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messenger

Volunteers of America of Indiana

VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA HOSTS FAMILY STRENGTHENING SUMMIT

On November 4, 2010 Volunteers of America of Indiana hosted a Family

Strengthening Summit at The Children's Museum of Indianapolis. The event was attended by over ninety individuals, including representatives from Congressman Andre Carson's office, a local State Representative, Executive Directors of many local human services organizations, officials from the Indiana University School of Social Work, area funding agencies, corrections officials and representatives from fourteen other Volunteers of America affiliates and the National Office.

The purpose of the summit was to release recent research findings conducted by Wilder Research in partnership with Volunteers of America. "Childhood Disrupted: Understanding the Effects of Maternal Incarceration", sponsored by Volunteers of America, is one of the first in-depth studies of the issues affecting incarcerated mothers and their families. Starting in late 2009, the multi-state study includes more than 200 interviews with mothers, their children and their children's

caregivers. The summit was moderated by Irv Katz, of the National Human Services Assembly, and featured prominent speakers Marilyn Van Dieten, with Orbis Partners, Mary Bissell, with Child Focus Partners, Phillip Lovell, with the Alliance for Excellent Education and Jessica Meyerson with Wilder Research.

With this research, Volunteers of America hopes to better understand the needs of families currently served by our organization's existing programs for these mothers and children, and look for new and better ways to strengthen all families affected by incarceration. That is the focus of the Look Up and Hope initiative, according to Beth Lovell, director of family strengthening at Volunteers of America. "We want people to understand," Lovell said, "that there are families that no one is currently serving, and no one is asking where these children are."

"Our local affiliate is proud to be leading this national effort, with all major program components currently in place", says President/CEO Tim Campbell. Indiana played

a key role in the study. Theodora House, a transitional reentry facility, was one of five pilot sites for the Look Up and Hope initiative. "Indianapolis is in the forefront of piloting some of these practices", say Mary Bissell, with Washington, D.C. based Child Focus Partners. In order to strengthen the learning network within Volunteers of America, the Indiana affiliate hosted a full-day training session on November 3, 2010 for staff from Volunteers of America affiliates all across the nation.

A full copy of the research report, titled "Childhood Disrupted: Understanding the Features and Effects of Maternal Incarceration", as well as an overview of its findings can be found on our website at www.voain.org.



L to R Phillip Lovell, Marilyn Van Dieten, Jessica Meyerson, Dawn Batts, Mary Bissell and Irv Katz.

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LOOK UP AND HOPE

by *Tim Campbell, President/CEO*

Hope can be in short supply if you are a woman caught up in the

criminal justice system. For such a woman with children, counting on family members or other caregivers in the community to provide day-to-day support for your children can erode your remaining hope. Yet the problem goes much deeper. While most women in the criminal justice system have children under age eighteen, and most will regain custody of these children, many have been “out of the picture” for a considerable length of time. In some cases, their parenting skills were poor even before incarceration. Many of the children have mixed feelings about the return of their mother. Caregivers likewise have ambivalence, anticipating that they will remain involved in the care of these children, even past the return of the mother.

As a community, we face a problem with both short and long-term consequences. It is important that we help those currently in the justice system become law-abiding, productive, and contributing members of society. However, it is also vitally important that we support the children of those incarcerated and their caregivers, so that these children do not follow in their parent’s footsteps. Efforts to work with

women in corrections have historically been hit-or-miss, typically not focusing on the unique needs of this population. Some attention has been paid to children of those incarcerated, although this work has generally not been integrated with services to parents. Almost no attention has been placed on the community caregivers of these children.

Volunteers of America has long realized the impact of incarceration on the families of those incarcerated. More than a century ago, co-founder Maud Booth recognized that these families are the hidden victims of crime. I am pleased to report that through our national Look Up and Hope initiative, Volunteers of America is working to support all three critical elements: women in corrections, their children, and the caregivers of these children. We believe that only through such a comprehensive, integrated approach can effective, measurable change occur. The Indiana affiliate is leading our national effort, with all major program components now in place.

As you read this issue of the Messenger, you will learn more about the innovative Look Up and Hope program. The path back to the community is not an easy one for our female clients, and the road to a normal family life can be uncertain for the children of these women. However, with renewed hope, there may be a promising future!

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, and those battling chronic addiction and mental illness.

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

Hear What Our Clients Have to Say...

"I learned that I am worth the effort and that I can achieve anything that I set my mind to. All of the staff members were great and very helpful. I wouldn't trade this experience for anything. I'm going to miss this place and these people."

"I learned how to be responsible...how to control my emotions. I took time to dig deep into myself and figure out who I really am. I haven't figured it all out yet, but I like what I have. I want a better life."

"This program has helped me regain my self-respect and morals of staying clean and there are a lot of programs to help you do that here."

"The staff offers encouragement while giving some freedom, along with boundaries and stability."

"VOA is an exceptional program for the clients who are brought here. If they are willing to change and work the program, VOA has a lot to offer to them. VOA has not only helped me, but has been a great help to my family! Thank you!"

"Parenting classes were most helpful to me and allowed me to see my son. This program teaches a new way to live that will make anyone successful."

"I will put this time of intense learning to good use in the future. I thank you (VOA) for your help and understanding. This is a very good and safe place to get clean if you really want it and I DO!"

Volunteers of America of Indiana Selects First Agency Chaplain

Volunteers of America of Indiana is pleased to announce the appointment of its first agency Chaplain. Kimberly Barlow began work as a part-time chaplain for the agency on October 4, 2010. Rev. Barlow has already established a daily prayer line which allows staff to stay connected and encouraged, as well as is implementing bible studies, monthly worship services and other exciting ministries intended to promote spiritual growth. This position was made possible by a two-year grant from the Volunteers of America National Endowment.



NAP TAX CREDITS – Hurry Before December 31 Deadline!

Volunteers of America of Indiana still has Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP) tax credits available. Help our Healing Families Program counseling services by making a tax-deductible contribution of \$100 or more making you eligible for a 50% Indiana state income tax credit. It is easy to do and will really make a difference to us *and* you!

Example: **\$500 donation to VOA = \$250 NAP credit to you**
 \$100 donation to VOA = \$50 NAP credit to you

Your NAP tax credit amount is always one-half of your donated amount. Simply contact our Development Office at 317-686-5807 to get more information and to complete the NC-10 Form that is submitted to the Indiana Department of Revenue. We do everything for you – please help us help our clients through this unique tax credit opportunity!

NAP credits are sold on a first-come, first-served basis until they are gone. You are encouraged to make your donation before December 31 to be eligible for the tax credit on your 2010 taxes. Cash, check, and credit cards are accepted, as well as stock donations. NAP contributions can also be claimed as a federal income tax deduction.



AREA 7 NUTRITION PROGRAM MOVES DINING SITE TO BROWNSTONE MANOR

Area 7 Agency on Aging and Disabled has moved its congregate dining site to Brownstone Manor, our 52-unit senior housing facility, located at 66 South 12th Street in Terre Haute. This move into a seniors-only apartment building (residents must be at least 62 to live there) enables the site to focus on persons who are 60+ and helping to meet their nutrition needs. The residents and staff are excited to have the Area 7 Nutrition Program in their building and invite other seniors to try it. You do not have to be a resident of Brownstone Manor to eat in this dining site; however you do need to make a reservation in advance.

A hot, lunchtime meal is served Monday through Friday (except holidays) at 11:30 a.m. at the Brownstone Manor site. The meal meets one-third of the Recommended Daily Intakes for a person 60 or over. The Congregate Meal Program is on a donation basis, and the current suggested donation is \$2 per meal.

In order to try out this or another dining site, persons 60+ who live within the six counties served by Area 7 (Clay, Parke, Putnam, Sullivan, Vermillion or Vigo) need to call the Nutrition Department at least two weeks in advance to make a reservation. Interested individuals who desire more information about the program may contact the Area 7 Nutrition Department at 812-238-1561 or toll-free at 1-800-489-1561.





FEDEX KEEPS ON CARING!

On September 20, 2010 over 200 FedEx volunteers supported Volunteers of America of Indiana for the third consecutive year by creating holiday stockings to be used at agency holiday parties, hygiene packets, job search kits for new residents arriving to Theodora House, Brandon Hall and Hope Hall, warm weather kits (including steel toe work boots for the male residents of Brandon Hall and Hope Hall), Halloween decorations and candy bags for the facility fall parties, and special kids shirts for resident's children who participate in the Words Travel program. In addition to the four hours of volunteer service that FedEx employees gave to support Volunteers of America of Indiana, the company also provided a very generous donation of \$10,000 worth of in-kind donations. All of the items were sorted, assembled and then delivered to the Volunteers of America facilities at no charge. Thank you to our friends at FedEx for showing us they care!!



SHARON SCOTT RECEIVES AWARD FROM THE INDIANA CORRECTIONAL ASSOCIATION

Sharon Scott, Senior Accountant, with Volunteers of America was recognized by the Indiana Correctional Association as the Support Services Staff of the Year at the Association's Annual Award Banquet held on October 6, 2010.



Sharon began her career in the criminal justice field in 1992. Working in the accounting department, she is exceptionally detailed and diligent in her position and always willing to take on new challenges. Sharon also teaches budgeting classes to clients. Four letters of support were submitted with her nomination. The overall summary of those recommendations is that Sharon is a true gem to work with. She is a one of a kind. She recognizes a greater purpose of her work and finds joy in celebrating the little victories with the clients she serves. The contributions of this individual are truly endless and it is believed that the agency for which she works, Volunteers of America of Indiana, would not be the same without her dedication, fire and selflessness. Congratulations Sharon!!



KIMTOYIA SAM NAMED "COUNSELOR OF THE YEAR" BY INDIANA COUNSELORS ASSOCIATION ON ALCOHOL & DRUG ABUSE

On October 23, 2010 during the ICAADA Fall Conference, President Louis Polansky, Assistant Deputy Director of Opioid Addiction Treatment Services in the Office of Addiction and Emergency Services, presented the ICAADA Counselor of the Year Award to Kimtoyia Sam, Division Director of Men's Services here at Volunteers of America of Indiana. Kimtoyia joined the organization in 2006. She received her Masters of Science from Indiana Wesleyan in 2001 and has been working in the counseling field for over 15 years. Congratulations Kimtoyia on this well-deserved recognition!!



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Please contact Diana Anderson at Volunteers of America of Indiana for information on leaving a legacy.

317.686.5807
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Consult your tax advisor regarding these types of gifts and estate planning.



give