

Offer *hope*

Restore *dignity*

Transform *lives*

www.voain.org



messenger

Volunteers of America of **Indiana**



VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA TO OPEN LIBERTY LANDING IN FORT WAYNE

Volunteers of America, Indiana (VOAIN) will open a forty-nine bed transitional housing facility in Fort Wayne, Indiana in late 2011. The facility, Liberty Landing, will be located at 2833 South Calhoun Street in Fort Wayne. In order to purchase and renovate the building, the agency applied for and received a capital grant award of \$709,332 from the Department of Veterans Affairs. Additionally, the agency was awarded a grant from the Federal Home Loan Bank of Indianapolis in the amount of \$365,000 to assist with the project.

Additionally, a grant per diem award from the Department of Veteran's Affairs will allow VOAIN to provide housing, food, supportive services, and community linkage to forty honorably discharged US veteran men and women. Supportive services will include assistance with meeting basic

needs and learning daily living skills such as cooking and budgeting. Social workers will help veterans build their vocational and employment skills and gain employment. Veterans are eligible to stay in the program for up to two years, until they are better prepared to maintain their own permanent, stable housing.

An advisory committee, consisting of local community representatives interested in helping veterans, will help the agency connect with vital resources, find volunteers, and get donations of clothing, toiletries and other essentials items for the residents. The advisory committee members currently are: David Swineheart, Indiana Air National Guard; William Andreas, Easter Seals; Jill Stewart, Oyster Bar; Patti Van Leuven, Women's Bureau; George Jarboe, Allen County Veteran Services Office; Stacy Knipscheer, Veterans

Affairs; Philip Thomas, Veterans Affairs; Naomi Nicastro, Veterans Affairs; Eddy Bazile, Fort Wayne Rescue Mission; and Ann Arnold, St. John Lutheran Church.

The facility is scheduled to open in the fall of 2011. The opening of any new facility requires many supplies, as well as some larger furniture and equipment. We will be developing a "Wish List" of needs in the coming months. If you would like to make a cash or in-kind donation to the new Liberty Landing building project, please contact the Development Office at (317) 686-5807 or mail to Volunteers of America of Indiana, 927 N. Pennsylvania Street, Indianapolis, Indiana, 46204. Please also visit our website at www.voain.org to make a secure online donation and to keep updated as well.

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SERVING OUR AMERICAN HEROES:

by Tim Campbell, President/CEO

Recent worldwide events have brought into sharp focus the essential work of the men and women of the United States Armed Forces. The freedoms we Americans enjoy come at a significant cost. Our soldiers are placed in harm's way each day in dozens of locations around the globe. Families are disrupted while our citizen-soldiers are away serving the nation. The very nature of war has changed over time. No longer is it a simple matter to identify the "enemy", and seldom can a soldier feel they are in a truly "safe" area.

There is both good and bad news to report regarding our military veterans. The public has a greatly renewed appreciation for the sacrifice made by these heroes. Efforts to recognize and honor our veterans are at an all-time high. The war on terror has brought the matter of national security to the very forefront of our attention. Unfortunately, the nature of modern conflict results in many wounded warriors. Between physical injuries and battle stress-related challenges, many returning veterans struggle to readjust to civilian life. It is not uncommon for young veterans and even female veterans to drift into homelessness.

Volunteers of America has a proud history of serving honorably discharged military veterans, helping those who struggle make a successful return to the community. Here in Indiana, we have worked with the Veterans Administration for a quarter century in meeting the transitional housing and case management needs of these American heroes. Until now, all of our services for veterans were located in Indianapolis.

We are pleased to announce the expansion of our work with veterans. This fall, Liberty Landing, a residential center for honorably discharged men and women from the Armed Forces will open in Fort Wayne. This much-needed program will help local veterans in their readjustment to productive life in the community. I hope that you will join me, and the entire Volunteers of America family, as we offer hope, restore dignity, and transform the lives of these true American heroes!

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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Timothy R. Campbell
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Mary Leffler, Editor

Please write or call us at the address above if you wish to be removed from our mailing list. In the event you contact us with this request, all reasonable efforts will be taken to ensure that you will not receive future mailings.

Robert L. Cooper is a Vietnam veteran who has suffered more than his fair share of personal misfortune. Difficulty in adjusting to life after the war served to compound Robert's situation and, like so many others, Robert became a homeless veteran. With the help of the Volunteers of America Homeless Veterans Program, today Robert is proud to tell how he was able to triumph over homelessness.

Robert L. Cooper grew up in Indiana and at the age of nineteen was drafted into the Army, leaving behind a wife and a one-year old son. After Robert served two years of military duty, his wife became ill and in 1969 he returned home on an emergency leave. Robert was only home for three days before his wife passed away. He barely had time to grieve. He had to return to the military where he completed his tour of duty before returning home to Indiana.

Robert remarried and had two more children but life was not easy for him. He faced a number of psychological challenges, most of which were later attributed to the war. Problems also developed in his marriage which resulted in divorce in 1979. In 1982, he married again, but his third wife was struggling with issues of her own, including a drug addiction, and within two months, the marriage was over. Robert met his fourth wife in 1984. "We dated for fourteen years," Robert said. "I wanted to make sure that this time I was doing the right thing."

A few years later, Robert ran into problems with the law and was sentenced to eight years in prison. While in prison, Robert had to face devastating news again. His fourth wife had passed away suddenly from a heart attack. He was soon to be released from prison and had nothing to look forward to. He had lost everything including his wife.

Temporary living arrangements were made for Robert upon his release from prison but he needed to find a job in order to be eligible to remain

there. In addition, Robert was battling a number of chronic medical conditions that limited his mobility as well as his chances of finding a job.

Robert was referred to the Homeless Veterans Program at Volunteers of America. "Volunteers of America inspired me to start taking better care of myself." Robert's eyes filled with tears as he talked about the opportunities that became available to him through the Volunteers of America Homeless Veterans Program. "They gave me the boost I needed to get out and try to get back on my feet." With the help and support of the staff at Volunteers of America, Robert was successful in accessing his medical benefits through the Veterans Administration. He received badly needed medical treatment at the VA Hospital then returned to Volunteers of America. Robert's voice was filled with gratitude as he remembered the days following his surgery. "They saved my bed until I returned from the hospital and the staff were very helpful to me while I was recuperating."

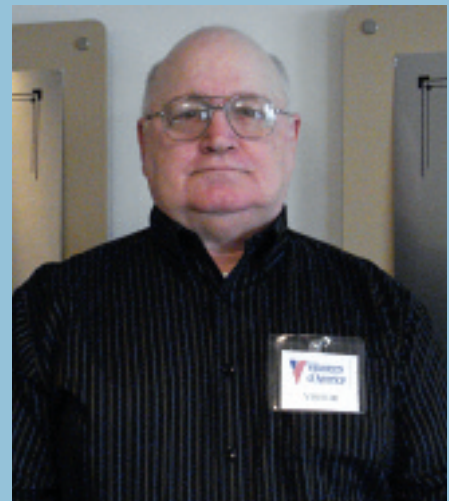
Although Robert had recuperated well from surgery, his disability prevented him from finding gainful employment. Nevertheless, positive things were happening for Robert and he was eager to take control of his life again. Larcina Hicks, Case Manager at Volunteers of America, worked very closely with Robert and was pleased with the obvious turnaround she witnessed. "He was motivated to succeed and dedicated to achieving self sufficiency."

Things were falling into place, but Robert still needed a place to live. His benefits through the VA were not enough to cover rental expense. The staff of the VOA Homeless Veterans Program gave Robert the tools he needed to gain access to his employment benefits from the railroad for which he had worked as a diesel mechanic for twenty five years. "The classes they offered gave me the confidence and the know-how to do these things

myself...to go and apply for these benefits."

Larcina worked with Robert, and through assistance from the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program (HPRP), combined with Robert's retirement benefits from the railroad, they were able to find him a place to live. Larcina arranged for help to move Robert into an apartment. Robert choked back tears as he talked about the case manager, whom he said was supportive from day one. "She found persons to help me to move into the apartment as I was still recuperating from the surgery. She was there whenever I needed her. I will always be grateful to you guys, especially Mrs. Hicks."

Robert L. Cooper proudly served his country in Vietnam, however the emotional and physical ravages of the war had taken a toll on him. Today, Robert has an income that he can live on. He helps other veterans every chance he gets. "I know what it's like, so I have to give back," Robert said. "I have a checking account now. I even have a savings account and that is good coming from someone who was homeless and had nowhere to go." Larcina expressed great admiration for the progress Robert has made; "Mr. Cooper is a positive and hardworking individual and I had great confidence that with the right amount of guidance and compassion, he would succeed. I commend him for working diligently to fight homelessness one step at a time."



VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA OF INDIANA RECEIVES GRANTS FOR WORK WITH AT-RISK FAMILIES

Toyota Motor Manufacturing Indiana made a grant of \$2,500 to the Healing Families Program of Hope Hall in Evansville, Indiana. This is the second consecutive year that Toyota has supported the start and growth of Healing Families in our co-ed transitional work-release center.

The **Ruth Lilly Philanthropic Foundation** awarded Volunteers of America of Indiana a \$15,000 grant for the continuation of Family Services through our award-winning Healing Families Program in Indianapolis. These funds were distributed through the Foundation's gift to the United Way of Central Indiana, who then re-grants to worthy community agencies and programs.

The **City of Indianapolis** awarded Volunteers of America of Indiana, Inc. \$15,800 to provide case management, counseling, and referral services to at-risk homeless clients leaving our facilities through its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) award. The agency is fortunate to have been the recipient of past CDBG awards and is grateful for the ongoing support of our work to assist high-risk individuals.

Thank you Toyota, Ruth Lilly Philanthropic Foundation and the City of Indianapolis for your continued support!!

VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA OF INDIANA RECEIVES CAPACITY BUILDING GRANT

The National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI) has awarded Volunteers of America, Indiana (VOAIN) a \$25,000 capacity-building grant. Volunteers of America of Indiana (VOAIN) was one of twenty-five agencies from across the country to be awarded this prestigious grant out of a staggering 408 agencies that applied. This grant is designed to help build the capacity of non-profit organizations, including both community-based and faith-based organizations, enabling awardees to build their organizational capacity to more effectively deliver existing or future services promoting responsible fatherhood in local communities. Two VOAIN leadership staff members attended an intensive, weeklong "Certification College," held in St. Louis in November 2010 led by fatherhood experts from NFI and private consultants who have past government experience. VOAIN has received follow-up technical assistance from NFI, including expert consultations, frequent web-based seminars and other resources. Also, awarded organizations will participate in a two-day mini-conference held in St. Louis in May 2011 which will include assessment and evaluations that measures VOAIN's

improvement in building its internal capacity. VOAIN hopes to use this invaluable knowledge and experience to start fatherhood programming for men residing in our Brandon Hall facility in Indianapolis and Hope Hall facility in Evansville. The end goal is to improve the wellbeing of the children of fathers who reside at VOAIN facilities by increasing Dads' skills and motivation to be responsible and committed fathers.



Remember a special loved one, your father or a father figure on this Father's Day. Make a gift to Volunteers of America of Indiana and tell us the name of who you are honoring or memorializing. A return envelope is provided in this newsletter with a designated area to mark your tribute. Let's partner together to create a lasting legacy for all fathers.

COMCAST CARES DAY

Volunteers of America of Indiana was able to benefit from the nationwide Comcast Cares Day Event on Saturday, April 30th, 2011. Comcast provided volunteers and needed supplies for interior painting at Brandon Hall and Theodora House. Volunteers also provided crafting activities for Theodora House residents. Some volunteers took to the outdoors working in the Theodora House garden mulching, painting the playground swing set, and planting flowers and vegetables. Special thanks to Covenant Christian High School "Gone Serving" volunteers who assisted with the preparation of the painting and gardening projects on Friday, April 29, 2011. Thank you to all our volunteers!!





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Volunteers of America of Indiana
for information on ways to make a
difference.

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types of gifts and estate planning.*

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