

AURORA

Giving light to the homeless

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

MISSION

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

Inside this issue:

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Changed Lives | 1 |
| From the Executive Director | 1 |
| Ways You Helped at Christmas | 2 |
| Housing Support | 2 |
| Staff Changes & Additions | 2 |
| Wish List & Seasonal Needs | 2 |
| Community Connections | 3 |
| "Our Eyes" Exhibit | 3 |
| Special Thanks | 3 |
| Trivia Tonight | 4 |
| Homeward Bound | 4 |

Special Events & Projects

Trivia Tonight

Sat., Apr. 25 6:00 p.m.
Victoria National Golf Club
2000 Victoria National Blvd.,
Newburgh
\$75.00 per player
(Teams of 4 to 8)
1st Team Prize—\$500
2nd Team Prize—\$300

Your check payable to "Aurora"
is your reservation.

Mail to
Trivia Tonight,
PO Box 74, Evansville, IN 47701-0074
Register online at
www.auroraevansville.org/Events/trivia.htm

Reservations close April 17, 2009
Business Casual Dress

For more info, contact Sherrie at
812.428.3246 x 29 or
sbias@auroraevansville.org

HOMeward BOUND

Indiana's 5K Walk to Provide Housing and Fight Homelessness

Homeward Bound—Southwest
Sat., June 13
Casino Aztar Pavilion

Join thousands of Hoosiers in raising thousands of dollars to provide housing and fight homelessness in Indiana!
Aurora is one of seven agencies that will benefit from this walk.

Schedule:
8:00 am Registration
8:45 am Greetings from dignitaries
9:00 am Walk starts, step off
10:30 am Awards ceremony, entertainment and activities for everyone

To learn more about joining a team, creating a team, donating to one of Aurora's team, and more, contact Sherrie at 428-3246 x 29 or visit www.homewardboundindiana.org (click on Evansville or Southwest)

To mail a donation, make checks payable to "Homeward Bound," insert a memo noting that your donation is for Aurora, and mail to Homeward Bound – Southwest, P.O. Box 512, Evansville, IN 47703

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

Aurora, Inc.

March 2009

Aurora News

Changed Lives

"Reaching out" is often done from two directions. Two travelers from opposite sides of a road can meet in the middle and choose to journey together for a time.

The one who can supply help extends her offer patiently, consistently, and with respect for another's choices. The one who needs help reaches a point in his life when he chooses to ask for help, remembering the one who extended the offer.

In his 49 years as a resident of Evansville, Roger has spent most of his life in the Fulton Ave. area. He's been divorced, has children he doesn't see, and spent about 14 of those years homeless, on the streets. He had sporadic sources of income and ate at a local soup kitchen.

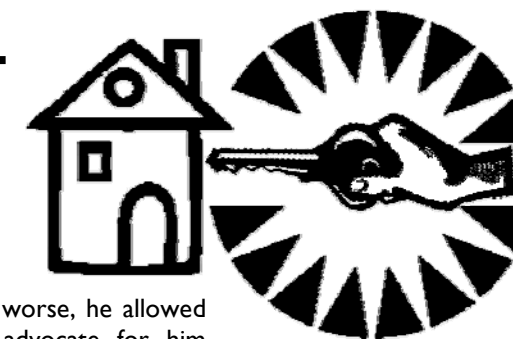
Roger's place of residence had been a carport or a three-sided shed

during those years on the street. Sometimes in the winter, he'd wake up with snow on his feet.

Aurora's Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) encountered Roger on weekly outreach trips, getting acquainted, sharing supplies and building trust.

Two years ago in February, Roger's toes needed medical attention for frostbite. A month after two trips to the VA in Marion, IL, he was admitted to a hospital here on a Wednesday. By Friday, parts of nine of his toes were removed. On Saturday, he was released with the instructions, "Don't walk any place but to the bathroom." For Roger, the bathroom was four blocks away from where he stayed outside.

Susan Steinkamp, of HOT, began working with Roger about that time. When his toes



became worse, he allowed her to advocate for him with a hospital, where he was able to stay for a week to allow more healing. Afterward, he had weekly dressings and went through three pair of walking sandals.

By June 2007, most of his toes had healed. In addition, Susan had helped him connect to food stamps and apply for disability and Section 8. He continued to try to cope on the streets any way possible.

A year later, he had a spell, fell over and went to a hospital, then to inpatient mental health care. Inpatient substance abuse treatment was recommended to Roger. He and Susan discussed options, but he wasn't interested then.

Later, he had another spell. Roger called Susan saying, "Okay. Can you get me in?" He was admitted, finished the treatment, then returned to the shed.

He did well for a couple of weeks, yet returned to his coping methods.

When an opening came at a VA residential treatment program in Kansas, Roger chose to take it. Just before leaving, he learned his Section 8 voucher was approved.

On Jan. 31, 2009, Roger returned to Evansville to his apartment (which Aurora had furnished with donated items), Section 8 voucher, and food stamps. His disability is still pending. He continues to follow up with the VA, counseling and medical appointments, and support group. He's mentioned that he wants to start looking for work.

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

From the Executive Director

It is hard to believe that 2009 is already almost a third gone! My work hours seem to fly by and there is never enough time in the day to attend to everything that has piled up on my desk. I found a note one of our case coordinators received from a client at the end of last year in my "pile" that I wanted to share with you. This makes all the business worthwhile:

"I am sorry it has taken me so long to write you expressing my gratitude and thanks for your untiring efforts and unwavering stick-to-it-ness in helping me to regain my sense of being. It seems to me the only way to truly understand what you and your organization has done for me is think of a drowning man going down for the last time and all of a sudden, he is given a new lease on life! God bless you always!"

It is difficult at times to describe exactly what we do at Aurora but I think this note sums it up pretty well, *We Help Change Lives*. Just like our name implies – we are a guiding light to help point the way for our clients to find their way back home. Whether its through case management (working one-on-one with clients), educating one more person about the reality of homelessness, meeting one more time to

finish the design of a new program, or saying "Thank you" to our partners and donors who make it possible for us to *Help Change Lives* everyday... What a great way to spend those work hours – always plenty to do, always challenging, sometimes frustrating, but so rewarding...

With a grateful heart,
Luzada Hayes



Ways You Helped at Christmas

During the Christmas season, many community members so generously give toward the work of Aurora, especially through two programs that collect items for distribution to the people we serve throughout the year.

Adopt-a-Client

Twelve individuals or families adopted 21 clients by purchasing essential items and a specially-requested gift for the person/s adopted. Volunteers gathered to sort, wrap, and bag the gifts in preparation for the Homeless Outreach Team to distribute them just before Christmas Eve.

Some of the groups that got involved were Payne-Walsh partners, a small

group from Christian Fellowship Church, Daughters of Charity, and three centers with St. Mary's: Breast Center, Hope Cancer Center, and the Child Development Center.

Outreach Ornaments

This means of making it possible for donors to select an ornament from the tree in our main office lobby or from other sites in the community is in its third year.

Trees and/or ornaments were hosted by PennyJohn's, Sadie's Collectibles & Consignments, and at the Aurora booth at the Holiday Sale at Patchwork Central.

At least 15 individuals and groups

participated, including such groups as Mended Hearts, Mater Dei Provincial House, St. Mary's Breast Center, Atlas Van Lines IT Department, and Chi Omega from U of E.

They were the donors of bus tokens, food (including 30 assembled Outreach Bags), gift cards for department and department stores as well as groceries and meals. In addition, donors gave clothing items, bed and bath linen, personal supplies, household items (for Housing Starter Kits), hand warmers, a sleeping bag, and a tent.

All the donations helped us enter 2009 with many items to serve our clients' needs. We're grateful to each who gave!



"Our Eyes" exhibit has moved from J.E. Smith Gallery to Willard Library through the middle of April.

www.jesmithgallery.com 812.455.8982

(The gallery is moving to 413 Main St., re-opening April 24.)

People in our community who are homeless were taught the use of photography as a means of artistic empowerment to encourage positive self-esteem and to build community. All proceeds will go to the artist, Aurora, Inc., and toward the "Our Eyes" project itself.

Housing Support

Near the end of last year, Aurora entered into another partnership with another agency in the community in order to assist with providing 20 units of permanent supportive housing.

"New Start" is such a program for families and individuals with disabilities who are homeless. The program is administered by ECHO Housing Cor-

poration, with Aurora providing the case coordination support.

Funding for the program comes primarily through a Supportive Housing Program grant from HUD.

To be eligible, the client must: have a disability, be homeless as defined by HUD guidelines, have the ability to function independently, have the need

New Start Scattered-Site Housing Program

for supportive services, and be willing to pay 30% of the household's income toward service fees.

For more information about New Start, contact ECHO Housing Corporation at 812.423.8422.

Staff Changes & Additions

Bethany Brazzell, BSW, has joined the staff of Aurora as a Case Coordinator with the New Start permanent supportive housing program of ECHO Housing Corporation.

During March, three members of

our Community Development Team have moved to our second office site, the Aurora Annex. Mindy Niehaus, (coordinator for the Discharge Planning Coalition), Kat Isbell (Education Specialist), and Sr. Mary Ann Wood-

ward (Community Liaison), are now located at 424 S. Kentucky Ave. (This address will not be used for postal mail.) Mindy and Kat may be reached at 428-4975. Sr. Mary Ann's phone number is now 437-2756.

Wish List/Seasonal Needs



For clients living out (not sheltered/not housed)

Lip balm, insect repellent, sunscreen, hand lotion (small containers), bottled water, hooded sweat-shirts, men's t-shirts & sweatshirts (XL & larger) men's socks & underwear, , flash lights, batteries, rain/wind garments, sleeping bags, wind-up alarm clocks, individually wrapped toilet paper rolls, tents, non-perishable food especially protein sources (easy-open, individual size cans)

For clients re-entering housing

30 gal. plastic tubs with lids (for Housing Starter Kits), basic furniture

For Aurora

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

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 fifth year of implementation.

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

Vanderburgh Homeless Connect

The Commission and more than 200 community partners held the first "homeless connect" event on March 12. More than 360 Guests (homeless & near-homeless) were served by 77 vendors with 225+ staff and another 150 volunteers. Guests were able to access community services under one roof.

Homeless Youth Coalition

This group announced in March that Hillcrest Washington Youth Home is volunteering to serve as the lead agency to work with the Coalition in developing a drop-in center for youth (ages 13-23). The next meeting will be held at noon on April 20, 2009.

Discharge Planning Coalition

This group holds monthly meetings on the first Thursdays of each month at 11:00 a.m. at the Central Library.

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 promotes a special website offering free listings for landlords and the means for renters to search for available units in the area. Hanna Scott, a USI student intern, (428-8500 or via email hanna.scott@evansvillehousing.org) helps promote the usage of the free site: www.indianahousingnow.org

Bridges—a Community Response to Poverty

This project, overseen by the Bridges Collaborative Group of Southern Indiana, has trained more than 1,700 people in this region in "Bridges Out of Poverty," as well as hosted the "Community Action Poverty Simulation" for more than 250 participants.

Bridges was selected by Leadership Evansville to receive the Celebration of Leadership Award 2009 for the Project Divisional Award.

2009 training events have been set: Day 1—Apr. 14 & July 8 (includes *Poverty Simulation*); & Day 2—Apr. 29 & July 29 (with hands-on application of principles).

Learn more about these & other projects & strategies by visiting www.destination-home.info or by calling 812.428.4975

[As a cost-saving measure, we're trying this remittance slip in lieu of an envelope]

CLIP & SEND YOUR SUPPORT

Yes, I want to help end & prevent homelessness in our community.

(Please print clearly.)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____

PHONE _____ ZIP _____

EMAIL _____

- My check is enclosed, payable to Aurora, Inc.
- I will donate to Aurora online at www.auroraevansville.org
- Please contact me about giving to Aurora, Inc. through a will/trust or securities
- I would like to learn more about hosting a presentation by the Speakers Bureau
- Please add me to the *Destination: Home Update* list. Send by (check one)
 - e-mail OR by
 - postal mail/paper version
- Please check this box if you do NOT want your name listed in donor recognition.

Other comments:

Mail to:
Aurora, PO Box 74, Evansville, IN 47701-0074
Thank you for your support!

Special Thanks ~ We extended thanks to the



- **Christ the King Catholic Church & School** – blankets, throws, sleeping bags, personal items, clothing, monetary donation, Outreach Bags & other food items, Housing Starter Kits, and more!
- **St. Mary's Breast Center & Daughters of Charity** for outreach supplies
- **Matt's Lawn Care** – grounds keeping
- **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
- **Vectren** for Aurora News assistance
- **Dan Dickerson** for rounding up hundreds of blankets
- Volunteers who've served with us since December: **Amanda Alexander, Lacova Douglas, Charlene Gall, Beth Heisler, Spencer McCoy, Sparky Perrette, Kerri Postlethweight, Camille Verkamp; Sandy Sims' CFC small group**, U of E volunteers: **Jacob Bullington & Lauren Schaftler**, Daughters of Charity volunteers: **Sr. Marianne Oliver, Whitney Kimmert, Marie Do, Teresa Lac, BichVan Le, Truc Nguyen**