

AURORA

Giving light to the homeless

1100 Lincoln Avenue
Evansville, IN 47714
812.428.3246
F: 812.428.3253
info@auroraevansville.org
www.auroraevansville.org

Non-Profit
Organization
US Postage Paid
Evansville, IN
Permit #1102

Winter 2012

AURORA News

—Giving Light to the Homeless—

1100 Lincoln Avenue Evansville, IN 47714 Phone: (812) 428-3246 Fax: (812) 428-3253 www.auroraevansville.org

Changed Lives

The Youth Lead Us

Growing up in Santa Claus, Indiana, 9-year-old Ethan Roos was a typical kid. He enjoyed basketball, baseball, football, talking to friends, and he had no idea what homelessness was. So how did he end up getting so involved in Aurora's mission, as you can see from the photos on this page? Well it all started with a family vacation in Cincinnati at the end of July...

Ethan and his family got to attend a professional baseball game—the Cincinnati Reds. Ethan's mom, Krista Roos, recalls the evening, "We had a great day—a lot of fun—and as we were leaving that night, we walked across a bridge over a highway. There were hordes of people leaving the ball game, but we noticed a man who was holding a sign that said he was homeless and terminally ill. Ethan got real quiet, then asked what the sign meant."

Krista says she explained the best she could with what little she knew about homelessness and even what terminal illness meant. Later, they ended up going through downtown Cincy to get to their hotel room and saw lots more homeless people. "Ethan was really quiet for a long time. When they got back to the hotel he told them it was really bothering him—seeing the homeless—and he really wanted to do something."

Ethan recalls the way he felt that evening, "I was trying to hold in my tears but I think one leaked out." Krista said that she and the rest of the family tried to reassure him, but it took awhile to calm him down. She told him that she didn't really know who to contact, but that they would find a way. She told him that someone at the church would know, and that she would try to talk to the pastor's wife the very next Sunday.

When they got back to Santa Claus, they were thrown back into the hectic of their lives, including school, sports and church involvement at St. Peter's United Church of Christ in Lamar, Indiana. A couple of weeks passed. One Sunday, the family was in the car and ready to leave church and Ethan spoke up. "No,

we can't leave yet. We haven't talked to Gail!"

Gail Morley-Jahn, the pastor's wife, was familiar with Aurora. She got them an appointment here and they met with Susan Steincamp, our Homeless Outreach Team Leader, who spent an hour with them, filling them in on the homeless situation in the area, and what Aurora does to help end it. Ethan listened, asked questions, and told her what he plans to do to help the homeless when he's President (of the US).

Susan answered his questions and told him what Aurora needs to make our assistance to the homeless happen. "I learned how big the homeless problem is and how little the amount of homeless shelters right now," Ethan said. "They need more." The amount of food that Aurora delivers per week also amazed him.

So Ethan put together a plan of what he thought he could do. He wanted to have a meal at his church that would be a money-maker for the homeless.

Their church usually has a Halloween party and auction. So this past fall, they put on the event to benefit Aurora... with no small results: \$1597 in total. Church members pitched in and got behind the effort, making baked goods to be auctioned off, such as sweet rolls. One coconut pie went for \$150—a testimony to the generosity of the auction-goers. "We are truly blessed to be in such a giving church," Krista commented.

That same day, Ethan got up and spoke in front of their church and another smaller church. He told them what he was doing and asked them for their help. He asked them to gather any items such as soaps, toiletries, blankets, etc. and he stood at the door as everyone was leaving with a basket and collected money that very day.

Not willing to stop there, Ethan felt like if he contacted some other churches in the area, he could give even more. So he sat

down and wrote a letter to 13 churches, challenging them to help as well. He hand-wrote each letter and envelope.

He also hit up grandparents and other adults he knew. His group of kids at church, the Young Disciples, made hats and scarves to help the effort as well. Some of the ladies of the church pitched in with their sewing talents.

Krista used to work at Shoe Carnival in the corporate office, so she contacted them and explained what Ethan and his friends were doing. An employee contacted one of their sock vendors and they donated 300 pairs of socks! St. Peter's also received a lot of other donations from congregants and friends: 3 sleeping bags, 29 blankets, 28 tubes of toothpaste, 50 toothbrushes, 114 bottles of shampoo and conditioner, 80 bottles of lotion, 153 bars of soap, bags and bags of clothes, flannel shirts, shoes, and t-shirts.

Taking part of the money they had made at the auction, Ethan and his church friends bought basic food supplies and made 80 outreach bags, which Aurora Case Managers will take out to the homeless who are living in shelters and on the street.

Altogether Ethan and his recruits raised \$3200+ to help end homelessness in our area. "I learned that anyone can do anything if you set your mind to it. A kid can make a difference."



MISSION: Aurora exists to bring an end to homelessness in our community.

Community Connections

Staff Bonding

OLD NATIONAL BANK
and AURORA present



Trivia Tonight

Saturday, March 3, 2012

Evansville Country Club

Starts at 6 pm, Dinner at 7, Play begins at 8

Reserve your tickets now! www.auroraevansville.org or 428-3246



Left: Development Officer Jayme Walters reigned victorious over Operations Manager Ken Scheller in the Jingle Bell Drop.

Our Holiday Party was full of laughs as staff competed in "Minute to Win It!"

Right: Homeless Outreach Case Manager Aaron Pryor gloats over his awarded prize of a gift card.



Below: Staff compete in the Reindeer face minute. No hands allowed!



From the Executive Director

One person can make a difference and change lives!

I hope you read the cover story about Ethan and his quest to make a difference to those who are living on the streets. Ethan is an incredible young man who was willing to step outside his comfort zone to make a difference. He saw a need, listened to his heart, spent some time learning about the need, and engaged help to raise money and collect supplies for those without a place to live. I had the opportunity to meet Ethan twice and each time his determination brought tears to my eyes. And his enthusiasm was contagious. The last time he came to the office, he brought 18 members of his youth group, his parents, his pastor, a newspaper photographer, and several other adults to learn more about homelessness and to assemble hygiene kits. There were kids everywhere and the atmosphere was charged with the excitement of helping - each one knowing they were making a difference, that what they were doing was important.

Ethan has changed lives not only for those that will benefit from the supplies and money that was collected, but he made a difference each time he spoke and with each letter he sent. Thanks Ethan for reminding us that one person can make a difference and change lives.

Making a difference comes in many forms – sometimes it’s rolling up our sleeves and getting our hands dirty and sometimes it’s providing support and encouragement for those on the front lines. I hope Ethan inspires you to think about how you can make a difference today. We would love to chat with you about engaging your passion and heart to help us end homelessness.

With a grateful heart,

Luzada Hayes, Executive Director



Special Thanks

Donations

Our work is not possible without the support of the community. This list in no way covers the generosity and care from individuals, groups and businesses in the past few months:

- Adopt-A-Client Participants
- Gingerbread Sponsors, Participants & Visitors
- Be A Light Campaign

Donors

- Trinity United Methodist Church
- Stephen Ralph
- St. Benedict Cathedral
- Bishop Charles C. Thompson
- Volunteers of Aurora & Destination: Home
- Donors to Ethan's Project

A full list of donors and volunteers will be available

in the 2011 Annual Report published Spring 2012.

On-going Donations:

- Matt's Lawn Care grounds keeping
- Penny John's - Selling House Pins
- Vectren - printing
- Lieberman Technologies storage space



Pictured above: Volunteers are always needed to sort donations.

Wish List - CURRENT NEEDS

For Homeless Clients

- Dark Blankets
- Pillows
- Socks
- Underwear - Medium
- Handwarmers & warm gloves
- Food
 - Pop-top cans of meats / proteins
 - Pop-top cans of fruit

- Cheese or peanut butter crackers
- Bottled Water
- Small bags of chips
- Other foods suitable for a lunch bag

Hygiene Items:

- Deodorant
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrushes
- Razors

- Feminine Hygiene products
- Diapers

For Clients Being Housed

- Queen-sized Blankets
- Kitchen Towels
- Skillets
- Furniture
- Hand Towels



PROFESSIONAL DIVISION: First Place - "Christmas at Count Dracula - Everybody loves Christmas!" by Aimee Blume, Baking & Pastry Instructor at Ivy Tech Community College; Nancy Peters, Artist of Oil, Pastel, and Art Restoration



AMATEUR DIVISION: First Place - "Angels Among Us" by St. Wendel Community Outreach Team including Tonna Seibert; Linda Mercer; Dianna Thorsen, Evansville, Indiana.



YOUTH DIVISION: First Place - "Snoopy's Christmas" by Candice Gill, Student at Reitz High School; Grace Gill, Student at Cynthia Heights Elementary School

Our Event was a Huge Success!

One thousand plus area residents came out to support Aurora's work to end homelessness, as we hosted The Midwest Gingerbread House Competition & Holiday Showcase on Saturday, December 10, 2011 at The Centre in Evansville.

Over 100 competitors comprising 43 teams from the local area and around the Midwest participated by building, on-site, holiday wonderlands in the form of gingerbread houses. Among the competitors, fourteen professional teams participated, made up of pastry chefs and artists from culinary institutions such as Sullivan University, Ivy Tech Community College, and many regional bakeries. Divisions included Professional, Amateur and Youth. The top three winners from each division received large cash prizes. Winners from each division were on display at Evansville Barnes & Noble as "Feature Artists of The Month" until New Year's.

This first annual event that promoted awareness for homelessness in southwestern Indiana and raised funds to support Aurora's mission to end homelessness, and laid the groundwork for future gingerbread events. Admission was an easy-open canned good or hygiene product, with monetary donations optional. Tri-staters poured out their hearts and pocketbooks to the homeless as they gave generously at the door, bid generously on the Silent Auction, and bought from the Holiday Shopping booths, where vendors of toys, personalized crafts, jewelry, handbags, ornaments, and sweets gave fifteen percent of profits to Aurora.

The silent auction with over 60 items included Colts, Harlem Globetrotter and IU tickets, a golf package and a children's outdoor playhouse donated by K-I Lumber and constructed by North High School Construction Processes Class. Pictures with Santa were available for \$2 per picture, courtesy of Darmstadt CVS, along with fun activities for kids of all ages. Visitors and competitors heard holiday performances from local groups and presentations about homelessness and Aurora.



Special Thanks to These Sponsors and Many More:

Aurora plans to make this an annual event with **Saturday, December 1, 2012** set aside as this year's tentative date. Watch for more information in our Spring issue.