

AUGUST 2009

Help-A-Housesm Day



Amber Miller paints window trim on North 7th Street.



Stacey and Shirley Detwiler outside their home.

360 volunteers lined up for a pancake breakfast early on May 9. Cold wind and threatening rain made the Exchange Club's pancakes taste especially good. Before long everyone was off to their worksites. They wanted to get as much done as they could before the rain came down. It never rained that day, and a lot of work was accomplished.

Stacey and Shirley Detwiler needed a new roof, windows and insulation. Stacey is off work since he recently had open heart surgery. Crew leader, Dana Miller, who is a neighbor of Stacey and Shirley, stopped by the week before Help-A-Housesm and talked at length about Stacey's symptoms leading up to his surgery, and details of his surgery experience and recovery.

Ironically, in the next week and a half, Dana was undergoing the same surgery. Because volunteers from Assembly Mennonite accomplished so much work on Help-A-Housesm day there was enough money leftover to replace the Detwiler's old furnace with an energy efficient one. Stacey and Shirley are very happy with the work done on their home, and their utility bills are already lower. Neighbors helping neighbors.

Vera is 82 and still works part-time at the Holiday Inn. She needed her roof replaced and could not afford to have it done. Nine members of Vera's family, along with members of the Goshen College tennis team, helped to repair her roof on Help-A-House Community Work Day. They worked until 4:30 that afternoon to make sure that the home would not get wet.

Twenty-seven volunteer groups were represented, all helping to fix up the homes of families in Goshen. Contractors, church groups, teachers, students, service clubs and businesses all worked together to accomplish an exceptional number of projects. These volunteers, along with professionals who donated their time, replaced 85 windows, worked on eight roof replacements, and rebuilt three porches or decks, as well as a host of other painting and general clean-up projects. We filled six city dump trucks, four with trash and construction debris and two with brush to be recycled.

Help-A-Housesm is a project which brings our community together: the city, businesses, volunteers and LaCasa. This collaboration has helped hundreds of families maintain their homes and continues to be an example of a public/private partnership that works. Please join the list of donors on page two and contribute to Help-A-Housesm. Your dollars will be put to work for our community!



Professional painters and volunteers gave this home a face lift.



Even though the weather was cold, a dilly bar makes for a good break.



NeighborWorks[®]
HomeOwnership Center

202 N. Cottage Avenue
Goshen, IN 46528
Tel.: (574) 533-4450
www.lacasagoshen.org

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Doors of Goshen Benefit Auction
August 7 at 7:30 p.m.
Eyedart Studio at 213 S. Main St.
www.gofridays.com

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Special Thanks to our Campaign Committee

Burl Troyer, Chairman
1st Source Bank
David Daugherty, Chamber of Commerce
Doug Johnston, Goshen Community Bank
Stan King, former LaCasa Board member
George Marlow, First State Bank
Amber Miller, Lake City Bank
Sanford Miller, Interra Credit Union
Jeff Showalter, Goshen Community Bank
Barb Swartley, Century 21

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Papa John's
Pizza Hut
South Side Soda Shop
Wal-Mart

GOSHEN NEIGHBORHOOD GAMES



East Lincoln Crossroads neighbors cheer after correctly answering a "Jeopardy" question focusing on river and watershed education.



Neighbors from Historic Racemere Peninsula wait for their turn to play.



Members of the Shanklin Millrace team get ready for the games to begin.



Grace Hunsberger gives starting instructions.

Your donations make our work possible!

Donations can be made online at

www.lacasagoshen.org or call 574-533-4450.

Thank you for joining with LaCasa to help families
and improve neighborhoods!



LaCasa Listens

by Larry Gautsche, *President/CEO*

These are challenging times for many families in our community. Unemployment and underemployment continue at disproportionately high levels in Elkhart and surrounding counties. Helping families maintain their housing, both homeowners and families who rent, stretches LaCasa's resources. Despite the tough times, every day I am reminded of the resilience and generosity of our community. Following are a few examples from the last few months:

- Donated former rental properties at 1014 S. 11th St. and 513 E. Washington, both in Goshen, have been completely renovated, primarily by volunteers. These energy efficient homes are now available at very affordable prices.
- A local family donated their van, which sold for \$2,200, to support LaCasa programs.
- 370 volunteers turned out on a cold day for the 19th annual Help-A-Housesm community work day to help 17 families with home repairs and complete additional LaCasa projects.
- Despite the poor economy, Help-A-Housesm donations continue to come in from our very generous business partners to support volunteer efforts throughout the year.
- Donations received this month from Bank of America (\$10,000) and Old National Bank (\$15,000) will support LaCasa's Homeownership Center. A gift from Goshen Health Systems (\$10,000) will also support Home Ownership Programs.

LaCasa was recently visited by a review team from NeighborWorks America, to update our national accreditation. One of the many areas highlighted as "exceeding expectations" was the level of community support, both in terms of financial support, volunteer involvement and local partnerships. Also noted was that for every dollar of expense in 2008, LaCasa generated \$7.80 investment in our community. This rate of return is twice the national average for community development organizations and a credit to our community volunteers and business partners.

Immigration— Salvador's Struggle

Salvador's calloused hands and weathered skin show the years of hard work he has endured. He asserts that his job is what keeps him going. The owner of the landscape and design business, where Salvador works, gives glowing remarks on his performance. Salvador originally came to the U.S. in his early 20s to better provide for his family back home in Mexico. He became a Legal Permanent Resident in the United States in 1989, allowing him to live and work in the U.S. and still travel back to his hometown to see his family. He and his girlfriend maintained their relationship on annual visits he made to Mexico for one or two weeks at a time. In 1998, a beautiful baby girl was born to the couple. While ecstatic about his new family, Salvador could only catch glimpses of his child's life as he continued to work and live in the U.S. in order to maintain his Immigration Status. In 2001, Salvador, tired of the separation from his family, began the immigration process to bring his wife and daughter to live with him here.

Because Salvador is a Permanent Resident, federal immigration law requires that his family members be put into a preference, or waiting, system which unfortunately consists of backlogs and delays. The family members are required to wait until a visa number becomes available to them in order to join their families in the U.S. Visa numbers, initially became available for Salvador's family in July 2007, six years after starting the process. He gathered the documentation, and LaCasa Immigration Counselors worked with him to submit the evidence and pay the required visa fees in order for his family to finally come. But after all of the preparations, the visa numbers suddenly fell and were no longer available to him. He was back to waiting.



LaCasa's Board of Directors play a vital role in determining the direction LaCasa takes. They meet the 4th Monday of each month.

*First Row: Regina Roberson, Lori Cline, Tony Cano & June Gingerich Yoder
Back Row: Art Stoltzfus, Chad Stoltzfus, Mel Claassen, David Daugherty
Not Pictured: David Eash, Rich Hooton, Jenna Mejia*

Then in November 2008, we received the good news that visas were again available. He was required to re-gather the documentation. A sponsor was also needed; someone who could submit an Affidavit of Support, stating that he/she would sponsor the family members to ensure that they would not become dependent on the government. Salvador's boss willingly stepped forward, saying "I would die for this guy; Salvador has done so much for us." LaCasa counselors prepared the affidavit and mailed the completed visa packets to the Visa Center. At the end of June LaCasa received a notice from the U.S. Consulate in Mexico that the appointment was scheduled for the family.

After years of waiting and working through immigration requirements, Salvador will be going to Mexico for another week this August. This time however, he'll return with his family rather than saying another dreaded goodbye as he departs.

New Staff

LaCasa has three new staff helping us to accomplish great things. Ruthann Tucker and Lavonn Hostetler work in our Finance Department. Julia King is filling in as LaCasa's Goshen Community Organizer while Grace Hunsberger is on maternity leave.

Ruthann—"I've spent my adult life in Elkhart County and brought almost 40 years of experience in the private sector, primarily in accounting, to the Finance Department. I'm thankful to have been selected for this position and to be working for such a wonderful organization that truly makes a difference in people's lives."

Julia King—"I come to LaCasa after years of community involvement in Goshen. I bring with me a devotion to neighborhoods and a belief in the importance of civic engagement and responsive local government. A long-time admirer of LaCasa, I'm thrilled to be working with the organization."

Lavonn—"I began my career working nearly eight years in public accounting. I moved on to serve as a controller, first for a non-profit organization, and then for a manufacturing company. I am now enjoying a new challenge as controller of LaCasa. Its' multiple programs provide plenty of good opportunities to learn new things. I especially appreciate the expertise and friendliness of the staff as well as how the services LaCasa provides are so relevant to the needs of the community."



Shown in picture: Ruthann Tucker, Financial Assistant, Julia King, Interim Community Organizer and Lavonn Hostetler, Controller.

LaCasa would be happy to share the story of our programs with your group.

Please call Bonnie at 533-4450 to set up a time.

LaCasa News is published 4 times a year by LaCasa, Inc. Bonnie Martin, Editor. Contributing writers: Larry Gautsche, Monica Newcomer Miller, Ruthann Tucker, Julia King and Lavonn Hostetler. 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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LaCasa, Inc.
Helping Families—Improving Neighborhoods



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