral therapy (a form of psychotherapy that emphasizes the important role of thinking in how we feel and behave) appears to be the most effective. Exposure therapy, (where one re-experiences the event) and medications can also be helpful. Center for Behavioral Health uses a combination of exposure therapy and CBT and is getting very positive results. Treatment typically runs from 17-20 sessions and is usually done indi-

vidually although group treatment is an option.

Organizations concerned about our returning veterans are springing up to help. Beyond local mental health resources like Center for Behavioral Health, Vets can access information on the Web from www.veteransandfamilies.org, www.va.gov, www.nami.org/veterans, and similar sites specializing in healing the wounds of war. We can't let our soldiers continue to suffer. Let us gain a better understanding and be there for them as they were for us.

Vets

Continued from page one

Who are the homeless veterans?

The U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) says the nation's homeless veterans are mostly males (4 % are females). The vast majority are single, most come from poor, disadvantaged communities, 45% suffer from mental illness, and half have substance abuse problems. America's homeless veterans have served in World War II, Korean War, Cold War, Vietnam War, Grenada, Panama, Lebanon, Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan), Operation Iraqi Freedom, or the military's anti-drug cultivation efforts in South America. Forty-seven percent of homeless veterans served during the Vietnam Era. More than 67% served our country for at least three years and 33% were stationed in a war zone.

Why are veterans homeless?

In addition to the complex set of factors affecting all homelessness -- extreme shortage of affordable housing, livable income, and access to health care -- a large number of displaced and at-risk veterans live with lingering effects of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and substance abuse, compounded by a lack of family and social support networks.

A top priority is secure, safe, clean housing that offers a supportive environment which is free of drugs and alcohol.

While "most homeless people are single, unaffiliated men ... most housing money in existing federal homelessness programs, in contrast, is devoted to helping homeless families or homeless women with dependent children," according to "Is Homelessness a Housing Problem?" in *Understanding Homelessness: New Policy and Research Perspectives*, published by Fannie Mae Foundation in 1997.

Doesn't the Department of Veterans Affairs take care of homeless veterans?

To a certain degree, yes. According to the VA, in the years since it "began responding to the special needs of homeless veterans, its homeless treatment and assistance network has developed into the nation's largest provider of homeless services, serving more than 100,000 veterans annually."

With an estimated 400,000 veterans homeless at some time during the year, the VA reaches 25% of those in need ... leaving 300,000 veterans who must seek assistance from local government agencies and service organizations in their communities.

Since 1987, the VA's programs for homeless veterans have emphasized collaboration with community service providers to help expand services to more veterans in crisis. This partnership is credited with reducing the number of homeless veterans on any given day by nearly 25% over the last six years. For more information about VA homeless veteran programs, go to www.va.gov/homeless/.

What services do veterans need?

Veterans need a coordinated effort that provides secure housing and nutritional meals;

essential physical health care, substance abuse aftercare and mental health counseling; and personal development and empowerment. Veterans also need job assessment, training and placement assistance.

NCHV strongly believes that all programs to assist homeless veterans must focus on helping veterans reach the point where they can obtain and sustain employment.

What seems to work best?

The most effective programs for homeless and at-risk veterans are community-based, nonprofit, "veterans helping veterans" groups. Programs that seem to work best feature transitional housing with the camaraderie of living in structured, substance-free environments with fellow veterans who are succeeding at bettering themselves. Because government money for homeless veterans is currently limited and serves only one in 10 of those in need, it is critical that community groups reach out to help provide the support, resources and opportunities most Americans take for granted: housing, employment and health care.

There are about 250 community-based veteran organizations across the country that have demonstrated impressive success reaching homeless veterans. These groups are most successful when they work in collaboration with federal, state and local government agencies, other homeless providers, and veteran service organizations. Veterans who participate in these programs have a higher chance of becoming tax-paying, productive citizens again.

About Safety-Net

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Safety-Net is a free quarterly community newspaper coordinated by the Shalom Community Center in cooperation with other social service/nonprofit agencies as well as the City and County about programs and services offered by the agencies, City, and County. Funding for printing Safety-Net is provided by the City of Bloomington. Previous issues of Safety-Net can be accessed at www.shalomcommunitycenter.org.

We are interested in your comments

Safety-Net will start printing comments from readers in a special section beginning with the next issue. So, if you would like to write your views on the focus subject of a particular issue, or state your opinions regarding other programs, or advocate for changes, please do this. Send your comments to the editor at white@indiana.edu, and copy to Pam Kinnaman at pkshalom@ix.netcom.com. The word limit is 200 words. Please sign your name.

Vet services: Helpful, but in need of work

Interviews with veterans at Shalom Center reveal system's problems, successes

Interview with Ed Sylvester, veteran of the Vietnam War and the first Gulf War

Interviewer: Have you ever been homeless?

Ed: I'm homeless at the moment. That's why I'm here, to try and assist vets in the same situation. I'm living in a tent.

Interviewer: Do you have medical insurance of any kind?

Ed: Just through the VA.

Interviewer: Have you had any problems getting medical care?

Ed: No. The care that I received at the Indianapolis VA Center was fantastic. I've never had any care like I've had up there. The Bloomington VA Outreach Clinic needs some work. They have some problems that need to be addressed.

Interviewer: Are you employed right now?

Ed: Not at the moment.

Interviewer: Have you had problems finding work here in Bloomington?

Ed: I've had an extreme amount. I have a felony, and with that it is extremely hard to find a job. It is extremely hard to find housing. Indiana has passed a law that states that you cannot sue for housing discrimination or job discrimination. There's still so much problems with veterans that have felonies or even just regular felons. The law which states you cannot sue for housing or job discrimination should be gotten rid of. If other nationalities have access to all of the healthcare, welfare systems, why don't Americans? You've heard the term 'hire a vet?' Well, vets don't get hired when they've got felonies.

Interviewer: Is there anything you'd like to have changed specifically with respect to programs and services for veterans?

Ed: Yes. There's been quite a bit of information in the media as to how organizations are assisting veterans, homeless veterans, disabled – so far, when I just got out of the hospital, I am several months behind on the bills because of not being able to work, the hospital stay. I went to various organizations that stated they help veterans. They stated to me, "We can't help you. We can refer you to the trustee, we can refer you to... but we can't help you." As far as direct help, as far as food or finances just to help you to... let's say, gasoline vouchers so you can get to and from work if you've got a vehicle. I've called every organization that I can think of. I still have not received any

assistance from any of these groups that say "hey, we're good on helping the veterans." It's a put-up, I think, for the media, but nothing's being done.

Interviewer: Emergency resources are badly needed.

Ed: Right. The finances... they're not there. But as far as other education, counseling services... there are quite a few here in Bloomington, but to get in on an individual basis, which is what a lot of veterans need, even with the VA it's hard. The VA is overwhelmed with vets with mental issues that need to really be addressed. They put you in groups, but you can't really talk about things that bother you in a group. Most of us need individual counseling.

Interviewer: How often do you come to the Shalom Center?

Ed: I come to the Shalom Center when I'm in town because they provide pretty good services food-wise. If I make it here once or twice a week I'm doing good. They're doing a fantastic job.

Interviewer: So it's been a place you can get a meal a couple times a week maybe.

Ed: Yes, and it's friendly. The staff is fantastic. I've not had one problem with the staff from here.

Interview with Abraham D. Morales III, veteran of the Vietnam War

Interviewer: What does the Shalom Center mean to veterans?

Abraham: It's a place that they can get help if needed. If they are homeless they have shelter. They can eat lunch.

Interviewer: Do veterans have problems in obtaining medical care?

Abraham: Sometimes medical help is a problem.

Interviewer: Do veterans have problems in

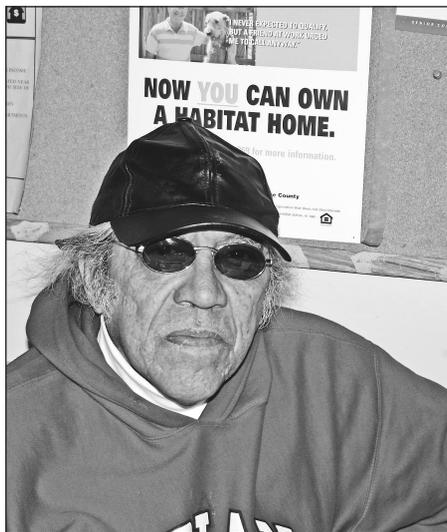


Photo by Pam Kinnaman

Vietnam veteran Abraham D. Morales III said many people still don't understand the war.

to educate people on the Vietnam War. Some people don't understand the Vietnam War. They think very poorly of Vietnam veterans. Some people still disrespect the Vietnam veterans, and they are called vulgar names. So, as I said, people should be educated about Vietnam veterans. My parents and family are proud of me. My son is proud of his dad. Vietnam veterans fought for freedom, just like any other war. But the Vietnam was just misunderstood.

Interview with Harley Wheatley, who was stationed in Germany during the Cold War

Interviewer: Are you now homeless or have you been homeless in Bloomington in the past?

Harley: I was homeless for a couple of years.

Interviewer: Have you had any problems in receiving medical care?

Harley: Just for my teeth.

Interviewer: Do you have any kind of medical insurance now?

Harley: I have nothing.

Interviewer: Where do you get your other medical care?

Harley: Myself. I just take care of myself. If it's something really super-major I'll figure out something.

Interviewer: Are you employed now?

Harley: Yes I am.

obtaining employment?

Abraham: Sometimes getting work is a problem.

Interviewer: What changes would you like to see made with respect to veterans?

Abraham: Sometimes getting the help you may need for veterans benefits or medical help is hard to do with different papers that might be needed.

Interviewer: What else would you like to talk about?

Abraham: We need

Interviewer: Have you had any problems in the past finding employment in Bloomington?

Harley: Yeah, lots. Since all the factories and all the really what I consider good-paying jobs have all gone, it's kind of like Allentown all over again.

Interviewer: Is there anything that you would like to have changed in respect to programs or services to veterans?

Harley: Everyone has to work through the VA in Indianapolis. A whole hour to get there, maybe maybe not you'll get seen and a whole hour back. They used to have a little medical staff here in Bloomington. I guess they must have done away with it.

Interviewer: Have you used the van that goes up to the hospital?

Harley: Us American veterans used to do that all the time, and they used to bring us sleeping bags and have warm clothing drives and all that stuff, but now it's stopped. I haven't seen the van around for a long time, and I really look for it.

Interviewer: What does the Shalom Center mean to you now?

Harley: A place where I can come see friends, get out of the weather, check a few things out, make phone calls. A place to go when you don't have anyplace else to go.

The veteran interviewed below preferred not to use his real name. Therefore, he is referred to as Barry. He served in Vietnam from 67-72.

Interviewer: Are you homeless right now or have you ever been homeless in the past?

Barry: Yes I am homeless right now.

Interviewer: Do you have any medical insurance?

Barry: I don't have nothing at all.

Interviewer: Are you employed now?

Barry: No ma'am. I've been looking for work but with my diabetes I don't think I can hold a job.

See "Interviews," page four

CBH

Continued from page two

Through the Center for Behavioral Health I was involved in an intensive day treatment program for substance abuse. This helped me learn how to live clean and sober. I was also assigned a therapist who helped me deal with serious issues that caused

me a lot of emotional pain. CBH even provided case management through which someone came to my house to help me with anything—from opening my mail to cleaning up a room in my house. This same case manager also led a group of her clients, including myself, to the YMCA where a weight-loss program was established. By my participation I was able to

lose 65 pounds in a year and a half. My involvement with CBH definitely gave me a greater quality of life. CBH even provided me with psychiatric counseling to help me with medications. Recently through CBH I was introduced to Harvest Employment (another CBH program) which helped me find gainful employment.

I cannot stress enough how CBH has changed my life for the better. To date, I have been drug and alcohol free for over five years and now live with hope for the future. My wish for CBH is that they continue to help people like myself and that I can continue to partake of their great services. Thank you CBH, for giving me back my life.

Interviews

Continued from page three

Interviewer: When you've looked for work, have you

had trouble finding jobs here?

Barry: Yeah. Also here a few months ago I did go on a trucking job and my sugar was so high... I held it for like a month, but I couldn't drive no more after that. I felt like I was going to die. I told the trucking company I wasn't feeling good. They told me to go ahead and go home – I don't have a home. I thought I was dying. I had to go see my daughter. I'm glad I did, she took me to the emergency room and my sugar was like 600. The doctor said I shouldn't have even been walking. They brought it down but I know it's 200 or 300 now. Also I try to get on SSI but you know how that goes. People take forever even though it is my money. You have to go through so much to get what you need around here.

Interviewer: Is there anything you'd like to see changed with respect to programs and services to veterans?

Barry: To me there's not enough awareness. There's a lot of veteran homeless around here. I'd like to see a little more of... get-togethers to let people know where here. I need help real bad. I would like to see a little more going on and upgrading.

Interviewer: How often do you come to the Shalom Center?

Barry: I make it up here everyday except those days I get real depressed and I don't want to get out of bed. I go just to get out. Even on weekends when I feel locked up... I gotta get out. I shower and get my clothes clean. I love coming up here. I really do. There's a lot of very interesting people here. I feel like I'm with a big family.

Interviewer: Anything else you'd like to say on what the Shalom Center means to you?

Barry: It means a whole lot. It really does. Since I've been here, Shalom's been a big help to me. I know it's sad, but I feel like I've got a little roof over my head. To Shalom, thank you for sleeping bags and blankets and whatever food I got. I'm hanging in there.

Terry Albrecht, a veteran of the Vietnam War

Interviewer: Where were you?

Terry: Right there where the big stuff was going on. Thailand. I can't remember every place; it's been a long time. Lost a buddy over there. We went to school together and went in at the same time together. He didn't make it back.

Interviewer: I'm sorry to hear that. Are you experiencing homelessness right now?

Terry: No, I got a place.

Interviewer: Have you ever been homeless here in Bloomington?

Terry: No.

Interviewer: Do you have any medical insurance?

Terry: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: Have you had any problems getting medical care?

Terry: No, I go to Indianapolis, the VA hospital. I had a triple bypass. They got me right on

To Shalom, thank you for sleeping bags and blankets and whatever food I got. I'm hanging in there.

-"Barry," a Vietnam veteran.



Photo by Pam Kinnaman

Vietnam veteran Terry Albrecht says he wishes the VA would help more people find a place to live.

Social Security disability.

Interviewer: Are you employed now?

Terry: No, I'm on disability. I can't – VA took my license and CDLs away from me. I can drive, but I can't drive a semi anymore.

Interviewer: When you were working did you ever have trouble finding employment?

Terry: Oh no.

Interviewer: And just not able to work now.

Terry: I can't drive, or... I just can't, they don't want me to lift anymore because of my heart.

Interviewer: Is there anything you'd like to see changed in the services and programs the VA provides?

Terry: I wish they would help more people get a place to live. Well, go up there to Indianapolis and they'll help you find a place. Another place in Tennessee – I have a daughter there, she had to take me there one time to get my blood tested. It's two times bigger than the one in Indianapolis. They got a, it's like a big apartment building on the side of it. Veterans don't have a place to live, they give you a place to live right there. They take care of you.

Interviewer: It'd be great to have something like that up here.

Terry: It's what they need up in Indianapolis.

Interviewer: How often do you come to the Shalom Center?

Terry: Almost every day.

Interviewer: What does it mean to you?

Terry: Lots of friends, people to talk to. Get tired of sitting at home all the time, nothing to do, so at least you can go out and do something.

Interview with Iris, veteran of the Korean War

Interviewer: Where were you stationed?

Iris: San Antonio, Texas.

Interviewer: Are you now homeless or have you ever been homeless?

Iris: No I've not.

Interviewer: Have you had any problems receiving medical care?

Iris: No.

Interviewer: Do you have medical insurance?

Iris: No, I have health care through the VA. This is why they opened the clinic in 2000 and I discontinued health insurance where I worked.

Interviewer: Are you employed now?

Iris: No, not now. I'm hoping it's not permanent.

Interviewer: Have you had problems finding employment in Bloomington?

Iris: I don't really think so.

Interviewer: How often do you come to the Shalom Center?

Iris: Sort of on and off. I make my plans at the last minute.

Interviewer: What does the Shalom Center mean to you?

Iris: I know what it is to be down and out and to feel helpless and be alone.

Dewey, a veteran of the Vietnam War, stayed in Fort Knox

Interviewer: What did you do stateside?

Dewey: My MOS was a tank turret mechanic but I worked as a supply clerk.

Interviewer: Are you experiencing homelessness or have you ever here in Bloomington?

Dewey: Yeah.

Interviewer: As a veteran, do you feel there should be better services?

Dewey: We need to start a shelter for veterans because there's really a lot more of them out here than what you know. According to a survey I read it's something like 1 in five but it's really like three out of four.

Interviewer: Have you had problems receiving medical care or dental care?

Dewey: Medical care no. No problem. It usually takes time, but I'm trying to get something going that way. I filed for disability Social Security because I broke my back. That's why I couldn't work. Things went downhill. I'm an electrician by trade for over 20 years and then to go to nothing. I couldn't get government assistance because I was a prior drug felon. So therefore I can't get section 8 housing, can't get food stamps. That's not right. That's one of the things they need to change.

Interviewer: So do you feel like that's the greatest hindrance to you that you have, the felony? What do you feel like is the most important thing that could change about the system.

Dewey: They need to change the policy on drug felons. They're not going to take the government financial aid and buy drugs. That's the government's view on it. If you get food stamps or this you're going to be trading them for drugs. That's not true because you got people like me that don't do the drugs.

Interviewer: How long ago was your drug felony?

Dewey: Um, '92.

Interviewer: Is there anything else specifically you wish would change?

Dewey: They need to get a lot of things changed actually. The whole probation system needs totally redone. If they change the probation system around to legalize marijuana that would take a bunch of criminals out of the jail. They talk about wanting to save money, that's how you save money. Figure out how you did it with the alcohol, how you got control of it, do the same thing with marijuana. If you study other countries where the crime rate is like zero, that's where it's legalized.

Interviewer: Do you feel like drugs and alcohol are a problem among veterans?

Dewey: Alcohol more than anything. The people want to drink their problems away, but it doesn't work. Most people realize it doesn't help. People just get the same problems again, plus they got a hangover. So I don't drink. I quit that a long time ago.

Interviewer: Has your injury kept you from finding employment or do you have trouble as a vet?

Dewey: My age and my injury that I had. When I filed for disability social security they said I was a high school graduate and no matter what I could do something else. But at the time I was taking 125 of morphine a day and 80 milligrams of Flexoril a day. There's no employer that's going to hire you on that. You gotta be realistic on that. If this guy's taking that much medication there's no one gonna hire him and you can't work on the computer because your mind's not right. They need to change that around too, to where a guy's got a chance. If there is a job that someone would take somebody like that, it... laughs. But they're never gonna do it. They want you to go through a group of their own doctors. I've been to the best doctors, one of the best neurologists in the world. Their doctors aren't going to be any better than those professional. Those doctors do a really brief examination – boom boom boom, you're fine. It don't work like that. The veterans, all the way around... you get so frustrated, you have to go through the VA hospital for anything. This outpatient clinic down here is ok. But to have to go up there for any kind of medical treatment... plan on staying up there four hours or more. If you're homeless, you don't have transportation... they furnish transportation, but only until like noon. So if you have an afternoon appointment, where you going to stay? I talked to a couple VA reps about that. Make it to where if I go up there and I know I got to see an eye doctor and I have to do this and that, make sure that I can stay two weeks somewhere so I can get everything done and come back down here. They don't have anything like that. It's impossible almost to get up there.

Interviewer: Do you still suffer pain from your injuries?

Dewey: All the time. I just don't want to live with it after a while.

Interviewer: How often do you come to the Shalom Center and what does it do for you?

Dewey: They do a lot for me. Everybody does. They're very helpful. They even served a thanksgiving meal. It was pretty good. They've done sleeping bags, clothing, things to eat...

See "Interviews," page five

VA Medical Center: Health care for homeless vets

By Sarah Souter, MSW, LSW. Homeless Team Social Worker

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Indianapolis, IN 46222
(317) 988-2623

As a social worker for the Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center in Indianapolis, I assist veterans on a daily basis with their psychosocial and medical needs. I work on a team through the Psychiatry Department called Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) providing outreach and housing opportunities for veterans with a mental health diagnosis and/or chemical dependency issue. The VA Homeless Programs are unique because they make up the largest integrated network of services in the United States. In the VA's partnership with other government agencies and community-based nonprofit organizations, it has made ending homelessness among veterans a top priority.

The veterans I encounter often come to our team with a feeling of powerlessness and hopelessness. They often have an overwhelming number of obstacles and challenges to face to end their homelessness. Our team has resources at our fingertips allowing us to collaborate with veterans to create a treatment plan to meet the goals they set for themselves. Many times, in just the first meeting with homeless veterans seeking services with our program, I can see a spark of hope when they hear the housing and resources available through our program and partner agencies.

The HCHV team provides outreach twice a week at our off-site facility where veterans can come in during open hours to see a social worker on our team. A social worker talks with the veteran privately to discuss their situation and goals for the future.

See "VA," page six

Volunteer van drivers needed

While the Veterans Administration clinic in Bloomington can take care of many medical needs of our county's military veterans, there are some procedures that can only be done at the facility in Indianapolis. The Monroe County Veterans Affairs Office has a van available five days a week to take veterans to the Roudebush VA Medical Center in Indianapolis, but volunteer drivers are needed. Many of the veterans who use the van services have no other way to get to their appointments and would otherwise have to go without treatment. An orientation is required. Call for more details on requirements. Minimum age is 16. Interested volunteers with a good driving record can call Phil Deckard at 332-4684. (Leave a message and your call will be returned.) (www.co.monroe.in.us/veteransaffairs).

Interviews

Continued from page four

Interview with Michael Taylor, veteran of the Vietnam War

Interviewer: Are you experiencing homelessness now or have you in the past?

Michael: I've been experiencing homelessness right now and I'm at Backstreet Missions.

Interviewer: How has that been for you as a veteran? Have you had trouble getting help?

Michael: Yeah, trouble here in Bloomington. I've had contact with people in Indianapolis and they found section eight housing up there within a month. I'm going up there tomorrow to check in and I'm going to the Roudebush VA Medical Center. I had a small stroke last week. I'm going to go in there - I've had pains in my shoulder and arms and from the hips down is numb. It's like I'm walking on stilts.

Interviewer: Have you had trouble finding medical care as a veteran?

Michael: Down here I have. I was in Florida for a month taking care of my uncle a few years ago. I went to the Veterans hospital in Florida and in one day I had my veterans ID card, I had my prescriptions - which I haven't

been able to get since I've been here - in one day. A lot more efficient down there.

Interviewer: So medical care in Florida was great but it's not here in Bloomington.

Michael: Very slow. I think Indianapolis Roudebush VA Hospital was a lot more efficient.

Interviewer: You said the medical care up here can be slow, but is it efficient? Have you been taken care of, at least?

Michael: You got like a month or two wait.

Interviewer: Have you had trouble finding employment as a veteran? Are you currently employed?

Michael: No. And I'm 61 years old. There's age discrimination here.

Interviewer: Have you had trouble finding employment only since you've gotten older?

Michael: Yeah, like the last couple years at fast food restaurants and that kind of stuff.

Interviewer: What services do you feel should be offered for veterans or what part of the system do you think has made the system for veterans hard? What about here in Indiana? What could change to help you or anyone?

Michael: Make it more efficient and quicker.

Interviewer: The medical care, specifically?

Program wants vets to tell their stories to local youth

By Nicole Swindler, Program Development Associate, Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)

630 W Edgewood Drive
Ellettsville, IN 47429
(812) 876-3383 or (800) 844-1010

Voicing Experiences through Service (VETS) is a program that supports youth with disabilities (ages 14-21) as they build relationships with veterans and record oral histories for submission to the National Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress. Funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service and housed at the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community (IIDC), VETS is partnering with local schools and community organizations to bring students and veterans together in this exciting effort. The project is a service learning experience for the students, as well as a mentoring and volunteer opportunity for veterans.

Service learning is greatly beneficial to students with disabilities, who may have limited access to early work experiences and community participation. These opportunities are important in helping students identify career options and transition to adult life. Furthermore, students will develop self-determination and self-advocacy, while enhancing their communication skills. For the volunteer veterans, VETS provides the opportunity to actively engage in a mentoring relationship with their interviewees, while recording their oral histories and sharing stories of military service for the benefit of future generations.

The VETS project is being implemented in Maryland, Vermont and throughout the state of Indiana. Locally, VETS has plans to work with students in the Monroe County Community School Corporation, Richland Bean Blossom School Corporation, and Spencer-Owen Community School Corporation. The veteran volunteers are being recruited by the students themselves, at Indiana University and through the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), a national volunteer program sponsored locally by Area 10 Agency on Aging. Currently, VETS is being conducted at individual schools, but a joint VETS/RSVP special event is planned for late spring of 2008.

Volunteer veterans are still needed for the project, which is estimated to conclude in 2009. Additionally, VETS is open to talking with schools and community organizations whose students may learn, benefit and grow through conducting the interviews. Interested veterans and organizations are encouraged to contact Nicole Swindler at the number listed at the beginning of this article for more information.

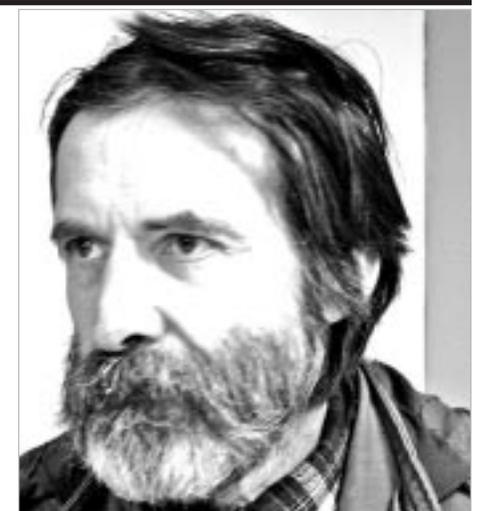


Photo by Pam Kinnaman

Veteran Charles had this message: "As a vet, I am glad that places like this exist! Feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and caring for the down and out is an inseparable part of the Great Commission. When people find themselves on the fringes of society, a mission like Shalom is about the only thing that keeps people like me from completely losing hope. Thank you for the good work you all do here. God bless you! May your banner wave long and high for all to see, even when the world doesn't seem to notice. T.A.M. your energy is well spent!!!"

Michael: Yeah.

Interviewer: Are there other social services you wish were provided?

Michael: I'm trying to get my Social Security early because I have seizures. I don't know how that's going to work out. I just hope it's better up in Indy. I know that the Veterans Administration in Indianapolis helps you find jobs. I can get into Roudebush VA Hospital and get the problems that I'm having physically taken care of, hopefully. Get my medications and just go from there.

Interviewer: Is there one thing besides better medical care you wish were provided?

Michael: It would be if they were quicker. VA outpatient thing on Landmark, they said I could make an appointment with them I could come in in a month or two. I'd be dead in a month. Just more efficient.

Interviewer: How often do you come to Shalom Center?

Michael: I come down here every day.

Interviewer: So it's been helpful for you?

Michael: Yes, yes.

Interviewer: What does Shalom mean to you?

Michael: It provides for me. Food. Come down here during the day and it's warm shelter. Got case workers that help.

Stepping Stones: A safe haven for homeless youth

By Chuck Holloway, board member, Stepping stones

(812) 339-9771

www.steppingstones-inc.org

Teens are an increasing population facing homelessness, caused mainly by family dysfunction and breakdown. Some youth are in foster care and are seeking a means to transition out of it. Other teens leave home to escape domestic violence, physical and/or sexual abuse. Too many teens experience severe neglect in their homes, and are often pushed out by parents or guardians regardless of whether they have an alternative place to live.

Stepping Stones, established in 2004 by its current executive director, Sheri Benham, is one agency in Bloomington that exists to provide shelter and services for homeless youth. Stepping Stones provides transitional housing and supportive services for up to six youths aged 16-20 experiencing homelessness. The agency has provided housing for 24 local youth since opening its first apartment in 2005.

Stepping Stones programs and services include providing: furnished two-resident apartments, a staffed community center, life skills coaching, job skills training,

educational support both for high school and post high school study, case management and counseling, social event support, and ultimately guidance in obtaining permanent housing.

Many youth may not consider themselves to be homeless, but in fact they are. They often drift from place to place, staying with friends and friends of friends. Often they are referred to as "couch surfers". Most of these youth come from these dysfunctional homes, and may have even experienced homelessness with their families sometime at an earlier age, before they reached teenage years. This is a critical time for teenagers, and the years from 16 to 20 are a significantly vulnerable time - especially for youth at risk of becoming homeless. It is difficult for teens to focus adequate attention on their personal, social, and educational development if the very basic need of having a safe and secure place to live is not available to them.

At the time of this writing, Stepping Stones currently provides transitional housing for five teenagers, filling all but one available space. Applications from

the waiting list are being reviewed in order to reassign this last spot. A quick look at some background information of nine of the most recent residents at Stepping Stones can provide a snapshot of who is being helped through Stepping Stones. Educational backgrounds show four high school graduates, four finishing their senior year, and the ninth still in high school. Two of these residents have started college study locally, and plan to resume course work this year. Six residents are employed, one is a full-time parent, and two are currently unemployed.

I was asked to become a member of the Stepping Stones Board of Directors this fall, and Sheri thought it might be worthwhile to say why I agreed to accept the invitation. In my work as principal of Aurora Alternative High School, I have witnessed an increase in the numbers of high school age youth whose goal of finishing high school has been sabotaged by this issue of unstable housing. For years we have seen student after student, whose goals, desires, and abilities all clearly are in place for successful academic achievement - leave our school for no other

reason than they have such unstable home lives that attending school is impossible. All the reasons mentioned previously here - parental neglect or abuse, poverty, family dysfunction, couch surfing - contribute to this phenomenon. It is heart-breaking to see kids who clearly want to graduate from high school miss out simply because they don't have a stable home.

Sheri completed her masters degree practicum several years ago with us at Aurora, supervised by our then social worker, Greg Marchant. The three of us spent hours and hours discussing this problem, trying to find some solution to help keep kids in school. Ultimately, Sheri took this issue head on, and made her vision a reality. The numbers of kids served at any one time may be small relative to the need, but definitely Stepping Stones has begun to effectively address this community problem. I am glad I have an opportunity to work more closely in support of this vision.

Please feel free to contact Stepping Stones at 330-9771, or the website at www.steppingstones-inc.org. for more information on how you can help support the fight against homelessness for our community youth.

Homebound service brings MCPL to the home

By Ann Segraves, Homebound Service, and Margaret Harter, Community Relations, Monroe County Public Library

(812) 349-3084

www.mcpl.info/outreach/homebound.html

A community service since 1972

Monroe County Public Library's Homebound Service has been serving patrons since 1972. It was one of the first homebound programs in Indiana, and has provided uninterrupted service for 35 years. It provides over 70 patrons with personalized selection and delivery of library materials.

How Homebound Service works

The library makes available all regu-

larly circulating items, including large print books, books on cassette and CD, magazines, music CDs, and movies to patrons who are unable to make it into the Main Library, Ellettsville Branch, or the Bookmobile. Any Monroe County resident confined to his or her residence due to illness, physical disability, or significant transportation problems can request Homebound Service.

Once every four weeks, the Community Outreach department delivers materials based on the patron's preferences and requests and retrieves the previous month's items. "We maintain a personal

relationship with our patrons and tailor our selections to their requests, but we also sometimes surprise them with items they hadn't considered," says Ann Segraves, who has been coordinating the service for 20 years.

Making a difference

Those who receive Homebound Service are the best ones to express the difference this services makes in their lives.

Addie Brown Robinson, a recipient of deliveries for five years, writes: "It's my idea of a gift of compassion. This service

affords the most caring attention to the homebound population."

Peggy Moran's daughter emailed her mother's comments: "The loss of mobility (vehicular, muscular, or mindful) is probably the most narrowing of physical failings, dooming us octogenarians, and our jeopardized juniors, to the mercy (however tender) of cousins and comrades. Among the places one would most sorely miss is that hot spot of learning, entertainment and community confabulations. The library—of course.

See "MCPL," page seven

VA

Continued from page five

The HCHV program allows

veterans up to two years of transitional housing with one of our partner community based agencies, allowing veterans a structured environment to address their emotional and/or chemical dependency issues. During this period of time, veterans are provided the opportunity to overcome barriers and improve their quality of life. In addition to the housing, veterans have access to other supportive services including medical care, substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, transportation assistance, employment

assistance, vocational rehabilitation, help obtaining public assistance, access to basic needs, and assistance with compensation and disability claims among other services.

From my time working in the community with homeless providers, I have noticed a number of positive differences with homeless programs at the VA. For one, the VA provides immediate access to housing. This allows a stable environment for the veterans as they work to achieve goals. Another difference is the access to resources. The VA system is different in the sense that the majority of the programs and services veterans need are within the

VA system. In contrast, in the community for example, an individual who is homeless and in need of substance abuse treatment or vocational development would have to be referred and apply with different community programs and agencies for those services rather than one location. For veterans, those services are available at the VA and enrollment often just takes a few clicks on the mouse. Finally, the VA's emphasis on meeting outcomes leads to better accountability, access, efficiency, effectiveness, and satisfaction.

In summary, as a social worker with the HCHV program within the VA system

I work with homeless veterans to end homelessness, address psychosocial and medical needs, and work for a better quality of life. I consider it an honor to serve veterans as a social worker at the Roubidoux VA Medical Center. It is my goal as a VA employee and social worker that each veteran feels they have been treated with compassion, respect, professionalism, and integrity. The committed staff of our team and the VA's unique system and availability of resources has led to positive outcomes, satisfaction with care, and progress towards ending homelessness among veterans.

Adult education: More awareness, more support

By Melanie Hunter, Marketing/Public Relations Coordinator, MCCSC Adult Education at Broadview Learning Center

(812) 330-7731x3
www.adult.mccsc.edu

Adult Education in Indiana has always been a part of the Department of Education. With its focus on basic skills such as reading, writing, and math, the Adult Education system is designed to meet the special needs of those seeking another chance. As a community-based program, its local providers serve communities through innovative programming. It also focuses on the workplace, with workforce education being a priority initiative. In 2005, more than 15,000 employed Hoosiers attended classes at local programs. In the Bloomington area, for example, MCCSC Adult Education has worked with companies such as Cook and GE to help their employees attain basic skills and work better at their tasks.

The system, as it currently exists, allows Hoosiers to attend classes at more than 350 sites around the state. This is criti-

cal, because many students who enroll in Adult Ed classes are poor; some work more than one job just to get by, and transportation is an issue. Single parents, young adults needing an alternative way to learn, and people with disabilities or limited English skills all benefit from such easy availability of classes and licensed teachers in their communities.

Consider the worth of the GED diploma: more than 95% of colleges, universities, and employers regard it as equivalent to a traditional high school diploma; one out of seven high school graduates in the US holds a GED; and more than 30% of people with a high school diploma are unable to pass today's GED test.

We can join in to help keep Adult Education strong and available to all the many who use it and need it. First, write your state legislators before the 2008 legislative session in January and tell them how important you think Adult Ed is in its present form to our community. The web-

site is <http://www.state.in.us/legislative/>. Addresses and phone numbers are:

Indiana House of Representatives
200 W. Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2786
Ph. (800) 382-9842

Indiana State Senate
200 W. Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2785
Ph. (800) 382-9467

Or write to Governor Daniels, Statehouse, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2797 (Ph. 317-232-4567; <http://www.in.gov/gov/contact/index.html>). Identify yourself,

MCCSC Adult Education at Broadview Learning Center offers:

- FREE Adult Basic Education & GED Preparation classes
- FREE Teen Learning Center programs
- FREE English as a Second Language classes
- FREE Basic Skills & Beginning Literacy classes
- Evening Computer Classes
- Secondary High School Evening Credit (NovaNet) classes
- Volunteer opportunities
- And much more!

Call 330-7731 for information, or visit them at 705 W. Coolidge Drive (between Rogers Street and Rockport Road).

be specific, and say in your own words how well the current Adult Ed system works for you or people you know, and ask for a response.

Second, you can write a letter to the editor of the local newspaper expressing their support.

Third, spread the word and get others involved.

The goal of Adult Education in Indiana is to keep the future bright and available for the more than 43,000 Hoosiers who got help from Adult Ed classes last year, and all those who have yet to seek help.

Homelessness, and what can be done about it

By Cherie Afanador, Executive Director, Martha's House, Inc.

(812) 332-1444
(812) 355-6841

PO Box 2115, Bloomington, IN 47402
919 S. Rogers Street, Bloomington, IN 47403

At a national level, between 2.5 and 3.5 million people experienced homelessness for some period of time throughout the year. Families and children are among the fastest growing segments and make up about half of the homeless population. Approximately half of homeless women and children are fleeing domestic violence.

Among the individual adult population, a disproportionate amount of veterans and persons suffering mental illness, physical disabilities and addiction disorders experience homelessness.

Martha's House provides emergency shelter and permanent supportive housing. Martha's House is an emergency homeless shelter for adult men and

women. Additionally, Martha's House operates a permanent supportive housing program for chronically homeless, disabled individuals and families. Last year Martha's House served 295 individuals for a total 8,097 nights of respite in its emergency shelter; and provided permanent supportive housing for 11 individuals and 4 families.

Homelessness and poverty are inextricably linked. Low-income people are frequently unable to pay for all the basic necessities such as housing, food, child-care, health care and education. Difficult choices must be made when resources are limited. For many folks, the reality is that they are just one illness, accident or paycheck away from homelessness.

Poverty is not merely the result of unemployment. In fact, experts note the growth in real wages is attributable to people working increased hours. This is often true for low-wage workers who

compensate for the lack of a living wage by working more. Additionally, low-wage workers have been hit hard by declining manufacturing jobs; weakened unions; the expansion of lower paying service industries; globalization; increased nonstandard work such as temporary and part-time employment; and jobs with stagnant or falling incomes which offer less or no benefits.

Simultaneously, there has been a decrease in the value and availability of public assistance. Recent policy changes have reduced or eliminated public assistance for low-income individuals. Contrary to popular belief, welfare does not provide relief from poverty. Current Temporary Assistance to Needy Families and Food Stamps combined are below the poverty level in every state.

Other factors contributing to homelessness is the lack of affordable housing and the limited availability of

housing assistance programs. Fewer than one in four families receiving welfare live in public housing or receive a voucher to help pay for private rentals. At the same time, a strong economy has caused rents to soar, putting housing out of reach for the poorest Americans.

In Monroe County the median monthly housing cost is \$689. Good budgeting dictates 30% of income should be spent on housing. A person working a full-time job while earning minimum wage will spend almost 70% of their income for housing in Monroe County. Persons with disabilities and receiving Supplemental Security Income will also spend an average of 70% of their income on housing. Low income and the high cost of housing place many people in our community at risk for homelessness.

See "Martha's House," page eight

MCPL
Continued from page six

"But despair not. If you are lucky enough to hang out

within the purview of the Monroe County Public Library, Ann Segraves and her stellar staff who man the Homebound Service are toiling tirelessly and with gifted acquaintance about both the library's considerable holdings and with an educated eye at the patron's preferred reading.

And they deliver. To your very doorstep. Each and every month, they dispense an amalgam of books, tapes, films, and DVDs. So whittle away, world, I've got

the Homebound Service to stretch my horizons, bolster my brain, and light up the great indoors."

Volunteers can help

"It's a different type of commitment than that of many other volunteer positions at the library. We look for interested people who can volunteer for a full year to be able to develop a relationship with the homebound patron," says Chris Jackson, Outreach Manager. "While the service we offer is delivery of library materials, often the relationship becomes at least as important, both to the patron and the

volunteer." Volunteers must complete a training session, be able to give 2-4 hours per month for deliveries, and provide their own transportation.

Contact Information

To find out more about Homebound Service, call Ann Segraves at 349-3084, or go to www.mcpl.info/outreach/homebound.html to fill out an application to receive service or to volunteer.

Outreach at MCPL

Homebound Service is part of the library's Outreach Department, which

provides library materials to many county residents through the Bookmobile, Outreach Van, and jail service:

- The Bookmobile makes 27 weekly stops throughout the county.
- The Outreach Van provides browsing collections to nursing homes, senior activity centers, senior living facilities, and licensed childcare centers, as well as to the St. Paul Catholic Center, where it brings Spanish language and English materials to a primarily Hispanic clientele.
- Through a cooperative agreement with the Monroe County Correctional Center, the library selects materials for and staffs a collection at the jail for inmates.

A community coming together to build homes

By Noma Maier, Associate Director, Habitat for Humanity of Monroe County

213 E. Kirkwood Avenue
(812) 331-4069
www.monroecountyhabitat.org

Habitat for Humanity of Monroe County is a nonprofit, ecumenical Christian organization. Its mission is to build simple, decent homes with people in need, guided by the philosophy of, "no interest, no profit." Habitat charges no interest on its mortgages and sells the houses for no profit. By doing this, Habitat hopes to eliminate poverty housing in Monroe County.

Habitat's motto is "A Hand Up, Not a Handout." Habitat serves families in Monroe County who are living in inadequate housing. These families have an income, but do not make enough to secure

a bank loan. Habitat works with families of all backgrounds. Applicants just need a government issued identification number in order to apply for a Habitat house (for example a social security number or taxpayer identification number).

Habitat is not a give-away program, but a joint venture between volunteers and partner families, or homeowners. Partner families are required to participate in the construction of their own new home and to help other prospective partner families build their homes. The volunteer labor helps keep the cost of the homes at a minimum.

The money to build Habitat homes comes from contributions from local churches, citizens, businesses, and other sponsors. Government funding is

Upcoming Habitat Events

January

Tuesday, January 8th: Homeowner Information Meeting (First United Methodist Church- Room 219) at 6:00 p.m.

February

Saturday, February 2nd: Homeowner Information Meeting (First United Methodist Church- Room 219) at 10:00 a.m.

March

Tuesday, March 4th: Homeowner Information Meeting (First United Methodist Church- Room 219) at 6:00 p.m.

accepted for land or infrastructure development. Families pay back a zero interest mortgage over 15-25 years. That money goes into a fund which helps to pay for more houses.

The Habitat office is located at 213 East Kirkwood Avenue, 47408. For additional information or to apply for a home, contact Habitat at the information listed at the beginning of this article.

The Healthy Indiana Plan is coming soon!

By Nancy Woolery, Health Projects Manager, City of Bloomington, Community and Family Resources Department

The Healthy Indiana Plan (HIP) is a new, affordable health insurance program for low-income uninsured adult Hoosiers. HIP was passed by the State Legislature and signed into law in April 2007. The program offers comprehensive health coverage that includes doctor visits, mental health services, and prescription drugs. The program is sponsored by the State and only requires minimal monthly contributions from the participant. HIP is for low-income adults who are without health insurance or access to it, and fall within 22-200% of the Federal Poverty Level (for example, a family of four can

make \$41,300.00). Participants must also be uninsured for at least 6 months. If an adult works for an employer who offers health insurance, then this person would not be eligible for the Healthy Indiana Plan, even if the employee has not enrolled into their employer's plan. Parents or guardians of children in the Hoosier Healthwise program are likely eligible for HIP. If a child is currently enrolled in the Hoosier Healthwise Program, the parents should receive a letter from the Family Social Services Administration stating that they may also be eligible for health care coverage if they are uninsured.

HIP will be available in January 2008. The State will begin accepting applications in mid-December. Applications are available online at www.HIP.in.gov and at a variety of community enrollment centers. Applications can also be requested by calling toll free, 877-GET-HIP-9 (877-438-4479). Available in the spring of 2008 is the Healthy Indiana Plan where uninsured individuals with incomes above 200% of the Federal Poverty Level may buy-in to HIP. The insurance rates will be based on age, gender, and health status, and participants will pay the full cost.

Enrollees will enroll in one of the two plans provided by two insurers, MDwise and Anthem Blue Cross & Blue Shield. Enrollment for HIP is limited due to available funding. HIP has funding to cover approximately 130,000 Hoosiers a year. So please, don't wait to enroll if you think you are eligible for the program. If you are unsure, please call the toll free phone number or visit the website listed above, or email your questions to hip-info@fssa.in.gov. You can also contact me Nancy Woolery at the City of Bloomington, 349-3430 for more information.

The YMCA: Exercise and more!

By Sara Herold, Marketing Director, Monroe County YMCA

2125 S Highland Ave
812-332-5555
www.monroecountyymca.org

The Monroe County YMCA is committed to building strong kids, strong families, and strong communities by providing programs based on four character values— caring, honesty, respect and responsibility.

We live our not for profit mission daily by providing life changing programs and services for all ages, faiths, races, backgrounds and abilities. We have the unique opportunity to touch the lives of infants

through seniors throughout Monroe County. The YMCA turns no one away due to the inability to pay. The YMCA active fundraising efforts help provide membership and program scholarship for people in need of financial assistance to participate.

The YMCA works to meet the needs of our community through a team of caring staff and generous volunteers. Our programs and services include summer camp, preschool, youth and adult sports, swim lessons, health and fitness classes, strength training and cardio equipment, water aerobics, yoga, pilates and more. All provided

in a family-friendly atmosphere. Joining is just the beginning.

The YMCA organization has been part of Monroe County since 1891, offering people of the community a place to come together in a Christian atmosphere. Years later, Bill Cook, of Cook Inc, decided that the YMCA needed a place where people could come together not only to build strength in the community, but where its members could build strong minds, bodies, and spirits. In 1981 the Monroe County YMCA opened its doors, providing a permanent home for the organization.

The YMCA facility was a success and just 4 years later the first expansion began. A larger childcare area was created, along with a warm water teaching pool. A second expansion took place in which a youth and family gym added even more to the repertoire. Now, in 2007, the Monroe County YMCA serves more than 11,000 members, is one of the largest YMCAs in the state of Indiana, and is still growing. One of the newest programs involves adapted swimming and Martial Arts. The Monroe County YMCA has made its name as a place where the community can come together, have fun, and stay healthy.

Martha's House

Continued from page seven

So what can you do to help end homelessness?

Consider volunteering your professional expertise and skills at a homeless shelter; contact a shelter to ask for their wish list and organize a supplies drive;

encourage your company, school or place of worship to hire those experiencing homelessness; support political leaders who address poverty issues with smart, innovative policies; contribute financially to homeless organizations or organize a group event benefiting a homeless organization; and invite an expert on homeless

issues to speak to your civic, educational or religious group. Ending homelessness begins with understanding the issues and working together as a community.

You can also participate in the Martha's House "Adopt A Bed" campaign. It costs Martha's House \$20 per day to offer one bed for one night of shel-

ter. Martha's House operates a 28-bed facility, with 22 beds for men and 6 beds for women. Start off the New Year by making a meaningful difference in the lives of those experiencing homelessness. Sponsor a bed at Martha's House and provide someone with the gift of safe shelter and the hope for a new beginning.

Catholic Charities expands access to counseling

By. Marsha McCarty, Director, Catholic Charities Bloomington

(812) 332-1262
631 N. College Avenue
mmccarty@CatholicCharitiesBtown.org

Our mission is to expand access to quality mental health counseling to everyone in our community including those who may have limitations on their ability to pay or other challenges in accessing services.

The need to increase access without increasing cost

As more families lose health care insurance coverage or, even if they maintain some coverage, experience higher out of pocket expenses for health care, accessing mental health counseling when needed has become increasingly difficult for many. And, ability to pay is only one of the barriers to receiving mental health services. Transportation is often a barrier, especially with the rising cost of gasoline. Being a non-English speaker, not knowing how to find appropriate services, or lack of awareness about the kinds of services available can also limit access. CCB, like many small not for profit agencies, runs on a tight budget and must always be looking for ways to increase services without incurring larger costs. The provision of mental health services requires the services of a professional trained staff and an appropriate setting for the services. How do we meet this challenge?

Taking services out into the community

One way of increasing access is to take our services to the people who may need them. This also can reduce cost for our agency when another agency has appropriate space that can be used to provide the services. Persons experiencing homelessness are under high levels of stress and may need counseling. Catholic Charities Bloomington is currently able to place counselors at Martha's House, an emergency housing shelter, and at Stepping Stones, a transitional housing program for youth experiencing homelessness.

Bloomington Area Birth Services is another site seeking group counseling for their clients on-site. A counselor on-site will be working with new mothers in both group and individual sessions to help reduce post partum stress and to enhance the developing parent-child relationship. This takes the counseling to a site where new parents are receiving other services thereby increasing access and increasing the possibility of reaching parents who might not have sought services otherwise.

Removing the language barrier

Bloomington is the home to a rising number of Spanish speaking residents. Providing the professional mental health services of bi-lingual, Spanish speaking therapists is one of the ways CCB strives to reach this population. This needs to be combined, however, with significant, ongoing outreach with other persons in the community who provide support and services to Bloomington's Latino population. Catholic Charities has joined forces with multiple Latino programming agencies in Bloomington to provide a greater diversity of services for this population. Collaboration efforts with El Centro, a Latino advocacy and programming community agency, has enabled Catholic Charities to come to a better understanding of the economic and political struggles of this population. We

are also in collaboration with Mujeres en Connexion, a Latina women's group, where we have disseminated information about our services. Middle Way House and the RISE have also been collaborators as our bilingual therapist has provided direct services to clients in these programs at their location. Lastly, our bilingual counselor has begun collaborating with school corporations in the Bloomington area conducting culturally competent academic, intellectual, and behavioral assessments as well as consulting with school staff on immigration and acculturation as they pertain to academic and school success

Counselors in training

Hiring and maintaining a professional staff is the primary requirement of a mental health counseling program. This is costly and can often be appropriately enhanced by utilizing the services of interns and practicum students from IU and other universities who are seeking to gain work experience while working toward a graduate degree in their chosen field. Pairing counselors in training with CCB's experienced staff can expand services. For example, two interns who are completing their Master's degrees in Counseling are available at Martha's House in the evenings to meet with residents. They are supervised by CCB's director, Dr. Marsha McCarty, who is a licensed psychologist. Dr. McCarty and the interns also offer stress management classes and other programs, such as how to prepare for job interviews. A new program at Pinnacle School, will be staffed by a staff therapist but will also utilize the services of interns and practicum students to expand the number of students we can serve. Trainees allow us to run more groups, do more observations in schools, talk to more teachers and have co-therapists to work with families. Students bring a wealth of knowledge, dedication, and energy to the work we do.

Partnering with other agencies

When Oaktree Counseling asked CCB to partner in the development of a group for boys, we were eager to participate. This group will involve partnering with Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Monroe County and the Boys and Girls Club to offer a ten week program early next year called "Passport to Manhood." This group will include boys 11 to 14 years of age who can benefit from a program that involves both counseling and a variety of community experiences that might not otherwise be available to them. This program will reach the clients of several agencies, be housed in a variety of locations, and will be staffed by counselors in training under the supervision of several trained professionals. This will be provided at no cost to the boys and their families. The partnering of the four agencies make this kind of program much more possible. When agencies in our community partner, everyone benefits. We are fortunate to live in a community where this is a common occurrence.

These are some of the ways the Catholic Charities Bloomington seeks to enhance our ability to reach the people who most need our services. We find the work challenging and exciting. We are fortunate to work in a community that supports, in many ways, both monetarily and through volunteerism, the work we do. As they say at PBS, thank you.

Local HIV services collaborate and expand services

By Emily Brinegar, MSW, LSW, Positive Link Prevention Coordinator

Bloomington Hospital Positive Link is south central Indiana's AIDS service organization. Positive Link provides both prevention services and case management for those living with HIV/AIDS. As the year draws to an end, staff continues planning for the 2008 year and is looking forward to expansion of services.

Due to steady rates of new HIV infection, and recognition of the importance of early detection of HIV, Positive Link received additional funding for HIV prevention, education and testing in 2005. Prior to this time Positive Link employed only one part-time HIV test counselor. Since 2005 Prevention services

have expanded to include one full-time employee and two half-time employees. This increase in staffing allowed for additional HIV testing hours to be added and for Positive Link to begin providing more HIV education and testing in the community. Positive Link currently provides HIV education and/or testing in 17 facilities throughout Monroe, Owen, Greene, Lawrence, Brown and Bartholomew counties. In addition, Positive Link staff participate in numerous health fairs, festivals and other community events in order to provide information on all of their services.

With funding for all health services

becoming increasingly sparse, Positive Link Program Manager, Jill Stowers, knew that in order for PL to remain competitive and receive funding to continue prevention services, collaboration and thoughtful planning would be key. "Working in the Bloomington Community, we are fortunate to have wonderful partnerships. The Monroe County Health Department and Positive Link came to the table to develop a unique plan that allows for expansion of services in our region, while decreasing overhead costs, by combining our programs."

See "Link," page 10

Bloomington Hospital Positive Link

Address: 333 East Miller Drive
Phone: (812) 353-3269; (812) 353-9150

Walk-in hours: Monday and Friday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (call for appointment outside walk-in hours).

MCHD Futures Clinic

Address: 338 South Walnut Street
Phone: (812) 349-7343

Hours (by appointment only):
Tuesday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Thursday
Thursday 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The Shalom Center: A community treasure

By Patricia Andrews, Shalom Board President

In September of this year, the Shalom Community Center celebrated its 5th anniversary as an independent 501 (3) (c) non-profit charitable organization. Most Bloomington citizens have heard of the Shalom Center and regard it highly. Yet, many only vaguely understand the scope and significance of Shalom's mission and outreach. The Shalom Community Center offers a safe, welcoming environment where residents of South Central Indiana who are experiencing poverty or homelessness can receive shelter, support services, food, and other necessities of daily living.

How many people are assisted by the Shalom Center in a given year? Based on grant-related data collected last year, we know that Shalom served *1,413 different individuals* in 2006. The Center serves all categories of those experiencing homelessness and poverty: adult women and men, youth, the mentally and physically disabled, our nation's veterans, and an increasing number of elderly citizens, as well as families living in poverty (many of whom are the working poor) and single-parent families (many of whom are headed by women).

Every week day, the Shalom Center opens promptly at 8:00 AM and remains open until 4:00 PM. The Center is currently located in the lower-level of two churches—the First United Methodist Church (4th and Washington) and the First Christian Church (East Kirkwood), and its resources and activities are divided between the two sites.

Shalom provides the only day shelter in Bloomington. Housed in the First United Methodist Church, the shelter does far more than protect Shalom guests from the elements. It is also a welcoming place where everyone is treated with respect and dignity, and many discover a sense of community and fellowship, receive much-needed assistance, and experience hope for the first time in a very long time. In the day shelter, guests can do their laundry, make phone calls, and volunteer



in all kinds of roles--staffing the hospitality desk, preparing and serving the meals, maintaining a clean and orderly dining area, and decorating for the holidays.

The day shelter is also the site of Shalom's hunger relief program. Shalom is the only agency in Bloomington to offer both breakfast and lunch each weekday, serving more than 200 women, men, and children every day. Hunger relief director, Ron Kerner, prepares and serves excellent, nutritious meals, assisted by guest and community volunteers. Individuals are served in a large dining hall, with a smaller dining area for families with children. By the end of 2007, the Shalom Center will have served over 70,000 meals, an increase of nearly 50% over 2005. Shalom also provides groceries and other resources to an average of 500 individuals each month through the Family Market outreach program at Templeton Elementary School, the local school with the highest percentage of students living in poverty.

The Shalom resource center and family program is located in the lower-level of the First Christian Church. Here guests receive mail, store their belongings, take hot showers, meet with caseworkers, and connect with visiting agency representatives. Special rooms in this facility are devoted to families, with a play area for children, a computer to assist with job searches, and counseling services. The Shalom Center's Family Homelessness Prevention Project prevented 237 families from becoming homeless during the past year.

Shalom also serves as a front door to the larger community and institutions that can help bring stability and the hope

of empowerment and self-sufficiency to those in need. Agencies from all over the area visit Shalom every week—meeting with Shalom guests and assisting them with housing, education, and health-related problems. Visiting agencies include the City of Bloomington's Housing and Neighborhood Development Department, Ivy Tech, Volunteers in Medicine, and the Social Security Administration.

Shalom also has its own employment program, Job Links, which brings employment counselors to the Center every day. These counselors help guests identify employment opportunities, assist with resume preparation, and offer coaching on interviewing and achieving job stability.

About one-third of guests who come to the Shalom Center are employed—but not in jobs that pay enough to allow them to provide for life's necessities—housing, child care, transportation, and food. So, the Shalom Center offers all it can--bus passes for those with new jobs or who need transportation to medical appointments, emergency assistance for families in the form of gas vouchers or utility assistance, diapers and infant formula, personal hygiene packets, and, of course, hot meals.

Many Shalom guests are experiencing homelessness—some sleeping temporarily on the floors of friend's homes, and others sleeping in cars, in alleys, or in the woods. Every person's story is unique. Some have chronic medical or mental health conditions. Others struggle with addictions. Some have lost their homes because of a

sudden illness that leads to job loss. Some are escaping an abusive family situation. Some are veterans. (See the lead story in the Herald-Times, December 2, 2007). Some are elderly. Some are very young. What do they have in common? They lack the basic support system of family and

friends that the rest of us depend on to see us through difficult times. For many of those experiencing homelessness, the Shalom Center offers the only stable

support system they have known in years. Shalom provides a safe space where those with no place else to go can find a little bit of something that feels like home. Shalom executive director, Joel Rekas, put in best in a recent Herald-Times editorial: "Folks experiencing homelessness need time to heal—physically, emotionally, and even spiritually—before taking any steps forward, to recover from the loss of self-esteem and confidence that comes with it."

The Shalom Community Center is indeed a precious community resource. If you are interested in learning more about the Shalom Center, becoming a volunteer, or donating such items as food, sleeping bags, or infant formula, please contact Joel Rekas (jrshalom@bloomington.in.us), or 334-5734. On Friday, December 21 at 10:00 AM the Shalom Center will remember those guests who have died during the year with a moving memorial service held in the chapel of the First United Methodist Church. Dr. Joe Emerson will conduct the service and Sylvia McNair will sing. Everyone is invited.

Link

Continued from page nine

last year by health advocates in Johnson County and asked if prevention services could be provided in their area. Many collaborative meetings were held to discuss how existing services could continue uninterrupted and additional services be

Likewise, Positive Link was contacted

provided in the midst of National and State funding cuts. As 2008 approaches, Positive Link is pleased with the plans for prevention services this coming year. While full funding was not awarded, enough of an increase was provided to add Johnson County to the service area and to increase both half-time employees to full-time.

One exciting collaboration that has developed is that between the Monroe County Health Department Future's Clinic and Positive Link. In 2008, Positive Link prevention staff will begin providing HIV testing two days per week at the Future's clinic. This collaboration will increase the availability of HIV testing services to the community. In addition, both Positive

Link and the Future's Clinic will offer testing for Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, and Syphilis. The Future's clinic currently offers these diagnostic services along with testing for other sexually transmitted infections. Positive Link will begin testing for Hepatitis B & C and Syphilis in early 2008.

Directory of agencies and services

This directory outlines several agencies and services available to residents of Monroe County. Additionally, many listings provide contact information for prospective volunteers. For more extensive articles about many of these agencies and services, see earlier issues of Safety-Net at www.shalomcommunitycenter.org. Several of the agencies and services described provide multiple forms of aid. Unless otherwise noted all services and agencies are located in Bloomington. Several of the agencies listed below send representatives to the Shalom Resource & Family Center in the basement of the First Christian Church at 205 E. Kirkwood Avenue at specific times during the week to meet with people. If you are interested in talking with someone from an agency, call the Shalom Center at 334-5728 and ask for the schedule.

Addiction Counseling Clothing, furniture, housewares

Amethyst House

Address: 645 N. Walnut St.

Phone: (812) 336-3570

Web: www.amethysthouse.org

Volunteer Contact: Gina Lovell ([812] 336-3570 x10; amethyst@bloomington.in.us)

About: 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 Evansville.

Center for Behavioral Health

Address: 645 S. Rogers St.

Phone: (812) 339-1691

Web: www.the-center.org

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

Alcoholics Anonymous

Address: Hours and locations vary.

Phone: (812) 334-8191

Web: www.alcoholics-anonymous.org

About: Provides support for those wanting to stop alcohol consumption.

AIDS/HIV Services

Bloomington Hospital Positive Link

Address: 333 E. Miller Dr.

Phone: (812) 353-9150

Web: www.bloomingtonhospital.org

About: Provides HIV testing and support services for infected individuals.

Monroe County United Ministries

Address: 827 W. 14 Ct.

Phone: (812) 339-3429

Volunteer Contact: Rebecca Gordan ([812] 353-9150; mcumhelp@bloomington.in.us)

About: 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.

My Sister's Closet of Monroe County, Inc.

Address: 1010 S. Walnut St.

Web: www.mysistersclosetofmonroeco.org

Volunteer Contact: JoAnne Bunnage ([812] 335-6603; jbunnage@indiana.edu)

About: Provides low-income women with free interview and workplace apparel, helping them overcome hurdles they face to independence and family self-sufficiency. Also sells used, affordable clothes to the public.

Salvation Army

Address: 111 N. Rogers St.

Phone: (812) 336-4310

Web: www.amethysthouse.org

Volunteer Contact: Monica Clemons ([812] 336-4310 x10; monica_clemons@usc.salvationarmy.org)

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

St. Vincent de Paul Society

Address: 4607 West State Road 46

Phone: (812) 961-1510

Web: www.bloomingtonsvdp.org

Volunteer Contact: Scott Alber, ([812] 335-1280; volunteer@bloomingtonsvdp.org)

About: A Catholic led ecumenical society of volunteers dedicated to helping those in need. Assistance is offered in the form of community resource information, vouchers for furniture, and in some cases limited financial help with a utility bill, rent, rent deposit or other essential need. Almost all funding comes through donations and assistance is given without regard to religion, race or creed. Volunteer opportunities abound.

Disabilities assistance programs

Abilities Unlimited

Address: 2620 N. Walnut St.

Phone: (812) 332-1620

Web: www.abilitiesunlimited.net

Volunteer Contact: Lynne Argent ([812] 332-1620; au@abilitiesunlimited.net)

About: Supplies free services to citizens with disabilities, including the elderly. Services include the temporary loan of durable medical equipment after an accident or illness, such as a wheelchair, walker, bath seat. Individuals who do not have insurance can borrow equipment for as long as they need it. Other services include the supply of Home Modifications for Accessible Living to low income City of Bloomington residents. This includes installation of wheelchair ramps, safety railings, and bathroom renovations. Also offers camp scholarships to young people with disabilities.

Citizen Advocacy of South Central Indiana, Inc.

Address: PO Box 1732

Volunteer Contact: Jo Gilbertson ([812] 219-5566; j.gilbertson@insightbb.com)

About: Facilitates the recognition, promotion and protection of the rights and interests of people with disabilities through Volunteer Advocates.

Mental Health America

Address: 120 W. 7th St., Ste. 104

Phone: (812) 339-1551

Web: www.monroementalhealth.org

Volunteer Contact: Donna Graves ([812] 339-1551 x12 or mha@bloomington.in.us)

About: The MHA mission is promoting awareness in the prevention of mental illness. The programs include an 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), and support groups that provide education and advocacy for families and friends of persons coping with specific types of mental illnesses.

Options for Better Living

Address: 200 E. Winslow Rd.

Phone: (812) 332-9615

Web: www.optionsfbl.com

Volunteer Contact: Melissa Copas, ([812] 332-9615 x218; mcopas@optionsfbl.com)

About: Works with people with disabilities to find a job that matches their skills, and then works one-on-one with the person and the employer to create barrier-free work environments.

People & Animal Learning Services (PALS)

Address: 680 W. That Rd.

Phone: (812) 336-2798

Web: www.palstherapy.org

Volunteer Contact: Jan Gavin ([812] 325-7863; jbgavin@indiana.edu)

About: Provides Equine Assisted Activities (EAA) such as therapeutic riding and hippotherapy to children and adults with disabilities and to at-risk youth from South Central Indiana. PALS is a NARHA Premier Accredited Center (www.narha.org) and a United Way of Monroe County Member Agency.

Stone Belt

Address: 2815 E. 10 St.

Phone: (812) 332-2168

Web: www.stonebelt.org

Volunteer Contact: Amy Jackson (332-2168 x314; ajackson@stonebelt.org)

About: A community-based organization with over 48 years of experience in serving persons with developmental disabilities. Supports include residential, employment, life skills training and psychological services. With locations in Monroe, Lawrence, Owen, Bartholomew and surrounding counties, Stone Belt's mission is to prepare, empower, and support persons with developmental disabilities and their families to participate fully in the life of the community.

Employment resources and job counseling

WorkOne

Address: 450 Landmark Ave.

Phone: (812) 331-6000

About: Assists individuals and businesses in meeting their employment and training needs. WorkOne provides employment services, job counseling and assessment services, training services through WIA, older worker services through Experience Works, vocational rehabilitation services through Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation, veteran services and unemployment insurance benefits.

Options for Better Living

See disabilities assistance programs.

Stone Belt

See disabilities assistance programs.

Job Links

About: An Area 10 Agency on Aging RSVP program that helps people write resumes, find employment, and prepare for job interviews. Job Links takes place at several locations, including the Shalom Community Center at 334-5728.

Family Services

Family Service Association

Address: One City Centre

Phone: (812) 339-1551

About: The FSA mission is strengthening the health quality of family life in its various styles and many relationships. The programs include Oak Tree Counseling (provides individual and family therapy), Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), who work with the Court to make recommendations for rehabilitative and protective services for children and families, and Families in Transition/Family Strengthening (provides parenting classes for both the community and for incarcerated parents.)

Family Resource Center at Templeton School

Address: 1400 Brenda Lane

Phone: (812) 330-7735 x 50117 and 50120

About: Provides pre-school play groups and story hours, a Free Family Market (a free food source) on Fridays, 2:00-3:30 p.m., and programming for families focused on literacy and family fun; information and referrals for the needs of children and families.

Head Start Program

Address: 1520 W. 15th St.

Phone: (812) 334-8350

Web: www.headstart.bloomington.in.us/

About: Guides children aged 3 to kindergarten towards gaining cognitive skills, patience, sharing, problem solving, hygiene, safety, and practice in good decision making. Free to income eligible.

Monroe County United Ministries

See clothing, furniture, housewares.

Office of Family and Children

Address: 401 E. Miller Drive

Phone: (812) 336-6351

About: Provides aid to families with dependent children (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, TANF), food stamps, Medicaid, and child welfare services.

WIC Program

Address: 333 East Miller Drive

Phone: (812) 353-3221

About: The WIC Program serves pregnant, breastfeeding and post partum women, infants and children up to 5 years of age. Applicants must meet income guidelines, live in Indiana, and have a nutritional need. The WIC Program provides checks for nutritious foods that are cashed at local grocery stores, nutrition education and breastfeeding support. All services are provided free of charge.

Food stamps

Office of Family and Children

See family services.

Health care

Futures Family Health Clinic

Address: 338 S. Walnut St.

Phone: (812) 349-7343

About: provides family planning health services for adolescents, men, and women. Services are provided on a sliding fee schedule based on income. Services offered include annual exam and Pap smear, pregnancy testing, STD and HIV testing, birth control counseling, emergency contraception, health education, birth control pills, birth control shots, IUD (intrauterine device), and condoms.

Hospice of Bloomington Hospital

Address: 619 W 1st St.

Phone: (812) 353-9818

Web: www.bloomingtonhospital.org

Volunteer Contact: Melanie Miller ([812] 353-9818; mmiller@bloomhealth.org)

About: Provides care and support for people who are terminally ill and their families through direct patient care, assistance with errands and deliveries, household and clerical assistance, and fundraising. Training classes for new volunteers are offered twice a year.

Hoosier Healthwise for Children

Address: 401 Morton St., Suite 260 (City Hall)

Phone: (812) 349-3851

Web: www.hoosierhealthwise.net

About: A state sponsored health insurance

program for children, pregnant women, and low-income families. Applicants must meet eligibility criteria. Free or low cost, depending upon income.

Monroe County Public Health Clinic

Address: 333 East Miller Drive

Phone: (812) 353-3244

About: Services provided include immunizations, lead screening, hemoglobin testing, tuberculosis skin testing, and lice checks. Call for dates and to make appointments.

Planned Parenthood

Address: 421 S. College Ave.

Phone: (812) 336-0219

Web: www.ppin.org

About: Services 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.

Vistacare Hospice

Address: 1801 Liberty Dr., Ste. 103

Phone: (812) 330-9640

Web: www.vistacare.com

Volunteer Contact: Cathi Counterman ([812] 340-3467; cathi.counterman@vistacare.com)

About: Provides caregiver relief and companionship for terminally ill patients and bereavement support for family members.

Volunteers in Medicine Clinic

Address: 333 E. Miller Dr.

Phone: (812) 353-3533

Web: www.vimmonroecounty.org

Volunteer Contact: Loraine Addison ([812] 353-3533 x6; info@vimmonroecounty.org)

About: Provides free medical care, including dental care at the offices of participating dentists, for people living in Monroe or Owen County who lack health insurance and have an income at or below 200% of the federal poverty level. This means that the income must not exceed \$20,420 for a 1 person household. For each additional person, add \$6,960. To qualify for medical care individuals must fill out an eligibility form about their economic situation and set up an eligibility interview. Children or adults who qualify for health care at the clinic will receive free care at Southern Indiana Pediatrics.

Housing (abused women)

Middle Way House

Address: 404 W. Kirkwood Ave.

Phone: (812) 336-0846 (Middle Way)

(812) 337-4510 (The Rise)

Web: www.bloomington.in.us/~mwhouse

Volunteer Contact: Colleen Yeakle

([812] 333-7404; mwhouse@bloomington.in.us)

About: Middle Way House is an emergency shelter that provides services to protect and help women who are victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, and women who feel they are in danger. Services include a safe place to stay, case management, in-house children's programs, legal advocacy. There is also a transitional housing program called The Rise which has self-contained apartments for families leaving abusive relationships. Women and their children can stay at The Rise for up to two years.

Housing (emergency, for adults)

Backstreet Missions

Address: 215 Westplex Ave.

Phone: (812) 333-1905

Web: www.backstreet.org

About: A men's shelter with services including a crisis and 12 month housing program, meals, the provision of clothing, ministry to spiritual needs, job and life skill training, GED classes, and employment and volunteer opportunities. There is also a Thrift Store.

Martha's House

Address: 1010 S. Walnut St.

Phone: (812) 332-1444

Volunteer Contact: Meredith Short ([812] 332-1444; [812] 355-6841; merediths@juno.com)

About: An emergency shelter with 28 beds for homeless men and women. Services provided include case management, food, and clothing.

Housing (Pregnant women)

Hannah House Maternity Home

Address: 808 N. College Ave.

Phone: (812) 334-2662

Web: www.cpcbloomington.org

About: A comprehensive residential program for pregnant women and teenagers. Offers access to prenatal and pediatric care. Also offers life skills training and assistance in achieving longer-term educational and career goals.

Housing (Rental)

Bloomington Housing Authority

Address: 1007 N. Summit St.

Phone: (812) 339-3491

About: Subsidized housing, Section 8, Public Housing. Cost varies to income eligible.

Housing and Neighborhood Development

Address: 401 N. Morton Street, Ste. 130

Phone: (812) 349-3420

Web: www.bloomington.in.gov/hand

About: Creates affordable housing opportunities in the City of Bloomington by working through its partnerships with local non-profit and for-profit developers and through its in-house housing programs. HAND provides housing counseling to individuals with housing needs or difficulties and provides a variety of learning opportunities for the community on housing related issues. In addition, HAND enforces the Property Maintenance Code and the City's weed and trash ordinances.

South Central Community Action Program, Inc.

Address: 1500 W. 15th St.

Phone: (812) 339-3447

Web: <http://www.sccap.monroe.in.us/>

Volunteer Contact: Beth Pankoski ([812] 339-3447 x233; beth@sccap.monroe.in.us)

About: State and federal anti-poverty programs for low income individuals and families. Weatherization Assistance, Energy Assistance, Owner Occupied Rehabilitation, Section 8 rent subsidy program.

Housing (homeless youth)

Stepping Stones

Address: PO Box 1366

Phone: (812) 339-9771

Web: www.stepsstones-inc.org

About: Transitional housing program and supportive service for homeless young people aged 16-20.

Youth Services Bureau

Address: 615 S. Adams St.

Phone: (812) 349-2506

Web: www.youthservicesbureau.net

Volunteer Contact: Ron Thompson ([812] 349-2588; rthompson@co.monroe.in.us)

About: Provides short term residential care and crisis intervention for youth ages 8-17. Provides other services as well.

Legal and court-related services

Community Justice & Mediation Center

Address: 120 W. 7th St., Ste. 310

Phone: (812) 339-1551

Web: www.bloomington.in.us/~mediate

Volunteer Contact: Amanda Nickey ([812] 336-8677; vorpcm@bloomington.in.us)

About: Programs include the Victim-Offender Reconciliation Program, Shoplifter's Alternative Program, Workshops, Trainings, and Community Mediation Services for neighborhood, school, family or business conflicts.

Legal Services Organization of Indiana, Inc. Bloomington

Address: 214 S. College Ave.

Phone: (812) 339-7668

About: Cannot help people in criminal cases. Helps people in civil cases, including: Housing (eviction, foreclosure, landlord/tenant); Public Benefits (food stamps, SSI, unemployment, poor relief, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); Health (Medicaid, Medicare); Divorce or child custody where there is child abuse or spouse abuse; Child In Need of Services (CHINS); Consumer (collections and repossessions); Education (including expulsion and access to special education services and Vocational Rehabilitation); Access to Justice (e.g. denial of a court-appointed attorney in certain civil cases).

Monroe County Court Appointed Special Advocates

Address: 120 W. 7th St., Ste. 104

Phone: (812) 339-1551

Web: www.monroementalhealth.com/casa.asp

Volunteer Contact: Sandy Rampley ([812] 339-1551 x23; casakids@bloomington.in.us)

About: Provides direct advocacy for child victims of physical abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. Volunteer advocates represent children in the court process to protect the child's best interests.

Monroe County Prosecutor - Victim Assistance Program

Address: 301 N. College Ave., Rm. 211

Phone: (812) 349-2670

Web: www.co.monroe.in.us

Volunteer Contact: Sarah Lanman ([812] 349-2670; slanman@co.monroe.in.us)

About: Helps to ease the trauma victim's burden by explaining the criminal justice process, accompanying victims to court, updating them on current cases and obtaining restitution.

Meals and pantries (no cost)

Meals

Backstreet Missions (Gino's Cafeteria)

Monday-Friday: Lunch: 11-12 p.m.;

Dinner: 4-5 p.m.

Saturday: Breakfast 8-9:30 a.m.; Lunch

11-12 p.m.

Bloomington Meals on Wheels, Inc.

Address: 714 S. Rogers St.

Phone: (812) 323-4982

Web: www.bloomington.in.us/~meals

About: Provides meals to homebound people who are unable to cook for themselves. No age or economic restrictions. To enroll, call number listed. A volunteer will arrange for meal delivery and special dietary needs, explain the costs and how payments can be made.

Community Kitchen

Address: 917 S. Rogers St.

Phone: (812) 332-0999

Web: www.monroecommunitykitchen.com

Volunteer Contact: Annie Brookshire ([812] 332-0999; volunteer@monroecommunitykitchen.com)

Monday-Saturday: Dinner: 4-6 p.m.

About: Provides hot meals in a sit-down area as well as cold carry-out boxed meals after 5 p.m. Also provides meals for after-school programs at the Boys and Girls Club, The Rise, and Girls Inc.

Community Kitchen Express

Address: 100 W. 11th St.

Monday-Saturday: Dinner: 4-6 p.m.

About: Provides hot meals in a sit-down area as well as cold carry-out boxed meals after 5 p.m. Provides hot and cold meals as carry-out only. See Community Kitchen listing (above) for phone and volunteer information.

First Christian Church

Address: Corner of Kirkwood Ave. and Washington St.

Sunday: Breakfast: 8-9:30 a.m.

Harvest House Soup Kitchen

Address: 1107 S. Fairview Dr.

Phone: (812) 339-4462

Sunday: Lunch: 2-4 p.m.

Shalom Community Center

Address: 219 E. 4th St. (entrance off alley at back)

Phone: (812) 332-5728

Web: www.hoosier.net/~shalom

Volunteer Contact: Pam Kinnaman ([812] 334-5734; pkshalom@ix.netcom.com)

Monday-Friday: Breakfast: 8-9:30 a.m.; Lunch: 12-1:30 p.m. (except Wednesday lunch, 12-1 p.m.)

About: A daytime resource center for those experiencing homelessness and poverty. The FUMC facility is open all day and functions as a Day Shelter for guests, where they can use restroom facilities, make phone calls, and do their laundry. Shalom's Hospitality Center is located in the First Christian Church. Guests can go there to see case workers, employment counselors, connect with visiting agencies, seek assistance through the Family Homelessness Prevention Project, store belongings, receive mail, use restroom facilities, and take a hot shower.

Pantries/Groceries

Backstreet Missions Thrift Store

Address: 1928 Arlington Rd.

Phone: (812) 333-1501

Hours: Tuesday-Friday, 10 a.m.-noon.

About: Offers patrons one week's worth of food once a month.

Hoosier Hills Food Bank

Address: 615 N. Fairview St.

Phone: (812) 334-8374

Web: www.hhfoodbank.org

Volunteer Contact: Stephanie Solomon

(334-8374; volunteer@hhfoodbank.org)

About: Collects, stores and distributes donated food to 84 nonprofit organizations with feeding programs that directly serve needy and hungry people. Distributes about 2 million pounds of food to hungry people each year.

MCUM Emergency Pantry

Address: 1010 S. Walnut St.

Phone: (812) 355-6843

Hours: Monday-Friday 8-11:30 a.m.; 1-3:30 p.m.

About: Canned goods only. One week's worth provided. Must be Monroe County resident. Must present photo ID, SS#, last 30 days income.

Mother Hubbard's Cupboard

Address: 827 W. 14th St.

Phone: (812) 339-3429

Web: www.mhcfoodpantry.org

Hours: Monday-Friday 4-6 p.m.

About: Provides nutritious food to people in need. Most of the food is received from the Hoosier Hills Food Bank. Also operates a Nutrition Education Program and an organic Community Gardening Program.

Salvation Army

Address: 111 N. Rogers St.

Phone: (812) 336-4310

Hours: Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m.-noon; 1 p.m.-4 p.m.

About: Need ID. Depending upon income and resources, can offer one week's supply of groceries. Will not provide again for at least 30 days.

Shalom Community Center, First United Methodist Church

Address: 219 E.4th St.

Phone: (812) 334-5728

Hours: Wednesdays, 3:30-5:30 p.m.

About: Provides brown bag lunch, groceries.

Township Trustees Food Pantries Bloomington

Address: 2111 W. Vernal Pike

Phone: (812) 336-4976

Hours: Monday-Friday 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

About: Provides canned goods. Must be a resident of Bloomington Township.

Perry

Address: 1010 S. Walnut St.

Phone: (812) 336-3713

Hours: Monday-Friday 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

About: Provides canned goods. Must be a resident of Perry Township.

Medicaid

Office of Family and Children

About: Medicaid is a federal and state funded medical assistance program that pays for approved and needed medical care for persons who meet eligibility requirements. For more information on the Office of Family and Children see the family services listing.

Older citizen programs

Area 10 Agency on Aging

Address: 630 W. Edgewood Drive
Ellettsville, Indiana 47429

Phone: (812) 876-3383

Web: www.bloomington.in.us/~area10

About: Offers programs and services, as well as being a resource of information about services for older and disabled citizens living in Monroe and Owen Counties. Services that can be accessed include in-home health-related services, home-delivered and congregate meal sites for the elderly, support groups, affordable housing, assistance for the homebound, handyman services, a long-term-care ombudsman program for residents of area nursing homes, a Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, an Older Workers Program for those 55 and older seeking employment, recreational and arts programs at Area 10's Endwright Center in Ellettsville, and also manages the Rural Transit bus service.

Pregnancy testing, counseling, education

Crisis Pregnancy Center

Address: 810 N. College Ave.

Phone: (812) 334-0104

Web: www.cpcbloomington.org

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

Planned Parenthood

See health care.

WIC Program

See family services.

Rent, utility, bill assistance

First call the Township Trustee in the Monroe County Township in which you live: Bean Blossom (876-5109), Benton (332-6081), Bloomington (336-4976), Clear Creek (824-7225), Indian Creek (824-4981), Perry (336-3713) Polk (837-9446), Richland (876-2509), Salt Creek (332-9777), Van Buren (825-4490), Washington (331-0809).

Youth programs

Big Brothers Big Sisters

Address: 418 S. Walnut St.

Phone: (812) 334-2828

Web: www.bigsindiana.org

Volunteer Contact: Andrea Smith ([812] 334-2828; amsmith@bigsindiana.org)

About: Serves the emotional and social needs of 6 to 17-year-olds by facilitating professionally supported relationships with adult volunteers. Programs also exist where children are visited in school or at a partner site by adults or high school students. Volunteers mentor, bring support, and engage in fun activities with the children with whom they are matched.

Bloomington Boys and Girls Club

Address: 311 S. Lincoln St.

Phone: (812) 332-5311

Web: www.bgcbloomington.org

Volunteer Contact: Donnie Morgan ([812] 332-5311; domorgan@indiana.edu)

About: A guidance organization which fosters the physical, intellectual and social growth of boys and girls ages 6-18 with a special concern for those most in need of service.

Girls, Inc.

Address: 1108 W. 8th St.

Phone: (812) 336-7313

Web: www.girlsinc-monroe.org

Volunteer Contact: Nathan Rumble ([812] 336-7313; nrumple.monroe@girls-inc.org)

About: Provides after-school, summer and holiday programming for girls ages 6 to 18, inspiring them to be strong, smart and bold. Services include transportation, organized sports, a teen room, technology, self-defense and homework help.

Harmony School

Address: 909 E. 2nd St.

Phone: (812) 334-8349

Web: www.harmonyschool.org

Volunteer Contact: Libby Gwynn ([812] 334-8349; libby@harmonyschool.org)

About: An independent pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade school providing education to youth ages 3 to 18 from a wide range of economic and educational backgrounds.

Rhino's Youth Center

Address: 331 S. Walnut St.

Phone: (812) 333-3430

Web: www.rhinosyouthcenter.org

Volunteer Contact: Brad Wilhelm ([812] 333-3430; rhinosdirector@ameritech.net)

About: 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, provides programs in partnership with the City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department through the week after school. Several creative and practical classes and workshops, as well as mentoring, tutoring, counseling, and more, are available.

Youth Services Bureau

Address: 615 S. Adams St.

Phone: (812) 349-2506

Web: www.youthservicesbureau.net

Volunteer Contact: Ron Thompson ([812] 349-2588; rthompson@co.monroe.in.us)

About: Alongside youth shelter (see housing [youth]), provides counseling, education, supervised recreation, and transportation to and from school, as well as referrals to a variety of agencies for other needed services. The Youth Outreach Program, in collaboration with MCCSC, works with suspended and expelled middle school youth, and provides these students with intensive, one-on-one teaching to help them keep up with their education while they are out of school.

Additional services

Catholic Charities-Bloomington

Address: 631 North College Avenue

Phone: (812) 332-1261

Web: www.CatholicCharitiesBtown.org

About: Provides education, social service delivery, and advocacy. Takes special interest in poor, disabled, and otherwise disadvantaged persons. Serves residences of Brown, Lawrence, Morgan, Monroe, Orange and Owen counties, especially through mental health services. Provides individual, family, couples and group counseling to the English and Spanish-speaking clients.

Habitat for Humanity of Monroe County

Address: 213 E. Kirkwood Avenue

Phone: (812) 331-4069

Web: www.monroecountyhabitat.org

About: Habitat for Humanity helps families and volunteers to build homes for those living in inadequate housing. The homes are for families who have an income but do not have the funds to secure a bank loan. The money to build the homes comes from contributions from local churches, citizens, businesses, and other sponsors. Families pay back a zero interest mortgage over 15-25 years. That money goes into a fund which helps to pay for more houses.

Monroe County Safe Kids Chapter

Phone: (812) 353-5437

About: Certified Child Passenger Safety technicians will help you install your child's car seat and answer questions regarding general vehicle safety. If you need financial help with the purchase of a seat, let us know. All services are by appointment only.

Midwest Pages to Prisoners Project

Address: 310A S. Washington St.

Phone: (812) 339-8710

Web: www.pagestoprisoners.org

Volunteer Contact: Tess Hannah (339-8710; midwestpagestoprisoners@yahoo.com)

About: Provides free reading material to inmates upon request. Encourages self-education among prisoners in the United States.

Monroe County Public Library

Address: 303 E. Kirkwood Ave.

Phone: (812) 349-3050

Web: www.mcpl.info

About: Offers books, magazines, audio-visual materials, Internet computers, and free programs for all ages. It serves the county through facilities in Bloomington and Ellettsville, the Bookmobile (with over 25 stops weekly), and the Outreach Van. Library cards are available at no charge to all county residents. The VITAL literacy program offers one-on-one confidential tutoring to adult learners and ESL classes. During the school year the Main Library offers homework help to elementary students and math homework help to teens. During tax season volunteers offer tax help. The library also offers public meeting rooms to nonprofit groups. Anyone in the community may produce a program through CATS for the Public Access Channel

Monroe County Wrap-Around

Address: 645 S. Rogers St.

Phone: (812) 337-2225

About: 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 driver's seat". Each family identifies a "team" that works with them, and the team develops a plan based upon the strengths and needs of the specific family. Representatives from families also serve on committees that examine the policies and goals of Wrap-Around. This summer, the Lost Child Fund, which operates within Wrap-Around, is accepting funds to send children of working single parents to camp.

New Leaf - New Life, Inc.

Address: PO Box 7071

Phone: (812) 857-4999

Web: www.newleaf-cej.org

Volunteer Contact: Tania Karnofsky ([812] 857-4999; tania@newleaf-cej.org)

About: Coordinates volunteers who serve as "navigators" for inmates and those released from jail to find sources of support for re-entry into the community.

Special Section: Criminal Justice Programs

New Leaf: How can we reduce recidivism?

vidbeldavs@aol.com
www.newleaf-newlife.org

According to Colonel Bill Wilson, Monroe County Jail Commander, most people who wind up in our jail have substance abuse problems, and for many, addictions are the cause of their arrest. With a grant from the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute the jail has contracted with New Leaf-New Life, Inc., a Bloomington not-for-profit organization, to help address this problem. Residential substance abuse treatment is extremely expensive at Betty Ford and other treatment centers across the country. The Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) grant received by New Leaf-New Life enables treatment to be provided at no cost to the inmate or the County during the term of the grant.

The RSAT program in the jail is called Therapeutic Milieu (TM). TM draws on the rich heritage of therapeutic communities that were first implemented in the UK and which have been widely used primarily in prisons as well as in mental health care for over 30 years. In addition to the TM program, New Leaf-New Life, Inc. also coordinates an Enrichment Program within the jail, as well as a Continuum of Care Program that begins in the jail and continues upon the release of the inmates. This article summarizes the TM Program,

the Enrichment Program, and the Continuum of Care Program facilitated by New Leaf-New Life. Most of the work is done by volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, contact Vid Beldavs at vidbeldavs@aol.com.

Therapeutic Milieu (TM) Program

The TM program takes place in designated cell blocks with inmates with substance abuse problems who volunteer for the program. TM is a 24/7 program where a significant component of treatment is the community formed by the inmates themselves. Experienced therapists guide the inmate community's therapeutic process.

Enrichment Program

The Enrichment Program in the jail is not confined to the TM blocks, and includes programs in writing, drama, music, yoga, as well as arts and crafts particularly to help inmates reach out to their children. Beth Lodge-Regal facilitates one of the writing programs working primarily with women inmates. Beth Barnett conducts a writing program on Saturday that includes men from several cellblocks who meet in the multipurpose room. Susan Sandburg works with groups of inmates reading and discussing plays as well as the writings of the inmates themselves.

Continuum of Care

Continuum of Care includes several programs. These include the Intake Program, the Thresholds Program, the Transition Program, CrossRoads, and a Mentoring Program (soon to begin).

- Intake Program. The purpose of the Intake Program is to help the inmate to adjust to jail which for many is a shock marked by anger and other emotions. The intake program includes anger management as well as motivational interviewing to help prepare inmates to succeed and benefit from their jail experience.

- Thresholds Program. Thresholds is an approach with over 25 years of success in other parts of the country in helping offenders to think more clearly about what led to their offending and arrest. Thresholds is made available to participants in TM as well as other inmates in the jail.

- Transition Program. The Transition Program provides "navigation" to offenders and their families to address problems such as housing, jobs, and access to social services. NewLeaf-NewLife operates an office at WorkOne where released inmates and their families can gain assistance in finding resolution to the problems that they face. Volunteer "navigators" are guided by a Transition manager working with inmates preparing for reentry as well as with released offenders.

Work One phone: (812) 331-6000

extension 223

Hours: MWF – 9:30 – 12 and by appointment

- CrossRoads. CrossRoads is an ex-offender support group that meets every Thursday from 6:30 – 8 at First Presbyterian church at Lincoln and Sixth. Enter by the side door.

- Mentoring. John Gaus, a retired pastor, is leading an effort with congregations in the community to organize teams of mentors who will work with released offenders in partnership with Probation.

Establishing a City-County Task Force For Reentry Programming

It is very important that those concerned with successful reentry programs and the reduction of recidivism sit at the same table to coordinate activities. A comprehensive systems approach is needed for the development of a strategic plan to assist people released from jail in the provision of needed services such as shelter, life skills and employment opportunities, education, counseling, and family outreach activities. A Task Force representing the City, County, Judicial system, Probation, and interested agencies and other groups is needed. Such a City-County Task Force with broad representation has not yet been established.

Visitation day: Reaching out to families

By Tania Karnofsky, Program Director for New Leaf - New Life jail programs
www.newleaf-newlife.org

It's Sunday afternoon and children outside the jail are filling napkins with goldfish crackers, drinking juice, and asking when David White will show up with his David puppet. Sundays are visitation days for all the blocks in the Monroe County jail. By noon crowds of people, including many children, are crushed into the jail lobby or gathered in the alley outside, waiting to sign up for a visit and then waiting to find out what time their visit will be. Late last summer volunteers of New Leaf-New Life began setting up a table outside the jail lobby on Sunday afternoons, offering free refreshments along with information about services in the community and even some entertainment. When David White, a board member of New Leaf-New Life and member of the Puck Players, first brought his David White puppet, some children

reacted with trepidation to the puppet's overtures. Now they wait eagerly for its arrival. As the weeks passed, more volunteers emerged. Some weeks a masseuse brings her massage chair and offers free massages. A man shows up with a guitar and begins to play and sing. Crayons and paper are available for kids to draw pictures. Information about proposed legislation that will help the outlook for many ex-felons seeking employment is handed out.

New Leaf-New Life sets up outside the jail in an effort to make contact with families and help to lower the stress of visitation on spouses and children of inmates.

The potential benefits of jail visitation for inmates and their children have been well documented. Children benefit from maintaining a bond with their parents. Visitation from family and friends allows inmates to maintain a sense of family and connection with the outside world.

See "Visitation," page 16

Jail Bingo relieves boredom, reduces tension

By E. Wainright Martin, jail volunteer, New Leaf/New Life, St. Mark's Methodist Church
www.newleaf-newlife.org

The six of us meet in the lobby of the jail at 7:30 p.m., carry our three sets of finger-tip Bingo cards through the double security doors into the jail, and sign in. Then we pick up our sacks of prizes that have been brought in one or two days before so that they can be checked for contraband and proceed to the elevator that whisks us up to the fourth floor. There we separate into three teams of two, each of which is escorted to an assigned cell block by a jail guard.

As we approach the cell block someone inside sees us coming and yells out BINGO! Soon there are cries of BINGO! throughout the block and the inmates pour into the common area while the guard buzzes the control room to unlock the door and admit us to the block. The two of us enter with our Bingo equipment and

prizes and the guard closes the cell block door and leaves us facing a sea of eager orange-clad inmates.

We give out the Bingo cards, one to a customer, and begin to pile candy bars, soap bars, dried noodle soup, etc. on the small table nearest the door. The Bingo cards are numbered on the back, and before starting to play Bingo, we call out numbers one at a time and the person with that card comes down and picks out a prize from those on the table. For some inmates the choice of a prize is quick and easy, but others agonize over which item to take. It can be a difficult choice for a person who has little or no money in his or her commissary account.

Then we begin playing Bingo, starting with regular Bingo and continuing with variations such as big X, big T, big L, etc.

See "Bingo," page 16

Special Section: Volunteer Opportunities

Nutrition Project and Food Pantry Volunteers Get food to those in need with the Area 10 Agency on Aging's Senior Citizens' Nutrition Project and/or Food Pantry. Volunteers assist staff by bagging groceries (once per month), shopping for food at the Hoosier Hills Food Bank (once per week), serving and cleaning up meals at nutrition sites and delivering packed meals and/or groceries to homebound elderly in Monroe and Owen counties. Drivers must be at least 16 years old and have a valid driver's license. For more information contact: Jenny Keatinge at 876-3383 or jkeatinge@area10.bloomington.in.us (www.area10.bloomington.in.us).

Bargain Boutique Helpers Do you love clothes? Then come volunteer for a four hour weekly or bi-weekly shift in the My Sister's Closet store. My Sister's Closet has been providing workforce attire to women seeking self-sufficiency since 1998. Tasks include processing donations, tagging and displaying clothing, and helping women select work attire. No retail experience needed; training provided. Minimum age is 16. For more information contact: JoAnne Bunnage at 335-6603 or jbunnage@indiana.edu (www.mysister-sclosetofmonroeco.org).

Habitat ReStore Volunteers Support Habitat for Humanity's mission by volunteering in its ReStore, which sells donated building materials and household items at discounted prices with the funds going to build decent, affordable housing for people in need. Volunteer with donation

pick up, art and advertising production, as a cashier or customer service representative or with special projects. Volunteers receive Restore Bucks and enjoy monthly volunteer appreciation events! Minimum age is 16. Please contact: Sandi Clothier at 331-2660 or clothier@monroecountyhabitat.org (www.monroecountyhabitat.org).

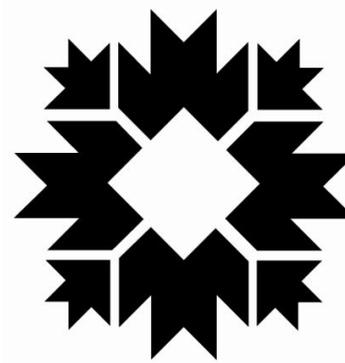
Aquarium Caretaker The Shalom Community Center aquariums are a pleasant and calming feature for visitors to the Day Center and an interesting attraction/distractor for the children who come with their parents to the Resource and Family Center, who are often in very stressful circumstances of financial emergencies or other crises. Volunteers will handle the weekly tasks of cleaning and changing the water, the filter and conducting periodic water testing. Minimum age is 15 or 12 if accompanied by an adult. For more information contact: Pam Kinnaman at 334-5734 or pkshalom@ix.netcom.com (www.hoosier.net/~shalom).

Clerical Assistants Mental Health America needs your clerical skills in their office! Volunteers complete general office duties such as copying, filing and helping with mailings. Clerical volunteers work with several MHA programs that serve children and families. Hours are flexible, however a minimum six month commitment is requested. Minimum age is 18. For more information contact: Donna Graves at 339-1551 ext. 12 or mha@bloomington.in.us (www.monroemental-health.org).

themselves. Dealing with things such as bills, childcare, and transportation, and trying to carry on with family life, when a spouse or family member is in jail is bound to be overwhelming. Visitation also can represent a significant expense in time, money, and emotional stress. The goal of New Leaf-New Life is to relieve some of the stress of family visits and to work towards increasing the programs and support for families and children during an inmate's incarceration and after their release.

playing Bingo. After about an hour we are usually down to a dozen prizes on the table and we end the night by playing a game of regular Bingo where we play until all the prizes are gone. The inmates turn in their cards and some of them help us gather up our Bingo equipment and put it back in the box. Many inmates come down, shake our hands, and thank us for coming in. We buzz the control room and a guard comes and lets us out and escorts us back to the elevator.

Jail Bingo is a New Leaf/New Life



City of Bloomington Volunteer Network

www.bloomington.in.gov



Shopping Volunteer Love shopping? Do you drive a truck, van or minivan? Can you do some heavy lifting? Being a volunteer shopper for the Grace Center food pantry in Harrodsburg may be just the match for you! Volunteer shoppers select, load and deliver food from the Hoosier Hills Food Bank to the pantry between 9:30 a.m. and noon Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Minimum age is 18. For more information contact: Georgia Schaich at 334-3292 or 824-2442 or gschaich@yahoo.com.

Send Books to Prisoners The Midwest Pages to Prisoners Project is an all-volunteer effort that strives to provide free reading material to prisoners in the United States. By doing so, they hope to aid in the rehabilitation process and stimulate critical thinking behind bars. Volunteers for the project are concerned citizens and activists interested in rehabilitation rather than punishment. Volunteers meet several times every week to send books to the imprisoned: Mondays from 7-9 p.m., Thursdays from 8-11 p.m., and Sundays from 2-5 p.m. All ages are welcome! For more information contact: 339-8710 or mwpp@pagestoprisoners.org (www.pagestoprisoners.org).

Nutrition Site Manager Looking for an opportunity to help provide a much needed service in the community? Be a nutrition site manager for Area 10 Agency on Aging at Cambridge Square Apartments and serve hot, nutritious meals to

the elderly from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Monday-Friday. Daily or weekly shifts are available. Volunteers will package meals for homebound delivery, serve individuals at lunchtime and clean up. The ideal volunteer would be energetic, personable and enjoy working with the elderly. Minimum age is 18. For more information contact: Ashley Hillman at 876-3383 or ahillman@area10.bloomington.in.us (www.area10.bloomington.in.us).

Newspaper Recorders Volunteer readers are sought by the Indiana Reading and Information Service, operated out of the WFYI Teleplex in Indianapolis, and coordinated through Aging and Community Services of South Central Indiana in Columbus. Volunteers read and record sections from the Herald-Times newspaper via a toll-free number using the provided headset telephone. Volunteers are currently needed to read the front page section on Monday, Tuesday and Saturday or the sports page on Mondays and Fridays. The recording takes about 30 minutes one morning per week and is completed by 9 a.m. This service enables people with visual impairments or the inability to read to hear local news and information by simply dialing a toll-free number. Minimum age is 16. For more information contact: Beth Bandy at 1-866-644-6407 or caringconnections@areaxi.org.

See "Volunteer," page 17

Visitation

Continued from page 15

Inmates who receive regular visits have an increased

likelihood of making a successful transition back into the community when they're released. They also tend to have fewer problems during their incarceration.

The difficulties faced by family members of inmates have received little attention but there are indications that incarceration is often more stressful for family members than for the inmates

Bingo

Continued from page 15

After the first bingo we continue until there have

been at least three winners, and then we start a new game. The players really get into it. As the game progresses and some players get close to a bingo they start to cheer for the number they need. In the crowded blocks it can get rather noisy and hard for the caller to make himself heard, but we cope because the residents there really need the relaxation of Bingo. The women are especially enthusiastic about

program co-sponsored by the jail administration and members of St. Mark's United Methodist Church. It is our hope that Bingo accomplishes the following:

- * Lets those in the jail know that someone out there cares about them;
- * Relieves the oppressive boredom that comes with being crowded into a small space without anything to do 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for months;
- * Reduces the tension in the jail and makes life easier for both the inmates and the jail officers.

It seems to be working, as the inmates tell us that Bingo is the best thing that happens in the jail, and the jail officers report that Bingo night is their easiest night of the week.

Doing Bingo in the jail also affects each of us volunteers. We are not the same as we were before. Virtually everyone who has agreed to try it once, often with considerable trepidation about going into the jail blocks, has wanted to continue to help with Bingo. Our group has grown from two to twenty regular volunteers who share Bingo leadership each week.

Special Section: Voices Seldom Heard

Song: Hard Life

By Kent

Early in the mornin' ... sun shinin' down
I hit the street to meet who might be hangin' 'round.
Old familiar faces... everyone is there
Wonder who might have a cigarette to spare?

'Cuz it's a Hard Life... Life in the Streets
Theres a finer class of people here
than you might think you'd meet
yeah, it's a Hard Life... Life on your own...
sometimes I get lonely, but, I'm never alone.

'Cuz theres the Artist and the Poet, the Joker and Mat-fu
Theres the Drinker and the Thinker an' they got nothin' left to do
The Old Sage and the Cowboy, the sweet lost Dreamer Girl...
The couple with the baby, all abandoned by the world...

(chorus)
Well, some folks got some money
Some folks got some time
Some ain't got but a cigarette
Some ain't gotta' dime...
Theres those that have, an' those that don't...
And those, they're in-between...
Bless those who give un-selfishly
Whose gifts may go un-seen!
(chorus)

Winter's cold burns to the bone
No comfort from the sun
Decembers just begun
April gave us twenties, May she gave us rain
And tried to take our dignity replacing it with pain
And soon we'll face it all again...

They found Randy dead this mornin',
A heart gave out last night
We never did get to hang out much,
And now that don't seem right

A Street's toll on that gentle soul,
Another good man down
Lets raise a beer to those still here
To those we've buried in the ground

Poem: No one was raised like me

By Max Jones

I was raised by some head-banging,
guitar picking, throw your body into some else,
hope you don't get hurt
kinda music.

I was raised by some hard hittin,
bone breakin, crowd pleasing,
hoping you don't mess it all up
kinda sports.

I was raised by fine line drawin,
so many markers I don't know what to do,
a blank canvas ready to get painted all over
kinda art.

I was raised by some, "Hey lets go do something,"
getting into trouble, kinda
never thinking about our actions
kinda friends.

I was raised by some loud yellin,
hard hittin, strict, but loving
kinda family.

I was raised by some late night runs,
with loud music playing, and some starving people in the back,
by drive thrus and O' Charley's
kinda food.

I was raised by some tattoos and piercings,
with black hair and punk clothes,
weird looks and people not understanding
kinda appearance.

This poem was written as part of a Memoir Writing Class at Aurora High School. For more poetry from Aurora students, please see pages 18 and 19.

Volunteer

Continued from page 16

Give Back

'Tis the season of gratitude

and giving. Across our community, people with full hearts and tummies are thinking about ways to give back this season. The Community Wish List produced by the City of Bloomington Volunteer Network is here to help. Throughout the year, our community's helping organizations have shown the true spirit of giving by offering the needed services that make our community a caring place to live, while asking for very little in return. We invite you to join with your families, friends, and co-workers in gift giving that will benefit the greater Bloomington area. Look for the complete Wish List in the Herald-Times on Friday, November 23rd. For more information contact Lucy or Bet at the City of Bloomington Volunteer Network at 349-3433 or volunteer@bloomington.in.gov. Access the Wish List year round at www.bloomington.in.gov/volunteer. Domestic Violence Volunteer Training Middle Way House is seeking new volunteers to help them maintain the level of service they provide to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Both women and men are strongly encouraged to attend the upcoming volunteer training, held on Saturday, December 1st from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at First United Methodist Church, 219 E. 4th St., Wesley Wing Rm.

318. Training is required for all volunteers. Opportunities in over 20 different program areas include childcare, crisis line, legal advocacy, house management and youth mentoring. Pre-registration is NOT required. Minimum age for most programs is 18. For more information contact: 333-7404 or mwhouse@bloomington.in.us (www.middlewayhouse.org).

Veterans' Van Drivers While the local Veterans Administration clinic can take care of many medical needs of our county's military veterans, there are some procedures that can only be done at the facility in Indianapolis. The Monroe County Veterans Affairs Office has a van available five days a week to take veterans to the Roudebush VA Medical Center in Indianapolis, but volunteer drivers are needed. Many of the veterans who use the van services have no other way to get to their appointments and would otherwise have to go without treatment. An orientation is required. Call for more details on requirements. Minimum age is 16. Interested volunteers with a good driving record can call Phil Deekard at 332-4684. (Leave a message and your call will be returned.) (www.co.monroe.in.us/veteransaffairs).

Domestic Violence Volunteer Training Middle Way House is seeking new

volunteers to help them maintain the level of service they provide to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Both women and men are strongly encouraged to attend the upcoming new volunteer training on Saturday, September 22nd from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at First United Methodist Church, 219 E. 4th St., Wesley Wing Rm. 318. Training is required for all volunteers. Opportunities in over 20 different program areas include childcare, crisis line, legal advocacy, house management and youth mentoring. Pre-registration is NOT required. Minimum age for most programs is 18. For more information contact: 333-7404 or mwhouse@bloomington.in.us (www.middlewayhouse.org).

Care Links Volunteers Provide social support and encouragement or just lend a listening ear to individuals in the community living with HIV/AIDS as a volunteer for Bloomington Hospital's Positive Link program. Volunteers are paired with an individual to maintain daily, weekly, bi-weekly or monthly phone contact based on the individual's needs. This is a great opportunity to support individuals living with HIV/AIDS in your community! Minimum age is 21. For more information contact: Jessica Adams at 812-353-3225 or jadams@bloomingtonhospital.org (www.bloomingtonhospital.org).

School Big for Hearing Impaired

Students People who are knowledgeable or have an interest in American Sign Language and working with hearing impaired students are needed to spend one hour once a week with a student in the hearing-impaired class at Fairview Elementary School. Volunteers participate in fun activities with their "School Little" in this Big Brothers Big Sisters program, and see each other only on school grounds during the school day. Minimum age for volunteers is 18; orientation and training are provided. For more information contact: Deborah Meader at 334-2828 or schoolbig@bigsindiana.org (www.bigsindiana.org).

Volunteers in Medicine Volunteer

Training The new Volunteers in Medicine of Monroe County free medical clinic schedules regular orientation sessions for both medical professional and non-medical volunteers. Orientation is required for all volunteers before being scheduled for a shift in the clinic. Volunteers are needed to staff the clinic for 3-5 hour shifts on Mondays and Thursdays from 8 a.m.-8 p.m. and Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Minimum age is 18. Inquire about the next training by calling 812-353-3201 or by emailing info@vimmonroecounty.org (www.vimmonroecounty.org).

Special Section: Youth Programs

Aurora: Transformation for the 21st Century

By Chuck Holloway, Principal

Aurora Alternative High School
524 North Fairview Street
Bloomington, Indiana 47404
(812) 330-7837
www.aurora.mccsc.edu

Aurora High School, MCCSC's existing alternative high school, like other MCCSC schools has been conducting redesign self-reflection for over a year. This fall, Aurora High School applied for and received a \$10,000 grant from the Foundation of Monroe County Community Schools in support of its own high school redesign/transformation efforts. This transformation grant will fund our planning efforts this school year.

From the fall of 2005 through the spring of 2007, the MCCSC sponsored a collective of school and community members called the Graduation Work Group. The primary objective of this group was to examine the possibilities of improving the quality of education available for MCCSC high school students. From this work came the establishment of the new alternative school, New Tech High, and also the new alternative Early College High School program.

The Graduation Work Group identified eight guiding principles that described the kinds of qualities they felt should exist at an effective MCCSC High School. (These eight guiding principles can be found at www.mccsc.edu)

Aurora High School has actually been meeting the standards of all but one of these eight guiding principals long before the Graduation Work Group ever held its first meeting. Flexible schedules and delivery of instruction; engagement with students, parents and community; smaller school and classes; personalization of both instruction and interaction; relationship development with all stake holders;

safe and positive environment; promoting the value of participation in a democratic society. All these were, and still are, critical components of Aurora as an educational institution since its inception in 1995. The only principle that may fall short is in broad curriculum. Relevant curriculum is fine. AHS ability to provide broad curriculum is limited by its small size.

Our redesign objective is to examine a variety of school models, and selectively adapt and meld successful strategies to our existing school structure. We can use experiences and knowledge gained from these programs to create a school-wide redesign model that uses the best strategies, characteristics, and qualities to create a hybrid Aurora High School that is available to any high school student in the MCCSC, whether freshman or senior.

Aurora staff members, collectively, in the past ten months have already visited schools in cities in California, Ohio, New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island, as well as Indianapolis. Programs that we have explored include Big Picture schools in Providence, RI, Early College schools in Dayton, OH, AVID programs in schools in Indianapolis, and New Tech High School in Napa, CA.

Existing strengths and unique characteristics of Aurora High School include:

- * Serving high school students of all ages, allowing for enrollment in any year throughout the high school experience. Aurora can continue to serve a wide range of students who experience difficulty in any existing MCCSC high school program (North, South, NTHS, ECHS, TLC, etc.)
- * Active and vital student voice and participation in overall operational aspects of the school community.
- * The only fully accredited public alterna-

tive high school in Indiana that has its own stand-alone diploma and graduation.

- * Established programming, experienced staff, and a proven history of success that will allow for growth opportunities while avoiding the problems associated with new start up schools/programs.

Redesign Project goals for enhancing these existing assets include:

- * To examine identified high school models, specifically MET School/Big Picture school models.

- * To apply experiences and knowledge gained from exploration activities to design and implement a pilot program to be offered this year third trimester.

- * To use experiences and knowledge gained from the pilot project for creating a school-wide redesign model that uses the best strategies, characteristics, and qualities to create a hybrid Aurora High School that is available to any high school student in the MCCSC, whether freshman or senior.

- * To implement a pilot program of interdisciplinary teaming this school year. A partnership with Indiana University focusing on a Veterans Writing Collaborative has been established as a spring board for this pilot project.

- * To create the framework for a redesigned Aurora High School to be ready for Fall 2008 that will provide MCCSC high students – freshman through senior – an opportunity for enhanced, enriched educational opportunity.

- * To establishing teams of four teachers and 60 students, combining Family Groups and increasing enrollment.

- * To establishing a hybrid program, designed by individual student needs, educational goals and interests, of internships and dual credit programming.

I'm from charms

By Melinda Phillips, Aurora

I'm from stacks of Vogue
Sticks of lavender incense
Old Barry Manilow records
And funky leopard prints
Mannequins
Sketches and knock off Chanel
Candles burning smoothly
Small tributes to pop art and irony
Spearmint tea

I'm from perpetual fountains
And theatrical attempts at gardening
My boyfriend's rusty, talented charcoal grill
And a pond of Koi and stones
Whimsical garden fantasies
And gnomes

I'm from tree houses
Rude neighborhood children
Noisy railroad tracks
And secret walkways
Playgrounds perched attentively throughout
Mid sized cars secured in their driveways
And yappy dogs

I'm from my mom, graceful,
overwhelmed
And my dad- Irish, arrogant, drunk
My Mamaw, my Papaw, my Uncle Cecil
Some influential people
Some mentors and substitutes
Icons... Marilyn Monroe

I'm from chants of "Legalize It"
Endless quotes from "The Big Lebowski"
"Question the answers"
Paranoia
Singing along with the Stones

I'm from toast any time of day
Virgin margaritas
White rice goes with anything

The perfect taco salad
Cocoa at Christmas
And cider in the fall
Mocha, frapa- whatever's to wake up

I'm from collages on the inside of my locker
door
Black and white photos and clumsily taped home
videos
Boxes of shells from beach vacations
I'm from a bracelet heavy with charms

Aurora High: Review and renewal

By Chuck Holloway, Principal

524 North Fairview Street
Bloomington, Indiana 47404
(812) 330-7837
www.aurora.mccsc.edu

Aurora Alternative High School, established in 1995, is part of the Monroe County Community School Corporation in Bloomington, Indiana. We are a school where both the students and the staff attend because they choose to do so. Prospective students complete applications, and when space becomes available, they undergo an interview process that includes the participation of administration, staff and Aurora students. We believe that this encourages student involvement and ownership. We are an accredited high school that offers its own diploma and seeks to enable Aurora students to attain whatever academic goals they wish to set.

We hope we are able to provide students options in the pursuit of their education. Aurora was created to provide alternatives for students who haven't experienced

success in traditional school settings. We encourage student participation in the day to day operations of the school. This promotes ownership in the school, and hopefully a sense of belonging and commitment.

Aurora is a "school of choice" meaning that students who are enrolled have done so by choice. The process of becoming an Aurora student begins with a few key steps. The first of these is to print and fill out our enrollment application and mail it in or bring it in to our secretary. Aurora considers applicants four times a year, at the start of school, and at the end of our trimesters in November, February and May. When one of these times approaches, the applicant will be contacted to schedule a parent conference with the principal. This allows potential students and their parents or guardians to ask questions and receive additional information about Aurora. After the parent conference, applicants will be scheduled for an interview with a team of Aurora teachers and

students to consider their application. In most cases, the interview team will inform the applicant of their decision at the end of the interview, along with some directions for what to do next.

The fall of 2007, we were able to expand our services to MCCSC students. For the first time in its thirteen year history, Aurora High School has school bus service both to and from school. It is now possible for every student to who wants to attend our school to have transportation provided by MCCSC bus service, relieving transport stresses for families with tight time demands.

We have also introduced a credit recovery program this fall, with a supervisory coordinator, to provide additional opportunities for Aurora students to both recover lost ground and accelerate the acquisition of additional high school credits, and still remain connected directly with the Aurora campus. Students now have the opportunity to earn between twelve and sixteen credits a year here.

See "Aurora," page 20

I am from...

By Kirsten Boyer, Aurora Student

I am from Michigan lakes and open fields
and vases filled with beautiful red flowers.

I am from photo albums and picture frames
filled with awards and ribbons.

I am from rakes in the yard
and bird feeders hanging in the trees
to bird baths in the yard.

I am from parks down the road to
the basketball courts by the park.

I am from the Reynolds tree,
from Amy to Jewel.

I am from "If you can't say anything nice than
don't say anything at all."

I am from deviled eggs and
home made mashed potatoes
I am from ham and turkey and pumpkin pie.

I am from journal entries and attic boxes
and treasures hidden in between my mattress and box
spring.

Youth Services: Poetry from Aurora students

I am who I am

By *Acacia Seitzinger*

I was raised by
sprinting back and forth,
shooting jumpers,
and setting screens,
running plays,
and getting knocked
“Ball, ball,”
kind of basketball.

I was raised by family—
sitting around the dinner table,
country cooking,
ham and beans,
the sweet aroma,
when you walk into the house.

Trotting horses,
and feeding cows,
waking up at the crack of dawn,
4-H meetings and tenderloins,
the county fair every summer,
kind of lifestyle.

Wiener roasts,
4-wheeler riding,
hunting and playing in the mud,
kind of country.

Moving from here to there,
from mom's to dad's on weekends,
new adventures,
exciting places,
kind of change,

Bedtime stories,
getting tucked into bed,
“Don't let the bed bugs bite,”
saying good night with hugs and kisses,
and bed time prayers
kind of love.

I was raised by
lots of siblings yelling,
“Mom, he did this and she did that,”
fishing with mom,
and playing in the woods with dad,
kind of family.

Soon to be baby raising,
mama on board,
and ready to take action,
kind of responsibility.

I was brought up by a never ending circle of love.

Where am I from?

By *JD Purtlebaugh*

I am from the wheels spinning,
And shots are taken.
I am from super big gulps, slushes to
cheese hot dogs.
I am from watching fights, to
watching TV at night.

I am from probation to red and blue
lights.
I am from hanging with my cousin at
the bridges, to shooting guns in the woods.
I am from have a good day to see
you later.

I am from grate tasting tatter tot casserole
To marvelous marble cake.
I am from ware kids go to school
And after that they go to the pool.

I am from pictures hang on the wall to
Hearing my friends through a phone call.
I am from going to see family in Tennessee
To family reunions.

I am from every day we do are best
And from life is a test.

Broken glass

By *Aus-10 Clayton*

I was raised
by a mom,
an “I am woman, hear me roar” mom,
a road trip takin',
no belly achin',
time for work and time for playin',
mommy.

By a dad,
a “mow the lawn at the butt crack of dawn” dad,
a “Go to college and get some knowledge,”
Sunday chicken so finger lickin',
good daddy.

By the music,
head crankin' no mercy takin',
make the Bible Belt nation start shakin',
broken bones
music.

Off tuning, kinda loony,
“If you don't play this next song right, I'm gonna
slug ya' in the jaw,”
this song sucks,
the frickin' amp just blew,
broken bones,
band mates.

The aerosol can dueling,
which graffiti team is ruling?
canvas assassinating,
slow and gentle brush stroke madness,
artists

Heart cuttin',
diamond trumpin',
go alone,
order it up,
spades and euchre partners.

I was raised by the loaded gun of life and culture.
I've lived life with a bang.
I was play doh and THEY molded me.
I was bad and THEY scolded me.
I thank you
And more importantly ... THEM.

This is me

By *Ashley Belgarde*

I am from the dusty piano keys,
unmade bed, & the abandoned half
empty glass, or perhaps half full.

I am from the three bean salad,
cigarette butts, & the American flag
that constantly sways in the wind.

I am from upstate, where summer
nights are chilly, & winter nights
are bitter, & the Canadian phrase
“eigh” is over used.

I am from spittin' snow, four leaf
clovers, “Ich liebe dich”, & the hidey hole
under the stairs.

I am from the leaves that turn inside
out when it's going to storm, barking
dogs, & blue & white stripes.

I am from stop signs, right turns,
& wrong turns. I am the mistakes &
regrets of life, & the daughter I never
thought I would become.

I am from the Belgarde's, Nash's, &
the O'Finnegan's. I am the items on top
of the shelves, the framed pictures, and
old journal entries.

I am the heart & soul of my body,
his creation, I am alive.

Where I'm from

By *Shane Leaneagh*

A home with loving family
Even when we're crumby
We all respect each other
And that's where I come from.

I'm from eight people
That my mother had
So there're many bodies on the floor
And the blankets get real bad.

Television is where I'm from
I'll sit and stare all day
Then I'll get the video games out
And then I'll sit and play.

I am from my dog Thyme
He's half Rottweiler half Great Dane
And when he gets his dog hair everywhere
It makes me go insane.

I'm from my yard
Littered with hoses, balls, and nets
And couldn't you believe it
There's even a crochet set.

Running through my old neighborhood
I see all sorts of stuff
Like trampolines and trolls
And Dad's house, oh look there's Buff.

I come from foods
That my family's got
Like my dad's cinnamon rolls
When they're fresh and hot.

I come from pumpkin pie
That my mom prepared
It makes all the pumpkin pie makers
Start running, because they're scared.

I keep most of my memories
Inside of my brain
Except for in a box
Oh yeah and two crates.

I'm from my family
Were all so close
We all love each other
And that counts the most.

Love conquers all

By *Loretta Lockwood*

I was raised by congregations,
standing up, sitting down,
koogle & wine on the holidays,
Along with song and prayer.

I love my people.

I was raised by pain
from drugs to therapy
& from insecurities to heartache.

I have overcome my demons, and I love myself.

I was raised by earth.
Digging my toes in the sand,
embracing the sun's rays on my face,
dancing in the rain.

My sign is Cancer, and I love the water.

I was raised by music,
“Carpet of the Sun”
BB King, Bo Diddly, Aretha Franklin,
All the greats & a few great hits.

I love the roots.

I was raised by my family,
Thanksgiving in Stockton,
champagne on New Years,
knowing they got my back.

I love my blood.

I am from

By *Sydney Jaeger*

I am from tarnished charcoal and snow colored
face paint,
A pool of it sweats down to my shirt.
I am from the explosion of sweet Faygo,
Covering the tip of my tongue down towards my
knees.

I am from fireball candies,
That blaze up and smoothly melt in my mouth.

I am from deformed safety pins,
That pierces most articles of mismatched cloth-
ing.

I am from a blanket of pillows,
They create a cotton blizzard in my living room.
I am from true homies,
Chillin' in the compulsive laughter.

I am from the familiar taste of Ramen Noodles,
Chicken, shrimp, and beef 100 cents for six.
I am from purple and red hair dye,
My hair soaks for thirty minutes then trans-
formed.

I am from decaying bikes,
Rotting away by time in the backyard.

I am from idyllic memories,
Cleansed by envious black rain.
I am from lifeless deer,
Carelessly abandoned on State Road 446.
I am from sapphire nail polish,
Chips incrustrated on my fingers and toes.

I am from wicked spits of Madrox and Monoxide,
Voices soothe my mind.
I am from rainbow jelly bracelets,
Binding my pale wrist.
I am from metallic discs,
Unable to live stably without.

I am from my polluted shredded chucks,
Surprisingly still in one piece.
I am from the scent of sweet pea,
The silky fragrance flows into my nose.
I am from wide hips and thick thighs,
Defined by the highs and lows of curves and dips.

I am from twinkling glitter,
It annoyingly finds a home in every open gap.
I am from an unaccepted bizarre style,
Consistent stares of disgust and disappointment.
I am from unsure place at a hesitant time,
Wrapped up in everyone else's concerns.

I Was Raised By Opposites

By *Shane Chandler*

I was raised by a long haired,
laid back,
funny,
respectable,
kinda' dad

I was influenced by a trouble makin',
law brakin',
parentless,
tell ya like it is'
kinda' friend

I was taught by an old school,
unique,
spontaneous,
“I believe that you can do better with your life,”
kinda teacher

I was loved by a beautiful,
funny,
smart,
“I'm always right because I'm perfect,”
kinda girl

I was shaped by a responsible,
tough lookin',
loud music listenin' to,
“I'll always be there for you; I got your back,”
kinda' person
ME

Youth Programs: Big Brothers Big Sisters profiles

Little Paige and Big Katy



Paige and Katy are a new match, but have known each other since last school year when Katy taught in Paige's classroom. They meet each week now as a School Bigs match at Templeton Elementary. Paige is in 2nd grade; Katy coordinates an after-school enrichment program for MCCSC called "To the Bell & Beyond". She is a new board member of BBBSSCI.

"It's awesome having a Big/Little Sister."

"I like talking to Paige."

"I like talking with Ms. Kelly."

"We have our own special tree to sit under."

"We printed witch pictures for Halloween."

"We made a witch hat. A (doesn't this A look like a witch hat?)"

"We made two WIND SOCKS that blow in the wind!"

Little Christian and Big Paul



Paul and Christian were matched last year at Templeton Elementary. They meet there every week; Christian is a 5th grader; Paul is a retired economics professor.

Paul: When we meet we do class work, read together, try puzzles and games, talk about many things, and play ping pong. We enjoy Sherlock Holmes and ping pong the most.

Christian: I like being a part of this program because I can meet new people who have done different things.

Paul: I like it because I enjoy being with a youngster I would otherwise not get to know.

Little Sophia and Big Susan



Susan and Sophia were matched last January at Templeton Elementary where they meet weekly. Sophia and Susan will soon be a Community AND School match so that they can see each other during holidays and summer vacation.

Sophia is a 5th grader; Susan is a retired financial advisor and has been a volunteer for BBBSSCI since 2004.

Sophia: I like being a Little because it's fun, important to me, and I am not able to be bored.

Susan: I like being a Big because I want to stay involved with children, and it is a way of giving back and sharing lives.

Both: In school we have decorated my favorite notebook, played Sudoku, chess, and ping pong, decorated bicycle helmets to look like a turtle for Lotus festival, had long walks with talking, and done a bit of homework. We plan on going skating and to a movie this Christmas Holiday.

Little Kali and Big Danell



Kali and Danell have been matched since fall of 2006. They meet every week at Templeton Elementary, but also do things outside of school since they are both a Community and School-Based match. Kali is in 5th grade and Danell works for Bill C. Brown, is co-chair of the Bowl For Kids Sake annual campaign, and a new member of the BBBSSCI board.

"We have been matched for over a year. Last year, weather permitting, we spent most of our time outside playing tetherball. This year, however, we meet during the lunch and recess time, so it's more difficult to play because all of the students are also on the playground. So we spend time playing four square with some of Kali's schoolmates, hang out on the monkey bars, or go inside to the library to do a craft or play a board game."

"Kali likes it that we get our own table in the cafeteria to eat lunch together so we can talk and catch up on things during the week. Most of the time it really doesn't matter if we are reviewing for an upcoming test, or playing a game, we really just enjoy hanging out and spending time together!"

Little Kiana and Big Joni

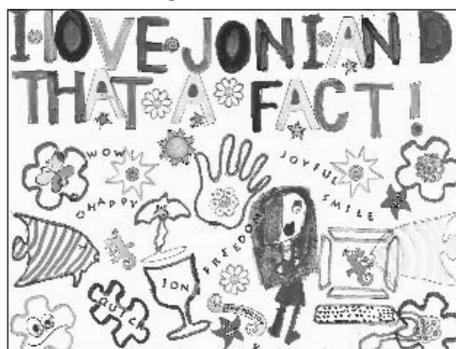


Kiana and Joni were matched last fall at Templeton Elementary where they meet every week. Kiana is in 3rd grade; Joni is employed by Old National Bank.

Kiana: I like it that my "Big" can help me with my math if I can't get it done. We also play lots of games and do crafts together. My favorite game is Mancala.

Joni: We also have a lot of good conversations. Kiana has shown me around her school so I feel comfortable there. Especially in the library! I really enjoy seeing Kiana's eyes light up when she sees me in the hallway.

Kiana also made a picture for Joni:



lives and experiences of Viet Nam War veterans, both through research and primarily through personal interviews with local vets. The compilation of the student work will be collected to create an archive of these experiences for publication and public reference.

An invitation has been extended to

Make a resolution for BBBS in 2008

By Karen Danielson, Executive Director, and Andrea Smith, Director of Operations

418 S. Walnut Street; PO Box 2534

(812) 334-2828

www.bigsindiana.org

Become a BIG!

The New Year brings with it a sense of new beginnings and a time to make resolutions. As you reflect upon the holiday celebrations and look forward, consider making 2008 the year when YOU make a BIG difference in the life of a local child. Become a Big Brother or Big Sister! To learn more about becoming a Big Brother or Big Sister, please contact the office at (812) 334-2828, ext. 222 or via e-mail at bbbs@bigsindiana.org. You can also learn more at www.bigsindiana.org.

Mentoring makes a difference

Mentors who volunteer with Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) make a difference for their Littles, the Littles' families and ultimately for the communities that we live in. Mentors not only touch one person's life, but they change the life of our community. Regardless of whether you were involved in a formal program like BBBS, it is highly likely that you experienced the magic of mentoring.

Some "local celebrities" recently shared their thoughts on mentoring and the positive impact it made in their own lives. IU Football Coach Bill Lynch said his high school coaches were influential mentors. "They taught more than just playing sports, but life lessons as well."

Similar to his predecessor, Coach Terry Hoepfner, Coach Lynch recognizes the importance and responsibility in being a mentor to his players. Lynch shares, "We're in a position to have an influence on young people in a positive way. . . so much more than just coaching football. It is a great challenge, but rewarding as well. I encourage anyone that can reflect on those who have positively given to their lives to be involved."

IU Athletics Director Rick Greenspan also shared his thoughts on mentoring and the value BBBS mentoring programs provide, "I've admired the work, wherever we've lived whether it is on the east coast or west coast, of this organization. I think there are few things more valuable to young people than to have a friend in time of need. A friend to share great experiences with, whether it's to go to a movie, whether it's to catch a ball, whatever it is." Greenspan continues, "The investment

we make in young people is perhaps the greatest investment we can make. In providing them direction, in providing them love, in providing them care."

Owen County Sheriff Chester Richardson recalls his youth baseball coaches as being outstanding mentors in his life. They taught him the important lessons of respect, always trying your best, and never giving up. In fact, he says that he wouldn't be where he is as sheriff without these important lessons.

Sheriff Richardson is a strong believer in mentoring and the important role it plays in the lives of youth. He says, "There will always be downfalls, but it will always be better if you keep trying. . . Never give up on your dreams, keep trying and it will pay off in life."

BBBS mentoring programs work and they are cost effective – Our experience and the stories of our matches confirm that no other organization is better suited to helping children. National research demonstrated that youth who have a Big Brother or Big Sister are less likely to use drugs, do better in school, and get along better with family and peers

However, we don't need to be statisticians or researchers to know youth can be at risk of diminished dreams, narrowed hopes, short horizons, and lost potential. We don't have to do a formal study to know that there are mothers, fathers, grandparents, and others who worry at night for their children's future, in spite of doing the very best they can.

Yet, on the other side of this coin, these same youth are equally at-risk of deep and fulfilling friendships, exploration of the world around them and the promise of adventure beyond; they are at-risk of bright futures. For many, the tipping point is the time and interest of a caring adult. . . a Big Brother or a Big Sister. BBBS offers many mentoring program options to fit ANY busy schedule. Regardless of the program option, our Bigs tell us they become involved because they want to make a difference, to help a kid – but they STAY involved with us because it's the most meaningful thing they do for themselves. We hope that 2008 will be the year you take part in something meaningful not only for yourself, but for our most precious resource – our kids!

Aurora

Continued from page 18

Also this fall, Aurora has created a partnership

with Indiana University to participate in a project entitled the Veterans History Project. The focus of this project will be to engage Aurora students in exploring the

Aurora students to attend a special conference to be held next April, 2008, in Minneapolis, and participate in a breakout session with three or four other schools from across the country and share their findings. Aurora students in this project will ultimately have an opportunity to take a trip to Washington D.C. by the end

of the year. They will get to visit with state legislators and also see the historical sights, including the Viet Nam War Memorial.

For more information about the veterans History Project, you can visit the web site at www.loc.gov/vets.