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Source: June, 2006 HomeScape

Lending a hand

Realtor Foundation investing \$80,000 to combat local homelessness

By Erin K. Witt

For Custom Publications

Approximately 3,500 people are homeless in Indianapolis every night. Their circumstances often are preventable — many homeless people cite eviction or inability to pay rent as leading causes of their homelessness.

Although services are available, most assistance programs face challenges that include limited resources and long lists of people in need.

Helping the helpers

To support those working tirelessly to help the homeless every day, the Realtor Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the Metropolitan Indianapolis Board of Realtors, is preparing for another round of annual giving. And this year, building on record-breaking fundraising in 2006, the foundation is investing \$80,000 in central Indiana's fight to end homelessness.

Through its competitive grants process, the Realtor Foundation supports community organizations working to provide solutions to homelessness.

In 2007, Holy Family Transitional Housing received its second grant from the foundation. The organization operates a nine-apartment program where homeless families can stay for up to two years. In this supportive program, social services address the issues that led to

the family's homelessness.

"Families come into our program directly from the homeless shelter," said director Bill Bickel. "We believe that shelters do a great job with limited resources, but many families can benefit from a long-term supportive program."

A matter of timing

Bickel came into his partnership with the Realtor Foundation by happenstance. He had gone to MIBOR in search of information on housing discrimination, and he left with a new local ally in the battle



against homelessness.

"I was waiting in the lobby to receive some materials for one of our families," Bickel recalled. "And I read the mission of the Realtor Foundation. I realized that our organizations had almost exactly the same vision — and I applied immediately."

Since that time, Holy Family has received two foundation grants. The \$15,000 awarded this year will be used to maintain

the apartments and to provide assistance to the program's families, including the purchase of school supplies, funds for transportation costs, medical co-pays and employment and training expenses.

"The support of the Realtor Foundation has really helped us make a difference in the lives of people who are struggling," Bickel explained. "Five of the 80 families we've served have actually come to us from a shelter, and then became first-time homeowners through our program. Having help from community partners like the foundation helps make that possible."

Again this year, the foundation will distribute grant applications in June. The applications are due in early July, with a grant review in August. The 2008 grant recipients will be announced in October.

To learn more about the Realtor Foundation or to download a 2008 grant application, visit www.realtorfoundation.org. ■

Grant recipients

In 2007, the Realtor Foundation received funding requests of more than \$564,000 from organizations throughout central Indiana. This year's grant recipients included:

■ **\$15,000 to Christian Help**, which provides affordable housing with attached services and case management. Located in Johnson County, Christian Help focuses on the strength of family and keeps it intact by rehabilitating mobile homes and renting them to families for a low cost until they can become permanent owners.

■ **\$15,000 to Coburn Place Safe Haven**, a domestic violence facility for homeless women and children from Marion County and surrounding counties. Coburn Place provides cost-regulated transitional apartment living, job training, life skills training, child care, medical care and legal advocacy.

■ **\$5,000 to Gennesaret Free Clinic's health recovery program**, which fills a unique niche in Indianapolis by providing a recuperation home for hospitalized homeless men.

■ **\$15,000 to Holy Family Transitional Housing**, a program that provides shelter and services to help families break the cycle of homelessness in Marion County. Families can stay in transitional housing for up to two years while addressing critical issues that lead to poverty and homelessness.

■ **\$10,000 to Partners in Housing Development Corporation**, which operates eight supportive housing projects in Indianapolis. Partners in Housing is dedicated to moving residents toward independent living by teaching life skills and keeping a safety net available for its residents.

■ **\$15,000 to Sheltering Wings Center for Women**, a Hendricks County domestic violence facility for women and children that offers emergency and transitional housing, medical services, job training, meals and counseling.

INSIDE

Apartments available for rent

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Light up the night

Outdoor lighting is a beautiful addition to your backyard and it's functional. To enhance landscaping, install low-voltage lighting to provide illumination. Low-voltage kits with a timer allow the homeowners flexibility in choosing when to turn the lights on and off. Other benefits of outdoor lighting include improved safety and overall ambiance.



— Courtesy of Steve Gray Renovations

Central Indiana housing data

Current active properties	20,381	
	March '07	March '06
Units sold:	2,407	2,977
Average sales price:	\$143,361	\$147,448
Date generated: 05/07/07		

Includes the counties of Boone, Brown, Decatur, Hamilton, Hancock, Hendricks, Johnson, Madison, Marion, Morgan, Montgomery, Putnam and Shelby.

Source: Metropolitan Indianapolis Board of Realtors.

Mortgage Rates from dozens of area companies

H8

Have real estate news to share?

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Trash to treasures: May flowers thrive thanks to landfill gas



Crossroads Greenhouse uses waste methane gas from a landfill to heat its greenhouse.

Submitted Photo

As warmer weather sends thousands of Hoosiers in search of this season's hottest plants, few people will be thinking "green" about that greenery. But many of the bedding and container plants available at local home and garden centers are environmentally responsible thanks to Crossroads Greenhouse of Indianapolis, one of the largest methane gas-controlled

greenhouses in the country.

Crossroads Greenhouse uses waste methane gas from a landfill one-quarter mile away to heat its 240,000-square-foot glass greenhouse, where a variety of bedding and container plants grow February through May. The computerized greenhouse provides a stable growing environment for spring seasonal plants.

"We make it easier so people can enjoy great plants without all the work of growing them from seed," said Matt Maxwell, general manager. "We grow a wide range of container and potted bedding plants under contract to area garden centers."

This year, look for new varieties of vinca or periwinkle, a popular landscape plant. "Victoria blue" salvia also has been growing well,

[By Barbara E. Cohen For Custom Publications]

as have begonias, the most popular choice for bedding or container gardening.

The greenhouse has no retail outlet, but local landscapers contract for Crossroads' plants, as do many suppliers for local home and garden centers, including area Lowe's stores and other garden centers throughout central Indiana. ■