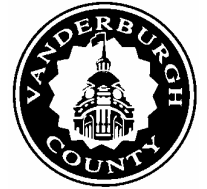




Commission *on*
Homelessness

City of Evansville/Vanderburgh County

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MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Vanderburgh Homeless Connect held Tuesday, March 30

(EVANSVILLE, IN) – For many people in our area who are homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless, accessing necessary services in the community can be a logistical challenge. Juggling childcare, job shifts, transportation, paperwork, etc. while trying to make it to various appointments or offices can add up to several hours and often increased stress or expenses.

To ease this burden, the Commission on Homelessness (with leaders of Evansville and Vanderburgh County) and many other community partners hosted Vanderburgh Homeless Connect, a one-day, one-stop event with one mission: to provide critical services for people who are homeless or near-homeless. The event was held on Tuesday, March 30, 2010, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at The Centre, 715 Locust Street, in downtown Evansville.

508 community members, referred to as “Guests” at the event, sought services at the event. While parents visited vendor booths, 48 children were cared for in the child care area, including a visit from Evie the Litter Dog and other partners in the community with activities.

By improving access to information about sources of assistance, Vanderburgh Homeless Connect helps meet a key goal of “*Destination: Home*, the ten-year plan to end homelessness in Evansville and Vanderburgh County,, which aims to “maximize resources and access to services through coordination of existing services and providers.” This innovative approach to service delivery has been rapidly adopted by communities of every size from coast to coast. Since 2004, more than 477 Homeless Connect events have been held in over 200 cities.

Vanderburgh Homeless Connect enables service agencies to efficiently reach many people in a single day and coordinate their services through 90 vendors’ booths. The more than 300 people staffing these booths made a powerful impact on people’s lives by providing a wide range of assistance in one location and by showing them respect and hospitality. In addition, the event educated the community about the issues surrounding homelessness and involved individual community members who contribute their efforts, talents, and compassion.

The menu of services available was as rich as the kinds of service providers who are willing and able to be present and offer some form of immediate service: processing an application, administering a health screening, preparing tax returns, assisting with a job search or housing application, cutting hair, and more!

– more –



Areas of service included **employment** and **education, financial** and tax assistance, **government assistance** (Social Security and birth certificate assistance, health care access), **veterans' services, health care, housing, legal** services, young adult services, parent resources, and many more! **Quality of life services** were also included, such as basic haircuts and neck/upper back massages, childcare for those attending the event, FREE lunch, computer lab, and helpful supplies such as nonperishable food bags, personal care items, veterans' supplies, and more.

More than 225 volunteers were engaged in various roles to make the event a success. Training was provided to those who invested their time in welcoming, assisting, and serving the event guests. Volunteers also handled some tasks before the event and others during the event.

Transportation to/from The Centre via ten pick-up sites around the city was made possible by the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation and Unity Taxi. Two express shuttles to/from the north side branch of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles was provided by Albion Fellows Bacon Center and United Caring Shelters to assist some Guests in obtaining a photo ID.

Several groups sponsored the event through the donation of items, funds, and/or staff time (for planning/coordinating): 4C of Southern Indiana, Albion Fellows Bacon Center, Aurora, Berry Plastics, Brendel: Creative, CAPE, City of Evansville, Deaconess Hospital, Discharge Planning Coalition, Evansville Christian Life Center, Evansville Courier & Press, Evansville Rescue Mission, Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation, Gerling Law, Kat Kreations, Meadows Catering, Old National Bank, St. John's East United Church of Christ, St. Mary's Medical Center, Scottrade, T. Eyer, United Caring Shelters, Unity Taxi, University of Southern Indiana, Vanderburgh County Commissioners, Vectren

Vanderburgh Homeless Connect was awarded the 2010 Celebration of Leadership Award in the Project Division. Receiving this award highlights the collaborative nature of this event that engaged 61 team members from 28 different agencies and 12 community volunteers to plan and coordinate the 2010 event.

For more information about Vanderburgh Homeless Connect, email connect@destination-home.info or dial 2-1-1 or visit www.destination-home.info/vhc.htm

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