



Safety~Net

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Therapeutic justice... is thinking for a change

This issue of Safety-Net has Focus articles describing programs whose ultimate goal is to help criminal offenders make positive changes in their lives, reduce recidivism, lower the numbers of incarcerated individuals in the Monroe County Jail, reach out to our troubled youth, and reduce poverty. Much of this has to do with therapeutic justice which is concerned with rehabilitative programs that aid offenders in

learning how to solve personal problems and be accountable for their actions. In addition to articles about relevant jail and re-entry programs organized by citizen groups, the reader will also learn more about the Drug Court, the Re-entry Task Force, the Probation Department and its adult and juvenile programs, programs facilitated by the Monroe County Prosecutor Department concerning mental health

issues and criminal behavior, the Circles program that addresses the issue of reducing poverty, proposed mentoring programs for individuals on probation, programs for troubled youth, and the views of Mayor Mark Kruzan on these issues. There are also articles in the Public Comment section about alternatives to building a new jail, jail overcrowding, as well as the need to build a local Juvenile Facility

with therapeutic programs. At the present time there is no correctional facility for juveniles in Monroe County. Such a facility is important not only for on-site therapeutic and educational programs, but also because it would keep incarcerated youth closer to families and helpful local agencies rather than shipping them out to facilities in other counties.

Recidivism: A multifaceted issue

By Mark Kruzan, Mayor of Bloomington

Recidivism must be addressed

Among our community's top economic development issues is the spiral and cycle of recidivism. Recidivism is both an individual and community failure. It is the responsibility of the individual to address the problem. It's the responsibility of the community to ensure the individual involved isn't fighting an un-winnable battle.

The explosive growth of people in prison and jail, especially of women, is creating a generation of angry kids growing up with the prospect for even more rapid growth.

If we build more and larger jails and prisons they will be simply be filled.

Statistics

Recidivism is a clear example of why the jail is not just a so-called "county issue." More than half of the inmates in the jail are city residents and the jail itself is situated at the center of our city.

Other sobering statistics include:

- 70% of released inmates will wind up back in jail or prison within three years.
- Nearly 70% of inmates have an addictions problem.
- Children of inmates are 7 times more likely to get involved with the criminal justice system and get incarcerated than other children whose parents are not in jail.

Breaking the cycle of recidivism

We should applaud the efforts of the sheriff, other county units, and the many local agencies already involved. But, we should also acknowledge that there is a need for a more concerted, coordinated effort to break the cycle of recidivism.

By breaking the cycle of recidivism, we can build long term value for the community -increasing the safety of our citizens while controlling and in the long term reducing the costs of corrections.

Employment is a key issue

The business world is a key component

of the solution to recidivism. Businesses need to be involved and be willing to hire and train qualified people who are released from jail. We need to reach out to the Chamber of Commerce as well as the school system and Ivy Tech to identify and establish training programs in job specific skill areas.

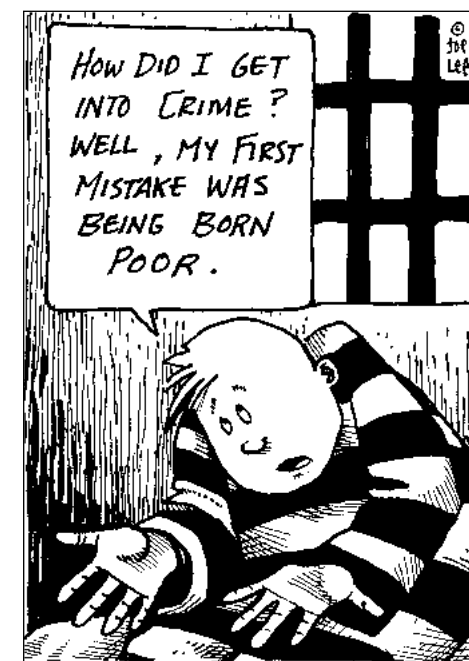
Poverty is a related issue

Whether it is children living in poverty or juveniles or adults in the revolving doors of the justice system, a real danger is a class of citizens that never break the bonds of poverty.

As a community, we can and will do better

A loss of an entire group of people's energies is a moral failure as well as a drain on limited resources and a waste of skilled workforce.

We can and will do better. That's our community's way.



Editorial cartoon by Joe Lee.

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Quiz Time! Test your knowledge

1. What are Mayor Mark Kruzan's views with respect to how the larger community can approach the problem of recidivism? See Mayor Kruzan's article on p. 1.

2. What is the Drug Court? How does it save taxpayers money and reduce recidivism? See the article by Judge Diekhoff on p. 2.

3. What is the "Population Snapshot" as to who is in the Monroe County Jail? What is the developing Jail Re-entry Program? What is the proposed mentoring program for probationers? See the article by Judge Harper on p. 2.

4. What is the position of Chris Gaal, the Monroe County Prosecuting Attorney with respect to addressing the problems of mentally ill people regarding the criminal justice system? See the article by Prosecutor Chris Gaal on p. 3.

5. How does Centerstone of Indiana (formerly Center for Behavioral Health) aid people with substance abuse problems after their release from incarceration? See the article by Andi Haynes and Cathi Norton on p. 4.

6. What are the programs for Adult Probation and Juvenile Probation? Why are they important? See the articles by Linda

Brady and by Linda Brady and Christine McAfee on p. 4.

7. What is the Adult Education program operated in the Monroe County Jail by the MCCSC Adult Education at Broadview Learning Center? See the article by Melanie Hunter on p. 6.

See "Quiz," page two



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

Developing re-entry programs, lowering recidivism

By Teresa D. Harper, Judge, Monroe Circuit Court 9

Who is in jail?

The Monroe County Sheriff's Department, the Monroe County Probation Office, the Monroe Prosecuting Attorney's Office and the Monroe Circuit Courts/Court Services combined efforts to study who was in our Jail on June 7, 2007. The information collected was based upon available local information with no out-of-jurisdiction record checks conducted unless already contained in a Pre-sentence Investigation report or other local documents. This "Population Snapshot" dispels some myths and clarifies our direction as we begin to think about re-entry.

Out of 251 inmates, only three appeared to be in jail for the first time: one held on a pending Class A felony charge, one on an out-of-county violation of a protective order; and one on a public intoxication charge who was released the next day. Females comprised 13% of the jail population. Seventy-two percent of the female population was 26 years or older. Sixty-six percent of them had prior alcohol or drug offenses. Their average number of prior arrests was seven and

prior convictions, four. Males comprised 87% of the jail population. Eighty percent of the male population was 26 years or older. Seventy-two percent of them had prior alcohol or drug offenses. Their average number of arrests was ten and prior convictions, five. The majority of inmates (154) were being held on Class D felonies and Misdemeanor charges or probation violations.

Most minor probation violations are administered administratively by the Probation Office. On June 7, 2007, 35% of inmates or 87 inmates were being held for probation violations. Sixty-one percent of them were held for a new offense and 39% were held for a technical violation such as failing to appear, failed residential treatment, use of alcohol and/or drugs, and work release, home detention, day reporting and drug court violations. Of those 87 inmates, 59 had been convicted and placed on probation for Class D felonies (46) and Misdemeanors (13). The average number of arrests for all inmates held for probation violations - no matter the classification of offense - was eleven.

The average number of convictions was six. The disparity between the number of arrests and convictions may arise from plea agreements that require the prosecution to dismiss other charges.

This snapshot dispels the myth that our jail is overrun with I.U. students jailed for minor offenses for undue periods of time. Rather our inmates are on average 26 years old repeat offenders with prior alcohol and drug offenses. And, the majority of them are Class D felons or misdemeanants. This revolving door phenomenon demonstrates we need to approach this problem differently.

Re-entry courts

Re-entry courts have recently been developed in some counties after our State Legislature provided for their development. Targeted at the Indiana Department of Correction population returning to their communities across the state, these former inmates receive services to help them reenter society when they arrive to the counties of conviction after their release. Because our returning DOC inmate population is low when compared with other counties, one appropriate focus for Monroe County is the Class D felon or misdemeanor population described above that re-offends and violates probation.

Discussion of proposed mentoring program for probationers taking place

The Community Corrections Advisory Board's subcommittee on re-entry has welcomed another member: a representative from New Life/New Life. This

group is exploring a model that would use screened and trained volunteer mentors to work in cooperation with probation and the courts. The Probation Department uses a needs and risk assessment tool to better develop individualized service plans for probationers. If probationers meeting the program's requirements wish to participate, their service plans would be shared with the volunteer mentors. Mentors would work with the probationers to encourage and assist them in meeting their service plans and finding and developing the skills and strength to avoid further contact with our criminal justice system.

Volunteers needed

One of Bloomington's greatest assets is the spirit of volunteerism. Volunteers are needed, not only for the personal contact of mentoring but also in a variety of ways. Probation has identified two recurring problems for probationers: employment and housing. Citizens, interested in volunteering, are needed to identify employment opportunities in our community for program participants. Other volunteers are needed to help find suitable housing. Still other volunteers are needed to help provide transportation for program participants, many who do not have drivers' licenses. The opportunities to volunteer to help solve the problems of recidivism, to help relieve overcrowding at our jail by addressing one of the root causes and to help make our community safer are endless as we begin developing Monroe County's Jail Re-entry Program.

Drug Treatment Court saves money, reduces recidivism

By Mary Ellen Diekhoff, Judge, Monroe Circuit Court

Drug treatment courts are one of the fastest growing programs designed to reduce drug abuse and criminal behavior in non-violent offenders in the United States. The first drug court was implemented in Miami (Dade County), Florida in 1989. As of January, 2008 there were more than 2100 adult and juvenile drug courts in operation in the United States.

Monroe County's Drug Court movement began in November of 1999 as a pilot project and was officially certified as a Drug Court by the Indiana Judicial Center (IJC) in May of 2005. The Drug Treatment Court targets non-violent felony offenders with significant alcohol and/or drug problems. The offenders who are accepted into Drug Court volunteer to participate in the rigorous two (2) year

program. Once the offender completes all requirements of the program (payment of all fees, documented sobriety for at least one year, and completion of all recommended treatment) the charges they initially plead to will be dismissed and they graduate from drug court. Graduation is referred to as Commencement because participants are "commencing onto a better life". The commencement ceremony is held on the second Wednesday of every month, provided there is at least one participant scheduled to graduate. To date of the 287 offenders that have been accepted into the drug court, 122 of them have successfully completed all requirements and have graduated from the program. This translates to a 60% success rate.

See "Treatment," page three

Quiz

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8. What are the alternatives to incarcerating our youth? See the article by Erin Marshal on p. 7.

9. What is the vision of New Leaf/New Life, Inc. for how our criminal justice system will continue to evolve to provide access to education and therapeutic programs rather than simply punishment? See

the article by Vid Beldavs on p. 7.

10. What is the Circles program in Bloomington, and how does it address issues of poverty? See the article by Bonnie Vesely on p. 8.

11. What are the goals and programs of the Shalom Center, New Leaf/New Life, Amethyst House, Habitat for Humanity, Mother Hubbard's Cupboard, Big Brothers Big Sisters? See page 15.

About Safety-Net

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Safety-Net is a volunteer-driven, free quarterly community newspaper produced by the Shalom Community Center in Bloomington, Indiana, a daytime shelter for those experiencing homelessness and/or poverty, with the cooperation of the other social service non-profit agencies as well as by departments of the City of Bloomington, and Monroe County. Printing is funded by the City of Bloomington. Previous issues can be accessed at www.shalomcommunitycenter.org. Editorial cartoons are provided by cartoonist Joe Lee.

FOCUS ARTICLE

Each issue of Safety-Net has articles focused on a particular topic that affects those in need in our community. This issue has focus articles about criminal justice and re-entry programs.

AGENCY REPORTS

Each issue of Safety-Net has articles contributed from the many non-profit/social service agencies in the Bloomington area about programs and services that they provide, as well as volunteer opportunities.

AGENCY GUIDE

There is an extensive Agency Guide pointing out where specific services/programs are available and how to access them.

SPECIAL SECTIONS

The special sections in this issue are: Public Comment, Therapeutic Jail and Re-entry Programs, Voices Seldom Heard, Agency Reports, Volunteer Opportunities, Youth Programs, Agency Guide.

WE WELCOME COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS. Please send these to the editor at white@indiana.edu, sign your name, and indicate whether you would like your comments to be published.

Mental health and the criminal justice system: The need for a better response

By Chris Gaal, Monroe County Prosecuting Attorney

A challenge; responding to the needs of defendants with mental illness

Responding effectively to the needs of defendants with mental illness is one of the most difficult challenges we face in the criminal justice system. Over the years, as more and more funding has been cut from our nation's public mental health infrastructure, the criminal justice system has become the default service provider for low-income mentally ill. This is a bad idea for a number of reasons.

Channeling mental health problems into the criminal justice system may first appear as a prudent way to save public dollars. But law enforcement is a poor substitute for medical care. Once a mentally ill person becomes unstable enough to commit a criminal offense, the public may be put at risk and law enforcement can only react to the crisis after the fact. If the offense involves a victim or it is more difficult to divert the defendant justice system to mental, even when treatment rather than jail may more effectively address the root of the problem behavior. Punishing someone with a serious mental illness through incarceration often just makes the problem worse. For those rare unfortunates whose behavior spirals enough out of control to engage in a violent offense, such an inhumane fate may become inevitable.

For a look at drug and alcohol addiction and their role in recidivism, see "What comes after jail?" on page four.

fact. If the offense is an act of violence, divert the defendant justice system to mental, even when

Preventive care

A more effective approach would be to avoid the meltdown in the first place through preventive mental health services. Though resourceful, people in the criminal justice system simply do not have the expertise to adequately deal with mental health issues on their own.

Success requires a community-wide commitment and the effective coordination of resources. Such collaboration is not easy to create – especially when additional financial and personnel resources are required. Still, an ounce of prevention is usually worth a pound of cure. Following that logic, jurisdictions around the country, and indeed even in Indiana, have developed Mental Health Courts and other programs to creatively address the problem. As the newly-elected prosecutor, I convened a meeting of stakeholders in 2007 to promote a broad discussion of how we could improve our community's response to mental health issues in the criminal justice system. On the table for debate were both problems and solutions.

The Forensic Diversion Plan

One thing that came to light was that the Monroe County Community Corrections Advisory Board had already quietly approved a "Forensic Diversion Plan" detailing the specifics for addressing mental illness within the criminal justice system. The State legislature had in fact passed a statute requiring that every county with a community

Treatment

Continued from page two

In 2006, NPC Research out of Portland, Oregon was contracted by IJC to begin a process, outcome, and cost study of five (5) Indiana adult drug courts. The Monroe County

Drug Treatment Court was one of the drug courts selected for this study. The evaluation was designed to answer several key components of the 10 Key Components for a successful Drug Court, which the Monroe County Drug Court said it would achieve. Those include the following:

- 1) Has the Monroe County Drug Treatment Court been implemented as intended and are they delivering planned services to the target population?
- 2) Does the Monroe County Drug Treatment Court reduce recidivism?
- 3) Does the Monroe County Drug Treatment Court reduce substance use?
- 4) Is there a cost-savings to the taxpayer due to drug court participation?

The evaluation concluded that, not only, is the answer yes to each question mentioned above, but the Monroe County Drug Treatment Court also fully satisfies the 10 Key Components to a Drug Court through its current policies and structure. In fact, the report established the following about the Monroe County Drug Treatment Court:

- 1) Monroe County Drug Court participants were significantly less likely to be re-ar-

rested than offenders who were eligible for the program but chose not to participate.

2) Monroe County Drug Court participants consistently showed less drug use as measured by percent positive urine drug screens over a 12 month period.

3) Due to positive outcomes for drug court participants (including fewer re-arrests, less probation time and fewer new court cases), there were substantial avoided costs for Monroe County Drug Court participants. Over a two (2) year period, the cost of Monroe County Drug Court participant outcomes were \$364.00 per participant compared to \$7,040.00 for an offender that did not participate in the program. This translates to a savings of over \$1,400,000.00.

The Mental Health Review Team

In the meantime, the Prosecutor's Office had already been coordinating an informal Mental Health Review Team. Defendants from the jail were referred for evaluation by Dr. Weller, who obtained a signed release form allowing medical information to be shared. After conducting his initial evaluation, Dr. Weller would report his impression, and the team would discuss the cases with the benefit of background medical and criminal history. The team also included clinical counselors and psychiatrists from the Center for Behavioral Health (now Centerstone), and representatives from the prosecutor, the public defender or private defense attorney, and probation.

Over the course of the year, the process picked up greater momentum and more cases were being creatively resolved in a way that addressed both the mental health needs of the defendant and the need for public accountability. In essence, the program offers eligible defendants the possibility of diversion from criminal prosecution in exchange for compliance with a mental health treatment plan. The requirements remain flexible enough so that the Review Team can tailor a plan to the specific case – taking into account factors such as the nature of the charged offense, the mental health condition of the defendant, the probable effectiveness of treatment, and the public safety good of the community. Depending on the specific case, the terms of diversion can be either informal or involve a term of supervised probation. Frequently the team takes on difficult issues such as obtaining Medicaid, veterans' or other insurance benefits to pay for mental health treatment, and even coordinates transitional services related to housing or employment. Cases involving violent offenses, drug dealing, and drunk driving are typically not eligible for diversion as a matter of public policy because of the risk to the community. But for many non-violent offenses, where mental health services can make a difference in addressing an untreated mental illness at the root of the behavioral problem, the program offers real benefits for both the defendant and the community.

See "Mental Health," page four

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In short, the evaluation found that there is strong evidence to support that the Monroe County Drug Treatment Court is both beneficial to participants and to the Indiana taxpayers. The Monroe County Drug Treatment Court continues to be successful and with the help and support of the community, individuals are getting clean and sober, reuniting with their families, maintaining employment, and continuing their education. The participants in the program have gone from taking to becoming more productive members of society, which in turn allows them to give something back to the community and their families.

More information about the Monroe County Drug Treatment Court and the NPC evaluation can be found on the Monroe County website at <http://www.co.monroe.in.us/>.

Juvenile Probation: Helping community youth

By Linda Brady, Chief Probation Officer, and Christine McAfee, Juvenile Division Supervisor, Monroe Circuit Court Probation Department

Juvenile Probation focuses on Prevention

Research has demonstrated that the best mechanisms to keep our youth from “graduating” to the adult criminal justice system are programs and practices which focus on prevention and early intervention. The Monroe Circuit Court Probation Department provides many rehabilitative programs and services which keep juveniles out of detention and divert youth from incarceration.

Most of the juvenile programs operated by the Probation Department are funded by a grant from the Indiana Department of Correction (IDOC), with the express purpose of diverting youth from incarceration in the state’s juvenile correctional facilities

(the Indianapolis Juvenile Correctional Facility, more commonly known as Indiana Girls School or Indiana Boys School).

Probation Programs treat Youth in the Community

The IDOC tracks incarceration rates by county. Monroe County’s IDOC juvenile incarceration rate consistently ranks amongst the lowest rates per capita in the state. Monroe County has sent only 33 youth to the Indiana Department of Correction over the past 6 years, averaging 5-6 youth per year. Compare this to Tippecanoe County which sent 24 youth to the IDOC in the year 2006 alone.

See “Juvenile,” page five

Probation provides an alternative to incarceration

By Linda Brady, Chief Probation Officer, Monroe Circuit Court Probation Department

Probation is one of several sentencing options

In Indiana, the basic sentencing options for crimes are jail, prison, and/or probation. Community Corrections alternatives such as Home Detention and Work Release are also available in most Indiana counties.

For misdemeanor offenses and lesser felony offenses, judges may sentence offenders to jail, Community Corrections alternatives, and/or probation. Prison sentences are for more serious felony offenses only. When imposing a prison sentence, a judge may also order a term of probation to be served after release from incarceration which facilitates the offender’s successful re-entry to the community.

Probation is designed for rehabilitation instead of incarceration

Though probation is often confused with parole, probation is a sentence of community-based supervision imposed in lieu of jail or prison, while parole is community supervision for prison inmates after their release from incarceration. Probation is not a form of leniency, but instead is intended for offenders whose rehabilitation can be better achieved through community care instead of imprisonment. When the judge puts someone on probation, the offender’s jail or prison sentence is suspended on certain terms and conditions.

See “Probation,” page five

Centerstone asks: What comes after jail?

By Andi Haynes and Cathi Norton, Centerstone of Indiana, Inc.

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Substance abuse offers a variety of troubles to people who fall under its spell. Some individuals find themselves hospitalized or come to realize they soon will be if they don’t address their disorder. Centerstone of Indiana, Inc., (CS) works with Bloomington Hospital to ensure that folks being discharged have seamless access to services as needed with a continuum of treatment options from education to partial hospitalization—based on the severity of the patient’s disorder.

All too often, however, people who misuse alcohol or drugs find themselves dealing with the justice system. In fact, over 70 percent of the (2000+) clients going through Centerstone’s Addictions Department each year are either directly or indirectly involved with the justice system. Research shows that jail time doesn’t

necessarily rehabilitate substance abusers. If they have a treatment program to go to upon release, they’re far more likely to maintain sobriety

and remain “clean.” If an individual is incarcerated for a reason involving substances, the odds are their problem is already severe. In such cases the justice system may recommend they be evaluated by CS for general mental health and possible substance abuse treatment. This can be done through our video-conferencing system right inside the jail. Judges and probation departments are more likely to offer early release (and thus relieve persistent jail overcrowding at the same time) if they know the released individual will have limited “street time” before heading into treatment. Therefore treatment at CS may be a condition of probation.

The first treatment stop after incarceration is CS’s Day Treatment. Clients move into Recovery House—a substance abuse

residential treatment center with 24/7 supervision. This is a short-term “partial hospitalization” program for clients lack-

ing skills necessary to stay clean and sober on their own. The program provides structure and 12-step education to prepare clients to remain clean and sober when they go home. The next 10-12 weeks involves “IOP” (Intensive Outpatient Program) to teach clients to build sober support systems and develop coping- and life-skills for a productive, drug-free life. Some clients need Batterer’s Treatment—an intensive six-month program designed exclusively for men with domestic violence issues. Clients learn behavior modification, communication skills, and anger management. After IOP, many clients elect to continue attending support, or “aftercare,” groups at Centerstone. CS has a variety of such support groups to address such life-skills issues like depression, anxiety, parenting skills, anger management, and living sober.

Individualized treatment planning assures that each client addresses issues most pertinent to their well-being. Substance-Abuse Education Class (SAEC) is the least restrictive treatment option, providing information and education about substance abuse. This is generally recommended for first-time offenders who do not have a lengthy substance abuse history. This treatment is also offered in Spanish as well as in a

format suitable for adolescents. Brief Intensive Group (BIG) is a harm-reduction model for those who are ambivalent about their use and whether it is a problem in their lives.

All clients in CS addictions programs are immediately introduced to the programs of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) or Narcotics Anonymous (NA) so when they leave treatment, they already have a 12-step support program as a foundation for their life and sustained recovery. National research has shown us that of all substance abusers who complete treatment and remain in AA/NA, 65% remain abstinent after 16 years. For treatment-only clients, that percentage is 50%. So clearly the effects of both treatment and an on-going 12-step program are very effective.

When one looks at the statistics on jail overcrowding, incarceration due to substance-abused-related crime, and recidivism, it’s not difficult to conclude that such people need help and support beyond their incarceration. If we ignore that need, we are not only ignoring the untold suffering addiction visits upon these people and their families, but we invite even more societal problems for our community and its future. Somewhere, somehow, these individuals fell through the cracks and landed in jail. Isn’t that enough to alert us to the need to patch-up/mend those cracks for tomorrow’s sake?

Mental Health

Continued from page three

The Mental Health Review Team has now

moved beyond jail inmates, to reviewing cases of criminal defendants out on bond. There have been ongoing discussions involving judges and probation about how to expand and formalize the program. There is a clear need for a more effective mechanism to monitor compliance with

the mental health treatment plan. This may involve a probation officer dedicated to working with mental health cases, or even a program based on the successful Drug Court model. As Monroe County Prosecuting Attorney, I am encouraging all the elements of the criminal justice system to work together with others in the community to improve our response to the issue of mentally ill criminal defendants – which I believe will lead to a safer community.

Probation

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The U.S. Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that about 3% of the U.S. adult population, or 1 in every 31 adults, was in prison or jail or on probation or parole at the end of 2006. Although much public attention is focused on rising jail and prison populations, probation is now the most common form of criminal sentence in the U.S. In fact, more offenders are sentenced to probation than to prisons and jails combined. Probation is America's most commonly used "alternative to incarceration."

Probation Requirements

As part of their probation, most defendants are ordered to successfully complete conditions such as substance abuse treatment, payment of victim restitution, completion of educational requirements, and obtaining/maintaining employment. While on probation, the offender's original jail or prison sentence remains in force and can be invoked should the terms of probation be violated. All persons placed on probation, known as probationers, must refrain from committing new offenses. If a probationer commits a new offense, the probation officer must inform the court of such violation via a "Petition to Revoke Suspended Sentence."

When a probationer fails to comply with the terms of probation but has not

committed a new offense, it is considered a "technical" probation violation. The most common technical probation violations are failure to attend appointments (with the probation officer or treatment provider) and using illegal substances (typically marijuana). The Probation Department utilizes an administrative process to effectively and appropriately deal with technical probation violations without formal court involvement. However, probationers who fail to take advantage of this administrative process and continue to commit technical violations of their probation will have a formal petition filed with the court. Most probationers complete all required terms and are successfully discharged (in 2007, there were 949 successful probation completions, a 68% successful completion rate).

Evidence Based Practices

The Probation Department is committed to providing and utilizing evidence-based practices (EBP), which are practices and programs that have been proven to reduce recidivism among offenders. All probation officers (POs) utilize various evidence based strategies including "Motivational Interviewing" skills (Miller & Rollinick) combined with "Stages of Change" theory (Prochaska & DiClementi). POs model appropriate communication skills and behavior while interacting with clients.

POs focus client interactions on addressing criminogenic needs (i.e., needs

which have been identified by research as predictors of crime and/or related recidivism). POs use cognitive behavioral strategies and reinforcement, and assist their clients with practicing new skills through planned or spontaneous role-plays. POs actively work with community agencies, churches, and individuals to broker needed services for probationers. They encourage and support family involvement in services.

Probation Department's Adult Programs and Services

Level of Services Inventory (LSI): All adult probationers receive a standard risk assessment utilizing the LSI, a validated risk tool that determines which risk factors are criminogenic, and therefore must be focused on most intently.

Drug Treatment Court: Intensive program for felony drug/alcohol offenders. Research has shown this program reduces recidivism by 67% for program graduates.

Court Alcohol and Drug Program – All adult probationers receive alcohol/drug assessments. Depending on the results of the substance abuse assessment, offenders are referred to the appropriate level of substance abuse education, intervention or

treatment.

Prime for Life Indiana (PRIME): A 12-hour cognitive-based substance abuse education program.

Thinking for a Change: A cognitive-behavioral program designed to change offender thinking and behavior from anti-social to pro-social. Offenders learn problem solving skills, communication skills, critical reasoning, and anger management.

Community Corrections Program: Provides a continuum of alternative services which includes:

- Public Restitution - Community service work performed for non-profit agencies.
- Road Crew – Picking up trash on County roads.
- Day Reporting – Offenders receive jail credit for reporting daily for alcohol and drug testing.
- Home Detention - Offenders serve jail sentences in their homes while they are tethered to ankle bracelets for Electronic Monitoring. GPS (Global Positioning) monitoring is used to keep closer tabs on more serious offenders.
- Work Release - Jail based program whereby offenders are released from jail daily to work.

More information can be found on the Probation Department's web site: <http://www.co.monroe.in.us/probation>

Juvenile

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Granted, Tippecanoe County's population is about 25% higher than Monroe County, but their incarceration rate of youth in the IDOC is significantly higher than our juvenile incarceration rate. Monroe County's IDOC numbers have decreased even further as the Probation Department has added additional evidence-based community programs.

Probation Department's Juvenile Programs and Services

Washington State Juvenile Court Assessment (WSJCA): All juveniles referred to the Probation Department receive a standard risk assessment utilizing the WSJCA, a validated risk tool that determines which risk factors must be focused on most intently. Based on the risk assessment, the juvenile probation officer sets goals for the youth, and designs a program of targeted interventions designed to address the youth's specific risk profile.

Alcohol and Drug Assessment: All juvenile probationers receive alcohol/drug assessments. Depending on the results of the substance abuse assessment, juveniles are referred to the appropriate level of substance abuse education, intervention or treatment.

Juvenile Alternative Management Services (J.A.M.S.):

An after-school day reporting program for youth which provides tutoring, homework help and life skills programs. Juveniles who are not in school participate in one-on-one tutoring during school hours.

Project S.E.T. (Supporting Education Together):

A probation based program which assists juvenile probationers to meet their educational objectives. Program participants receive daily tutoring services, provided at our Community Corrections site, free of charge. Students may be referred for remedial work, assistance in preparing for exams, or simply a quiet place to complete homework.

Functional Family Therapy (FFT):

An intervention for at-risk youth ages 11-18 and their families. This counseling program is provided free of charge to our juvenile probationers and their families in partnership with the I.U. Center for Human Growth.

Family Preservation Program: Provides intensive home-based services to families of juveniles who are at-risk for out of home placement. Since the program's inception, Family Preservation has successfully served youth in the community, avoiding out-of-home placement costs of about \$1 million each year.

Aggression Replacement Training (A.R.T.):

A 10-week cognitive-behavioral intervention program. A.R.T. is based on the theory that "how we THINK is how we act." A.R.T. utilizes three curriculum tracks to address specific skill development: skill-streaming, anger control, and moral reasoning. Youth practice new skills through planned or spontaneous role-plays.

P.A.R.T. (Parental Aggression Replacement Training):

Provided to the parent(s) of juveniles who are in the A.R.T. program. P.A.R.T. educates parents regarding the new skills and behavior techniques their children are learning in A.R.T. It is believed this support outside the classroom will increase skill development and utilization for the juveniles.

Juvenile Prime for Life Indiana (PRIME):

A 16-hour cognitive-based substance abuse education program.

Specialized Truancy Caseloads: Habitual truants are assigned to specialized caseloads for individualized supervision. Juvenile Probation Officers devise an individual case plan for each juvenile focusing on the underlying issues which contribute to the youth being truant from school.

SHOCAP: The Serious Habitual Offender Comprehensive Action Program, known

as SHOCAP, is an intensive supervision program for habitual juvenile offenders. Juveniles are determined to be a SHO -Serious Habitual Offender- by an objective point system based on numbers and seriousness of offenses. It is a "last chance" program, because by the time a juvenile has "earned" enough points to be classified as SHO, the juvenile has been afforded numerous opportunities to succeed in any number of rehabilitative programs in the community. SHOCAP is the last stop before a commitment to Indiana Boys School or Girls school.

Community Corrections Program: Provides a continuum of alternative services which includes:

- Public Restitution - Community service work performed for non-profit agencies.
- Juvenile Day Reporting – See J.A.M.S. above.
- Home Detention – Utilized by the Court as an alternative to juvenile detention. Juveniles avoid placement in out-of-county detention facilities, and are permitted to reside in their homes while they are tethered to ankle bracelets for Electronic Monitoring. GPS (Global Positioning) monitoring is used to keep closer tabs on more serious offenders.

More information can be found on the Probation Department's web site: <http://www.co.monroe.in.us/probation>

Correctional Center Adult Ed students recognized in first “graduation” ceremony

Program allows graduates a better chance at success upon reentry

By Melanie Hunter, Marketing/Public Relations Coordinator, MCCSC Adult Education



Photos submitted

Inmates, officials, and adult ed contributors (including Sheriff Jim Kennedy, Sheila Butler and Sherry Dick) show their serious (and goofy) sides at graduation.

MCCSC Adult Education at Broadview
Learning Center
705 W. Coolidge Drive
812-330-7731
www.adult.mccsc.edu

Bobby “Mastermind” Rogers seems pretty convinced that he’s now on the right track. In his booming voice – just right for a future public speaker – he tells the small group gathered before him that the Adult Education program at the jail gets all its students in gear for the time when they are released. “If some of us just sit on the floor, watch TV, play cards, and stuff,” he says, “we are not rehabilitating ourselves to be a better person for when we return to our respective societies.” His teacher, Sheila Butler, beams over at him, while Sheriff Jim Kennedy looks on and nods in approval.

Bobby is one of the student speakers at the very first “Recognition Ceremony” held for the Monroe County Correctional Center inmates who have chosen to take the Adult Basic Education and GED Preparation classes offered there by the Monroe County Community School Corporation. Some have earned their GEDs, while others are receiving gold or silver WorkKeys certifi-

cates. It is Tuesday, May 13, the day before the large ceremony being held for all the Adult Ed students at Broadview Learning Center. The small classroom is decorated, with colorful letters spelling “Congratulations!” on the front blackboard. Several young men in orange jumpsuits or black-and-white uniforms have filed in and are sitting off to the side of the “stage,” shuffling their feet, looking over the guests, joking, or waiting quietly. A few audience members sit patiently in the few seats provided, while a video camera in the back of the room records the ceremony.

Another student speaker, Adam Sarnecki, expresses his gratitude for the chance to better himself and for the “wonderful teachers” he and the others have in Sheila and her assistant, Tammy Rogers. Adam is not only a GED recipient but has also earned a Gold WorkKeys certificate. Sheriff Kennedy gives his keynote speech, after which Director of Adult Education Sherry Dick hands out each award and Sheila makes her closing statements. As final pictures are snapped, the whole group of attendees stand in sober acknowledgment of the accomplishments honored that day. Then, at the command, “Now be goofy,” they let go and clown for the camera. Sheriff Ken-

Inmate Bobby “Mastermind” Rogers had this to say about Correctional Center Adult Ed’s programs: “If some of us just sit on the floor, watch TV, play cards, and stuff we are not rehabilitating ourselves to be a better person for when we return to our respective societies.”

nedy playfully throws an arm around the neck of a young man in a buzz cut, who pretends to be choking while others chortle, “Police brutality! Police brutality!” The whole scene is imbued with an obvious sense of pride and hope.

The MCCC together with the MCCSC offer inmates, both men and women, the opportunity to increase their basic skills, study for and take the GED test, and prepare for employment during their time of incarceration. While in class, the students are expected to set their own goals, cooperate with the teacher, be prepared for class when called by the Correctional Officer, and do serious work toward their educational goals. The classes are a privilege and an opportunity for inmates.

Goals may include learning to read and write, improving English or math skills, studying for a GED, college, or technical training, acquiring life skills such as getting a driver’s license, learning how to fill out job applications or write a resume, and more.

There is sometimes a long waiting list for the Adult Education classes. Students who are placed on the list can get GED study books in the Inmate Library to use until a space opens up in the class.

Those trying to get a GED must come to class and get passing scores on the GED practice test in order to be signed up. A complete GED exam is \$60, while single tests are \$15. However, the practice test is free.

As Bobby Rogers tells those gathered at this first Correctional Center Recognition Ceremony, the Adult Ed program gives inmates hope: that their skills will be recognized, that they will gain employment and be productive in society, that their families will recognize how they are trying, and that they can show their teachers, the program, and the public officers of the Monroe County justice system the difference between those who want to change for the better and those who do not.

These young men seem to believe they are the ones who do.

Our jail: From warehouse to schoolhouse to museum of poverty

By Vid Beldavs, Executive Director, New Leaf – NewLife, Inc.

www.newleaf-cej.com

In the 1980s as jail populations were rising it became an accepted truth that rehabilitation programs do not work. The rate of recidivism rose while the nation also got ever tougher on crime putting ever more people into jail. There was always money to build another bigger jail but never enough money to prevent the problem in the first place. So the jail and prison population escalated at a rate much faster than the increase in population. The jails and prisons became warehouses for damaged goods – broken people largely forgotten by their communities except for the continually rising costs of warehousing the poor.

Warehousing a poor person in prison costs as much as to send that same person to a school to get a good education. In New York the annual cost of incarcerating a person exceeds \$60,000 – more than the annual cost of attending Harvard. Indiana is less than this but still higher than the typical cost of attending Indiana University. The generally accepted figures range about \$30,000 per year somewhat dependent on medical needs. Older inmates generally cost a lot more due to their higher medical expenses.

What if we could provide the skills and knowledge to the person while in jail such that he could choose to not return to jail when he gets out? Right off the bat it seems clear that we would save the annual \$30,000 per inmate - year. More importantly, every person who does not return to

jail can be a taxpayer, a breadwinner or at a minimum a payer of child support. Even more important a mother or father who returns to their family can save their children from also ending up in the warehouse for damaged people, our jail.

If we as a community decide that enough is enough, that we are no longer willing to warehouse people in enforced idleness at great expense, then we need to find a way to do much more in our jail and with post-release reentry programs without spending much more money. Study after study has shown that more punishment actually creates more crime and fills the jail faster. Punishment does not work. And, more money is simply not available to transform the jail to a working schoolhouse through a conventional approach and to have available effective reentry programs after release. Good teachers need to be well-paid as do therapists and other specialists. If our jail costs us about \$30,000 per year per inmate to simply warehouse people, imagine what a jail would cost to run staffed with all the professionals needed to help people heal and turn their lives around? One answer could be to charge the inmates. Poor people don't have the means to pay and the jail is largely full of people too poor to bail out or too poor to hire the lawyer to keep them out of jail. We could charge the taxpayer – but that's us. If we had to pay then we literally might have to pay more than the cost of attending Harvard for jailhouse education to have impact so that the person doesn't come back to jail. It sure is expensive to try to fix what is broken rather than

to prevent the problem in the first place!

What if the jail could be set up as a school, indeed as a "correctional center", with volunteers filling the many critical needs? Some people need to learn how to read or how to budget, or how to control their tempers. Our community has every type of expertise needed by the people in the jail, especially the expertise to better get along with their neighbors. Especially important is volunteers who can mentor or be available to people released from jail as they try to lead more productive lives. With nearly 6,000 bookings in our jail there is a potential need for a large number of mentors.

One of the most important things people in jail need to learn is how not to be poor. A new program in town called Circles is just about that – helping people to learn how not to be poor. Circles, which is coordinated by the South Central Indiana Community Action Program (SCAAP) involves a broad cross-section of the community in a Guiding Coalition. Circles has been effective in Muncie and dozens of other communities. The idea about Circles is that for a person or a family to lift itself out of poverty they need to master skills that people have who are not poor. Some of those skills involve navigating in a middle class culture, which is where the good jobs are. Circles is a community-wide movement involving volunteers from all walks of life with the shared purpose of sharing cultural knowledge and social capital with

their neighbors.

I am very hopeful that Circles will touch some of the families of the men and women in the jail that have been trapped in generational poverty and one by one we will see these families heal and no longer return to jail. But the goal of the Circles movement is much more than to lift a few people out of poverty. The goal of Circles is to eradicate poverty. Two hundred years ago people could not imagine a world without slavery. After all, someone had to do the dirty and unpleasant work and who else but a slave would do that? Slavery is gone. But just as the world moved on and left slavery behind so can the world move on and leave poverty behind. In a world with the almost infinite resources offered through science and innovation there is no structural reason why some must live in abject poverty so that others can live in plenty. There is enough for all. In his recent book *Creating a World Without Poverty* Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus envisioned a world where poverty was eradicated. Museums of poverty remind the citizens of this world two generations in the future of a past where people tolerated poverty, disease, and hunger amidst plenty. There would be no more fitting museum of poverty than the jail, an institution where poor people are kept in enforced idleness at a cost equal to a Harvard education teaching lessons that breed more poverty. Let us work to eradicate poverty and to make the jail a museum of the past.

Alternatives to youth incarceration

By Erin Marshall, AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer at Stepping Stones, Inc.

Stepping Stones, Inc.

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The majority of incarcerated youth are not violent offenders. According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation's "Reducing Juvenile Incarceration," published in January 2003, 77% of incarcerated youth are non-violent offenders. This means that most children in detention facilities are taken out of their homes and away from their families for things such as "property crimes, drug offenses and technical violations of the law" (Coalition for Juvenile Justice, 1999 Annual Report).

Children who are convicted of offenses are not criminals; they are children in need

of support and guidance. They need education, stability, job training, and access to medical and mental health care. They need an understanding of law, process, imprisonment and their connection to those systems.

We have a responsibility to the children in Bloomington. We have the responsibility to ensure they receive the best care and direction possible. We have the responsibility of keeping them safe and helping them develop and realize themselves, their goals and purposes. We have the responsibility of remembering that children are young and inexperienced and make mistakes.

Bloomington has the resources, knowledge, and progressive nature to implement

an alternative to the traditional juvenile detention facility. Our city is rich in non-profits, many of which could be utilized for the supportive services they offer and are necessary to rehabilitate youth convicted of crimes.

If a detention center is to be built in our community, the focus needs to be youth development and empowerment, not punishment. The Missouri Division of Youth Services has revolutionized the way they incarcerate youth by creating an effective alternative to incarceration. Individual Treatment Plans are made for each person to determine the best place and program, of which there is a wide range, for their needs.

Prevention programs such as "day treat-

ment and alternative schools, intensive supervision, community group counseling, intensive probation, and educational training" are used for youth with minor offenses. Community-Based Services are designed with "the individual needs of youths and their families" in mind. Case management and intensive case monitoring, the Job Readiness/Work Experience Program, alternative living for youth who are unable to return to living with their families, day treatment, and family therapy are all resources available (Missouri's Division of Youth Services, Programs and Services).

See "Stepping Stones," page eight

Monroe County Circles Initiative

Working to End Poverty in Monroe County

By Bonnie Vesely, Circles Coordinator/Community Organizer

In April, Scott Miller of Move The Mountain Leadership Center, came to Bloomington to present workshops for Monroe County residents on the Circles Campaign. Circles creates intentional community among low-income families, and people in other classes who choose to ally with low-income neighbors, in order to move individuals and families out of poverty, work together on community, national and systemic problems that create poverty, and change the community mindset about low-income people. The Circles Campaign has had practical success in cities throughout the country: early results show a return of six times the monetary investment in Circles, due to participants no longer requiring public assistance, and new earned income entering the economy. An ongoing evaluation process will improve the process and create more successes. But most important, barriers are broken down and low-income people discover their strengths and leadership abilities, pride in themselves and the empowering pleasure of giving back to those allied with them.

People working to transition out of poverty are called Circle Leaders.

Applicants attend a 13 – 15 week training course, “Getting Ahead in a Just Getting By World,” where they investigate the myriad causes of poverty and learn the hidden rules of class. Child care, meals and a small stipend are provided during the training. At the end of the course they create a personal plan to transition out of poverty. They may then be offered the opportunity to be matched with three to five middle- and upper-income “Allies” from the community, who will provide support, friendship and social/employment connections to Circle Leaders as they work their plan to leave poverty. Allies are oriented to the Circles model and trained in “Bridges Out of Poverty,” then attend three weekly dinner-meetings with Circle Leaders before the matches are made. Circles Coach Linda Patton is available to problem-solve and facilitate relationships between Circle Leaders and Allies.

After matches are made, Circle Leaders meet monthly with their Allies and continue to attend weekly dinner-meetings, with programming, meals and child care always provided. Allies are also encouraged to attend when possible. One

Vesely says for Circles to continue working, it needs help from the whole community: “Circles is owned by the community and requires the efforts of many enthusiastic volunteers to succeed. We need low-income Guiding Coalition members, child care volunteers, volunteers to prepare and serve meals, and transportation help for Circle Leaders who run into problems getting to training classes or meetings.”

meeting monthly is a “Big View” meeting, to which all Monroe County residents are invited to work on local problems that keep people impoverished. Both Allies and Circle Leaders are asked to commit to the Circles process for at least 18 months. Circle Leaders who have left poverty can choose to “give back” by continuing to attend and co-facilitate weekly meetings, helping low-income people new to Circles to leave poverty – creating cycles of prosperity instead of cycles of poverty.

While South Central Community Action Program is the lead agency in the local Circles Initiative, providing staff and office space, a Guiding Coalition composed of all sectors of the community provides direction and lots of hands-on work to the initiative. Circles is owned by the community and requires the efforts of many enthusiastic volunteers to succeed. We need low-income Guiding Coalition members, child care volunteers, volunteers to prepare and serve meals, and transportation help for Circle Lead-

ers who run into problems getting to training classes or meetings. We are also actively seeking both Circle Leaders and Allies. Circle Leaders must not currently be in the crisis of homelessness, current domestic violence or untreated mental illness or untreated addiction. They must be dedicated to moving out of poverty, and capable of working full-time.

Individuals, agencies and all of the faith community are invited to join with us in this work. Working together we can break down barriers between classes and bring everyone to the table to end poverty locally.

Getting Ahead classes are scheduled to begin in late July; Bridges classes will begin in late September or early October.

If you or someone you know is struggling to leave poverty and would fit the criteria to be a Circle Leader, or if you would like to volunteer, please contact Circles Coordinator/Community Organizer Bonnie Vesely at 339-3447, extension 218, or bonnie@sccap.monroe.in.us.

Stepping Stones

Continued from page seven

Youth convicted of more serious offenses are housed in different levels of residential programs. “Secure Care” is for juveniles who have been convicted of crimes against people, such as assault, murder, and rape. “Moderate Care” is for youth who have been convicted of crimes such as theft and vandalism. Group homes are often located in residential areas and are reserved for youth convicted of low-level crimes (Missouri’s Division of Youth Services, Programs and Services). Missouri’s Division of Youth Services also has programs for youth with special needs and disabilities. After graduating from one of the residential or community-based programs, youth are

I would like to say I am truly sorry for the crime I committed two years ago. But, I feel that you need to understand that it’s hard for teens, especially me, because I lost both of my parents. Juvenile hall is not a place for youth. For one thing, it makes us madder inside rather than helping us. Second, all you do is associate with other kids in trouble which could be positive, but is mostly negative. I also feel that the system should learn to give second chances...

provided with aftercare services.

Many of the programs operating in the Missouri youth centers are similar to the programs offered at Stepping Stones, a transitional housing and supportive services organization for youth ages 16-20 who are experiencing homelessness. Stepping Stones offers supportive services in areas such as job skills training and educational support as well as assistance with social service programs like food stamps and Medicaid. The focus at Stepping Stones is prevention and empowerment.

- Anthony, a juvenile currently serving time

The program is designed to enable teens to be independent and make responsible decisions based on the skills they have acquired while participating in the program.

Youth will not learn from being locked in a cell. This is not rehabilitation; it is a chance to become angry and disgruntled, and to fall behind in education, vocational training, and social skills that prepare young people for entering the work force and supporting themselves. These kinds of ineffective facets of the juvenile justice

system create repeat offenders and turn non-violent, low-level offenders into criminals.

Anthony is a juvenile cited as a “voice from inside” in the 1999 Annual Report of the Coalition for Juvenile Justice. Anthony is quoted: “I would like to say I am truly sorry for the crime I committed two years ago. But, I feel that you need to understand that it’s hard for teens, especially me, because I lost both of my parents. Juvenile hall is not a place for youth. For one thing, it makes us madder inside rather than helping us. Second, all you do is associate with other kids in trouble which could be positive, but is mostly negative. I also feel that the system should learn to give second chances...”

Special Section: Public Comment

The Public Comments provide an opportunity for individuals in our community to express their personal views on various topics that are addressed in Safety-Net articles. If you would like to make a public comment about a topic addressed in Safety-Net, please limit your article to less than 400 words and send it to the editor at white@indiana.edu.

Better alternatives to building a new jail

By Mark Stoops, Democratic candidate for Monroe County Commissioner District 2

I believe that building a new, larger jail is not a viable option for Monroe County and that alternatives to incarceration would provide long-term benefits to the community. We must keep in mind that any new jail would have to be built to state and federal standards. For instance, we would not be allowed to build a jail with 350 beds. We would be required to build a 500 bed jail. If we build a 500 bed jail, we could conceivably fill it within 5 years.

The county has difficulty covering expenses for the prisoners and jail staff we currently have. Doubling the jail population would mean Monroe County would have to come up with an additional \$2.5 million in revenue, not counting debt service on the \$40-\$50 million facility, which would cost an additional \$3.5 million per year. And, if we could raise that much in additional revenue, is housing more prisoners really the best way to spend that money?

Compared to other Indiana counties, Monroe has done a good job of creating alternative programming and sentencing options. However, because of funding shortfalls, we have only scratched the surface in taking advantage of other options to reduce jail overcrowding.

To truly tackle the problem of an increas-

Investing in a Juvenile Treatment facility that is not a “kiddie jail,” but a full spectrum treatment facility that also works with families of troubled youth, would be a far more logical and cost effective method of reducing juvenile recidivism.

- Mark Stoops

ing jail population, we must start focusing on programs for our children. Between 50% and 80% of youths released from juvenile detention centers are rearrested within three years, a trend noted by Doug Church, president of the Indiana State Bar Association. “It comes as no shock once many of these children are in the juvenile justice system these children are on a path to be lifelong residents of our prison system,” Church said.

A recent Monroe County Jail census found that 70% of inmates had been in jail an average of 8 times. These inmates, of course, are the adult consequence of the kids that fell through the holes of our current juvenile justice efforts. This information is the key that should allow us to greatly reduce our jail population in the long term.

Investing in a Juvenile Treatment facility that is not a “kiddie jail,” but a full spectrum treatment facility that also works with families of troubled youth, would be a far

more logical and cost effective method of reducing juvenile recidivism. Wrap Around programs that use local social service agencies to target specific problem areas for kids and their families involved in the juvenile justice system, after school programs for youth, programs for kids suspended from school, and even access to pre- and post-natal health care for families are all important, but currently under-funded, avenues to decrease juvenile crime.

We also need a reform of the Probation fee system. With a drop in Federal and State funding, the deficit is often made up by allowing local governments to increase fees for community corrections programs, paid for by criminals in the system. On the surface this might seem fair, making sure the people who caused the expense pay for it, but in reality this system creates a real disincentive for inmates released into the community. With no job and no savings, inability to pay probation fees can send a person back to jail. 30% of our jail

population is a result of probation violations. In the end, the cost of incarceration to the taxpayer is higher than the probation expense.

A work release center with intensive programming for qualified prisoners would also allow for a smoother transition back into the community, and in other areas has proven successful at keeping individuals from falling into the same habits that land them in jail again and again. In the long run, because of a reduction in recidivism, a well run work release center can cost only one sixth the cost of incarceration.

Also, we must re-evaluate and improve systems to keep people with mental health and substance abuse problems out of the jail and get them into appropriate programs with proven track records of success.

A rapidly growing jail population can be a difficult problem to solve. There is no one solution that will fix the problem, especially spending all of our available funding on building a bigger jail to house more prisoners. With a change in focus and funding, Monroe County can expand its opportunities to develop programs aimed at correcting criminal behavior in our community for a long-term social, moral, and fiscal benefit.

Investing in services, not a new jail

By Matt Hoffmann, Decarcerate Monroe County

In an effort to drum up public support for a costly new jail, Monroe County officials have made an appeal to local agencies, advocacy groups, and concerned residents by promising a new facility with more physical space for prisoners to partake in educational programs, drug treatment, re-entry planning, and other support services.

Clearly, the jail is overcrowded and action needs to be taken, however the idea that incarceration is a good point of intervention to provide opportunities to people is severely off the mark. Incarceration is a humiliating and dehumanizing experience. Sensory deprivation, social isolation, an institutionally supported pecking order among inmates, and severely restricted decision-making and self-expression all create a situation that can aggravate feelings of helplessness and exacerbate problems related to drug use and mental illness. No matter how a new jail is constructed this caustic environment will be recreated. Indeed, a new and larger jail may only serve to worsen crime by socializing more people as criminals.

An expensive new jail will not address the root causes of crime and will not make Monroe County safer. A more cost effective and humane way to reduce the jail

population and the crime rate is to reach people with opportunities and services before they find themselves in trouble with the law. By investing just a fraction of the estimated construction cost of the proposed jail—between \$30 and \$50 million (not including the annual operating expenses and financing)—into already existing services, Monroe County can expand access to and improve the quality of these services. Some recommendations include expanding community mediation services, increasing funding for addictions treatment, improving access to mental and physical healthcare, offering educational opportunities to working people, ensuring quality affordable housing, guaranteeing people access to healthy food, and expanding employment opportunities, particularly for people transitioning home from jail or prison.

As a point of comparison, the 2007 operating budget (including in-kind contributions) of the Community Kitchen was \$465,200. With that, the Community Kitchen served 152,516 meals to 2,500 different people, over 500 of which were children. The Amethyst House provided education, treatment, and recovery opportunities for 400 people in 2007 with

an operating budget of \$950,000. The Community Justice and Mediation Center helped 26 people with their Victim-Offender Reconciliation Program and over 100 adults and a dozen youth in a Shoplifters Alternative Program with a 2007 operating budget of only \$56,400. Obviously, not all of the people who partook in these services would be incarcerated without them, but the importance of these services as part of a larger social safety net cannot be denied.

While Monroe County officials reprioritize, we can impose some immediate measures to reduce jail overcrowding and effectively eliminate the manufactured need for more cages. Over half of the current Monroe County jail population consists of people held unnecessarily because of technical violations, inefficient police procedures, probation infractions, and simple court backlogging. By appropriately addressing these bureaucratic incarcerations we can provide a number of effective short-term solutions that would immediately reduce overcrowding. Here are some ideas brought up by a group of concerned Monroe County residents:

- Don't violate people on probation or

parole for trivial offenses

- Change the current procedures for police interaction with the public, including the mandatory handcuffing policy, which leads to arrests for “resisting arrest.”

- Change the way people on parole and probation are given notice to appear for a court date or hearing. People are violated for “failure to appear” when notices are left on windswept porches, high foot-traffic areas, and even previous addresses. Instead, use an 800# telephone call-in system where the parolee has to call in weekly.

- Hire two more Public Defenders and a half-dozen paralegals to process people through to arraignment so that they can get out of jail on bond.

- Reduce bonds for non-violent offenders to affordable amounts

- Let people who are not flight risks out on affordable bonds or their own recognition, “O/R,” meaning no bond.

Monroe County does not need a costly new jail. We can reduce the jail population now and in the future by building the social safety net that Monroe County residents deserve.

It's time to reform the criminal justice system

By Raymond Rust

I am a volunteer for New Leaf/ New Life and CEJ, both groups in Bloomington who are working to improve the lives of the inmates in our local jail and upon their release. The goal is to reduce recidivism and help with their basic needs when released, (housing, food, employment, debt payments, etc), and in general do what we can to integrate them back into the local society.

The problems these inmates have are several and with some, very serious issues such as mental health issues. However most problems upon release have to do with money. Most owe various entities at that point, some times many thousands of dollars, combined with current requirements

of living expenses when released. And with the current low paying jobs which in any case may be unavailable to "ex cons" they don't have a chance of paying even partial payments. The inmates may owe money for any or all of the following; for bail, attorneys fees, Court costs, probation officer fees, drug testing fees, alcohol testing fees, home detention fees, possible restitution costs, possible child support and, when released, living expenses.

The criminal justice system has become dependent on the incarcerated and recently released offenders. The jail population calls for and supports a large population of law enforcement officers, probation officers and court officials. The current system

of mandated sentencing for many violent and non violent offences has filled our jails and prisons and is supporting and encouraging a large criminal justice system. One consequence of this is that the jails are over crowded and bigger than they need to be and we are building more. First I suggest the sentencing mandates be removed or significantly revised. For example the three strikes rule has many cases of decade's long sentences for minor offences. Drug dependency, alcohol abuse, traffic infractions and minor theft are offences which can and should be handled by the caring fellow citizens in the local society.

Secondly we need to have the criminal justice system fully taxpayer sup-

ported. The current situation where the law enforcement officials and policies are in part compensated by their charges is a conflict of interest encouraging longer sentences, longer probation periods, more testing for drugs and alcohol and inclusion of the inmate on the list of "the usual suspects". The criminal justice system should not be hired and be compensated by the involuntary population of the jails and prisons and recently released offenders. If it is in the interest of society to establish and maintain an incarcerated population then the taxpayers should fully fund the criminal justice system.

A thank you letter

From Kent Johnson

The spaghetti was quite excellent... rich and earthy-warm flavours, a wonderful thick and clinging sauce, and very meaty, too. A slight hint of sweet, with a linger of tomato, far removed from the harsh ascorbic and overtly orega-nized dregs usually found in "authentic" Italian restaurants. Served along with a lovely side of spinach and a crusty slice of golden brown garlic-buttered French bread. The crisp salad burst with textures, shapes and colours, slathered with a sweet French dressing. Ripe, juicy strawberry slices precede a

delightful cheesecake finish that leaves one feeling completely sated and well-pleased! Now, you might think this was a New York food critic talking-up some new restaurant, but, not so! This was Chef Ron's usual fare at the Shalom Center's Dining area, where, from modest ingredients, and his unique abilities as Kitchen Master, he daily creates culinary delights for between 150 and 300 of Bloomington's Poor, Working Poor, Handicapped and Homeless citizens. Thank you, Ron!!

And, I would like to take a moment to

thank some of the rest of the people who throw their hats in the ring to make a positive difference in so many people's lives: Mother Hubbards Cupboard, First United Methodist Church, First Christian Church, The Back Street Mission, Community Kitchens, Job Links, Saint Vincent DePaul, The Township Offices (all of them), the Salvation Army, Monroe County United Ministries, the Safety-Net newspaper, South Central Community Action Program, the Hoosier Hills Food Bank, Renovo Ministries, the Herald Times, W.F.H.B. Radio ,

Volunteers in Medicine Staff, Bloomington Hospital Staff, Pearl Vision and The Gift Of Sight, Sylvia McNair, Hal Taylor, Indiana University Student Volunteers, Alan Backler, David White, Joel Rekas, the Shalom Community Center, Martha's House, Middle-Way House, and ALL the staff and volunteers of all these fine organizations, along with all the Businesses that help sponsor charity events, and lastly, to all the kind and generous people who are the true heart-beat of Bloomington!! Well done, and Thank You All!!!

Special Section: Therapeutic Jail and Re-entry Programs

This section describes the many therapeutic and educational programs that take place in the Monroe County Jail to aid inmates while incarcerated and upon their release in changing their lives to make a successful re-entry into our society. These programs include in-jail educational programs organized by the MCCSC Adult Basic Education and GED Preparation classes, a Monroe County Public Library program that takes place in the jail, Alcohol Anonymous/Narcotics Anonymous classes in the jail, and enrichment programs such as reading programs, theater programs, and art programs that take place in the jail. Some of these programs, as well as others, are organized by New Leaf-New Life, Inc. which also organizes re-entry programs that take place outside of the jail, and these are also described.

Books behind bars: MCPL at the MCCC

by Art Leach, Community Outreach, Monroe County Public Library

An inmate, clearly agitated, enters the Jail Library and immediately engages the librarian in animated discussion. Both of their voices rise in what appears to be a heated exchange. But there is no cause for alarm. The inmate is impatiently awaiting the third book in a trilogy he has been reading, and the librarian is trying to explain that the book has not been published yet. No security threat, just an enthusiastic library patron, and a good example of the success of the Monroe County Public Library (MCPL) service point at the Monroe County Correctional Center. Often the challenge is not getting inmates to read, but keeping up with their interests.

The Monroe County Jail Library has been serving the inmates of the Correctional Center for over 20 years (since 1987). Started with a grant from the Indiana State Library, it has developed into a joint venture between the Library and Correctional

Center. The Jail provides space for the library and a materials budget; MCPL provides staff to operate the service and supplements the collection with books donated by the Friends of the Library. Inmates also can request titles from the public library's regular collection.

Jail Library Service

The result is a highly successful program, one of the best of its kind in the nation. Virtually every inmate has access to library materials. With over two-thirds of the jail population checking out books, it is perhaps the most used program at the Jail. Circulation averages upwards of 1,000 items per month, but that number doesn't include the books that inmates regularly share with each other. In fact, it is not unusual for individuals to read over twenty books in the course of a month.

See "MCPL," page 11



Photo submitted
MCPL volunteers take the library everywhere in the community, including the Monroe County Correctional Center.

Bingo night at the jail

By Trudy Shaw, jail volunteer, New Leaf/New Life, St. Mark's Methodist Church

The following are reflections by Trudy Shaw about her experience the first time she volunteered for bingo night at the jail.

Signed in, heavy doors slammed,
locked bolted, escorted, watched.

Nineteen were there, welcoming
with claps and cheers.

Most sitting on steel stools around
steel tables bolted to the floor;

Two on metal stairs leading to
upper cell tier;

Two on metal bench, one pregnant,
Most with pretty faces and young
skin, white and black.

Some with crosses dangling around
their necks.

Why? How?

One asking if '51' was missing.

All helping each other, cheering
the winners.

All, winners, choosing their prizes
with thanks.

One, with thick auburn hair and
smiling face, taken out.....

to meet with her parole officer?

The youngest, nineteen;

The oldest, fifty-six, dark curly

hair graying,

mother of nine children,

grandmother of four granddaughters,

hoping to be gone – home – next bingo
night.

How? Why?

New Leaf-New Life In-Jail and Outside Jail programs

New Leaf-New Life, Inc.

P.O. Box 7071

www.newleaf-newlife.org

New Leaf-New Life, Inc. is a non-profit organization offering services to inmates in the Monroe County Jail during incarceration and after release. Volunteers are welcome. New Leaf-New Life needs transition navigators and assistance with existing educational, enrichment, and recreational programs. Please call or email Volunteer Coordinator Debra Morrow at (812) 349-2890, volunteerNewLeaf@aol.com.

Support New Leaf-New Life

There will be a benefit for New Leaf-New Life at Nick's English Hut, 423 E. Kirkwood Ave on September 18 from 5 to 8 p.m. Come and enjoy delicious food in the back room. All the tips, and 20% of the food sales will go to New Leaf-New Life. Thank you Nick's English Hut!

In-Jail programs

1. Intensive Block. This is a residential substance abuse treatment program located in one cell block. This program features all-day classes focusing on anger management, community building, meditation, parenting and family relations, life values, and decision making.

2. Intake program. This program offers

and security, and is a key factor in managing the stress level in the facility. Reading combats idleness and boredom. An inmate quietly reading a book is one less person to worry about.

The Jail Library also supports other programs at the Correctional Center. From book discussion groups and education classes to twelve-step programs and church services, the library makes relevant materials available.

Jail Library Collection

Generally, what's popular on the outside is popular in the Jail, but the collection does reflect the jail population, which is mostly male and primarily between the ages of 18 and 35. Street fiction, thrillers,



Photo by Angela Herrmann

Guests and New Leaf-New Life volunteers at New Leaf-New Life volunteer reception.

afternoon discussion groups for men from various cell blocks on a variety of topics including problem solving, substance abuse, and anger management.

3. Enrichment programs. This features a range of classes in self-expression and artistic exploration, including creative writing for men and women, literature reading and discussion, arts and crafts geared toward strengthening family relations and children's activities, music and drama, and Bingo for fun.

4. Transition program. This program focuses on helping inmates prepare for making a successful transition back into community and family life, anticipating and managing needs, and various concerns facing participants upon release.

Outside programs

1. WorkOne job assistance. New Leaf-New Life's office in WorkOne makes it easier for released inmates to find job help with career planning, resume writing, skills assessment, and interview skill. Call 331-6000 ext.223.

2. CrossRoads support group. Meeting Thursdays at 7 p.m. at the Community Kitchen, this on-going support group works with New Leaf staff to deal with challenges of life after incarceration.

3. A+ group. Meeting Fridays at 5 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church, this group works to maintain the sense of community and mutual support established in the Intensive Block.

MCPL

Continued from page seven

The Jail Library is valuable in multiple ways.

Inmates greatly appreciate it because books give them a positive, rewarding way to pass the long hours. Beyond that, many make use of library resources to address the issues they face at this difficult time in their lives: checking out items on substance abuse, general education, self-help, careers, parenting, and spiritual needs. Some inmates who were not active readers before entering the Jail take the opportunity to dramatically improve their literacy skills.

Correctional Center officers appreciate the Jail Library because it enhances safety

horror, westerns and fantasy fly off the shelves, but requests are not predictable. Inmates have asked for books on English tea-time etiquette, advanced physics, and intermediate Chinese. Often friends and relatives will suggest books to inmates, helping them stay connected. Also, inmates frequently offer recommendations to each other.

Success of Program

Ultimately, the success of the Jail Library is dependent on the support of the Sheriff and the Correctional Center staff. Without guard staff to escort inmates to the library and make books available to those unable to come, the Jail Library could not provide such a high level of

service. Support from all the staff, from the Sheriff on down, makes the program work.

The Monroe County Jail Library exemplifies the mission of the Monroe County Public Library: offering access to information and opportunities for lifelong learning and enrichment. Its importance is summed up by a hand-written note from an inmate hanging above the Jail Librarian's desk: "Need books to read - Need the Librarian man."

Jail service is a program of Community Outreach Services, which brings the public library to people in the county who are unable to get to an MCPL facility. Other services include the Bookmobile, the Outreach Van, and Homebound Delivery. You can find out more at www.mcpl.info/outreach.

Special Section: Youth Programs

This section focuses on youth services in and around Monroe County. For more information on youth programs, please see the Agency Reference Guide, pages PAGES HERE

Sixth annual Big Brothers Big Sisters reality health fair

By Deborah Meader, Director of Site-Based Programs



Photos submitted

Left: Big Brother Greg coaches Jamie is buying an affordable car.

Right: Barbara Brewster, background, reviews student loan payments. Brianish Gray, foreground, talks to 21st Century Scholars program about funds for college.

Big Brothers Big Sisters
418 So. Walnut Street
(812) 334-2828
schoolbigs@bigsindiana.org

On May 8th, matches from Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) and Crestmont Boys & Girls Club members learned a few of life's rough lessons the easy way at the Reality Health Fair. Have you ever heard someone say, "If only I'd known, I would have done it differently"? Exactly! If I'd known that keeping a balance on my credit cards would keep me perpetually in debt, I'd have resisted the urge to charge in the first place... if I'd known that the bank didn't care I can't subtract because they checks bounces either way... and the list goes on.

The Reality Health Fair is an opportunity for kids to "test drive" their future. After choosing a career and "life scenario" (married, single, children, etc.), paychecks are "deposited" into their bank account. The goal is to successfully balance monthly expenses with monthly income, and kids soon come to understand the difference between what they want versus what they need (and can afford).

As teens maneuver their way through real-life situations, volunteers provide information, discuss options, and assist with instilling a "dose of reality" in a non-threatening,

fun, and supportive atmosphere.

Random draws at the "Life Surprises" add a bit of the unexpected – good and bad. For instance you may discover that because your child drinks too much soda, he has some nasty cavities. You now have to deduct \$100 from your checkbook balance for dental work. And you will have to visit nutrition booth for healthier drink options. Or you may find that your hard work on the job has earned you an unexpected bonus – add \$75 to your checkbook. That's nice. But some really unfortunate draws may find you arrested for a DUI and in debt over \$1000 as a result!

During the event, volunteers will spend time talking to the kids about choices they may have. They help them solve problems, and they cheer them on. Kids discover that our choices really do matter. When kids finished the Reality Health Fair they had a lot to talk about. Some realized they had more children than they could realistically juggle – literally! (You must carry a raw egg for each child you have.) Some found out that even though you have a good income, you could still come up short at the end of the month if you overspend.

The Reality Health Fair is a collaborative special event for kids 10 and older (and interested family members) offered by Big Brothers Big Sisters, Crestmont Residents Council and Crestmont Boys & Girls Club. This year's Fair enjoyed a grant from the Department of Family & Children. This allowed us to serve a lot of good, healthy food! We hope you'll join us next year.

The Mentor Connection: Upperclassmen help freshmen

by Deborah Meader, Director of Site-Based Programs (with a lot of help from her friends)

Do you remember the transition from middle to high school? Chances are you were excited about having more choices and freedom. You undoubtedly looked forward to meeting new people. But you were probably a bit nervous as well. It's possible you were worried about getting picked on or teased, getting lost in a large, unfamiliar school, or dealing with harder subjects and more work.

You were not alone. The transition to

high school, with its messy mix of excitement and anxiety, is an experience everyone can relate to. How you respond to your first year of high school has a lot to do with how confident you are that you'll fit in and successfully navigate new academic demands.

The support of a cohort brought together for the purpose of easing the transition can make a fundamental difference in how freshmen will experience that challeng-

ing first year. When freshmen are given a chance to develop friendships with upperclassmen and other incoming freshmen, they are more likely to engage and succeed in the high school experience. This is the underlying principle of The Mentor Connection, a collaborative pilot project of Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Central Indiana (BBSSCI) and Bloomington High School South (BHSS).

Participation in the Mentor Connection

is 100% voluntary. Freshmen agree to be matched with an upperclassman (junior or senior) for the purpose of friendship and academic support during their transition to high school. The upperclassmen mentors are recruited, screened, and trained by BBSSCI and have committed to a minimum of one school year in the program. There is currently a group of six matches meeting on a weekly basis.

See "BBBS," page 13

Special Section: Voices Seldom Heard

Voices Seldom Heard provides a space for self-reflective writings from people in our community.

Poetry from the Shalom Writers' Circle

The War

She was in the routine of her day
Shopping, the housework
You know the drill
A day like any other
Except that today
An opposing army's bullet struck
And entered the head
Of her beloved son, her child.

In that single second
Her house her home
Her family her friends
Became a figment
Of someone else's imagination
Her horrified heart
Something no free world
Could ever again
Offer tranquility.

The pledge of allegiance
The national anthem
Became the hymns of heretics
The members of her government
Became a stage
Of macabre clowns
And her country
Just a piece of damn dirt

- Kay Sara Bull

The Shalom Writers' Circle is a weekly meeting of writers interested in exploring and giving voice to their stories through poetry, prose, and song. The Circle meets every Wednesday morning at 10:00 at the Shalom Center and always welcomes new participants. The circle also occasionally holds public readings of their poetry at a local café. For more information, contact Shannon Gayk at sgayk@indiana.edu.



Photo by Shannon Gayk

Kay Sara Bull is one of the Circle's most prolific writers.

Roads

The right road isn't always
the easiest road,
but the wrong road
will never lead you
anywhere but wrong.

Yeah, the right road isn't always
the easiest road,
But take it and you can be sure
you are not making a mistake,
Before you get started
On your journey...

- Bill Fox

The Passing

Some, through this life will pass
The way light passes through a pane of glass
Disturbing less than the wind
Through a strand of grass.

Some through this life will pass
The way a stone passes through a pane of glass
A shattering wind
That snaps like a lash.

But I through this life will pass
The way a poet stares through a pane of glass
At the lashing wind
And the bending grass

- Kay Sara Bull

This Weighted World

The weighted world upon me stands,
The burden borne by working hands.
Your times have tried and taken toll
On weary heart and ancient soul

I need no quarter, no favor's grace
No second stands to take my place
And every day I turn and face
The whip that drives my yoke and chase.

Let moonlight not a burden be,
Though stars shine out no path for me
Bring not me rain, nor evil time,
Nor users, liars, those of crime

Oh, these to me do not thee do
For naught have I e're done to you.
A fair exchange I do implore,
For sorrows well I've ever bore.
Lay not more heartache at my door...
This I ask, nothing more.

- Kent Johnson

BBBS

Continued from page 12

Mentor
Con-
nec-
tion matches
meet during

BHSS's weekly Student Resource Time (SRT). SRT offers a smaller learning environment for one period every Wednesday. Students can choose to visit teachers for assistance, use labs, attend presentations on a number of subjects, or meet with fellow participants in the Mentor Connection.

Mentor Connection members have embraced the idea of lending to support to each other – mentor and mentee alike. They began as strangers sharing a common experience – that oftentimes overwhelming first year of high school. For this group of high school students, being in the Mentor Connection has meant new friendships, shared lunches, homework help, and more. They are planning already for the 2008-09 school year. For example, this year's "mentees" will become "mentors in training" during their

sophomore year. They want to offer new freshmen the same support and friendship they received.

Recently we asked the students to talk about what the Mentor Connection has meant to them. They interviewed each other and offered us the following quotes:

"The reason I did this program is because it would give me a chance to meet new people, and to get help with homework."

Macy, Freshman

"My mentee is Macy and I enjoy getting together with her because she and I have good open discussions."

Rebecca, Junior

"I enjoyed helping others adjust to the high school environment and working with my mentee TJ."

Tony, Junior

"I liked getting to know a lot of new

people through Bigs and also getting help from my Big Tony."

TJ, Freshman

"I liked being able to get help on homework and just hanging out during SRT class. My mentor is Courtney and I enjoy hanging out with her."

Lindley, Freshman

"I like it a whole lot because I made new high class friends that helped me. Also great for students who are shy. It's also fun."

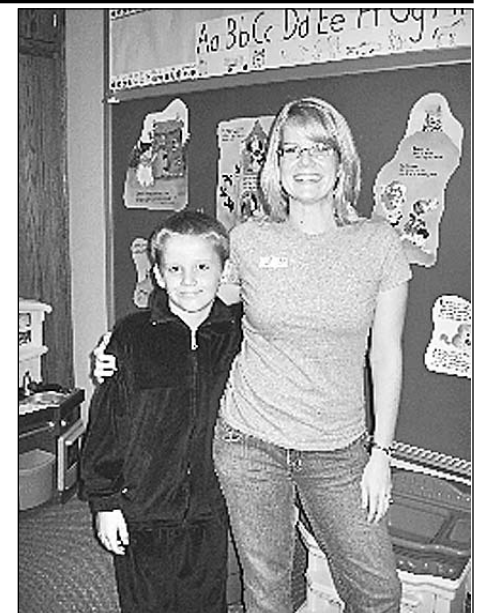
Jeremy, Freshman

"Big Brothers and Big Sisters is working out good for me. One reason I chose to be in here is because I thought it would be a good experience for me and it is."

Shalika, Freshman

"Being in Big Brothers & Big Sisters has helped build my leadership skills."

Anissa, Junior



Big Julie and Little Nathan are one of many Big-Little pairings in the Bloomington area.

Women Writing for (a) Change

Abuse

Did you think I'd let you
Off scot free?
You never let me, be who I
Wanted to be.
To see the things that I
could've seen.

Divided me.
Kept me from the one who
Was really lovin' me.
You hoped—I'd never see!

But now I'm BACK
Eyes wide open.
Now that I'm up off the
ground.
Sorry home-boy you can't
Hold me down.

The feeling that I'm feeling
Just might make me clown
I will never frown.
Let my kids feel that I let
Them down, because I
Wouldn't come around.

-Jennifer Hardiman

My Declaration of Independence

I wanted to write out my feelings, but all I felt was hesitation. I guess you could say it's merely frustration, maybe even some aspects of irritation. All I want is some sort of rationalization, justification, and reunification. Why do I feel such insubordination? All I know is my motivation for notification of my addiction, my imperfection and feelings of separation are a sensation of a migration of emotions inside. When it comes to my addiction, there's a combination of information that needs to come to your attention. I can't really offer any consolation, just a brief explanation of my infatuation. I guess it was a culmination of feeling isolation and a lack of motivation. Drugs helped my mind by numbing my feelings. It was like some sort of evil saturation, clouding the love I had even for life itself. Then in addition, my lack of honest communication caused my life severe suffocation. There's always gonna be temptation, but my desire for sanctification and reunification with my family, and the strength I received from this humiliation, give me such satisfaction. Through the years there's always been a magnification of a need for supplication in my conversation which caused me to feel isolation. I'm just trying to give some explanation of my frustration in hope to bring on some realization concerning my feelings of separation and need for justification. I can only pray my mistakes won't affect my next generation in which they feel the need for replication. Trust me, this path I took was no good vibration, just a mere simulation. I guess all I can do is pray that the circulation of this message gets across the nation ~ that drugs lead to nothing but devastation.

- Debbie Asmus

Women Writing for (a) Change is just one of the many programs operating under the New Leaf New Life umbrella at the Monroe County Corrections Center. WWF(a)C outreach is an extension of the emerging writing project in Bloomington which inspires individuals to craft more conscious lives through the art of writing and the practices of community. Women Writing for (a) Change is a place that supports women (and men in co-ed groups) for whom writing is an important creative, spiritual, healing, and exploratory process.

The following pieces were written by women at the MCCC and are printed here with their permission.

What my mother never taught me but "stuff did"

Embrace the good and bad
That's how we grow to know
All that life has to bestow

Eyes wide shut only lead
To a lovely desolate dream

- Robin

Untitled

Because of a man, just
Can't understand.
Why it took these years
To finally realize it was too
Many tears...
And more like wasted years.
Turned 28 then got my ass in gear.
Now I refuse to have any fear
I love what I'm seeing
The view is sooo clear

- Jennifer Hardiman

Destination

I am so sick of these bitches
for their moans, gropes, and complaints
come thick like hives that itch
intellectual personalities
with awkward sexualities
and disturbed cosmetically
watching your back with every step,
every inch. Flashbacks, where's a pinch?
Desperation. Drenched with frustration.
But trying to stay with determination.
Staying full of hope – for a better tomorrow
... better yet, an hour
Hope that my soul will not be devoured
Hoping, and God-willing,
that this isn't...
my final destination.

- Jennifer Hardiman

Seasonal Changes

It was winter still, when I went in.
Winter faded. Grass got greener. Trees got fuller.
Then spring brought in the flowers.
Now, summer is here.
People going swimming, sun brightly shining,
Everyone is enjoying the summer breeze....
I'm still feeling this same, stale air.

I will go through changes too, like the seasons.
I will go on to treatment, bring on my own changes,
Develop my own "flowers" in my personality.
I want to leave behind my old lifestyle,
Like a season that is past.
I know my real friends will still be there,
Like the perennials that bloom every year.

When I return home, it may be winter again,
But the warmth of my freedom from my addiction,
Will make me feel my own summer.
Just like the Earth needs seasons to replenish itself,
To renew growth, to become more fruitful....
So, I believe, people need to go through these
Types of seasons – to renew themselves and become
Stronger, and more fruitful in their future.

- Debbie Asmus

The Gift

Neatly wrapped with
Fancy paper
Tightly secured with
Ornate ribbon

The gift presents itself

Thoughtfully untied and
Carefully unfolded
The gift presents itself
To reveal its inner contents

Exposed and vulnerable
The gift becomes the beholder

- Robin

I Miss

My garden. The cherry trees should
be blossoming by now...

My great-grandmother's tulips
a blaze of color underneath the
bedroom windows

The entire front yard
covered with a profusion
of teeny-tiny
clover flowers

A solitary lamp-post standing guard
by the road covered head-to-toe in passion
flower vines.

-Barbara Moore

Another writing from the jail

The Son That He Never Had

Hope I wrote the right place and I'm reaching my dad,
Hope your life has been well and your health isn't bad,
I'm just wondering why the hell you've been out of my life,
Mom said you just left to go back to your wife,
That you never sent a dime or even a card,
Life without you being present has really been hard,
Mom's got a new boyfriend and he's treating her wrong,
Got jealous cause her name was in one of your songs,
I heard I got two sisters and a brother who's close,
And why you really left is that you love them the most,
Another reason you said f--- it, turned around and went back,
Is that your parents wouldn't like it cause I'm only half black,
How could you say nothing and leave me alone,
Nor write a single letter or call up on the phone,
Please don't take it all wrong like I'm trying to attack,
I'm just hoping you have answers and you just write me back.

Dear Jordan, I'm really glad to see that you wrote,
So you can finally hear the truth instead of rumors that float,
The truth is I've been searching around for you some years,
Now you wonder why my leave seemed rude and abrupt,
Is that it wasn't my own choice, I was forced by cuffs,
Cause a false claim filed by my new ex-wife,
Who couldn't take it I was making it without her in my life,
Yes, you do have two sisters and a brother before,
But because they are of color doesn't mean they are more,
And it's the fault of your mom if we have to debate,
Cause instead of being patient she couldn't just wait,
Please don't think that my absence is any fault of your own,
I think you'll understand it better when you're a little more grown,
Please see I want to change your mother's misplaced gripes,
Keep me posted on your addy cause I want to be in your life.

Now I'm glad you responded and I got the right house,
But the reason why you're gone is what I can't figure out,
Were you arrested for a crime that you could have avoid,
Was it another family's life that you set to destroy,
Did you rob from another just to achieve self gain,
Before you did this silly crime did you think of the pain,
That you would bring into my life, do you think it was fair,
That six years of my life your presence not there,
You missed my baby days and when I first walked,
And said my first word as daddy from the time that I talked,
Let's not talk about the pain that you have been through,
The responsibility of miss falls squarely on you,
You should have thought about my feelings before you did something dumb,
So the love you profess is on a heart that is numb,
I don't need a part time father to come into my life,
To tell me what he thinks and what is wrong and what's right.

- Robert Bobby Rogers, "The Mastermind"

Special Section: Agency Reports

Agency Reports focuses on miscellaneous news and upcoming events from area agencies. This issue features several items from the Shalom Center as well as other agencies.

Weekly services at the Shalom Center

Daily Services

Job Links: Ten a.m. to noon. Helps with all facets of employment from finding work to preparing a resume or applying for college/education financing.

Shelter/Dining Hall: Open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Breakfast is served from 8 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. Lunch is served from noon to 1:30 p.m. The shelter offers visitors a place to shower, eat, and interact with others, as well as a number of weekly services. For an up-to-date list of these services please visit the center, call it at 812-334-5728, or visit its Web site at shalomcommunitycenter.org.

Wednesdays

PATH (Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness): Starts at 11 a.m. Provides help for the multiple problems facing Bloomington's homeless population, including assistance in finding mental health services or money for medication.

Thursdays

St. Vincent de Paul Society: Starts at 10 a.m. Gives visitors time to talk with a rep from the charitable arm of the Catholic churches.

Fridays

PATH (Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness): Starts at 11 a.m. Provides help for the multiple problems facing Bloomington's homeless population, including assistance in finding mental health services or money for medication.

H.E.L.P. (Legal Aid Clinic): Noon to 3 p.m. Provides legal help for visitors.

Family Market at Trinity Episcopal Church (Corner of Kirkwood & Grant - Use REAR Entrance): Two p.m. to 3 p.m. Offers basic food items, diapers, baby food, formula, and other basic necessities. Open to all families with children.

ALL SERVICES ARE FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL. For an up-to-date list of services please visit the center, call it at 812-334-5728, or visit its Web site at shalomcommunitycenter.org.

Urban community food production

By Stephanie Jane Solomon, Assistant Director, Mother Hubbard's Cupboard

Mother Hubbard's Cupboard
1010 S. Walnut St., Suite G
(812) 355-6843
www.bloomington.in.us/~mhc
stephanie@mhcfoodpantry.org

Building food security through gardening

We at Mother Hubbard's Cupboard food pantry as well as other emergency food assistance providers are watching our lines grow longer and hearing more and more stories of high prices at the pump and in the grocery store. The cost of energy is rising as the earth's resources are dwindling. Yet, as becomes apparent each spring, gardening holds an incredible amount of hope for the regenerative ability of our communities and the planet. Across Bloomington, this hope is embodied as gardeners are transforming backyards and sometimes even gravel or cement lots into vibrant gardens. Such are the resources this community has to give; from People's University classes on gardening to conversations with local farmers at the market, we have what we need to build incredible food security throughout Bloomington.

What is food security?

How is food security defined? The Community Food Security Coalition

defines food security as "a condition in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice." There is nothing more self-reliant than growing our own food, and no meal more nutritious than one prepared from the food we cultivate ourselves. At Mother Hubbard's Cupboard, we believe that everyone deserves access to nutritious food, regardless of socioeconomic status. We attempt to make this vision a reality by offering gardening and nutrition workshops, as well as supporting our patrons in their own gardening efforts.

How MHC encourages local gardening

This season MHC has distributed hundreds of plants to the households of our patrons, consisting of seedlings from our garden program and plants donated by local farmers. The tomatoes are gone as soon as they arrive, proving them to be as popular an item as milk and eggs in the pantry. The interest in growing our own food is burgeoning, with class rosters filling up in local gardening classes, and every local community garden plot filled (and waiting lists to boot!).

Legal aid clinic at the Shalom Center

By Jacob Atz, Legal Aid coordinator

Shalom Community Center
334-5728

jacob@shalomcommunitycenter.org

The Shalom Community Center is pleased to announce the opening of Project HELP, a legal aid clinic created to serve individuals and families experiencing homelessness and poverty. The clinic is funded by the Community Foundation of Bloomington and Monroe County. SCC and Project HELP are pleased to have Indiana Legal Services and the District 10 Pro Bono Project as agency partners, and count many local law firms, judges and individual attorneys as participating legal counsel. In addition,

the Indiana University-Bloomington School of Law provides significant support, with both professors and students taking an active interest in the clinic's growth. Project HELP is a source of free legal aid in all areas of law, including issues related to employment, housing, and family law. The clinic is open for walk-in appointments every Friday from 12PM-3PM at the Shalom Community Center. If you are interested in volunteering or need more information about this effort, contact Jacob Atz, Project HELP Legal Aid Coordinator at the information listed at the beginning of this article.

Habitat for Humanity of Monroe County

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

Habitat for Humanity of Monroe County
213 E. Kirkwood Avenue
(812) 331-4069

<http://www.monroecountyhabitat.org>
maier@monroecountyhabitat.com

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 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.

Consumer Service Review of Amethyst House

By Tom Cox, Executive Director, Amethyst House

www.amethysthouse.org
(812) 336-3570

Amethyst House, Inc., is a Bloomington, IN based not-for-profit United Way agency that provides high quality, structured living environments, treatment, education and recovery services to individuals with addictions and substance abuse issues.

During the week of March 21st 14

reviewers descended on Bloomington to conduct the first ever "Consumer Service Review" of a primary addiction program Amethyst House.

Reviewers from across the United States (literally Hawaii, Florida, New York, DC and along with other reviewers from all over Indiana spent 5 days in Bloomington studying 15 randomly selected clients of Amethyst House Programming.

Special Section: Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer Opportunities outlines the multiple opportunities to lend a hand in and around Bloomington, as well as testimonials from current volunteers.

Volunteering: Get involved and make a difference!

By Elizabeth (Bet) Savich, Director, City of Bloomington Volunteer Network

The City of Bloomington Volunteer Network is your source for information about volunteering locally. For information about the listings posted in this article, contact them at 349-3433, volunteer@bloomington.in.gov or www.bloomington.in.gov/volunteer. The inclusion of an organization in this list does not imply City endorsement or support of the organization's activities or policies.

The Chamber of Commerce Franklin Initiative and other area partners: Academic & Career Mentors needed. Minimum age of 18. To register online go to <http://www.indiana.edu/~iuspa/FORMS/collegementor.html>. For more information contact: Joe Lovejoy at jflovejo@indiana.edu (www.ChamberBloomington.org).

Mobile Meals, a program of the Area 10 Agency on Aging: Mobile Meals Drivers needed. Minimum age is 18. for more info, contact: Cheri Adada at 812-935-2505 or cadada@area10agency.org (www.area10agency.org).

Hoosier Hills Food Bank: Repackers for Meal Share Program needed. Minimum age is 10. For more information contact: Kim Kanney at 334-8374 or volunteer@hhfoodbank.org (www.hhfoodbank.org).

Community Kitchen: Summer Kitchen help needed. Ages 10-13 should be accompanied by an adult, those age 14 and older may volunteer without an adult. For more information contact: Annie Brookshire at 332-0999 or volunteer@

monroecommunitykitchen.com (www.monroecommunitykitchen.com).

Hoosier Hills Food Bank (HHFB): Farm Gleaners needed. Individuals of all ages welcome. For more information contact: Kim Kanney at 334-8374 or volunteer@hhfoodbank.org (www.hhfoodbank.org).

Boxcar Books: Boxcar Books volunteers needed. All ages welcome. For more information contact: Tess Hannah at 339-8710 or tess@boxcarbooks.org (www.boxcarbooks.org).

IU's Asian Culture Center: CATS Diversity Project volunteers needed. Adult volunteers and kids in grade 7 or above are needed. For more information contact the CATS Project Steering Committee at acc@indiana.edu or call (812) 856-5361 (www.indiana.edu/~acc).

Habitat for Humanity: Habitat ReStore volunteers needed. Minimum age is 16. Please contact: Sandi Clothier at 331-2660 or clothier@monroecountyhabitat.org (www.monroecountyhabitat.org).

Grace Center food pantry in Harrodsburg: Shopping volunteers needed. Minimum age is 18. For more information contact: Georgia Schaich at 334-3292 or 824-2442 or gschaich@yahoo.com.

Shalom Community Center: Volunteers needed for multiple positions. Contact: Pam Kinnaman, 334-5734 or pam@shalomcommunitycenter.org.

Area 10 Agency on Aging and RSVP opportunities

For more information on any of these openings, please contact Christine McKenna at 812-935-2514 or cmckenna@area10agency.org.

RSVP Job Coach: Help low income individuals of all ages secure employment. All training and close support is provided. Minimum commitment is for 2 hours every other week.

Area 10 Mobile Meals: Deliver nutritious meals to homebound seniors. Very flexible scheduling - volunteer as little as one hour of your time each month. Mileage reimbursed. Routes run through central Bloomington. Volunteers greatly needed to work Thursdays and/or Fridays. Valid driver's license and transportation required.

Area 10 Receptionists:

- **Receptionist:** Greet visitors and answer the phone at Area 10 Agency on Aging 1x/week for 3-4 hours. No experience needed. Enjoy interacting with others and learning more about Area 10. Exercise for free at the End-

wright Center after you're done!

- **Summer Receptionist:** One of our regular receptionists is taking off for June-August, and we need someone to fill her Monday afternoon shift (12:30-4:30).

Area 10 Grocery Shopper for Homebound Seniors: Purchase and deliver groceries from a preprepared list for homebound seniors. Money for groceries provided. Average volunteer time is one to three times a month with very flexible scheduling

America Reads Tutors: Needed in Bloomington, Ellettsville, and Owen County to serve for just 1 hour each week during the school year and/or summer. No experience necessary. Training is provided. The America Reads Coordinator will help you find a school and student(s) that work well for you. Commitment is one hour per week during the school year and/or summer. Agency will contact a substitute tutor when you have schedule conflicts or will be out of town.

Volunteer opportunities are everywhere!

The opportunities listed on this page are only a very small sample of those available to prospective volunteers in the Bloomington area. If you would like to lend your unique skills and talents to a Bloomington agency, contact the City of Bloomington Volunteer network at (812) 349-3433 and find out what you can do for the community!

Amethyst

Continued from page 15

Unlike CARF and other accreditations and certifications attained by Amethyst House the "Consumer Service Review" process focuses on the actual client, their case, and the quality and appropriateness of the clinical practice. A team of two reviews spent one full day on each client's case. Interviewing the client, AH staff, significant others, parents, 12 step sponsors, probation officers, staff at other agencies involved with the client such as The Center for Behavioral Health. In total over the week over 105 interviews were conducted including several community focus groups of AH staff and Board, CBH, Positive Link, Probation, Etc. Tom Cox the Executive Director of Amethyst House states that this type of review gets down to the real work at the client level and gives a clear picture of what the strengths and weaknesses

MHC

Continued from page 15

As a Bloomingtonian, there are many ways to become an active food producer, whether in your backyard or as a grower for your fellow community members. On my first visit to the Bloomington Farmers Market this season, I met a new grower with a one-acre lot south of town, with bags of luscious greens from his yard to sell at market. As spring turns into summer, almost no one with a salad garden can consume all that they produce.

Where to start?

Join the MHC Garden email list and hear about our seasonal workshops, grab a copy of the City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation Program Guide, talk to members of the Bloomington Organic Gardeners Association (BOGA), or the Bloomington

of an organization are, in order to assist in future program development.

The results of the "Consumer Service Review" of the Amethyst House clients were 100 % in the quadrant of good practice and good client status. The results were more than satisfying to Cox and the Amethyst House staff considering that much of the review centers on the relationship and case management of each client. Amethyst House does not receive any funding for the case management services provided to clients and has seen a decrease in all of our traditional funding sources over the last couple of years says Cox. Amethyst House Staff have been successful in maintaining the high quality of care and commitment to client services in spite of significantly reduced resources and struggling with a budget shortfall. **For more information on the survey, visit <http://www.amethysthouse.org>.**

Permaculture Guild. The opportunities are endless. Talk to your neighbors who are engaged in growing their own food, and some of our local chicken experts with in-city and out of city coops. Donate your excess produce to the Hoosier Hills Food Bank or MHC through the Plant a Row for the Hungry program, rent a spot at the market and sell your excess, or learn to preserve your food through canning or drying at one of the community courses. Contact the local extension office to learn about the Master Gardener program and for resources on gardening and nutrition. Join us in the MHC gardens to meet gardeners of all levels of expertise and learn how we are growing food for the pantry. Resources for gardening in Bloomington are at your fingertips, look around and find your place in the action! To learn more about the resources contact Stephanie Solomon at Mother Hubbard's Cupboard at 812-355-6843 or Stephanie@mhcfoodpantry.org.

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.

Centerstone of Indiana, Inc.

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. Centerstone 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

Address: 200 E. Winslow Rd.

Phone: (812) 332-9615

Web: www.optionsfbl.com

Volunteer Contact: Karen Schere, (kscherer@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

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: Shelley Sallee ([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. (office)

919 S. Rogers (Shelter)

Phone: (812) 335-6841 (812) 332-1444 (office)

Volunteer Contact: Bobbie Summers

About: An emergency shelter with 28 beds for homeless men and women. Services provided include case management, food, and clothing. Opens at 4:30 p.m.

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: 827 W. 14th St.
Phone: (812) 339-3429
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: 1010 S. Walnut St.
Phone: (812) 355-6843
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.