

HOI Happenings

MAY 2010

Housing Opportunities serves the community through the provision of safe, decent, and affordable housing and customized support services.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Easter Blessings	1
Julie Spears ~ A Thriving Participant	2
HO & Hilltop 5K Fundraiser	2
Family Bible "Egg'stravaganza & Pizza Part	3
Curves of Valparaiso	3
FAWN Style Show	4
The Story of The House Pins	4
HOI Food Pantry Update	5
New Employees	5
Realizing the American Dream	6
HOI Contributors	6
Contributors Cont.	7
Food Pantry Wish List	7
Breakfast Food Drive	8

Easter Blessings

Preparation for Easter for our families was in full swing again this year. Through the donations from community members and other generous organizations, Housing Opportunities was able to provide families living in the housing programs with a wonderful Easter blessing.



When living on a limited income, it's hard to be able to afford the luxuries that many of us take for granted. With this in mind, Housing Opportunities linked with the Northwest Indiana Hispanic Chamber of Commerce in order to provide Easter baskets for each child in our transitional and permanent housing projects. Pictured is Ivette Westerman, of Task Force Tips and the Northwest Indiana Hispanic Chamber. We would like to thank Gilbert Velez, President, and Rita De La Rosa, Vice President of the Northwest Indiana Hispanic Chamber for providing the baskets, toys, coloring books, crayons, and various gift items. Also, special thanks to Mike Mamouzelos, Manager of the Holiday Inn Express in Valparaiso, for providing healthy snacks for our baskets, as well as Danielle Kissel, Manager of the Courtyard by Marriott in Valparaiso, who provided candy for the children. We can't forget Dave Furman, Director of Operations at McDonald's (RMC) of Valparaiso for donating Happy Meal coupons and toys.

Donations were also received from the United Way of Porter County, Jane Willsea, and June Hardy in order to provide food for an Easter dinner.

The families appreciated all the effort that was put into providing Easter items. Housing Opportunities and all the families would like to thank each and everyone who donated to make this a blessed Easter.



(LaTosha Knight, Ivette Westerman, and Amanda Gano carry in the beautiful baskets.)

Housing
Opportunities, Inc.
Board
of
Directors

Fred McNulty,
Chairman
Tim Rice,
Vice-Chairman
Jamie Juarez,
Secretary
Scott Steinwart,
Treasurer
Mark Abbett
David Blumenthal
Nancy Dworkin
Bob Franko
Ric Frataccia
Tom Galovic
Angie Hampton
Jennifer Hohl
Adriana Jardim
David Remijan
Jerry Rodenbarger
John Seibert
Brad Sweet
Susan Toadvine
Michael Tolbert
Peter Wilson

Thank you for your
commitment and
service to Housing
Opportunities and
our mission.

If you are interested in
learning more about
Housing Opportunities,
please contact us at
(219) 548-2800 or visit
our website at
[www.housing-
opportunities.com](http://www.housing-
opportunities.com).

Julie Spears a Thriving Participant



Julie Spear's journey started when she signed all the intake papers with Housing Opportunities on August 17, 2009. Julie had not been in stable housing for years. Julie's daughter stayed with her Grandma most of the time. Julie work on and off at the same job for 3 years. Since coming into the program Julie has consistently maintained employment. Julie had a life altering experience, and decided to follow what her heart was telling her to do and make a better life for her and her daughter Annie. Julie

decided to take advantage of Housing Opportunities Permanent Housing Program.

Julie and Annie moved into their own apartment and decorated it to make it their home. Julie started working with the case manager immediately making goals and budgeting for herself and daughter. Julie has continued to work as many shifts as she can to make enough money to buy groceries and pay her bills.

It was the month of October 2009, as we met for our weekly meeting, Julie was so excited that she had paid all her bills with her own money. This was the first time in her life! Julie had reached one of her goals towards independence and self sufficiency. She did not have to borrow money from anyone to make ends meet.

She has since opened her own checking and savings account and has kept a positive balance and has made regular deposits for 6 months, another goal towards independence. Julie is now working toward homeownership. She is working on opening an IDA account with Housing Opportunities to save for a down payment for her first home. She has also applied for the Habitat for Humanity House.

HO Joins Hilltop Neighborhood House in 5K run/walk Fundraiser

Get your walking shoes on – it is time for the annual Hilltop Neighborhood House 5 K run/walk on June 19th.. The route wound through Valparaiso University's old and new campuses. If you are interested in joining the HO team, please contact Caroline Shook at cshook@housing-opportunities.com or David Blumenthal at dblumenthal@innovativeworkforce.com.

Family Bible Church Hosts an Easter "Egg"stravaganza & Pizza Party

On a Saturday morning this March, Family Bible Church hosted the participants in our homeless program to a wonderful morning filled with games and face-painting for the children; a store for the moms to get clothing and household items for their families; a delicious pizza lunch; as well as some drawings for gas cards.



Unfortunately due to the rain, the Easter egg hunt was canceled, but each mom went home with filled eggs for her children to have an egg hunt at a later date.

A special thanks to Claudia Graham and the Women's Ministries team at the church for all of their hard work putting this together and making it such a memorable day for our families.

Pictured are some of the children in our program enjoying the event.



Curves of Valparaiso

Many thanks to the members of Curves in Valparaiso for donating over 600 pounds of food and paper goods to our food pantry. Featured in the photo below on the right are some of the members of Curves.



Shirley Luchene, HOI bookkeeper, helps unload the huge delivery from Curves for the HOI Food Pantry



Members of Curves of Valparaiso and some food/items they collected for the HOI Pantry

Style Show Quickly Approaching

Preparations for the September 9th Style Show are in full swing at both Housing Opportunities, Inc. and Friends Assisting Women in Need, Inc. (FAWN). The Fashion Show, Dinner, and Silent Auction will be held at Avalon Manor on September 9, 2010 at 5:30 p.m. The charitable recipient of this event will be Housing Opportunities, Inc. FAWN is a 501(C)3 organization that specializes in positively changing women's lives as well as the lives of their families. This event holds great opportunities for both organizations as they aim to improve the lives of program participants, especially the female head of household families.

The Style Show will feature apparel from local businesses. If you are interested in becoming a sponsor, donating a silent auction item, or purchasing tickets, please contact Housing Opportunities.

House Pins—a way to show your support!



Knowing there was something the owner of the company, Lucinda could do to help herself overcome poverty and homelessness, Lucinda used her creativity and drive to launch a successful line of fashion jewelry. One day she designed a simple pin in the shape of a house. The idea behind the pin was to raise money for the homeless, and at the same time, create a greater awareness of homelessness in her community. The pin was a success on both counts. Lucinda's experience of homelessness would come full circle and a company with a conscience was born... Designs by Lucinda. These pins were a huge success. They raise money not only for Housing Opportunities but more importantly they create a greater awareness for the issues surrounding homelessness. Please stop in to purchase your pin today. Pins are priced at \$15.00.

HOI Food Pantry—By the Numbers

February

- Food received from USDA: 1202 lbs.
- Food purchase from Food Bank of NWI: 877 lbs.
- Porter County residents served: 105
 - Returning: 75
 - New: 30

March

- Food received from USDA: 845 lbs.
- Food received from donors: 1084 lbs.
- Food purchased from Food Bank of NWI: 209 lbs.
- Porter County residents served: 112
 - Returning: 75
 - New: 37

April

- Food received from USDA: 757 lbs.
- Food received from donors: 3027.50 lbs.
- Food purchased from Food Bank of NWI: 369 lbs.
- Food purchased from grocery store: 216.5 lbs.
- Porter county residents served: 171
 - Returning: 116
 - New: 55



Boone Grove student Valerie Strickland organized a food drive for HO Food Pantry. Thanks Valerie!

Thank you to everyone who donated time, goods and money toward making the Housing Opportunities food pantry a place where those in need can always find what they are looking for while in a safe and comfortable environment.

HOI's Newest Employees



Cindy Farmer, HPRP Assistant
Cathy Thompson, Property Manager

Please join us in welcoming our newest employees ~ **Cathy Thompson** joined Housing Opportunities in January. She started in the HPRP Program and in March she transitioned to Property Manager for HO. She is settling into her new position and is really enjoying working with our participants. **Cindy Farmer** was hired as the new HPRP Assistant in March. Cindy is excited to be working with Alora Johnson, HPRP Coordinator to help the homeless and to assist in preventing homelessness.

Realizing The American Dream

Bridgette came to Housing Opportunities in 2006. She went through the homebuyer education classes to learn the process of purchasing a home but later decided that buying a home for her was simply a dream at this point. With limited resources, she would not be able to purchase a home. She would still keep dreaming in hopes that one day her dream would come true.

She contacted Housing Opportunities in February of this year and stated that she wanted to reactivate her file. She had found a house and wanted to go forward. She met with her housing counselor to update her file. She contacted USDA Rural Development for a loan and was approved. With a loan from USDA and down payment assistance from Housing Opportunities, Bridgette's dream came true. She closed on her home last week. Bridgette stated "I can't thank you enough for all the help you've given me. Your friendliness and caring meant so much to me. And I thank Housing Opportunities in helping me with extra funding."



HOI Contributors

1st American Management Co., Inc.
A and M Farm Center
Anderson, Jeanette
Anwari, Sherry
Asher, Amy
Banta Feeds
Beinharst, Diane
Bentley, David and Christine
Blumenthal, David
Bodensteiner, Pat
Bondi, Michael
Borchert, Michael
Brennechi, Megan
Brubaker, Gary and Josie
Buehrle, Danette
Carneygee, Denise
Casey Smar
Catalano, Donna
Century 21 Executive Realty
Chester, Jim and Oleta
Christensen, Jon
Coldwell Banker Charitable Found.
Culver's Of Valparaiso
Currie, Candie
Curves Of Valparaiso
Douglas, Alice

Douglas, John
Duffy, Bob
Duffy, Liz
Duffy, Samantha
Duneland Resale
Eiden, Justice
Eiden, Larry
Eiden, Liberty
Emery, Bob
Family Bible Church
Fiedler, Wanda
Firchad, Jodi
Fleck, Joan
Furdeck, Caren and Joe
Garnett, Joe
Graham, Rich and Claudia
Green, Steve
Gregorash, Karen
Group 7
Guzek, Emily
Hardy & Associates
Harris Bank
Henaghan, Judy
Herring, Ryan
Hilltop Food Pantry
Holiday Inn Express
Horizon Bank

Immanuel Food Pantry
Jesse Michaels Construction
Jones, Lindsay
Kardos, Debbie
Krefzmann, Alissa
Kuch, Shire and Kelly
Kuehner, Allison
LaFollette, Kelly
Lee, Christian
Lohman, Brandon
Lohse Family
Lovings Heating & Cooling
Marty & Cheri Spain
McAfee's Animal Clinic
McClure, Bill and Kathleen
McColly Real Estate
Mellgren, Shannon
Munroe, Linda
Olenik, Michele
Olson, Alexandra
Petkovic, Milena
Phelps, Jean
Poortanga, Linda
Portage United Penticostal Church

HOI Contributors Cont'

Porter EMS
 Porter Health Services Compensation & Benefits
 Prairie View Homemakers
 Reynolds, Sandy
 Rice, Tim and Shelly
 Richardson, Kris
 Rodriguez, Jodi
 Salas, Normis
 Sappington, Bob
 Sauder, Heidi
 Sauder, Kelly
 Schillmiller, Ryan
 Scibbe, Alice
 Scibbe, Claire
 Snedecor, Brianna
 Stephan, Jaime
 Stokarski, Sherrill
 Stowers, Amy
 Strickland, Valerie
 The Eiden Family
 The Lundquist Household
 Thompson, Nic & Jacque
 Thompson, Scott
 Tulloch, Bob
 Union Country Kids - 4H
 United Way Of Porter County
 Valparaiso Lions Club
 VonBaren, Kelly
 VonBaron, Melissa
 Vondra, Brooke
 Warren, Jane
 Westerman, Ivette
 Wheeler United Methodist Church
 White, Dawn
 Whitegrove, Kyle
 Willsea, Jane
 Yarovsky, Deb
 Yeager, Tyler

Food Pantry Wish List

Imagine for a moment if you didn't have the means to purchase toothpaste, shampoo, toilet paper or laundry soap. These are just a few of the items that we never think would be difficult to provide for ourselves or our families, but for some there isn't always enough income to purchase these items.

Housing Opportunities would love to have your support in providing these items by asking you to organize a food and/or paper product drive. Please contact Kathleen McClure at 219- 548-2800 x 205. Below is a wish list of items. **The top two items that are constantly needed are toilet paper and laundry soap.**

Kleenex	Window Cleaner
Shampoo	Cotton Balls
Conditioner	Mouthwash
Tampons/Pads	Dish Soap
Dental Floss	Diapers
Toilet Paper	Baby Wipes
Paper Towels	Baby Lotion
Napkins	Deodorant
Laundry Soap	Fabric Softener
Multi-Purpose Cleaner	

Cereal	Jello/Pudding
Bread	Hot Chocolate Mix
Flour	Macaroni & Cheese
Sugar	Applesauce
Instant Oatmeal	Jiffy Mixes
Raisins	Spaghetti Sauce
Crackers	Hamburger Helper
Ketchup	Mustard
Mayonnaise	Juice
Tuna	Cheese



Please help us do Breakfast Food Drive for our clients. The needed items would be:

Boxed Cereal

Pancake Mix

Frozen Waffles

Syrup

Bread

Juice

Jam

Eggs

Cheese

Muffins

*If you would like to help please contact
Kathleen at 219-548-2800 x 205*