

COMMUNITY LINC

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*Developing self-sufficient communities
& families for nearly 25 years*



December 2012

Please remember Community LINC

As you celebrate this special time of year and plan your yearend giving and Taxes. Please consider a gift that will end homelessness for a child.

Hope for the Holidays



Your support allows us to give hope to families who desperately need it. "Hope" is the feeling that is very important during the holidays, a season that can be very scary for homeless families in Kansas City.

Samantha grew up in a home with severe mental illness. While moving back and forth between various family members, Samantha attended 11 different high schools. Her dad had been in and out of prison during most of her childhood. Not surprisingly, Samantha's life became chaotic.

She did the best she could to survive, but found herself pregnant with twin girls at age 19. Jordyn and Jayde were born six weeks premature, and soon thereafter they were homeless. Samantha met a friend at church who recommended she contact Community LINC. Within weeks Samantha and her girls moved into their new apartment.

Life before Community LINC was hard. "It was stressful," Samantha said. "I never knew what was going to happen next." Community LINC gave Samantha the ability to hope. She continued, "I love the community. I love the staff. I love the classes and the opportunity that has been given to me."

Samantha continues to meet every one of her goals that she established with

the help of Tammy, her Family Coach. Samantha loves the Life Skills classes that provide the foundation she was previously lacking. Within just a few weeks Samantha found a full-time job as a Customer Service Representative. Her 3-year-old daughters love their new school and never miss the daily opportunity to tell Mom what they learned.

People who experience homelessness are no different than people who don't experience it. They love their families, and they want opportunities to work and to be able to provide for their families. On behalf of everyone at Community LINC, thank you for your support, and thank you for your desire to help people like Samantha find hope!

As you consider your year-end contributions and tax planning, please remember Community LINC. You can give a family like Samantha's the gift of self-sufficiency.

Laura Gray
Executive Director

Community LINC recently received funding through the Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City to upgrade the electrical service in all six of our buildings. We successfully completed this project on October 25th!

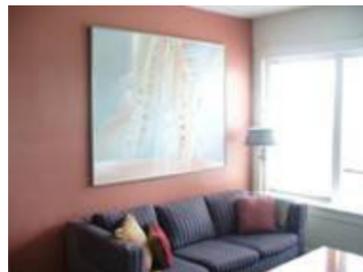
Did You Know ...

- According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, Missouri has recently experienced the fourth largest increase in family homelessness out of all 50 states.
- In Missouri the number of students known to be living in motels or hotels jumped 140 percent from 2007 to 2012.
- According to the National Center on Family Homelessness, Missouri has 256,000 children living in poverty. Fifty-nine percent of Missouri's children living in families with incomes below the poverty level are White/non-Hispanic; 33% are Black/non-Hispanic; and seven percent are Hispanic.
- Untreated mental illness has substantial costs on both the public and private sector. According to the Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City, Greater Kansas City has 94,478 cases of untreated mental illness.
- Overall, the annual cost burden of untreated serious mental illness to Missouri is estimated to be \$2.5 billion.
- According to the National Center on Family Homelessness, a two-bedroom unit priced at the Fair Market Rent (FMR) falls outside of the financial reach of a full-time worker earning minimum wage in Missouri. One wage earner earning the state's minimum wage (\$7.25) would need to work nearly 70 hours per week for 52 weeks per year to afford a two-bedroom apartment at FMR.
- Officials estimate that about 2,255 Johnson County, Kansas residents are homeless and that many of those are families with children. They are among the 36,000 residents in Johnson County who live in poverty.
- Most of those who seek help are working parents. About 70 percent of the homeless families in Johnson County are working at least 30 hours a week.

We Need You!

Do you or your work team or friends have a day you can give to Community LINC? We have several big projects we need help with.

- Preparing program space for our kids
- Deep clean all the children's centers
- If units are empty, help us prepare a unit for a homeless family



If you can help call Teresa at 816-595-5553 or email her at tmclain@communitylinc.org

Believe

by Teresa McClain

Remember being a teenager and attending a concert by your favorite idol? If you were like me, your hormones went crazy when swooning over Elvis or another famous musician. In those days the price of a concert ticket was \$5 to \$15. Today the average price of a concert ticket is over \$35. When teen heartthrob Justin Bieber came to the Sprint Center recently, some of the tickets sold for over \$300 to \$500 apiece!

Imagine being a teenager living at Community LINC where your family is rebuilding their life. Attending a huge concert is nothing but a dream, a dream that seems completely beyond reach! Because of one generous donor, this dream became a reality for four lucky girls.

Recently Community LINC held the annual Rent Party, our annual fundraiser. One of our packages was the Justin Bieber Suite for 16 guests with unlimited food and drink. Faithful friends of Community LINC, Mike and Karen Decola, joined the bidding war to buy the package for their granddaughter. The Decola's won the final bid at a very hefty price. Unbelievably, they decided to share their good fortune with four lucky girls who live at Community LINC.

The theme of the Justin Bieber tour this year was "Believe," and I can't help but imagine that these girls felt like the luckiest girls on earth as our Housing Coordinator, Julie, and Intern, Sara, chaperoned them. Julie shared the girls' experience:

"The girls were quiet as church mice when we first picked them up, but a few minutes into the car ride two of the girls made up a song and sang it the entire way there. Once at the Sprint Center, the girls had fun posing for photos in front of the Justin Bieber billboard.

"Because we were in a suite, we went to a separate entrance. They scanned our tickets, the door unlocked and a voice said, 'Welcome to the Sprint Center. Your suite is now open.' The girls eyes grew very large and they giggled!

"When we got into the suite, Mike and his family greeted us. They were very excited to meet the girls. The girls were timid at first, seemingly overwhelmed by their surroundings. The suite was supplied with a refrigerator full of soda, pizza, vegetables, chips and dip, popcorn, and a table full of candy. The girls went right for the candy!

"Before Justin Bieber was scheduled to start, Mike took the girls to buy Justin

Bieber t-shirts. Each of the girls was thrilled to pick out her own shirt. When we got back to the suites, all four girls immediately changed into them.

"The girls were glued to the front of the balcony waiting for Justin Bieber to come onstage. Imagine 10 girls standing side-by-side in close quarters gazing at the big screen and counting down to that final moment. When the countdown was at one minute, the whole crowd started screaming and our girls were jumping up and down in crazed exuberance!

"During the entire concert, the girls stayed at the post right at the front of the balcony, dancing and singing along. They never moved from their spots. They were absolutely mesmerized by Justin.

"After all of the excitement, the girls were still giddy during the ride home. It took about 20 minutes in traffic for them to fall silent and half-asleep. One of the girls said, 'I had so much fun tonight. It was way better than I ever thought!'"

It's fitting that Justin's concert theme was "Believe". Because of this generous donor, four young girls probably now believe that all things are possible thanks to generosity and community!



Rent Party Impact!



A very special thanks to the 2012 Rent Party Sponsors!

Honorary Sponsor
 Karen and Hank Herrmann

Presenting Sponsor
 Diana and Bart N. Miller

Honorary Founding Chair
 Reimer Family Foundation

Event Co-Chairs
 Missy and Robert Kroeker
 Toni and Phil Sanders

Thank you for making The Rent Party a huge success! On behalf of the families we serve at Community LINC, we would like to express our deepest appreciation to those who supported the Rent Party.

We are thankful you chose to invest in your community. Kansas City has experienced the fourth-largest increase in family homelessness in the United States, and your support will make an impact!

You can take pride that your dollars are investing in a program model that works! Consider these facts:

- 80% of the families who left for permanent housing since 2007 have not become homeless again.
- From 2007 to 2011, the families who exited our program increased their taxable income by a total of \$620K and decreased their dependence on public assistance by a total of \$190K. If everyone who left between 2007 and 2011 kept the jobs they had when they exited, the cumulative impact would have been a \$2.2M increase in taxable income and a \$590K decrease in public assistance.

Your donations will go directly to support our mission to end homelessness, impact poverty, and remove barriers to self-sufficiency for the families we serve. Our board and staff set an ambitious fundraising goal, and thanks to the compassion and generosity of donors like you, the Rent Party, our signature fundraising event, was a success! Plans are already underway for Rent Party 2013! We would welcome suggestions on how to improve our event. If you have time, please send your comments to development@communitylinc.org.

We have set a tentative date of **Saturday, September 28th** for the 2013 Rent Party. Please mark your calendar to join us next year!

Laura Gray
 CEO



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Corrine's Story

When Corrine came to us, she had spent most of high school moving from place to place and sleeping on couches. Homeless, she and her mother moved to an emergency shelter before they found Community LINC.

While at Community LINC Corrine's mother paid her debts, obtained full-time employment and permanently stabilized her own housing. Corrine also took advantage of the program classes and learned she could break the cycle of homelessness and poverty by considering college.

Four years later Corrine is in her third year of college with an outstanding GPA! A first generation college student, she has her own apartment and gives back to Community LINC by volunteering with the infants and toddlers on program nights.

