



Fall 2010 Newsletter

Stepping Stones

Our Mission:

*Providing transitional housing
and supportive services to
youth aged 16-20 that are
experiencing homelessness.*

NOVEMBER IS NATIONAL HOMELESS YOUTH AWARENESS MONTH

Did you know that the average age of a homeless person is 9 years old? Did you know that homeless children and youth suffer from severe anxiety and depression, poor health and nutrition, and low self-esteem at almost three times the rate of non-homeless youth? And did you know that because of difficulties like legal guardianship requirements, residency requirements, improper records, and lack of transportation homeless youth are at an extreme disadvantage to attend and succeed in school (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2008)?

November is National Youth Homelessness Awareness month. It is a month where we recognize that this is a very vulnerable, fragile and rapidly growing segment of the homeless population. Some research suggests that, at any given point, there are over 1 million children and youth experiencing homelessness in the U.S. Closer to home, the Indiana Department of Education recently surveyed the youth in the schools. From this survey, the DoE identified over 9,000 children and youth that were homeless. And these are just youth in the public education system. It does not include private, charter or not-in-school homeless youth. As a part of this state-wide survey, our own Monroe County Community Schools Corporation identified over 200 children and youth that were homeless.

How do youth become homeless? There are various, often inter-related scenarios in which a youth can become homeless and, while this is in no way exhaustive, these scenarios often fall under three categories: family and/or economic problems and residential stability. If there is physical, sexual or substance abuse problems (like addiction of a family member) in the home, strained relationships, or general neglect, a youth may choose to leave home and find themselves homeless. Some youth become homeless because their families have suffered an economic crisis like loss of a job, illness of a guardian, or lack of housing options. Or, if a youth lacks residential stability and has been in and out of various housing situations, they are more likely to experience homelessness.

Who are the homeless youth and what are their characteristics? According to advocacy group Youth Noise, there are 4 "types" of homeless youth: Runaways, Episodic, Unaccompanied, and Street-Dependent. They are more likely to experience depression, to use substance and over half of them will drop out of school even though almost 80% attended school regularly before becoming homeless. They lack the skills that are essential to living self-sufficiently like financial literacy, substance usage awareness, or healthy lifestyle choices. Older youth often have limited to no financial resources, have limited to no employment history and a lack of residential history. This maelstrom causes youth to experience and remain homeless.

Continued on next page

We want to do our part for the environment by reducing paper use. If you would like to receive your newsletters electronically please send an email message to wwade@steppingstones-inc.org.

THANK YOU! Bounds and McPike donated new carpeting and labor hours. Our apartments look great!

**BOUNDS
& MCPIKE
FLOORING**

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There are various organizations throughout the Bloomington and Monroe County area that respond to the needs of this population. For younger youth experiencing homelessness, the Youth Services Bureau of Monroe County can provide safe, temporary emergency shelter, foster healthy and positive youth development, and provide support and structure to families in crisis. Middle Way House provides child care, children and youth programming and mentoring opportunities for domestic violence victims and their children. Agencies like Big Brothers, Big Sisters, Boys and Girls Club and Girl's Inc. provide services to children and families that help prevent children and youth homelessness from occurring like providing mentoring relationships and opportunities for youth that will benefit them and their families in the future.

Stepping Stones provides transitional housing and supportive services to youth between the ages of 16-20 that are experiencing homelessness. We provide them with a safe, furnished apartment that they share with 2 other residents. While in our program they also receive various supportive services like educational and vocational support and planning. We also facilitate mental and physical medical services as most of our youth struggle with some mental health issue and have no primary care provider. We provide these youth the opportunity to stay in school, obtain employment, and develop the necessary skills to live independently beyond our program.

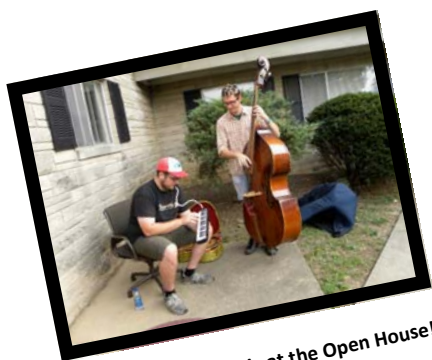
While we and the other organizations mentioned are able to address the needs of some of the homeless youth and children in Bloomington and Monroe County, the need remains and is expected to grow. On average, Stepping Stones receives two calls a week from or on behalf of a youth in need of housing.

We and other organizations need your help. Here are a couple of ways to get involved:

- Become a donor – Financially supporting our missions can help provide opportunities for youth currently experiencing homelessness. Those same economic conditions which can lead to a youth experiencing homelessness (like economic downturn or the loss of industry and jobs) can also affect an agency and its fundraising efforts.
- Become a volunteer – with limited resources, these nonprofit organizations are able to do amazing things with the support of volunteers. Do you have any skill that you could lend to an agency? Check out their websites for volunteer opportunities and needs.
- Become informed – If you are familiar with the agencies in your community, you can provide the information to intervene and possibly prevent an episode of homelessness.

The Bloomington community is special. It possesses a rare empathy for its downtrodden citizens, responds with care, and fosters hope in the lives of children. So, during this holiday season, keep homeless youth in mind.

Open House Photos



Making some great music at the Open House!



Board member Sheila Evans and Executive Director Sheri Benham.



Resident Assistant Anyah Land and Board Member Mike Beam check out the "Path to Giving."

Check out our Facebook page for more pictures of the Open House!

How Can You Help?

- Make a monetary donation:** You can give a couple of different ways
 - ◇ Make checks payable to Stepping Stones and send your checks to our P.O. box listed below. Please include the information sheet at the bottom of this page.
 - ◇ Automatic Bank Transfer—contact Warren if you’d like to set up automatic transactions through your bank account.
 - ◇ Or head to our web site and make a safe online donation via PayPal.
- Make an “in-kind” donation:** Our online wish list is constantly being updated. Go to steppingstones-inc.org and click on “How to Donate.” Our wish list link is at the bottom of the page.
- Volunteer:** Stepping Stones is always looking for volunteers. There are several different ways you can help out. Be a mentor! Become a tutor! You could even host a dinner for our residents! There are more opportunities listed on our web site. Check them out!



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FL10

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\$1000
 \$500
 \$250
 \$150
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THIS GIFT IS IN HONOR OF: _____

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I WOULD LIKE INFORMATION ON AUTOMATIC DONATIONS OPTIONS I WISH TO REMAIN ANONYMOUS

Stepping Stones deeply values the contributions that our donors make to sustain our mission. To protect your privacy, your personal donor information will not be traded or sold with other organizations.

We are a 501(C)3, tax exempt corporation. Your contributions are tax deductible as allowed by current law.

Our Tax ID# is 06-1730901. Please return to Stepping Stones P.O. Box 1366 Bloomington, IN 47402

OOPS!

In our Summer newsletter, we accidentally omitted **Sallyann Murphey** from our 2010 Icing on the Cake Honoree List. Murphey is the High School Coordinator and Senior Advisor at the local Harmony School. Thank you so much **Sallyann Murphey** for all you have done for our residents and for Stepping Stones!



Upcoming Events

November 18th: "Are They Smarter Than a Fifth Grader?" Event at Bloomington High School South at 7 p.m.

All Week Long: "Spare Change for Social Change" - Donation canisters all over Bloomington!

Look for our Annual Report in January!

CONTACT US

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