



# citizens concerned *for the homeless*

SPRING 2026 EDITION

On March 13, CCH was honored with the 2026 Community Impact Award from the Michigan City Chamber of Commerce. This recognition reflects the compassion and commitment our team brings to serving people experiencing homelessness and other serious life challenges. We were especially proud to be recognized for the innovative ways we collaborate with community partners to close service gaps.

As I stood before hundreds of attendees at the Chamber's annual gala, I shared my gratitude for the community that makes this work possible, our staff and volunteers, program and service partners, funding partners, and everyone who gives their time, resources, and financial support. Because of you, we can strengthen and expand our programs: Sand Castle Shelter for Homeless Families, Grace Learning Center, Keys to Hope Community Resource Center, and CCH's Food Rescue Initiative. Your support helps CCH provide meaningful services and invest in our community alongside our most vulnerable neighbors.

The following pages highlight the work of our programs—made possible through grants and your generous donations. If you would like to give your time, resources, or financial support, please visit our webpage at [www.cch-mc.org](http://www.cch-mc.org) or call 219-879-2552. Thank you for being part of the solution.

Jim Musial, Executive Director of CCH





## The Path Forward

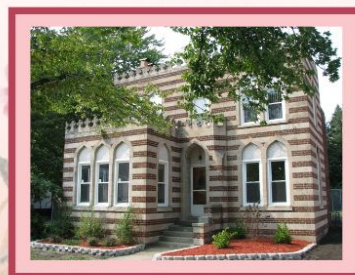
For some Sand Castle residents, the path forward seems rather simple: obtain employment, save money and find housing. For others, however, the barriers can seem insurmountable. This story is about a family who came to the shelter with little more than the clothes on their backs.

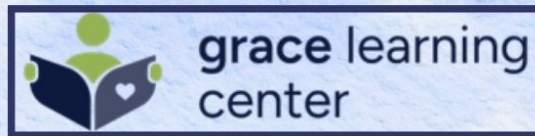
Leaving a bad relationship with no job or vehicle is enough of an obstacle to overcome, but even more so when you have three children to take care of. This mom arranged bus transportation with the school system, and the children were picked up in front of the building each morning. She began taking classes next door at Grace Learning Center, one of the most important ones being Healthy Relationships.

Not allowed to work in the past, this mom had no work experience to list on a resume. Despite her limited work experience, we connected her with a restaurant owner who was looking for kitchen help, and she quickly became part of the management team! This mom quickly increased her savings, especially when she started receiving child support. She was even able to buy a reliable car, making their lives a lot easier. Mom's confidence and self-esteem increased the longer she was here and saw that she COULD succeed on her own. The children also opened up and blossomed once they were in a safe, stable environment. A couple of them even joined extracurricular activities at school, which they hadn't been allowed to do before.

Then came the day that mom found a cute little house that she could afford to rent. The landlord kindly gave her a few pieces of furniture, and we helped out with the rest, including dishes and other kitchen items. The children were so excited to tell us that the neighbors were nice, and they had kids their age to play with! The path taken by this family was about so much more than increasing income and moving onto housing, they also learned about breaking generational cycles and creating a life that was happy and safe.

That's what we do at Sand Castle Shelter for Homeless Families.





## Grow Your Skills This Spring

Spring is the perfect time to invest in yourself. Whether you want to strengthen your mental health, earn your HSE (GED) diploma, build computer skills, sharpen your cooking, or become ServSafe® certified, our classes can help you bloom. With a welcoming environment, knowledgeable instructors, and practical tools, our center is here to support your growth.

### Building a Safer, Healthier, More Resilient Community

National statistics show more than 60 million adults and millions of youth are facing mental health or substance use challenges – and the impact is felt in every neighborhood, school, and workplace, including ours. These aren't distant numbers; they represent our coworkers, students, friends, families, and sometimes ourselves. The close link between mental health and substance use reminds us that these issues are not optional or secondary – they're community priorities.

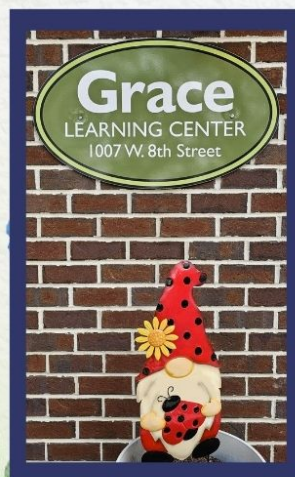
At Grace Learning Center, Griffin Rhyne, LMHC-A (Pillars of Wellness) leads supportive, skills-based mental health classes that help participants strengthen relationships, manage stress, understand emotions, and build confidence. As one participant, BC, shared, "I think Griffin does a fantastic job of listening to everybody and getting his lessons across."

Toni Mandeville, BSCO, HSBCP provides evidence-based adult and youth substance use education focused on preventing drug misuse, supporting healthy decision-making, and building long-term coping skills. Each session blends practical strategies with a welcoming, judgment-free environment.

Grace Learning Center also hosts Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, and Crystal Meth Anonymous, offering safe spaces for individuals seeking support in their recovery journey. Every step we take – no matter how small – strengthens our community's health and resilience.

To view the full Grace Learning Center class calendar, please visit our website at

**[www.cch-mc.org](http://www.cch-mc.org)**





## Celebrating Progress, Purpose, and Perseverance

Spring has our participants working hard—and they’re shining. Through the first quarter of 2026, an average of 16 participants are W-2 employed, with three more each month earning income through benefits.

Participants continue tackling barriers from job readiness to financial stability, with every step forward recognized. From January to March, Keys to Hope graduated nine participants.

Through classes at Grace Learning Center and weekly case management, clients set goals and tracked progress. With so many successes, we’re excited to highlight two standout stories.



### Rising Strong:

#### A Journey to Independence

DK joined the program in July determined to rebuild after setbacks, focusing from day one on saving money and creating stability.

He completed classes at Grace Learning Center—including Living with Anxiety, Self-Esteem, Healthy Relationships, and Coping with Trauma—with dedication, and became a reliable, positive presence in the day center.

Now, DK has secured his own home and is moving forward independently. We’re proud of his hard work and growth—he’s exactly where he’s meant to be.

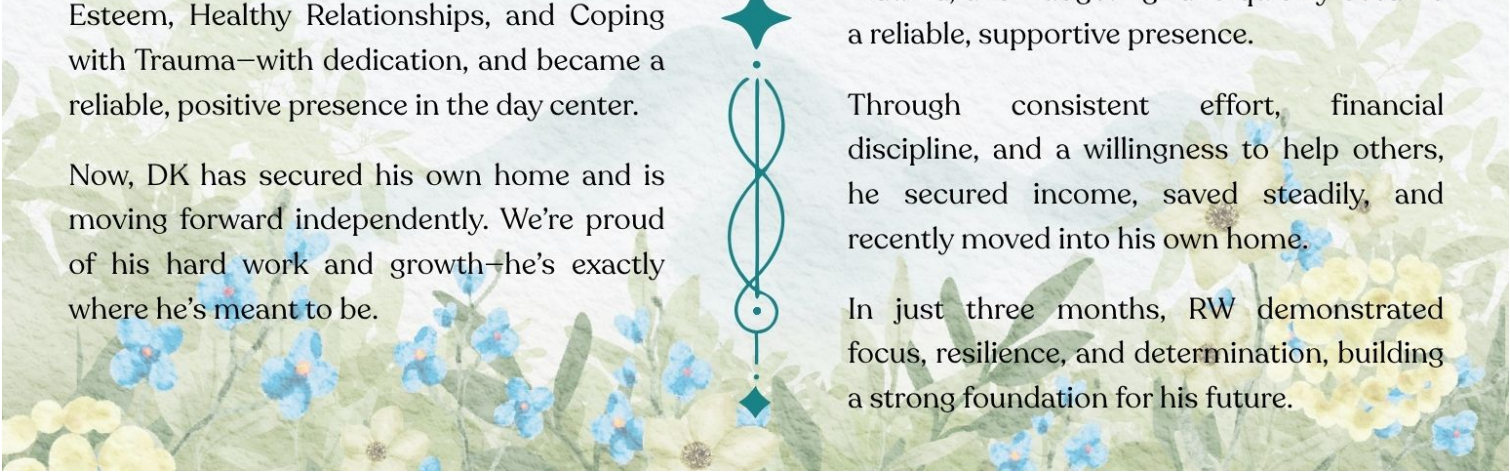


### Three Months to Transformation

RW joined the program in December determined to rebuild after several setbacks. He fully engaged in classes at Grace Learning Center—including Computer Basics, Living with Anxiety, Self-Esteem, Coping with Trauma, and Budgeting—and quickly became a reliable, supportive presence.

Through consistent effort, financial discipline, and a willingness to help others, he secured income, saved steadily, and recently moved into his own home.

In just three months, RW demonstrated focus, resilience, and determination, building a strong foundation for his future.





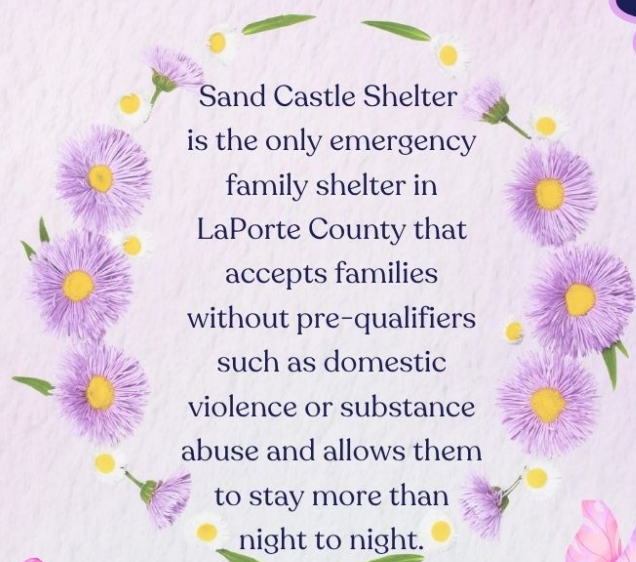
Since January 2019, our Food Rescue Initiative refrigeration truck has served our community dependably. From food rescue under the federal Feeding America umbrella to mobile food distribution events and many other critical duties, our vehicle has been a workhorse. Bought used, our beloved truck is reaching the end of its service life.

We need a new truck to continue serving LaPorte County and to meet the vital basic needs of our communities. The recent cuts to SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits will significantly increase food insecurity levels, especially in areas like LaPorte County where the food insecurity rate is already higher than both state and federal levels. With grocery prices remaining high, many individuals and families will struggle even more to meet their basic needs. Without a replacement truck, we will be unable to continue.

In May, we will be announcing a capital campaign to raise the funds needed to purchase the truck. All donations count, large or small. Please donate to invest in our communities to ensure no individual, family, or child goes hungry.




# DID YOU KNOW



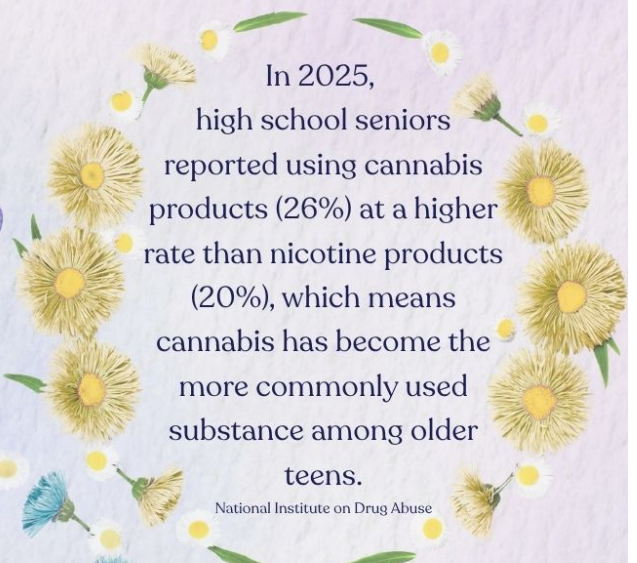
Sand Castle Shelter is the only emergency family shelter in LaPorte County that accepts families without pre-qualifiers such as domestic violence or substance abuse and allows them to stay more than night to night.



Each year, CCH's Food Rescue Initiative program provides nearly 45 tons of food to over 3,100 local families through its mobile food pantry events.

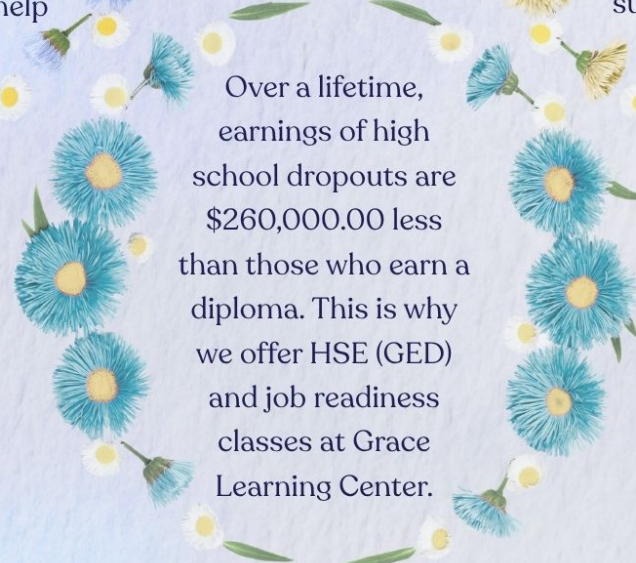


CCH partners with Pillars of Wellness to provide no-cost mental health evaluations, with recommendations, in under 7 days. Pillars also provides 7 mental health classes at Grace Learning Center to help meet individual needs.



In 2025, high school seniors reported using cannabis products (26%) at a higher rate than nicotine products (20%), which means cannabis has become the more commonly used substance among older teens.

National Institute on Drug Abuse



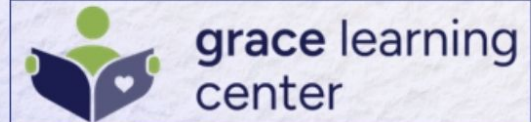
Over a lifetime, earnings of high school dropouts are \$260,000.00 less than those who earn a diploma. This is why we offer HSE (GED) and job readiness classes at Grace Learning Center.

# Contact Us

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Citizens Concerned for the Homeless, Sand Castle Shelter for Homeless Families, Grace Learning Center, Keys to Hope Community Resource Center and the Food Rescue Initiative program gladly accept goods in kind as well as monetary donations. Your donations help us to continue to offer the shelter and programs that assist in reducing homelessness in LaPorte County.

Using the donation slip below, you may donate by check and mail it to us; or you may donate online by simply scanning the QR code below.

Funds are used to maintain our building, administer our programs, and help us change lives throughout LaPorte County! We invite you to consider a donation using one of the following options.

Should you wish to speak to someone about a special contribution, please contact us at:  
219-879-2552



**Sand Castle Shelter for Homeless Families,  
Grace Learning Center, Keys to Hope Community  
Resource Center, Food Rescue Initiative  
PO Box 8612 Michigan City, IN 46361  
219-879-2552 / [www.cch-mc.org](http://www.cch-mc.org)**

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