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Volunteers of America of Indiana

messenger

LOOK UP AND HOPE: A NEW APPROACH TO COMBATING POVERTY AND DISTRESS IN AMERICA'S MOST VULNERABLE FAMILIES



Volunteers of America is introducing a new, more holistic and research-based approach to breaking the cycles of poverty and incarceration. Our new national program, *Look Up and Hope*, is designed to support the long-term success

of children, their incarcerated mothers and the children's caregivers through a comprehensive array of coordinated support services, including crisis intervention; family group decision making; family counseling; mental health and substance abuse treatment; vocational training and employment services; life-skills and parenting classes; graduated visitation opportunities; family-centered assessments; and strengths-based service planning. Our Volunteers of America Indiana affiliate has had a head-start with this programming since we have been providing our *Healing Families Program* for the past five years in Indianapolis. Therefore, our *Look Up and Hope* initiative, working with children and their caregivers, will be an expansion of *Healing Families*.

Through such a complex, multimodal approach, Volunteers of America expects to empower its *Look Up and Hope* participants with the skills, relationships, and resiliency they need to finally transcend the devastating effects of poverty and incarceration.

Five pilot sites from our national network of local offices have been chosen to launch the program—In addition to **Indiana**, the affiliates in Illinois, Maine, South Dakota and Texas will launch the new program. These affiliates were selected based on each affiliate's proven experience in operating programs

that serve children, families and incarcerated individuals. These five sites also represent a diverse mix of urban, rural, African American, white, Latino and Native American communities—allowing Volunteers of America to pilot its new approach across a broad range of ethnic and racial groups.

Our mission through *Look Up and Hope* is to break the cycle of poverty for children impacted by incarceration, allowing them to reach their full potential. *Look Up and Hope* focuses on five major goals: family preservation; economic stability for families; positive family relationships; school success for children; and juvenile delinquency prevention. Our program eligibility requires that mothers must have been a custodial parent prior to their incarceration; they must have at least one child under 18; and they must be eligible for reunification with their children post-release. In addition, the mother, her children and the children's caregiver must all consent to be participants in the program.

Backed by our legacy in the area of community corrections and children, youth and families, Volunteers of America continues to develop innovative evidence-based service models to serve these populations. Our *Look Up and Hope* program is part of our ongoing efforts to not only provide life-changing benefits for the formerly incarcerated, their children and caregivers, but also to make a direct impact on the health and vitality of the communities where they live, and hopefully, breaking the cycle of poverty one family at a time.

"Volunteers of America believes, both in rhetoric and practice, that improved outcomes for children are best achieved by serving the whole family unit. Children, indeed, do better when their parents do better."

— Charles Gould, President and CEO of Volunteers of America

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A MODEL FOR SUCCESS

by Tim Campbell, President/CEO

When I stroll around our Theodora

House facility for women returning from the correctional system, there is a buzz of activity. That's not surprising, as our number of clients is greater than ever. Women are the fastest-growing population in all of corrections, and we are seeing evidence of that trend right here in Indiana. Moreover, studies have shown that the overwhelming majority of women in corrections have children under age 18, and that they will regain custody of these children upon release.

For many years, the correctional system has focused on the individual offender, without much consideration for their children or their children's caregivers. The harsh reality is that the children of those incarcerated frequently end up the silent victims of crime, existing in poverty while their parent is imprisoned. All too often, this becomes a cycle of crime and poverty that extends from generation to generation.

Is it possible to change this distressing picture? We believe so. Volunteers of America proposes a different model. In our model, women returning from corrections, their children and caretakers are provided comprehensive, coordinated services to make sustainable success more likely. By providing these families with the tools necessary to

succeed, and offering a continuity of support not seen in other programs, the *Look Up and Hope* initiative holds considerable promise.

I am very pleased to report that *Look Up and Hope* has moved from concept to reality! Thanks to the wonderful vision and generous support of the Ruth Lilly Philanthropic Foundation, the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust, and the Glick Fund (a fund of the Central Indiana Community Foundation), women from Theodora House and their children will have a much greater chance for long-term success. It is our sincere belief that the cycle of criminal activity, and the poverty linked to crime and incarceration, can be broken by focusing on making families strong.

In this issue of the Messenger, you will learn more about our new Transition Coordinators and Family Coaches, and the important role they will play with these highly vulnerable families. You will also learn more about the amazing support of local foundations that has made this effort possible.

Can we forge a new model for working with women in corrections and their children, a model for success? Yes, we can! It's what we do every day at Volunteers of America, offering hope, restoring dignity, and transforming lives.

OUR MISSION

Offer Hope... Restore Dignity... Transform Lives...

Volunteers of America of Indiana is a faith-based organization that provides life-changing services to enhance the physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual needs of individuals by providing counseling, rehabilitation, job placement, and residential services. We serve individuals transitioning from the correctional system, the elderly, chronically addicted, and mentally ill.

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HOW WILL LOOK UP AND HOPE LOOK IN INDIANA?

Our Healing Families Program, which has long served women at Theodora House and women at the Marion County Jail, will now start helping their children and their children's caregivers. This new approach is Indiana's version of the *Look Up and Hope* national model.

What will Volunteers of America of Indiana do to help the children?

A family coach will connect with the children of moms who reside at Theodora House and the Marion County Jail as the moms simultaneously engage in the "regular" Healing Families programming. The family coach will meet with the children and their caregivers at the caregivers' homes and assess their needs. The family coach will assess their social, academic, psychological, and basic needs then coordinate services to help them meet their needs. The first goal is to make sure they have a safe and stable place to stay. The family coach will meet with them weekly or as needed.

How long will Volunteers of America of Indiana stay engaged with the children?

The family coach will commit to working with the children for one year or until their initial needs are met. The goal is to match children with mentors and their families with the faith-based community, if they so choose, in an effort to replace our "professional" helper staff with positive "natural" supports.

How will the children benefit?

We will track to make sure the children we work with stay out of the juvenile justice system, have success in school, participate in an adult mentor relationship, and receive any mental health treatment they need. We will also support the caregiver with her/ his needs so they can adequately take care of the children by helping with rent assistance, child care, transportation and other barriers.

Who champions this effort with their financial support?

The Healing Families Program has been supported almost entirely by private contributions since it began five years ago. Every year the **United Way of Central Indiana** agency allocation to Volunteers of America of Indiana has provided needed resources to pay counselor salaries and cover program costs. For the third year in a row the **Ruth Lilly Philanthropic Foundation** has generously given a designated gift to Theodora House and the Healing Families Program for women and their children. In 2009, we had the returning support of the **Nina Mason Pulliam**

Charitable Trust for this program after the Trust gave a significant capital grant in 2004 toward the building campaign and renovation of Theodora House. Due to the significant success of the program another community funding leader, **The Glick Fund, a fund of the Central Indiana Community Foundation**, just awarded Theodora House a major gift to facilitate this Healing Families Program expansion. Additionally, thanks to two new corporate foundation gifts from the Vectren Foundation and Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Indiana, our Hope Hall facility in Evansville will be launching components of the Healing Families Program for women beginning in 2010.

How can you help?

There are multiple ways you can lend your support toward this effort, both in volunteer activities and through your financial support. Individuals and groups may make a direct financial contribution using the enclosed giving envelope. When you support the local United Way, you are giving of your individual support since we receive significant annual program support through our agency allocation. Another excellent opportunity currently exists through the **Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP) tax credits**.

NAP TAX CREDIT EXAMPLE

Donations of \$100 or more are eligible for a 50% state income tax credit on your Indiana taxes.

Example: \$100 donation to VOA = \$50 NAP credit to you.

Example: \$500 donation to VOA = \$250 NAP credit to you

For every NAP dollar you donate to our agency (\$100 minimum) you receive 50% of the contribution as a direct tax credit on your Indiana income taxes. Unlike a deduction, NAP credits are applied to the Indiana state tax liability - the bottom line taxes that a person owes after all deductions are taken.

Cash, check, credit card, and stock gifts are all accepted.

Your NAP contribution can also be claimed as a federal income tax deduction.

Just complete an NC-10 Form (will be provided to you). If you file jointly with your spouse, please provide the name and social security number of the head-of-household tax filer. Return the form to VOA.

Questions? Direct them to Diana Anderson, Director of Development at 317-686-5807 or danderson@voain.org. Additional instructions are provided on the NC-10 Form.

FED EX CONTINUES TO CARE

Nearly 200 FedEx employees volunteered on Monday, September 21, 2009 in support of Volunteers of America of Indiana. FedEx staff members were participating in FedEx Cares Week, a week of service bringing thousands of FedEx volunteers from around the world and across the FedEx companies together, to support the communities where team members and customers live and work. This is the second consecutive year that FedEx has adopted Volunteers of America of Indiana through its service projects.

FedEx staff provided funding and man power and produced over 2000 kits for Volunteers of America of Indiana including hygiene kits, food kits, job search kits, Christmas stockings, volunteer packets, and Words Travel packets. “At FedEx, we are committed to being a great place to work,” said Bob Palmer, Vice-President, FedEx Express, “and with that, goes a commitment to our community and those who need our help.”

FedEx went above and beyond the man power support by asking other community members to support this day of service. A special thanks to all our sponsors: Sam’s Club Westside, IndyGo, Cracker Barrel, Staybridge Suites, Holiday Inn Express-Airport, Avon Dental Centre, Country Inn & Suites, FedEx Office Kinkos, Hampton Inn-Plainfield, Candlewood Suites, Marriott Downtown, Hampton Inn-South Indianapolis, Hampton Inn-Airport, Courtyard by Marriott, Embassy Suites Indianapolis North, Hilton Garden Inn, Walmart-Brownsburg, and Fed Ex Corporation for their generous additional support!

Volunteers of America of Indiana is grateful to have our mission to “Offer Hope, Restore Dignity, and Transform Lives” supported by the generous efforts of FedEx employees on FedEx Cares Day!



ANNA CALDWELL CELEBRATES 25 YEAR MILESTONE!

Anna Caldwell states, “the day I walked in the door on June 19, 1984, I knew I was home.” That is the date that Anna Caldwell’s journey with Volunteers of America began. In talking with Anna about her time at VOA she states, “Although I have been employed by Volunteers of America for twenty-five years, I learn something new everyday. I don’t know anyone who is as fortunate as me in regard to being able to mix a rich history of the ministry with a personal connection to God’s work. I’ve been allowed numerous opportunities for growth that includes flexibility of time that permitted me to complete a Doctorate in Psychology from Southern California University. Sharing the ministry and blending life experiences has enhanced my life and enables me to continue to give.” Anna Caldwell was presented with a beautiful Volunteers of America ring by President Tim Campbell.



MONET ORR AWARDED ICA COUNSELOR OF THE YEAR



At it’s 76th Annual Fall Conference, the Indiana Correctional Association presented the **2009 Counselor the Year Award** to Monet Orr, Case Manager at Theodora House! Monet joined Volunteers of America in 2004 as a Residential Counselor and was promoted to Case Manager in 2005. Monet is a highly valued and dedicated member of the Theodora House team. Her commitment to her clients is evidenced daily in the way she carries out the duties of her job. Shown at left is Monet receiving her award from ICA President David Leonard. Congratulations Monet!

PROMOTIONS AT HOPE HALL

On September 8, 2009 President/CEO Tim Campbell announced the promotion of Nicole Simpson as the Center Director at Hope Hall, located in Evansville, Indiana. Nicole joined Volunteers of America in August 2004 as a part-time correctional officer. She moved to a case manager position in 2006 and then to the residential manager position in 2007. Nicole holds a Master’s in Criminology from Indiana State University.

On September 29, 2009 DeMarco Monroe assumed the position of Residential Manager at Hope Hall. DeMarco joined the agency in 2008 as a correctional officer. He has also worked as a case manager. DeMarco holds a BS in Criminal Justice from Michigan State University.

Please give Nicole and DeMarco your support and encouragement as they transition into their new roles with the agency.





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Please contact Diana Anderson at
Volunteers of America of Indiana
for information on ways to make a
difference.

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*Consult your tax advisor regarding these
types of gifts and estate planning.*

