



Keeping Families in Their Homes

Jorge and Joyce moved to Arbor Ridge in 2007 with their two children, Jorge Jr. and Jolin. Jorge had a good job at a local factory and worked hard to support them. Joyce soon transformed their apartment at Arbor Ridge from an empty unit into a home. In 2008 their third child, Jennifer was born and Jorge made a change to a job with steady income including regular overtime. Along with many other workers in our community Jorge was laid off in December 2008. His last day of work was two days prior to his one year employment anniversary date which would have increased his wages and benefits.

Many families have experienced devastating economic changes during the past several months due to job lay offs and plant closings. As a result they have been unable to pay their housing expenses. During these uncertain times **LaCasa** chose to put a moratorium on evicting families from its rentals because of their inability to pay rent due to job loss. In order to do this LaCasa established a fund so the community could donate money to these families in crisis. The initiative is called **“Keeping Families in Their Homes”** and was launched in December 2008.

There was strong support for this decision from the community and numerous donors gave generously. As a result many families have been able to stay in their homes and keep their children in school despite their financial uncertainty.

Money from the “Keeping Families in Their Homes” fund was used to help Jorge and Joyce make their rent payments and over the past several months LaCasa has used this fund to keep 10 families in their homes. LaCasa will continue to assist families with their rental payments through the end of the school year.

Our mission is to help families and improve neighborhoods and we are doing it every day thanks to **your gift** to LaCasa!



Assistant Property Manager Michele P. Consalvo-Chaney and the Guarra Family



NeighborWorks®
HomeOwnership Center

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Visit us on the web
www.lacasagoshen.org

Community Leadership Institute in San Jose



Front from left: Gabriela Tovar, Regina Roberson, Rachel Denlinger; Back: Paul Bertha, Jason Shenk, Jason McFarley, Michael Downing)

Back in October, representatives from forty states participated in a three-day Community Leadership Institute in San Jose, California. Residents of Goshen's Northside, Historic Dickerson Landing, Crescent Street and East Goshen Neighborhood Associations, along with residents of Elkhart's Historic Roosevelt Center Association, took part in this educational weekend with hundreds of community leaders.

The Community Leadership Institute (CLI) helps emerging leaders learn new techniques and sharpen their skills to address specific issues affecting their communities. At the end of the CLI, participants created an action plan so they could bring the knowledge they gained back to their communities and use it to effect positive change.

Goshen's neighborhood group is working on a neighborhood identity project. Residents are designing banners which will be hung on street side light posts. Later this spring, each neighborhood will have a special celebration to unveil the banners.

In Elkhart, neighbors are planning the Roosevelt Center Summer Academy, a series of courses that draw on the gifts, interests, and cultural richness of the surrounding community. Courses will begin in June focusing on the interests of youth, but will also be open to intergenerational involvement. In July, during a multicultural public celebration, each class will share what they have learned.

Crescent St. Update

"Crescent Street" area residents have been meeting regularly to identify common interests and concerns as they begin working as a neighborhood group. The Steering Committee is brainstorming neighborhood names and



has drafted a mission statement that they are currently getting neighbors' input on.

They have received a NeighborWorks Green Community Project grant and are working on a garden beautification project.

Neighbors who live along Crescent Street have also been meeting with the City Engineering and Planning Departments to stay up-to-date on the reconstruction project happening along Crescent.

If you or someone you know lives within the neighborhood boundaries, call Grace at 533-4450 to find out how you can get involved! (Neighborhood Boundaries: Main Street on the west, Lincoln Avenue/railroad tracks on the south, Olive Street on the east and Middlebury Street on the north).

Your donations make our work possible! Donations can be made online at www.lacasagoshen.org or at our office: 202 N. Cottage Ave., Goshen, IN 46528
THANK YOU FOR JOINING WITH LACASA, INC. TO HELP FAMILIES AND IMPROVE NEIGHBORHOODS!



NATIONAL NEIGHBORWORKS WEEK

JUNE 6-13, 2009

GOSHEN'S NEIGHBORHOOD GAMES

Elkhart County Courthouse Lawn (101 N. Main Street, Goshen)

Friday, June 5 from 5 – 8 pm

Join your neighbors at the Courthouse lawn for a picnic followed by Goshen's Neighborhood Games. Neighborhood teams will compete in fun, educational activities while learning about the Elkhart River watershed. For more information visit www.gofridays.com!

ROOSEVELT COMMUNITY GARAGE SALE

Roosevelt Center (215 E Indiana Ave, Elkhart)

Saturday, June 6

Gather throughout the day and meet neighbors, find some deals, and enjoy local food and entertainment. A chance for Roosevelt Center residents, neighbors, and community members to collaborate and find some deals!

GOSHEN'S NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION LEADERSHIP BRUNCH

LaCasa, Inc. (202 N. Cottage Ave, Goshen)

Saturday, June 13 at 9 am

The Bi-Annual Networking Brunch is for local resident leaders and is hosted by LaCasa. During the brunch, we will hear updates from each neighborhood association and discuss topics of neighborhood interest.



LaCasa Listens

by Larry Gautsche, *President/CEO*

Partnerships

In my last letter, discussing the local economy, I stated that, “as State and Federal initiatives develop to address the housing crisis, we will do our best to bring those resources to Elkhart County.” Partnerships at the local and State level continue to be critical to our efforts:

- Years of effort, working with Elkhart County government and the County Health department paid off with the award of a \$3,000,000 grant for lead education and remediation of lead based paint hazards from rental and owner occupied homes in Elkhart County. LaCasa will coordinate lead removal operations and training for local contractors to do this work.
- Elkhart City received Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) funds to purchase, rehab and restore to homeownership, vacant foreclosed properties. LaCasa will coordinate the rehab of these properties and provide homebuyer education, grants and loans to homebuyers.
- LaCasa has partnered with Goshen to apply for \$2.2 million in Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) funds and Goshen City council has authorized a companion \$800,000 loan to facilitate the purchase of vacant, abandoned and foreclosed properties for rehabilitation and sale to new homeowners. LaCasa will provide grants, loans and education to homebuyers and manage the acquisition and rehab of these properties with the assistance of local contractors. We anticipate a grant award by May 30.
- LaCasa recently accepted the donation of two former rental properties in Goshen at 513 E. Washington St. and 1014 S. 11th St. Volunteer crews and subcontractors are completing rehabs of these properties which will be available for home ownership by June 1.
- Partnering with Goshen and local corporate donors, LaCasa’s community work day on May 9 will kick off the Help-A-Housesm season with volunteers taking on 17 home repair projects for local families in need of assistance. We anticipate the release of an RFP in July that would create an opportunity for us to take this program county-wide.

Protecting our housing and neighborhoods will be a serious challenge over the next few years. LaCasa will continue to look for every opportunity to bring resources to this important cause and we continue to value and rely on our partnerships with: local government, churches, the business community, financial institutions, and many individual donors and volunteers to help us make the most of these opportunities. Thank you for your ongoing support!

Get the Lead Out!

What every parent needs to know about lead based paint:

- If you live in a house that was built before 1978 your house may have lead based paint in it and could be damaging your child’s health.
- If you want to use a test swab kit such as the kits available from hardware or paint stores, be certain that you scrape all the way down through the layers of paint so the swab will touch the first layers that were painted, since the older layers are most likely to contain lead. Be aware that these kits may sometimes give you a false reading, either positive or negative.
- If your child likes to chew on the window sill, banister, painted wood toys or any other painted wood, have the piece tested for lead based paint.
- Your child should have a blood lead level test at 9 to 12 months of age and two additional tests by 24 months of age. If your child qualifies for Medicaid this test is mandatory and free of charge.
- Help is on the way! If you live in Elkhart County you may qualify for help in testing and repairing your home to make it lead safe. Beginning in April, LaCasa and Elkhart County Health Department are teaming up to test homes and, if necessary, remediate the lead hazards that are found in them.

If you want to see if you qualify for lead testing and repair, call Carrie Brunson, Elkhart County Health Dept. at 574-875-3388 or LaCasa’s Lead Remediation Specialist, Armand Martin at 574-533-4450.



Captions (clockwise, from top):

1. Goshen College volunteer during Help-A-Housesm
2. Rep. Joe Donnelly and LaCasa staff Kate Irelan after the 2009 LaCasa Annual Meeting.
3. Participants in the 2008 Neighborhood Games met at the courthouse.



IN MEMORY

LaCasa board members provide guidance and expertise, advocate for our mission, raise funds and help us stay accountable to the community. Cletus Yoder was such a Board

Member. On the board for over five years, he asked the tough questions and challenged LaCasa management to follow our mission. Every year Clete volunteered for Help-A-Housesm Community Work Day, joining other volunteers to improve the lives of families in Goshen. He also served on board committees dedicated to fundraising success and board development. We will miss him! The Staff and Board of LaCasa send a warm Thank You to Clete's many family members and friends who donated to LaCasa in his memory.

GIVE We need your support to continue helping families. Call LaCasa to find out how your gift can help real families in our community.



Affordable energy efficient homes for sale in Goshen. Call 574-533-4450 for more information. These homes for sale are made possible by the generous support of our donors.

1014 S. 11th Street—Perfect for a single, this home has one bedroom/one bath. Original hardwood floors, great neighborhood. New kitchen with all new appliances. Super Energy Efficient!



513 Washington—This 3 bedroom, 2 bath home is being completely renovated. It has a new roof and windows and will be painted outside on Help-A-House Day. Inside the kitchen and baths are completely redone with new cabinets, appliances and flooring. Super Energy Efficient!



513 S. Cottage—Across from Chandler Elementary playground, 4 bedroom 2 bath home, completely renovated. Active Neighborhood Assn., walking distance to library and Goshen High School. Super Energy Efficient!



LaCasa News is published 4 times a year by LaCasa, Inc. Bonnie Martin, Editor. Contributing writers: Becky Gascho, Larry Gautsche, Alan Greaser, Grace Hunsberger, Armand Martin and Jason Shenk. Layout by Sties Design. 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. We multiply the resources of a caring community to create safe, attractive, and economically stable neighborhoods.



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