

CCH NEWS

The latest news from Citizens Concerned for the Homeless

30 Years of Service

On May 31, 1991, Citizens Concerned for the Homeless, Inc. was created and has served Michigan City, LaPorte County and beyond for 30 years. We began as a small family shelter on 9th Street. Twelve years ago, CCH was gifted the rectory of Sacred Heart Church and Sand Castle Shelter for Homeless Families began operation. Thousands have stayed at both shelters over the years. Shortly after Sand Castle opened, CCH built the Grace Learning Center (next door to Sand Castle) and has provided education and life skills workshops designed to eliminate barriers to self-sufficiency for CCH participants.

In 2014, answering the call from the County Plan to End Homelessness, CCH built the Keys to Hope Community Resource Center. KTH is a day facility where men and women staying in the overnight emergency center had a place to shower, do laundry, and have a locker; but most importantly, receive case management from the CCH team. This path to self-sufficiency returns them to fiscal and personal independence. In 2019, CCH began its Food Rescue Initiative, now exceeding over one million pounds of food annually. This provides, through deliveries, free food to the public through an expansive network of 33 partner agencies.

CCH is honored and privileged to serve LaPorte County for basic needs of food, shelter, education, and rental assistance, among other programs. We firmly believe in empowering—rather than enabling—our participants to move forward. All program benefits are earned through working a case management Action Plan created and personalized for each individual by our Case Management Team.

If you would like to become a part of the solution to end homelessness, see the last page for donation information. Here's to the next 30 years of service!

Thank you!
Jim Musial,
Executive Director

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CCH FOOD RESCUE INITIATIVE

Feeding LaPorte County through Community partnerships



When the pandemic hit, CCH expanded food rescue with food networking to provide as much food to LaPorte County as possible. In 2020, CCH began working with USDA Farmers to Families Program, Hoosiers Feeding the Hungry and other local groups. More importantly, Food Bank of Northern Indiana increased their Mobile Food Distributions (public food giveaways) in LaPorte County from a handful per year to weekly, in areas they serve. In addition, nine United Way sponsored events have been held in Michigan City, LaPorte, Kingsford Heights, New Carlisle/Rolling Prairie and Wanatah as part of a new partnership. These multiple collaborations resulted in CCH's distribution of over **one million pounds of food** through a thirty-three-organization network of food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters throughout LaPorte County.

Most recently, CCH reached out to Purdue Northwest in Westville, partnering with the University to work side by side with CCH for a food event. We were able to use their facilities to host the event and collaborate with the students and faculty of the Social Work Program from the Department of Behavioral Services at PNW. Jim Musial, Executive Director of CCH, stated "this partnership will allow the students to see first-hand the face of need, the impact of service and the gratitude of families requiring this assistance. It also shows the power of collaborations by making good services better ones." Robin Miller, Clinical Assistant Professor & Field Education Director for the University, also added "this is an opportunity for our Social Work Students to take what they have learned in classes about the importance of advocacy, volunteerism, social justice and civic engagement to the community in a tangible way."

At the event, CCH and PNW presented the largest event yet, nearly 26,000 pounds of food. United Way boxes contained non-perishable items, while the Farmers to Families boxes provided by Food Bank included a mix of dairy, fresh produce, and meat.





SANDCASTLE SHELTER

The long journey: The story of “T”

T began her journey with CCH in 2017. In fact, she was the very first client at KTH, walking in for help before it was officially open. T was referred to community agencies for assistance, but after losing her housing, T began staying at the overnight shelter and going to Keys to Hope for resources during the day. T had a bit of a slow start addressing and working through her barriers, but once she made the decision that it was time to tackle each one, she started toward the path to success. T was taking classes that promote self-sufficiency at Grace Learning Center. Some of those classes were Interpersonal Communications, Financial Literacy (with Horizon Bank), Nurturing Parenting, Nutrition Education (with Jody Kutch from Purdue Extension), Self-Change and Problem Solving, Anger Management, and Job Readiness, among others.

T also recognized that attending to her mental health would be important in knocking down the barriers standing in the way of her success. Before returning to Sand Castle for a second time, one of the first barriers to be addressed was employment. T interviewed well and received plenty of job offers over the years, but taking the final step to overcome any fears and showing up the first day was something she was not able to do until the time was right. It was brought to her attention that volunteering at the soup kitchen every day was like showing up to work. The light bulb went off and T realized she could do this! Soon after, T received full-time employment and went to work. (Unknown to T, one member of Team CCH even watched her show up to work on day one, ready to jump in if she needed a little extra moral support). T was ready this time though, and she kept up her end of the bargain by going to work, so we kept ours by bringing her back into Sand Castle to begin her residency. T was told that she needed and DESERVED to have a different outcome this time around, with her graduating the program and moving on to housing.

T continued to work full-time and faithfully saved 75% of her income each payday. T also continued going to classes at GLC, learning everything she possibly could to help her sustain the new life she was building for herself. She can still be found at Grace Learning Center taking classes and staying in touch with her CCH family. By taking the Budgeting and Self-Sufficiency Workshop, T was eligible to participate in the Housing Assistance Program which paid her first month's rent. She received furniture and household items donated to Sand Castle from our generous community and a kitchen full of food from CCH's Food Rescue Initiative program.

It has been such a pleasure getting to know this kind-hearted individual and watch her learn, grow, and realize she has a support system in Team CCH for life! Great job T, we are so incredibly proud of you.





GRACE LEARNING CENTER

New faces, classes and programs at GLC

Grace Learning Center continues to be a go-to facility for those who need life skills workshops, education and other services within our community. In 2021, we have seen many faces— both new and familiar— while continuing to practice proper social distancing guidelines. The increase in applications for housing assistance, unemployment extensions and IRS/ stimulus questions have created an influx of usage in our free computer lab and fax/copy services. Our GED program continues to grow monthly, with new students participating in virtual learning at our facility and recent participants earning their HSE/GED. Our continued partnership with TRIO Services affords continuing education and post-secondary scholarship opportunities to those who have successfully earned their high school diploma.

The recent expansion of classes created new opportunities for our clients and the community to learn about financial literacy with Horizon Bank's 'Money Smart' program. Our Interpersonal Communications class teaches individuals how to better communicate and negotiate with others, and the Michigan City Public Library is once again offering Adult Literacy at GLC. Due to the demand in our computer lab, we have brought back the Computer Skills course, teaching basic typing skills, Microsoft Office programs, and more. Our 'Fun Friday' series began in late March, with participants of all ages now utilizing the classroom each Friday for a fun event. From building birdhouses to hanging out with the Easter Bunny, the community is being reminded that Grace is the place to come for both help *and* fun.

At GLC, we continue to align our facility with those partners whose clients need one-on-one attention, resulting in new success stories every day. We look forward to continuing the upward trend at Grace Learning Center, and to implementing even more classes and series moving forward.





KEYS TO HOPE

KTH: Utilizing Collective Impact to address the needs of our population

Since opening its doors in 2015, The Keys to Hope Program has operated upon a foundation of Collective Impact; collaborations with other social service organizations to create a multi-faceted approach to addressing the needs of our population. This model gives our participants the supplemental tools and support they need to survive, thus stimulating growth toward economic self-sufficiency and independent housing.

Being the only facility of this kind in Laporte County, we rely extensively on coordination with established community partners in our social service efforts. Organizations such as PADS, Homeward Bound, Swanson Center, PATH, Bowen Center, Work One, Goodwill, National Able, Healthy Communities, Housing Opportunities, Aliveness Project, and countless others, are invaluable in helping us meet our clients' needs.

The mission of the Keys to Hope Program is to provide an alcohol and drug free facility within which the homeless population can engage in aggressive case management. By so doing, clients can develop skills which lead to healthier living, employment, and housing opportunities, as well as build a strong foundation to minimize homelessness in the future. A client we will call W gives an example of just that.

KEYS TO HOPE/CCH SUCCESS STORY

The Journey of W: Using all the tools in the toolbox

W came to us in April of 2020, a victim of the pandemic and a series of unfortunate events. Although he has over 14 years of continuous substance abuse recovery, mental health issues had been quite problematic. However, W was quite employable, and was soon engaged in an overnight position for a local factory.

Unfortunately, W failed to completely address his mental health issues and returned to the cycle of hotel living that causes many more problems than it solves. This is often an area of grave concern for our population, and we do all we can to remove the stigma that frequently comes with being "different". As a result, W left the program last August, only to return in November with a firm resolution to follow ALL program requirements.

Today, following a SUCCESSFUL program completion in March of this year, we take comfort in knowing that W is gainfully employed full-time, with one of the Gary, IN, steel mills! With a boost from Homeward Bound and their Housing Assistance Program, as well as the Center Township Trustee, W was able to obtain housing in LaPorte County. He continues to do extremely well because of Collective Impact between CCH and our community partners.





CCH IN ACTION



CONTACT US

Citizens Concerned for the Homeless Inc:
2706 Franklin Street Michigan City IN,
46360. (219)-257-1110



mcjem430@hotmail.com

Jim Musial, Executive Director

Keys to Hope Community
Resource Center:

1802 Franklin Street

Michigan City IN, 46360. (219)-809-9903

abigailstewartkth@gmail.com

facebook.com/KeysToHopeResourceCenter

Abby Stewart, Case Manager



[Darren Dunham, Program Manager](mailto:Darren.Dunham@keys-to-hope.org)



Sand Castle Shelter:

1005 W. 8th Street Michigan City IN,
46360. (219)-879-2552



facebook.com/10058thst

trosebaumsc@gmail.com

Tammy Rosebaum, CCH Operations Director

Grace Learning Center:

1007 W. 8th Street Michigan City IN, 46360.
(219)-879-6788



gracelearningcentermc@gmail.com



[grace_learning_center](https://www.instagram.com/grace_learning_center)



facebook.com/gracelearningcentermc

Erica Morse, Program Developer





HOUSING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

In late 2019, CCH partnered with local non-profit Homeward Bound, Inc. to form CCH's Housing Assistance Program. With a very generous donation from the Huizenga Foundation, CCH is able to graduate participants to permanent housing with help in the way of first month's rent. This is accomplished as our participants work the case management program established for them and if they achieve the following three primary goals. First, they must have sustainable income to pay their rent. Second, they must save enough to pay their security deposit and all utility deposits. Finally, they must complete a three hour Self-Sufficiency Workshop. All three preconditions must occur to qualify.

AGENCY WISH LIST

Paper Products:

Bathroom tissue
Paper towels
Kleenex
Plastic storage bags
Aluminum foil
Plastic wrap
Kitchen garbage bags (Tall-13 gallon)
School supplies for all ages

Cleaning Supplies:

Disinfectant wipes/spray
Multipurpose cleaner
Bathroom cleaner
Furniture polish
Glass cleaner

Baby Products:

Diapers, all sizes
New bottles
Wipes
Lotion/powder
Sippy cups

Furniture:

All types of household furniture
(Please call for appointment)

Laundry Supplies:

Laundry detergent
Bleach

Gift Cards:

Walmart
Meijer
Lowe's
Menards
Gas cards

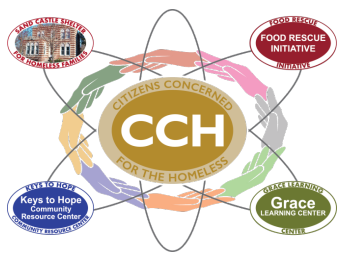
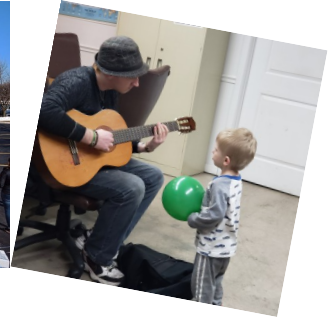
Household Supplies:

Silverware
Dishes: bowls, plates
Coffee Pots
Crock Pots
Toasters
Kitchen towels/wash cloths
Pots and pans
Glasses/cups
Mops/brooms





30 Years of Service



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Citizens Concerned for the Homeless, Inc.

Sand Castle Shelter for Homeless Families,
Grace Learning Center, Keys to Hope Community
Resource Center

PO Box 8612 Michigan City, IN 46361
219-879-2552 / mchomeless@ameritech.net

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