

# Realtor Foundation awards \$80,000 in grants

**By Erin K. Witt**

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In 2007, a group of local Realtors focused its fundraising efforts to help homeless families transition into safe, permanent residences. On Oct. 18, the Realtor Foundation announced a record-breaking \$80,000 in grants to 12 local charities that supply emergency housing for victims of unforeseen circumstances.

Established in 1984, the Realtor Foundation is the philanthropic arm of the Metropolitan Indianapolis Board of Realtors. Through its work in transitional housing — defined as the step between emergency shelter and permanent homeownership — the Realtor Foundation partners with organizations to address homelessness throughout central Indiana.

“The extent of homelessness in central Indiana is inexcusable,” said Mark Dudley, Realtor Foundation president. “Realtors have now made a huge step forward in this fight by raising enough to award grants to 12 organizations. These groups all fill a unique need and are spread across the region, allowing our dollars to help more people than ever before in one grant cycle. It’s tremendously gratifying.”

Fundraisers such as the Realtor Foundation Golf Outing and individual and corporate donations from the real estate community contributed to the total.

## 12 award winners

Eight of the grant beneficiaries in 2007 are repeat award-winners. Recipients’ geographic and demographic areas of service, missions and specializations vary as greatly as their plans for the funds.

Mary Rigg Neighborhood Center, a first-time award recipient, will apply its gift toward Fostering Independence, a transitional housing program for teens who are too old for Indiana’s foster

care system, said Clark Lienemann, executive director.

“This is a very innovative program, locally and nationally,” Lienemann said. “It’s an independent living model that helps young people who have become homeless after leaving foster care learn to make positive choices as adults.”

In its two-year history, Fostering Independence has served 24 individuals, primarily 19- to 21-year-olds, offering mental health counseling, employment support and case-management services while they live in one of the program’s two duplex homes. Participants learn to become self-sufficient by paying rent, maintaining a home and learning to live with roommates. They also receive help overcoming the typical challenges of young adulthood that are compounded by poverty and mental health issues.

“Research indicates that if we can get a young person to age 21 without pregnancy, substance abuse, homelessness or incarceration, their outcomes will be better throughout their adult lives,” Lienemann said. “The grant from the Realtor Foundation will allow us to keep providing the individualized service that is so critical to the kids in this program. Whether it’s a new pair of shoes for a job interview or a pair of glasses for a participant that doesn’t have vision insurance, we now have some dollars to help where help is needed.”

For more information about donating to or volunteering with the Realtor Foundation, visit [www.realtorfoundation.org](http://www.realtorfoundation.org).

## Grants also were awarded to:

- **Christian Help**, Johnson County
- **Coburn Place Safe Haven**, Marion County
- **Community Service Center of**

## Morgan County, Morgan County

- **Desert Rose**, Morgan, Johnson, Owen, Brown and Hendricks counties
- **Gennesaret Free Clinic**, Marion County
- **Hancock Hope House**, Hancock, Shelby and Rush counties
- **Holy Family Services**, Marion County
- **Julian Center**, Marion County
- **Partners in Housing Development Corporation**, Marion County
- **Pathway to Recovery**, Marion County
- **Sheltering Wings Center for Women**, Hendricks and Marion counties



