Save the Date!

October 12, 2013 will be the First Annual Licking County Coalition for Housing (LCCH) “Home-Run 5K Run/Walk”. The 5K will be held at Rotary Park beginning at 9:00 a.m. This will be a great opportunity to get some exercise while supporting LCCH. More information will be available in the next newsletter.

There is currently a competition open to anyone that would like to design the logo for the “Home-Run 5K run/walk.” The logo will be used on printed materials, advertisements for the race and on T-shirts distributed to runners and walkers. Please contact Kathy Scott at kscott@lcchousing.org for further details on the logo competition.

Funding Needed to Continue Upgrades

By Casey Shaffer, Property Management

In an effort to improve the 14 transitional housing units owned by LCCH, Lindsay Mays replaced this original kitchen sink base cabinet & counter top. The prior cabinet was originally installed in 1986 and had deteriorated to the point of needing to be replaced immediately. This particular base cabinet was in the worst shape of any cabinet currently in our 40th Street location. Similar kitchen or bathroom cabinet replacement needs have been identified, and will happen as funds can be secured.

See You at the Market!

LCCH is happy to announce that we will once again be selling coffee at the Granville Farmers Market, in downtown Granville this year. Sponsored by the Granville Area Chamber of Commerce and located on the last block of North Main Street (between Broadway and North College), the Market is open every Saturday from 8:30 AM to 12:00 PM, May 18th through October 19th 2013.

For the second year in a row, LCCH will be brewing and selling a variety of fresh roasted coffees provided by River Road Coffeehouse, the only locally roasted coffee in Licking County. If you haven’t been to the market, (or if you have!) stop by to check it out. It is a vibrant market with outstanding local vendors of fresh seasonal produce, plants, baked goods, meats, cheeses and specialty items. There is absolutely something for everyone at this market, so mark your calendar now and visit often!

Many thanks to Mark Forman and River Road Coffee House for supporting LCCH - all the profits from coffee sales benefit LCCH. If you’d like to volunteer, please contact Kathy Scott at 345-1970 x229.

Our Mission

Our mission is to provide a community forum, to assess housing resources, to identify problems and to create solutions through collaboration.

Visit Our Facebook Page For More Info

Contact Us

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Contact
info@lcchousing.org
Rapid Rehousing - From Homeless to Housed

Hank and Debbi contacted the Licking County Coalition for Housing (LCCH) in February, 2013. They had become homeless in December, 2012 and, even though Debbi was employed full time, they had been unable to gain rental housing due to past negative rental history. They contacted LCCH with much hope that LCCH would be able to do anything to help as she had repeatedly been told they did not qualify for help from other places they had contacted. Hank thought this was going to be another let down and wondered, “Why even try?”

Over the next few weeks, the couple and their LCCH case manager handled 33 landlords. Out of that number, only three (3) would consider the couple for rental housing. Out of the three (3), one (1) of those landlords gave them the opportunity to start over. Harry was appreciative at first. His experience had been that “those things always fall through and never work out!” Once the paper work was filed and the utilities were turned on, he was more responsive and was starting to trust that sometimes things do work out. With a little bit of trust, hard work, and dedication things have continued to move forward. Hank and Debbi have been in their new apartment for 2 months and have paid their utilities and rent on time since moving in. They have worked with their coordinator at LCCH not only to learn, but to practice, how to budget their money. Hank and Debbi did not have any household furnishings and through some generous donations, LCCH was able to provide a variety of these, including pots and pans, kitchen utensils, dishes, and even a bed.

Hank and Debbi now have stable, affordable housing, and Hank has been able to get the medical help he has needed for more than 6 years through a local partner facility. He looks into the future with goals of being able to handle life’s ups and downs more easily and he feels like he is on the road to recovery. Through continued treatment, Hank plans to eventually be able to work part time. By providing a hand up, this family is equipped with the tools to continue to pursue their goals.

They were so thankful that LCCH helped them, and they plan to keep LCCH updated with their progress. All of us at LCCH wish Hank and Debbi the best!

Need for Financial Assistance Grows

By Candace Elkins, Homeless Prevention Assistant

In the past 6 months of working with clients in our Project HomeLine Program, I have seen more people who have not needed rental assistance in the past - clients whose rent is higher than the less than $500 per month we normally see. (we’re now seeing rent requests of $500.00 to $1,000.00 or more per month). Most couples who have had good paying jobs for years and didn’t foresee an extended illness, or permanent job loss.

Unfortunately, most don’t come in until faced with eviction, because they have never had to seek help in the past and don’t know that there is help or are embarrassed about moving into housing where they may have spent all their savings while still looking for employment and trying to pay what they can. We have also seen a rise in calls for information about affordable housing and subsidized apartments. The average waiting list for a subsidized apartment is one year in Licking County.

From September 2012 to March 2013 we received a total of 689 calls for assistance. (See chart)

It would seem that more of our older neighbors are losing their housing. A woman who owned her own home for 40 years and was always self-sufficient is now in foreclosure. Due to a lengthy battle with cancer and her inability to remain employed, she is now forced to live on a small Social Security check and find alternative housing. We are assisting her with a security deposit to move into housing where her monthly rent is based on her income (no more than 30%).

Great Granville Garage Sale - The Fun Begins on May 4!

The Great Granville Garage Sale (GGGS), an event now in its fourth year, draws 2-3,000 enthusiastic customers to the Granville area, rain or shine. The sale begins at 8:00 a.m.

St. Luke’s Episcopal Church organizes this event in order to raise funds for the Licking County Coalition for Housing’s programs to help our friends and neighbors who may be facing challenges with their housing.

Sellers and Buyers can find more information at www.granvillegaragesale.com.

Sponsors committed to this year’s event include Fiberglas Federal Credit Union, Abe’s Body Shop, and Reece, Pyle, Drake & Meyer, PLLC. If you’re interested in being a sponsor, please contact Bruce Westall at (740) 587-1995.

LCCH will have a booth on Main Street with coffee and pastries for sale. We’ll also be selling cards for Mother’s Day, created by some of the children in our Transitional Housing program. We look forward to seeing you there!

Can’t participate but would like to help the cause?

Mail your check to St. Luke’s, PO Box 82, Granville OH 43023 or call or visit the Parish House, 118 South Main Street, M-F 9 am – 12 n. 740-587-0167. Credit cards accepted.

Transitional Housing Program Receives Key Funding

It’s official!

Our Transitional Housing grant from HUD has been renewed for one more year, starting July 1, 2013!

On March 13, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced renewed support for 7,000 local homeless housing and service programs across the U.S. Provided through HUD’s Continuum of Care Program, the funding will ensure these local projects remain operating in the coming year. The $1.5 billion in grants support a wide range of programs including street outreach, client assessment, and direct housing assistance.

While the Fiscal Year 2012 funds awarded are not impacted by the automatic across-the-board budget cuts under sequestration that began March 1st, HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan cautioned that future budget cuts may reverse significant reported declines in homelessness: “During this challenging budget climate, we must make certain that we don’t balance our books on the backs of our most vulnerable citizens. When we make event modest investments in these programs, we see a measurable decline in homelessness.”

LCCH has received funding under the HUD Continuum of Care program since 1995. This $590,179 grant, in combination with funding from the Ohio Development Services Agency, Veterans Administration, United Way of Licking County, City of Newark, Community Development Block Grant and local donors, will continue to provide 43 transitional housing units and serve an estimated 35 families and 47 adults without children during the 2013-2014 program year. Over 70% of the participants successfully move to permanent housing each year.

Thank You!

LCCH wishes to thank the many other area organizations who continue to pledge their cooperation and support necessary to make Transitional Housing a highly successful program:

Apprizen (Consumer Credit Counseling Services)

Behavioral Healthcare Partners of Central Ohio, Inc.

Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Licking & Perry Counties

Chalmers P. Wylie VA Ambulatory Care Center

C-TEC

Food Pantry Network

LEADS Community Action

Licking County Alcoholism Prevention Program (LAPP)

Licking County Board of Developmental Disabilities

Licking County Department of Job and Family Services

Licking County Family YMCA

Licking County Health Department

Licking County Veterans’ Service Commission

Licking/Knox Goodwill Industries

Mental Health America of Licking County

Ohio State Legal Services Association - Southeast Ohio Legal Services

Pathways of Central Ohio

The Licking County Aging Program, Inc.

The Main Place

The Salvation Army

The Woodlands Serving Central Ohio, Inc.

Want to Help?

We are always searching for new volunteers. To find out more about how you can help, visit www.lcchousing.org.
In Memoriam

Marie Kerns - a fond & fierce remembrance
By Jeff Gill

When we were having the community meetings that resulted in the push for the Licking County Coalition for Housing, I wasn't sure what to make of Marie Kerns.

I was a young associate pastor in town who had been involved in the Newark Area Ministerial Association, and the CROP Walk committee, and getting the Licking County Jail Ministry up and running at the new Justice Center (aka “the jail”). I’d only been in town two years, but I felt like I’d gotten to know most of the church folk and leaders and such by 1991.

But I hadn’t met Marie yet.

So here’s this lady, with something called the “Licking County Needy Fund.” It appeared to be housed at a church in Newark, but was largely her organization. She lived not far from the church I served, on Elmwood Ave., but I hadn’t met her. So I was a little skeptical. Pastors, who have a tendency to go Lone Ranger themselves, have a well-earned nervousness about Lone Rangers.

But it turned out Marie wasn’t a Lone Ranger, and she sure wasn’t anyone’s Tonto. She was a scout, and often pretty far ahead of the wagon train, but she had a path and a plan and a party in mind, and that party was going to get where they needed to go.

If Marie saw a need, she saw a solution. She didn’t wait for people to head on forward to cut the trail for her, she waded in herself. Brambles, briars, swampy ground, deep valleys, she just kept going.

Marie was a woman of faith, and her faith knew that the phrase in the Twenty-third Psalm was “yea, though I walk THROUGH the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil” because Marie was going THROUGH. She wasn’t stopping to hold a pity party or to wait for stragglers, she was moving towards the goal, a one-woman exploratory party into unknown country.

So she was part of the pioneering group that said “yeah, we can make transitional housing fly, on a shoestring, and see if we can earn our way into consideration for some grants after we’ve been housing people for a while on our own.” It was a crazy thought, and one that not many shared, though many saw the need. Marie saw the solution, too, and moved resolutely in that direction.

As a pastor, and as a friend, I can add this: Marie knew that she wasn’t alone, and she wasn’t the first through that valley, or into strange terrain. Jesus was always just ahead, and clearing the way. Her confidence in who Jesus is and what he was doing for her and the people she loved is what kept her going.

At the end, her eyes dimmed, her steps few and feeble, her vision and her drive never flagged. She was on her way right up to when she left this world, and she was not worried about how soon we’d all catch up with her. She saw the goal for the Beloved Community, on earth as it is in heaven, and she heard the trumpets sounding, and she charged on ahead.

Just like always!

Esther "Marie" Kerns (1929-2013) was a founding member of the Licking County Coalition for Housing, having signed its Articles of Incorporation in September 1992 and establishing the first four transitional housing units in 1993, among many other acts of service on behalf of the Licking County community and its residents.

Angie’s Story

No longer afraid to talk about her experience, Angie France has become the spokesperson for why housing and supportive services are critical to recovery. She began using drugs at age 13 and spent half of her life in and out of jail, rehab facilities, prison and seeking the next fix.

Angie participated in the Transitional Housing program for 20 months. While in the program she maintained employment for the duration of her stay. She saved over $4000 and purchased a reliable car. She made significant progress in paying off fines and tackling debt. Angie entered the program at age 27, following a stay at Courage House and The Salvation Army emergency shelter. She has currently been clean for over 30 months and is the proud new mother of a perfectly healthy baby girl. Angie recently moved into permanent housing and remains employed.

In describing her experience with LCCH, Angie said, “Housing Coalition really gave me a chance to get myself together. They were amazing about providing resources to almost any problem. My coordinator, Linda Little was especially helpful even just lending an ear. I will always be indebted to them.”

Angie was the keynote speaker at the LCCH 2011 Annual Meeting, as well as the United Way of Licking County’s Recognition Breakfast on March 15, 2013. We wish her and her new family all the best!
Want to Help?

Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities

Are you looking for a way to help your community, learn more about housing and homelessness in Licking County or spend time on fun and fulfilling activities? Check out the upcoming volunteer opportunities at LCCH!

Great Granville Garage Sale
Saturday, May 4, 2013 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

As the name implies, this is a huge collection of Garage Sales in and around the Village of Granville. The event is organized by St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, with the proceeds benefitting LCCH. We could use help staffing a table the day of the sale, and with marketing prior to the event. Interested? Contact Deb Tegtmeyer, at dtegtmeyer@lcchousing.org for more information. Shoppers also welcome!

Granville Farmers Market
May 18 thru October 19 Saturdays, 8:30 to Noon

River Road Coffeehouse generously provides the coffee and supplies at cost to operate a booth at the Granville Farmers Market in downtown Granville. We supply the labor and keep the proceeds. It is a great way to spend a Saturday morning….. making coffee, meeting your neighbors, and sampling the best homegrown and homemade products around. If you would like to help make and sell coffee, contact Kathy Scott, at kscott@lcchousing.org.

LCCH 9th Annual Golf Outing
August 2013 (Date to be determined)

Want to participate in a great golf event? Would you rather watch, or help with the marketing and set up? Stay tuned to our newsletter and website for more information about how you can help with this event.

Home-Run 5K Run/Walk
October 12, 2013

Be a part of this first annual event, even if running isn’t for you! Can you sponsor prizes for our runners or advertising for the event? Would you like to help with marketing or course set up? Or just bring a friend, support our runners and walkers and have a good time at this family event? If so, contact Kathy Scott at kscott@lcchousing.org

Administrative Support
Various times throughout the year

Do you have clerical skills or experience with Microsoft Excel and Publisher? Could you offer a few hours to help produce marketing materials, or assemble mailings on an “as needed” basis? Contact Kathy Scott, at kscott@lcchousing.org to be included on our contact list for administrative support.

Product Collection/ Donation
Seasonal items

Could your service group sponsor a personal care product donation this spring for residents of our Transitional Housing program? Would your VBS like to donate school supplies to homeless children this summer? How about a blanket drive for the needy next fall? If you can coordinate a product drive or provide seasonal items for our clients, contact Kathy Scott at kscott@lcchousing.org.

Resource Room Monitor
Schedule to be determined

This multi-purpose room will include books, computers, games and movies for children and families in our Transitional Housing program. You will be assigned with another volunteer to provide basic assistance and supervision to children and adults. Background check and regular schedule will be required. Keep watching this newsletter and our website for more information about this opportunity.

Property Maintenance
Various times through the year

This is a great opportunity for a group. Tasks vary from basic yard work in the summer months, to semi-skilled painting and minor interior renovations in the fall and winter. Contact Kathy Scott, at kscott@lcchousing.org to be included on our contact list for property maintenance projects.

Tax Preparation
January through April

If you have accounting, business or tax experience and enjoy working with people, this may be a great experience for you. Classroom or on-line training is provided and IRS certification is required. A commitment of 4 hours per week throughout the tax season is requested. Contact Kathy Scott, at kscott@lcchousing.org if you are interested. Volunteer recruiting begins in the fall for the following tax season.

And thank you for all you do!
As a group of churches, human services agencies, and local government entities, we had already been through the process of determining that there were at least 2,500 men, women, and children who were homeless at some point during a given year in Licking County. We had met for several months to gather information, analyze the housing options, determine what the City of Newark’s resources and priorities should be concerning homelessness and affordable housing, and sent our HUD-required report off to Washington, D.C.

“So what do we do now?” said one of the community leaders around the table. “Now that we know we have such a large number of homeless, we have to do something.” And everyone nodded in agreement.

So we did.

With financial support from both the City of Newark and Licking County Commissioners, and the timely offer of four newly-renovated one-bedroom apartments by a man who was willing to give up his Ohio home to make a difference for someone in need, we knew we had to do something.

The doors were now opened to four homeless families. LCCH’s mission came to life.

With the support, encouragement, energy, conviction and resources provided by many extraordinary people, LCCH’s housing and financial literacy services to residents of Licking County have grown considerably over the past 20 years. In that time, we’ve worked with thousands of people. Many have found success, but there is still work to do.

Join us, as we look forward to celebrating our 20th Anniversary in November, and looking ahead to the next 20 years!
2013 Point In Time ▪ A Count of the Homeless in Licking County

Every year, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires each community receiving HUD funding to perform a Point-In-Time (PIT) count in order to capture the number of homeless individuals in each county on any given night. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Agency decided to conduct Ohio’s PIT on Tuesday, January 22, 2013. In order to accomplish this, there was a countywide “street count,” members of the Licking County Housing Initiative (LCHI), our local HUD-required homeless Continuum of Care planning group, put together several teams to go out on that night and try to find individuals living on the streets, in their cars, or places not meant for habitation.

Although the “street count” effort didn’t find anyone living in these outdoor situations, there were 191 individuals identified that met HUD’s definition of “homeless.” There were 88 persons living in emergency shelters (The Salvation Army and St. Vincent Hospital). 98 persons living in Local Continuum of Care Housing, 3 individuals, interviewed at one of the local food pantries, who stated they were living on the streets. Notably, 54 (28%) of the 191 homeless individuals were under the age of 18, 15 (8%) were between the ages of 18 and 24 and the remaining 122 (64%) individuals were over the age of 24. There were 17 homeless veterans identified, 21 persons suffering from severe mental illness, 17 with chronic substance abuse, 1 person with HIV/AIDS, and 37 victims of domestic violence.

LCHI has determined it would be helpful to do another count this summer in order to have another opportunity to count the homeless population during the warmer months. Be on the lookout for further information about how you can help with this project.

Assistance Comes in Many Forms

By Kathy Scott, VITA Program Coordinator

I think most people have an idea of who the typical LCCH client is. And I think most people would be surprised to find out how different our clients are from that idea. Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) is a program that can help most taxpayers who have an income of $51,000 or less per year, so we see a really wide variety of clients at our tax sites. Many come for free tax preparation and have no need for other services, and some utilize several of our programs. The majority of our tax clients are repeat customers and I look forward to seeing them each year. One client in particular has a story which I think is worth sharing.

“Jennifer” came to our tax site last year with a very limited income. She was in her early sixties and in dire financial need. Jennifer had worked at a very good job with excellent benefits and a private retirement plan for over 17 years. She was forced to leave her job at age 58 for health reasons. With no health insurance and medical bills piling up, Jennifer took some bad advice and withdrew all of the money from her retirement plan to survive. She felt strongly that it was her responsibility to provide for herself as much as she could without seeking assistance. There was not enough to cover the bills, however, and withdrawing her private retirement meant that her Social Security benefits, when she was eligible for them, were reduced to $200 per month. Also, Jennifer had purchased a house and been the victim of predatory lending and investment fraud. The house was entered into foreclosure, which meant that her Social Security benefits were under the age of 18, 15 (8%) were between the ages of 18 and 24 and the remaining 122 (64%) individuals were over the age of 24. There were 17 homeless veterans identified, 21 persons suffering from severe mental illness, 17 with chronic substance abuse, 1 person with HIV/AIDS, and 37 victims of domestic violence.

LCHI has determined it would be helpful to do another count this summer in order to have another opportunity to count the homeless population during the warmer months. Be on the lookout for further information about how you can help with this project.

A big thanks to Mental Health America of Licking County, the Jennifer and Ben McNaughton family, and other donors. With their kind donations, we were able to supply a total of 29 Easter Baskets to the children in our transitional housing program.

We try to acknowledge all gifts, even those made online without mailing information for the donor. When our Executive Director thanked a Network for Good donor by email, she received this reply: “This donation is actually from my 12 year old son ‘Sam.’ He had $200.00 to donate and he researched and researched where to give his money this year. He chose Licking County Coalition for Housing! He has shared his “donation” story with several family members and friends. He was most impressed with the % of people that are able to get back on their feet with your help! He has a tender heart and has reflected a lot this Christmas Season on the people you serve. Thank you for the services that YOU and YOUR TEAM provide!”

What a wonderful way to share the holiday spirit with others.

It is good to know that there are philanthropists of all ages out there! Everyone can make a difference, no matter what their age or circumstance.
Play Space Needed!

LCF and BSA Troop 65 bring us closer to our goal.

We are thrilled to announce that The Licking County Foundation has awarded LCCH a grant to assist in the construction of a play space and gathering area for children in our Transitional Housing program and their families. The funds and private donations will be used to provide toys and play equipment for toddlers and children, as well as picnic tables and benches for outdoor events, mulch and landscaping. The play area will be located between the two apartment buildings that LCCH owns on North 40th Street. This is the second consecutive year that the Licking County Foundation has supported LCCH projects.

We also have labor to erect the equipment, install the furniture, construct a sidewalk and help with the landscaping and mulch thanks to Matt Kaercher of Granville. Matt, who is a member of Boy Scout Troop 65, has adopted the play space as his Eagle project. Eagle is the highest rank awarded by the Boy Scouts, and one requirement for achieving it is to complete a service project which benefits the community. Matt, along with parents and other scouts will commit at least 100 hours to the project.

The project cannot be started, however, until some safety issues are addressed. We need to install a fence to contain the kids and their toys, and some existing pole lights need to be replaced with surface mounted lights. We have received a discounted price for the fencing from a local vendor, however we still need to raise the funds to purchase it.

If you are interested in contributing to the play area fund, or can provide the electrical work as an in-kind donation, please contact Kathy Scott at 740-345-1970 extension 229, or kscott@lcchousing.org. With your help, the play space will be completed by August 2013.

Special Thanks