

Accomplishments



Commission on Homelessness committees

www.destination-home.info/commission.htm

⑩ Prevention Committee

- A rating scale is being developed to identify those at-risk of losing their housing.

⑩ Discharge Planning Committee

- A community discharge policy, approved in 2006 by the Commission, aims to prevent individuals from being released from institutions into homelessness. 2007 has included the work of implementing the policy through forming public-private partnerships to coordinate a Community Discharge Coalition.

⑩ Housing Committee

- 5 affordable housing units for homeless families became available in 2 housing developments: Jacobsville Apartments-Phase II and Dale Haven Estates
- Applications are pending for a total of 40 additional permanent supportive housing units for individuals and families
- Partners In Housing, out of Indianapolis, is partnering with Southwestern Indiana Mental Health Center and Aurora to develop 60 units of supportive permanent housing for singles. Anticipated completion by the end of 2008.

⑩ Homeless Youth Council convened in 2007 to research avenues of identifying and addressing homeless youth issues and solutions, with a focus on middle school and older. Recommendations will be presented to the Commission in early 2008 and an ongoing Homeless Youth Coalition will be formed. This group was influential in the formation of the state Interim Study Committee on Missing and Homeless Children.

Strategies in Action Through Projects & Collaborations

⑩ Financial Stability Partnership -- a coalition of health and human service agencies throughout the Tri-State all dedicated to stemming the root causes of poverty and working to make all local families and individuals self sufficient.

- *Earned Income Tax Credit* -- has been laying groundwork for establishing Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites in 2008 to provide free tax preparation for low-income individuals and families in order to ensure that they are taking all of the tax credits and tax exemptions that they are eligible to receive.
- VITA Activities in the works
 - Jan. 29th at WorkOne from 6-8 p.m.
 - Jan. 31st at CK Newsome 6-8 p.m.
 - Super Saturday TBA -- with representatives from local banks, credit unions, and financial literacy trainers on hand

⑩ Bridges—A Community Response to Poverty -- coordinated by the Bridges Collaborative Group of Southern Indiana

- A total of 6 Community Trainers have been certified in “*Bridges Out of Poverty*”
- 2007 Trainings: 303 attended Day 1 led by local Community Trainers; 111 attended Day 1 led by Phil DeVol, consultant with aha! Process, Inc. and co-author of the book and curriculum

- Consulting: Phil DeVol spoke with 36 business leaders at a corporate breakfast, more than 200 Rotarians, and met with the advisory group of the Bridges Collaborative Group of Southern Indiana
- The *Poverty Simulation* experience is designed to help participants begin to understand what it might be like to live in a typical low-income family trying to survive from month to month. It is a simulation, not a game. The object is to sensitize participants to the realities faced by people with low-income. The Bridges Collaborative Group has begun partnering with United Way of Southwestern Indiana to incorporate the simulated experiences into the *Bridges* curriculum and calendar.

⑩ Universal Service Program

- Vectren initiated a pilot program called the Universal Service Program (USP) from January 1, 2005 through May 31, 2007 to provide a year-round discount on natural gas for customers who qualify for the local Energy Assistance Program (EAP)
- Through advocating for this effective program again, the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission has granted Vectren Energy Delivery an extension of the program through May 31, 2009.

⑩ Transportation Issues

- Partners in Caring -- A collaborative of dozens of government and social service agencies which has been focusing on influencing changes in the availability of public transportation in order to improve the impact on families and households, employment, safety, medical care, and more.
- Homeless Veterans Networking Group - The *Bike to Work* program provided over 165 bikes to homeless veterans to help with employment since 2005. The program continues to operate into 2008.

⑩ Early Childhood Services -- Development of *PlaySpaces*, a coordinated early childhood development program in seven existing homeless programs, is moving forward with Phase 1 as two more sites opened in 2007 and additional funding received toward equipping the three remaining sites. The project is overseen by the H.E.L.P. group, a support group of homeless service provider staff.

⑩ Community Awareness

- Website: www.destination-home.info
- *Housing Matters!* shirts -- 84 sweatshirts and 25 T-shirts are in the community
- *Housing Matters! Simulation & Service Challenge* presentations
- Bi-monthly *Destination: Home Updates*
- Various other presentations were presented to community and faith-based groups throughout the year
- Initial connections were made with more than 15 congregations re: creating Compassionate Connections among congregations, homeless services agencies and people who have experienced or are at-risk of homelessness
- Endorsements: 15 new organizational (69 total); 18 new individual (35 total); 4 new elected officials (7 total)