

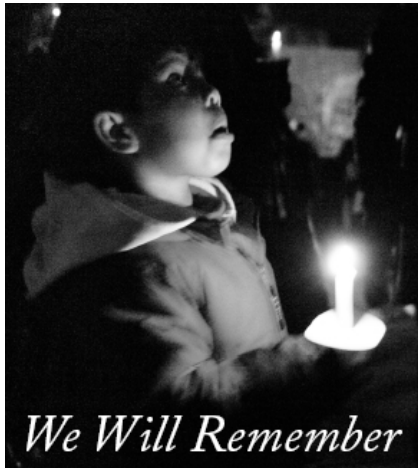
# AURORA

*Anniversary*  
Giving light to the homeless

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## MISSION

*Aurora exists to bring an end to homelessness in our community.*



## Homeless Memorial Service

10:00 a.m.  
Thurs., Dec. 18, 2008  
Trinity United Methodist Church  
216 SE Third St.,  
Evansville

see inside for details

## Special Events & Projects

### J.E. Smith GALLERY

56 Adams, Evansville, Indiana  
812.455.8982  
www.jesmithgallery.com



announces

**Opening Reception**  
Wed., Dec. 10, 2008  
3:00-7:00 pm

**December 10, 2008**  
through  
**January 28, 2009**

The J.E. Smith GALLERY will teach people in our community who are homeless traditional black and white photography as a means of artistic empowerment to encourage positive self-esteem, and to build community.

There are ample venues where one can view photos of the homeless, but what happens when we turn that concept around and see life through the eyes of the homeless? Just how do those without homes spend their time? See for yourself from behind the homeless camera looking into the world as a moment in time is captured.

All proceeds will go to the artist, Aurora, Inc., and toward the "OUR EYES" project itself. For more information about Aurora, visit [www.auroraevansville.org](http://www.auroraevansville.org)

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

Aurora, Inc.

# Aurora News



December 2008



## Changed Lives

Car trouble, low-paying job, health problems, job loss, car quits, little family support, no home ... If this were a description of more than 18 months of your life, how would you feel? How would you go about your daily life?

In the spring of 2007, Meghann Kulenkamp, an Outreach Coordinator with our Homeless Outreach Team, met Suzette at a local shelter for which we provide case management services.

Suzette is in her early 40's and has one adult daughter. She had a vehicle that got her by. When she got a job outside the county, she moved from the shelter to a motel. Struggling to make it, she kept trying.

Her car quit running, she left her job, and returned to the shelter. She applied for Social Security Income (SSI), continuing to try to move forward.

In the fall of 2007, Suzette met with Meghann again at the shelter. She allowed Meghann to help with housing applications, applying for Medicaid, navigating some of the disability process, and connecting with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR).

Through all this time, Suzette's tenacity stood out and bore fruit. She's been described as mostly positive. "Even when she gets down, she perks up quickly," noted Meghann. "She's very friendly and welcoming."

That fall she was awarded Medicaid and had her hearing for disability. VR was able to help her find a job while waiting for word on those benefits.

By spring of 2008, she was approved for disability! Two months later, she had knee trouble and had to quit work for a time.

By the end of that same month, Suzette's disability income began, including back pay! Shortly after that, she moved into an apartment. Meghann connected her with donated furniture and household items (including a Housing Starter Kit) to help her get started.

Over a month later, she was able to purchase a vehicle (see photo above). She continues to consult

with VR toward a job placement that doesn't require a lot of standing. She's doing well in her apartment and has a support system to help her remain stable.

As Meghann reflected upon Suzette, she said, "She's a true success, who's been through many barriers and has overcome them. She's doing very, very well and has entered a new chapter in her life with more stable surroundings."

*YOUR SUPPORT helps us end homelessness one household at a time for people like Suzette ... and many, many others! THANK YOU!*

## From the Executive Director

At this time of year we often ask others or we are asked, "What would you like for Christmas?" Usually, I answer very contentedly, "Oh, I don't need anything." But this year, I thought I would share two specific needs that Aurora has for the new year.

First, we need free warehouse/storage space for donated furniture. We currently have two rented spaces and would like to consolidate to one site. With that, we would love to eliminate the rental costs from the budget. So, at the top of my wish list is about 3,000 sq. ft. to help us

sort and store the basics such as beds, couches, tables, chairs and dressers. Perhaps you have space you are not using and can make this wish come true.

Second, we need housing! Anytime I ask the Outreach Team, what they need to do their job better, I am overwhelmingly met with the response, "More housing." Hmm, not an easy fix.

I have been advocating for permanent supportive housing for the last eight years and have yet to get a first project completed. So, second on my wish list this year is a Development Team. I need a de-

veloper, an architect, an attorney, a general contractor, lenders, an accountant, a market analyst, and an experienced property manager—all passionate about providing permanent housing solutions for our community. We will also need potential property sites—about 45,000 square feet should allow us to develop approximately 75 units with some nice common areas. The property needs to have easy access to public transportation and shopping, have some options for outside green space, and allow for a single entry point to the building.

The neat thing about helping make my wish

come true, is that you can also make the wishes of others come true, especially for the 1200 plus families over this past year, who, when asked what they want for Christmas would respond, "A home." I have seen wishes come true time and time again for many of our clients. It's a magical feeling. Perhaps you can make wishes come true this holiday season in ways you never imaged. Enjoy the magic and have a blessed holiday season.

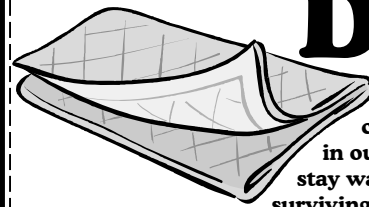
*Luzada Hayes*



clip & save as a reminder all year



## Blanket Drive



old or new, your blanket can help someone in our community stay warm while surviving on the streets

**dark, non-attention-getting colored warm blankets are needed for our clients who are not sheltered, not housed (no comforters, please)**

Donations may be dropped off at  
Aurora, Inc., 1100 Lincoln Ave., Evansville  
Mon-Thu. 8:00 am - 5:00 pm  
or Fri. 8:00 am - 4:00 pm

For more information, call Sr. Mary Ann at 428-3246 x 33 or email [bealight@auroraevansville.org](mailto:bealight@auroraevansville.org)

## Housing Programs

Our mission is to end homelessness. On the average, Aurora houses four individuals or families each month. As more doors open for funding sources and partnerships in the community, that average is expected to grow. We have added another housing program and additional partnerships.

### Shelter Plus Care

*Shelter Plus Care* is a federal program designed to provide rental subsidies and supportive services to homeless

individuals with disabilities, primarily those with chronic mental illness, substance abuse, and HIV/AIDS.

The participant pays 30% of his or her income toward the rent, and the subsidy supplies the balance to the landlord. Aurora provides the administrative component to the grant. Those aspects include processing applications, contracting with landlords, processing rent payments, monitoring the match requirements, and conducting unit inspections to assure the

rental units meet HUD housing standards.

Supportive services enable participants to maintain stable housing, address their social service and treatment needs, build skills, and enhance their ability to make decisions about their lives. Aurora partners with AIDS Resource Group and Southwestern Behavioral Healthcare to provide the supportive services.

Patty Pyle is our Housing Specialist for *Shelter Plus Care*.

### Annual Homeless Memorial Service

Aurora, Inc., invites the community to attend the ninth annual memorial service honoring those who have died while being homeless in our community during this last year and since 1990. This also serves as a reminder that homelessness continues to increase in the most prosperous nation in the world.

The **Homeless Memorial Service** will be held on **Thurs., Dec. 18**, at

**10:00 a.m. at Trinity United Methodist Church**, 216 SE Third St., in downtown Evansville.

The National Coalition for the Homeless instituted the memorial service in 1990 and encourages communities across the nation to remember those who have died because of the day-to-day realities and long-term effects of homelessness. The memorial service is held near the first day of

winter, which marks the beginning of a particularly difficult and dangerous time for people who are homeless.

If you are unable to attend the service, please pause for a moment at 10:00 a.m. on December 18 to remember those missing from our community.

Anyone knowing of individuals who have died while homeless during 2008 is encouraged to contact Aurora at 428-3246 by Dec. 15.

### Staff Changes & Additions

Jennifer Smith, BSW, has joined the staff of Aurora as an Outreach Coordinator on the Homeless Outreach Team. She replaces Natasha Nix who had previously served with this team.

In 2008, two Housing Specialists

were also added to our staff:

Amanda Sartore, MSW, coordinates *Home4Good* and is housed at Habitat for Humanity of Evansville; and Patty Pyle serves with *Shelter Plus Care* (see feature above).

Mindy Niehaus, BSW, the Coalition Coordinator for the Discharge Planning Coalition, is also housed at Aurora.

Larry Andrews, an AARP employee handles maintenance tasks for us.



## Community Connections

### Destination: Home

Aurora is highly involved in the work of the city-county ten-year plan to end homelessness called *Destination: Home*. The plan is in its fourth year of making a difference in our community.

*Destination: Home* is overseen by the city-county Commission on Homelessness. Our Executive Director, in her role as Resource Coordinator for the plan, provides staff support to the Commission.

### Housing Committee Intern

One of the Commission's working groups is the Housing Committee, with Mildred Motley of Evansville Housing Authority as Chair.

This committee has chosen as one of its aims to promote a special website that offers free listings for landlords and the means for renters to search for available units in the area. Integra Bank has made a donation that is funding an intern, Hanna Scott, a USI student, to help promote the usage of this site

among landlords with units available to rent. Landlords with questions about listing properties on the site or for other information may contact Hanna at 428-8500 or via email [hanna.scott@evansvillehousing.org](mailto:hanna.scott@evansvillehousing.org). The website offers listings for various cities in the state including Evansville. Check out the free site at [www.indianahousingnow.org](http://www.indianahousingnow.org)

### Discharge Planning Coalition

Another working group of the Commission on Homelessness is the Discharge Planning Coalition. The coalition is a network of community institutions addressing aimed at preventing homelessness among those released from health care, corrections, & foster care. Interested persons are welcome to attend the monthly meetings on the first Thursdays of each month at 11:00 a.m. at the Central library's Browning Events Room.

### Homeless Youth Coalition

This working group continues to focus on various aspects of addressing youth homelessness (ages

13—23) in our community. The next meeting will be held Jan. 13, 2009, at noon at Old National Bank, Blue & Gold Room. This group also reports to the Commission on Homelessness.

### Bridges—a Community Response to Poverty

This project, overseen by the Bridges Collaborative Group of Southern Indiana, carries out a training strategy of *Destination: Home*. *Bridges* has provided training in "Bridges Out of Poverty" for more than 1,690 people in this region, as well as hosted the "Community Action Poverty Simulation" for more than 200 participants. Early 2009 training events have been set:

- Day 1—Feb. 5 & Apr. 14 (includes *Poverty Simulation*);
- Day 2—Feb. 26 & Apr. 29 (with hands-on application of principles).

Learn more about these & other projects & strategies by visiting [www.destination-home.info](http://www.destination-home.info) or by calling 812.428.4975 x 28

### Special Thanks ~ We extended thanks to the following:

- **Seek & Find, Buy-U-Boutique, Sadie's Collectibles & Consignments, Margaret's Resale, & many individuals** – Housing Starter Kit supplies plus!
- **St. Mary's Breast Center & Daughters of Charity** for outreach supplies
- **Matt's Lawn Care** – grounds keeping
- **Vectren** for Aurora News assistance & for hosting the 2008 Networking Group quarterly meetings
- **Tri-State Fire Protection Inc.** for servicing office fire extinguishers
- **PennyJohn's and Sadie's Collectibles & Consignments** for selling House Pins
- **Christian Fellowship Church (CFC)** – Emergency Housing & Compassionate Connections partner
- **Mater Dei Provincialate** for selecting Aurora as a volunteer site
- **Firefly Southern Grill** – lunch for board retreat
- **Old National Bank** – Trivia Tonight sponsor
- **United Caring Shelters** – contract for case management
- **Jamie Levy** – consulting and training
- **Host & Sponsors for the first annual Aurora Golf Scramble: Eagle Valley Golf Course, Ameriprise Financial, Bank of Evansville, Basinski, LLC, Brinkers Mfg. Jewelers, Inc, Broerman & Sons Inc., Control Specialists, Inc, Donut Bank, Double H Hydraulics, Evansville Endodontics, Fifth Third Bank, Goodwill Industries, Jorgensen Petroleum Maintenance Inc., Life Mortgage Group, Inc, Marc Rasure Floor Covering, Old National Bank, Riverside Prosthetics, Separation By Design, Siegel's Corporation, Tri-State Trailer and Truck Sales, Vowells & Schaaf, LLC, West Side Nut Club**
- **YWCA** – hosting H.E.L.P. group monthly meetings for 2008
- **Habitat for Humanity of Evansville** – Home4Good Partnership
- **Brad Raley** – outreach bags as Eagle Scout project
- **AIDS Resource Group** – commitment to housing & the first annual Heroes for Housing Award
- **Housing Starter Kit Blitz – Bethel United Church of Christ** - hosting, providing supplies & volunteers; **Scott Scales** - temporary storage for kits; & volunteers: **Youth Build, Evansville Housing Authority, Teresa Huff, Bethany Brazzell, Camille Verkamp, Kerri Postlethweight, Donna Baxter, Carol Gainey, Sue Gardner, Darlene Martin, & Janice Nolt**
- Student volunteers: Ivy Tech: **Stephanie Goebel, Sarah Wirth, Tabitha Lance, Natasha John; USI: Abbie Balbach, Natalie Bolen, Josh Bowman, Ryan King; Central High School: Spencer McCoy**
- Community volunteers: **Amanda Alexander, Ocean Bias, Brenda Daniels, Leah Garcia, Lauren Nelsen, Jessica Ralph, Felissa Spencer, Patsy Sproatt, Tom & Jerry Tucker, Larry Wells, Hilary Wolfe**



### UPCOMING EVENTS

Dec. 10, 2008 - Jan. 18, 2009 - "**Our Eyes**" photo exhibit at J.E. Smith Gallery, 56 Adams, Evansville

Dec. 17 - 6:00 pm - **Adopt-a-Client Gift Wrapping** at Aurora

Dec. 18 - 10:00 am **Homeless Memorial Service** Trinity United Methodist Church, 216 SE 3rd St., Evansville

Dec. 24 - Jan. 2, 2009—**Aurora's office will be closed** (phone coverage only on Dec. 26, 29-31, & Jan. 2)

### Wish List/Seasonal Needs

#### For clients living out (not sheltered/not housed)

Hand warmers, lip balm, hand lotion (small containers), bottled water, warm gloves (men's sizes), men's underwear & long underwear, hooded sweatshirts, men's heavyweight socks, ear muffs, scarves, sweaters, warm rain/wind/snow garments, sleeping bags, wind-up alarm clocks, individually wrapped toilet paper rolls, flash lights, batteries, tents, non-perishable food especially protein sources (easy-open, individual size cans)

**Blankets are especially needed** (see note on p. 4)

#### For clients re-entering housing

towel sets, twin sheets, pillows, blankets (any color; not throws), cleaning supplies

FURNITURE: dressers, chest of drawers, comfortable living room chairs

#### For Aurora

Free storage space to store donated furniture & household items until clients are ready to move in

