

News

WORKING TO END HOMELESSNESS

15 New Apartments Completed in Goshen

LaCasa, Inc., Oaklawn and DJ Construction announce completion of 15 new apartment units. Located at 1101 W. Lincoln Ave the project will provide permanent housing to individuals who are experiencing homelessness. LaCasa, as part of a nationwide challenge, is working toward ending homelessness in our community. A Ribbon Cutting and Open House will be held on Dec. 6 at 11:30 am.

Oaklawn is LaCasa's partner in this Permanent Supported Housing program. Funded by Indiana Housing & Community Development Authority, LaCasa and Oaklawn have developed this affordable housing option for individuals who are experiencing homelessness and are accessing services with Oaklawn. The need for permanent supportive housing is great within the Goshen/Elkhart communities. Waiting lists exist in both cities. Individuals who live in the apartments will qualify for support services with Oaklawn. There will also be a caretaker apartment for a resident manager within the building.

Rudy Gourdine of Oaklawn works with the clients who will rent the new apartments. He said "Shelter Plus is not only about getting the homeless off the streets and out of shelters, but it is also about providing the men and women enrolled the type of support they need to become productive members of a community."

LaCasa and Oaklawn would like to duplicate this model in other locations

in Elkhart County. Oaklawn has a long history in developing and providing supportive housing services for persons with mental illness. Since its designation as a community mental health center in 1973, Oaklawn's focus has been to provide services (Case management, medication and skills training and treatment) that support individuals in their community. LaCasa's role is to develop and manage safe, attractive and affordable housing that compliments the neighborhood. The relationship between Oaklawn and LaCasa will allow the properties to be maintained at a high level of quality and occupancy, freeing Oaklawn staff to focus on the service and rehabilitative needs of the individuals who reside there.



*Captions:
Top right: Collette Troyer and others from Interra Credit Union spent 3 days volunteering at 1101 W. Lincoln.*

Center right: Rudy Gourdine of Oaklawn and potential resident Kevin.

Below: The new exterior of 1101 W. Lincoln Ave., Goshen.



NeighborWorks® America: *Who are they?*

Many times throughout the year, you may have noted that we mention NeighborWorks® America and their support of LaCasa. We are proud to be a Charter Member of the NeighborWorks® Network and thought you might like to know a little more about them. NeighborWorks® America is the country's preeminent leader in affordable housing and community development. They work to create opportunities for lower-income people to live in affordable homes in safe, sustainable neighborhoods that are healthy places for families to grow. Headquartered in Washington, DC, NeighborWorks® America operates through a national office, two regional offices and seven district offices.

NeighborWorks® facilitates community-focused programs and services through the national NeighborWorks® network – 235 independent, community-based nonprofit organizations serving more than 4,500 communities nationwide. More than one-third of these organizations serve rural communities. Together with its national and local partners, NeighborWorks®



Mark (left) and Raymond Jorgeson (right) participated in NeighborWorks® Week Activities in the Dickerson Landing Neighborhood.

provides grants, programmatic support, training and technical assistance to its national network. LaCasa is rated an Exemplary organization by NeighborWorks® (NW).

LaCasa receives grants each year to help with specific projects. NW supplies certification for our counselors in homeownership and financial fitness education and foreclosure counseling.

Local neighborhoods participate in NeighborWorks Week each year the second week of June. NW also provides training institutes where neighborhood leaders gain insight in organizing their communities. In 2011 NW granted LaCasa \$435,000 to upgrade Roosevelt Center with solar panels and led lights as well as other energy saving green upgrades at many of our locations.



Jason Oswald (right) lives in the Chamberlain Neighborhood and attended a Neighborhood Leadership Academy in Louisville.



(Left) Entrance on Francis Street of LaCasa's new office in Elkhart.



(Right) Rod Roberson and Rick Newbill visit during the Open House at LaCasa's new office at Roosevelt Center.



LaCasa Listens

by Larry Gautsche, *President/CEO*

On October 26, the Elkhart Chamber of Commerce helped LaCasa host a ribbon cutting to open our new Elkhart Office at Roosevelt Center. Renovated offices, meeting and classroom space were made possible with the financial support of the Elkhart County Community Foundation and CDBG funds from the City of Elkhart. The office is staffed by Teresa Lewis, Monday thru Friday. The Elkhart office will also host LaCasa community outreach staff, homebuyer education and financial fitness classes and serve as a resource for the neighborhood association. Office and classroom space is available for other organizations who would like to provide services or host events at this site.

The Church of Elkhart meets regularly in the adjoining gymnasium. In October, Bashor Children's Home established an educational support program with Elkhart Community Schools.

Located in Roosevelt Center's West Wing, this program serves children in grades 4-6 from Mary Beck and Hawthorne Schools. We are grateful to The Elkhart County Community Foundation and the City of Elkhart for their support and excited about the potential for other organizations to join us to provide services at this location. To reserve the gymnasium, office or classroom space for an event, contact Teresa at 522-2874 or stop by the office (Francis Street entrance). Our goal is to maximize the resource of Roosevelt Center for the benefit of the surrounding neighborhood.

As we approach the holidays, I want to express our very sincere thanks to all of LaCasa's volunteers, donors and partners who have helped us work toward our mission in another very challenging year. As government support continues to shrink, we are even more dependent on, and grateful for, a generous and caring community.

If you are age 70-½ or older the IRS requires IRA owners to withdraw a certain amount of their IRA funds each and every year. This year you can designate those funds to a charity and avoid paying taxes on the withdrawal. Rather than taking the mandatory withdrawal from your IRA and then giving the money to charities, you will save on taxes by transferring the money directly to the charity. For more information contact Bonnie Martin @ 533-4450 or your tax preparer.

The Home Ownership Dream Comes True for One More Family

Mark Saner grew up in Goshen. He moved away and then back again, married with three young boys. He and Kristin wanted to move out of their rental on Main Street because it didn't have a backyard for the boys. They did not think they could purchase a house due to their income. However, Mark had volunteered at LaCasa as a young man and thought he should at least check out the possibilities.

San Moreno counseled the couple, encouraging them to take Financial Fitness and Home Ownership classes while enrolling in the IDA program. Mark said that the discussions in the classes reminded them how important it is to set priorities and the value of paying down debt.

Mark and Kristin saved aggressively and with the help of LaCasa's IDA program they received match funding for their down payment and closing costs. They moved into their home this past June. Mark says that being able to paint the boy's room and the kitchen have made the house their home. Now the family can have a pet and play in the back yard. The couple worked very hard to complete their education and now they have fulfilled their second goal—having a home for their three boys to grow up in a safe environment and a healthy community.

Photo: Mark and Kristin Saner with their three boys outside their new home in Goshen.





A Fond Farewell!

Rebecca Gasho's twelve years at LaCasa saw tremendous growth and change. Becky was involved in many of those changes. She has now left LaCasa to look for other challenges and our staff would like to salute her.

Immigration Counseling benefited from her oversight. Becky provided supervision and support to the immigration department with a compassionate heart and a business eye,

ensuring that client needs, as well as office goals were met. She led the department to obtain federal accreditation in 2001 and supported the immigration counselors who represented hundreds of clients each year in the immigration process. Becky helped the counselors gain training in specialized needs such as the U Visa. She also secured funding for this program so that abused immigrants would not have to pay for the service. Monica Newcomer-Miller and Karen Viveros want to give genuine thanks for her personal, trusting, effective manner of supervising. "Thank you, Becky for your support, skilled leadership and empathetic service".

LaCasa's IDA program has continued to be one of the foremost programs in the State of Indiana. Deb Fath said "As our supervisor Becky seriously took into account our ideas, feelings, insights and questions. She challenged us to think "outside the box", to improve, make more efficient and create a healthier, more vibrant IDA program."

I asked Becky what she thought of as the most important work she was involved in while at LaCasa. She replied, "During my 12 years at LaCasa I enjoyed working with neighborhoods and community leaders to determine what gaps existed in our community and determine what services LaCasa could provide to fill those gaps. LaCasa's role in designing programs to address these gaps provided valuable services to many who would have been underserved without LaCasa. These programs include working with first time homebuyers, immigration counseling, providing affordable housing and working with neighborhoods."

As to the future, her immediate plans include spending time with family. Becky's goal is to return to management in a nonprofit setting.

LACASA NEEDS

your contributions to continue the high quality of service that has been provided to Elkhart County for 42 years. Please consider a year end gift to LaCasa.



NeighborWorks®
HomeOwnership Center

202 N. Cottage Avenue
Goshen, IN 46528
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www.lacasainc.net

LaCasa believes that every family deserves the chance to build a better life. Our staff helps people access the tools they need to move from crisis to stability. Our education and counseling programs help strengthen families and create safe, attractive and economically stable neighborhoods. LaCasa provides affordable rentals, home repairs for low-income homeowners, matched savings accounts, home buyer and financial fitness education, resident leadership training and immigration counseling.



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Helping Families: Improving Neighborhoods



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