Hunger is something we think only happens in Third World countries. According to the Feeding America 2010 Hunger Report, one in eight Americans rely on them for food, through their partners, “Food Banks”. Food banks were created to encourage large suppliers to donate and to serve as a central point of collection for manufacturers, distribution centers, retailers, and the government who donate food by the semi-truckload. Most pantries are not equipped to handle food donations of that caliber. In turn, food banks distribute the food to hundreds of food pantries that provide direct services to people in need.

Hunger is something that is happening right here in Boone County. The Caring Center (a food pantry) and the KAT (Kids at the Table) program strive to reduce childhood hunger in Boone County. In 2010, The Caring Center helped 2,366 families, which represents 7,661 individuals and of those 3,308 were children. Over 70 tons of food was distributed to needy families right here in Boone County. Our goal is to ensure that every child goes to bed food secure.

Why are children hungry? Most childhood hunger is caused by lack of income and lack of information about programs that they are eligible for. We are engaging in a robust effort to educate our families on programs that they are eligible for and encouraging them to enroll.

The impact on low income families is clear. Earnings for the lower-income families have been stagnant in recent years, but the same cannot be said of costs. Housing prices, food, and energy costs continue to skyrocket. This has put a tremendous stress on these families to keep food on the table. That’s where we, as a community, can help.

What can I do to help? The Caring Center has been aggressive by taking steps to combat childhood hunger and to address their nutritional needs with the help of our community donors. For example, frozen foods and refrigerated items are now distributed to our clients daily due to the recent donations of a 15’x15’ walk-in cooler/freezer and a 4’x2’ refrigerated unit. Items, such as fresh fruit and vegetables, milk and other dairy products, fresh and frozen meats, etc., are needed so we can continue to address reducing childhood hunger in Boone County. As I once read, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world: indeed it's the only thing that ever has.”

Step up to the plate – Get Involved, Volunteer, Donate!
SUCCESS THROUGH OPPORTUNITY

Opportunity is the luxury of a productive society. Our Constitution protects it, our laws promote it, and our institutions – public and private – provide it. It is, in essence, the purpose of The Caring Center to sustain the individual and family in crisis and assist them in transitioning to a condition where they may seize the opportunities available to them to improve themselves and their families.

The Caring Center is working hard to provide options to our clients that will maximize the opportunities available to them. We do this through the community’s donations in the thousands – thousands of caring hours, thousands of pounds of food, thousands of dollars, and thousands of prayers. Pragmatically we do this by addressing the youngest generation first through improved education and exposure to acceptable social principles through KAT. The family is the next target of support. By providing for some essential needs – food and clothing and furnishings – the stress to the family budget and need is lessened. The food pantry, clothing assistance, and Classic Reruns provide these opportunities.

The adult, as family provider, is the third focus of The Caring Center. As 2011 unfolds, we hope to introduce tools these clients will use to improve themselves so as to be better informed, educated, and acclimated to tackle the challenges presented daily.

Success in all three targeted areas will be measured by the increased opportunity generated for each and all of The Caring Center’s clients.

With humble gratitude and great amazement, on behalf of The Caring Center – its Board, staff, volunteers, and most of all its clients, I thank all of the generous donors to The Caring Center. For those who donated their talents, for those who donated their treasure – from socks to sofas; from pennies to plenty; for those who donated their time, for those who donated their prayers, thank you. Please continue to support The Caring Center as we move forward pursuing opportunity for all in Boone County.

— Mike Einterz, Board President

Here we grow again!

Since the inception of the Community Gardens in 2004, we estimate over a thousand pounds of fresh organic produce has been distributed to help needy families. This helps to address their nutritional needs on a daily basis. We are thrilled to have the ability to provide fresh produce to the clients with the help of master gardeners and volunteers.

The Caring Center has now been selected by the Communities Take Root Program (CTRP) as a finalist to receive a fruit tree and berry shrub orchard (up to 20 trees and shrubs) this summer. The CTRP is a cooperative effort between the Fruit Tree Planting Foundation and Dreyer’s Grand Ice Cream, Inc. As a finalist, The Caring Center will be listed on a national website (www.communitystakeroot.com) starting April 15, 2011, for the public to vote on where the orchards will be awarded.

From April through August (for a total of four rounds), the five non-profit organizations with the highest vote totals in each round will be announced as winners. A total of 20 winners across the country will receive orchards this year. Rita Boje will be submitting a short essay about The Caring Center and a photograph of the proposed orchard location will be included on the website.

Starting April 15, The Caring Center will need our entire community to register a vote each day at the website mentioned above to nominate us for receipt of the orchard. The fruit trees and berry shrubs are not only beautiful in the spring, but will also provide an additional variety to the fresh produce for our food pantry. As the trees and shrubs mature, this orchard may even be a way to raise money for The Caring Center programs by offering the produce to the general public in return for donations.

Remember to cast your vote!

“God has created us to do small things with great love. I believe that great love, from the heart, should start at home: with my family, my neighbors across the street, those right next door. And this love should then reach everyone.” —Mother Teresa
Feeding Our Future developments

GROWING NEED
We continued to feel the effects of the Great Recession here in Boone County in 2010 with many signs pointing to the increased poverty in our community. More families are living below the poverty line. Unemployment is higher. Food stamp usage grew significantly. The Caring Center experienced an increase of 11% in the amount of food it distributed from 2009 to 2010. In the spring of 2010, the free and reduced rate at Hattie B. Stokes increased to over 70%. All in all, the need for help for low income families and children grew as more and more people suffered through these bad times. Thankfully, our community has responded to this increased need in a variety of ways with generous assistance.

FOOD PROVIDERS CONTINUE TO HELP
The work of many private food providers continued and increased during the year. Many churches distribute food in a variety of ways. Some have a regular food distribution every week to whoever needs help. Some help individual families directly. Others distribute food with help from national organizations such as Angel Food Ministries. Some help whoever knocks on their door for emergency assistance. And some provide food boxes during the holiday seasons. The “What’s for Lunch” program along with several other similar groups provide lunch to children when school is out. Many civic and business organizations also contribute significantly to food drives during the year. And, of course, private citizens give both food and financially to help families. All these groups and individuals have seen the need increase during the past year and have responded generously with increased aid to help families and their children become food secure.

HATTIE B. STOKES
There were two significant enhancements to the food distribution at the Hattie B. Stokes school last year. First, breakfast is now served at the school to all children in their classrooms. This “Universal” breakfast program provides nutritious food to all students at the start of the school day. Second, a food pantry available to all parents each Friday for the weekend needs of their families was opened. It is staffed by volunteers from our community. The food is supplied by the Gleaners food bank. About 90 or so families make use of this every Friday the school is in session. Of course, the KAT program for suppers along with the regular free and reduced lunches both continue. All of this work means that the needy children attending Hattie B. Stokes are on the road to food security.

LEBANON AREA BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB
The Lebanon Area Boys and Girls Club is now providing supper meals for about 70 children every week day, year round. This is in addition to the lunches provided at the Club during the summers and the breakfasts and lunches provided during school breaks when the schools are not in session. These food programs are a key part of helping the needy children who are clients of the Club become food secure.

CARING CENTER
The Caring Center has made several improvements to its food pantry. A new cooler now allows the distribution of fresh dairy products to clients. In addition, a very generous donor paid for the installation of an industrial size freezer unit so that The Caring Center can now receive and store frozen food, including meat in large quantities, for the first time. The cooler and the freezer are key parts of The Caring Center’s work to improve the quality of the food it provides clients. In addition, The Caring Center will start a new program, called Table Talk, to help a group of 20 families better manage their food resources. Meeting twice monthly, this group will discuss their own food situations, attend cooking and nutrition classes and review expense budgeting techniques. Also, the food pantry at The Caring Center will provide enough food to each family so that they are completely food secure. And through these discussions we will learn more about the challenges families face in providing enough for their children.

GOAL FOR 2019
Our 2019 goal remains to eliminate childhood hunger in Boone County. We want each family in the county to have access to high quality food so that all children have enough nutritious food to eat. We believe that the best way to do this is by providing a wide variety of flexible and easily assessable programs and food sources to supplement the family’s own diet.

Feeding Our Future developments

GROWING NEED
We continued to feel the effects of the Great Recession here in Boone County in 2010 with many signs pointing to the increased poverty in our community. More families are living below the poverty line. Unemployment is higher. Food stamp usage grew significantly. The Caring Center experienced an increase of 11% in the amount of food it distributed from 2009 to 2010. In the spring of 2010, the free and reduced rate at Hattie B. Stokes increased to over 70%. All in all, the need for help for low income families and children grew as more and more people suffered through these bad times. Thankfully, our community has responded to this increased need in a variety of ways with generous assistance.

FOOD PROVIDERS CONTINUE TO HELP
The work of many private food providers continued and increased during the year. Many churches distribute food in a variety of ways. Some have a regular food distribution every week to whoever needs help. Some help individual families directly. Others distribute food with help from national organizations such as Angel Food Ministries. Some help whoever knocks on their door for emergency assistance. And some provide food boxes during the holiday seasons. The “What’s for Lunch” program along with several other similar groups provide lunch to children when school is out. Many civic and business organizations also contribute significantly to food drives during the year. And, of course, private citizens give both food and financially to help families. All these groups and individuals have seen the need increase during the past year and have responded generously with increased aid to help families and their children become food secure.

HATTIE B. STOKES
There were two significant enhancements to the food distribution at the Hattie B. Stokes school last year. First, breakfast is now served at the school to all children in their classrooms. This “Universal” breakfast program provides nutritious food to all students at the start of the school day. Second, a food pantry available to all parents each Friday for the weekend needs of their families was opened. It is staffed by volunteers from our community. The food is supplied by the Gleaners food bank. About 90 or so families make use of this every Friday the school is in session. Of course, the KAT program for suppers along with the regular free and reduced lunches both continue. All of this work means that the needy children attending Hattie B. Stokes are on the road to food security.

LEBANON AREA BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB
The Lebanon Area Boys and Girls Club is now providing supper meals for about 70 children every week day, year round. This is in addition to the lunches provided at the Club during the summers and the breakfasts and lunches provided during school breaks when the schools are not in session. These food programs are a key part of helping the needy children who are clients of the Club become food secure.

CARING CENTER
The Caring Center has made several improvements to its food pantry. A new cooler now allows the distribution of fresh dairy products to clients. In addition, a very generous donor paid for the installation of an industrial size freezer unit so that The Caring Center can now receive and store frozen food, including meat in large quantities, for the first time. The cooler and the freezer are key parts of The Caring Center’s work to improve the quality of the food it provides clients. In addition, The Caring Center will start a new program, called Table Talk, to help a group of 20 families better manage their food resources. Meeting twice monthly, this group will discuss their own food situations, attend cooking and nutrition classes and review expense budgeting techniques. Also, the food pantry at The Caring Center will provide enough food to each family so that they are completely food secure. And through these discussions we will learn more about the challenges families face in providing enough for their children.

GOAL FOR 2019
Our 2019 goal remains to eliminate childhood hunger in Boone County. We want each family in the county to have access to high quality food so that all children have enough nutritious food to eat. We believe that the best way to do this is by providing a wide variety of flexible and easily assessable programs and food sources to supplement the family’s own diet.
The Caring Center addresses hunger issues every day. We appreciate your continued help and support in reaching our goal of, “Reducing Childhood Hunger In Boone County”.

To find out more ways to support families in need, please visit www.thecaringcenter.net

1230 Ransdell Court
Lebanon, IN 46052