

COMMUNITY LINC

Ending homelessness. Transforming lives.



Our Mission

To end homelessness, impact poverty, and remove barriers to self-sufficiency for the families we serve.

Our Vision

A Kansas City free of family homelessness.

Our Beliefs

- We believe we should give a hand up rather than a hand out.
- We believe it is important to have a lasting impact on few rather than a short impact on many.
- We are most successful with homeless families who are committed to changing their lives.



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History of Community LINC

In May 1986, a group of citizens from three local churches began meeting to discuss the plight of the working poor and homeless families in the urban core of Kansas City. They had a vision to offer programs to break the cycle of poverty and end homelessness.

In 1987, the first governing body was established and the name LINC (Living In New Community) was adopted. In 1988, LINC was granted a 501(c)(3) status, and the organization was born. The program's first official home was an apartment building at 32nd and Warwick with four units available for homeless families.

In September 1991, HUD approved relocation to three apartment buildings at 4012-14, 4016-18, and 4028-30 Troost at no cost. In the 1990's, the word "Community" was officially added to the name, becoming "Community LINC."

Twenty-six years later, Community LINC owns 36 units, has an annual budget over \$2.2 million, and serves approximately 150 families a year.

Executive Staff



Laura Gray
CEO/Executive Director
816-595-5554
lgray@communitylinc.org



Teresa McClain
Director of Fund Development
816-595-5553
tmclain@communitylinc.org



Jeannine Short
Director
of Programs
816-595-5550
jshort@communitylinc.org



JoAnne Owens
Director of Operations
816-595-5552
jaowens@communitylinc.org

Why are so many families homeless?

Poverty

- Among the nation's working families, 10 million are poor.
- 24 million U.S. jobs (one-fifth of all jobs) do not keep a family of four out of poverty.
- The federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour leaves even a single full-time wage earner living below the federal poverty line.
- The poverty rate for single-mother families was 40% in 2013, five times the rate for married-couple families. Only one-third of single mothers receive any child support (2014).



Affordable Housing

- 6.8 million units are needed to fill the gap in affordable housing for low-income households.
- Housing costs outpace wages. A full-time worker earning minimum wage cannot afford a one-bedroom unit at the Fair Market Rent anywhere in the United States. Nationally, a full-time worker must earn \$18.25 an hour to afford a two-bedroom unit at Fair Market Rent.
- The average wait for public housing is 1-3 years. The average wait for a Section 8 Voucher is 35 months.
- Federal support for low-income housing has fallen 49% since 1980.

Domestic Violence

- Nine out of ten homeless mothers have experienced severe physical or sexual assault at some point in their lives.
- Over 80% of survivors entering shelters identified "finding housing I can afford" as a need, second only to "safety for myself" (85%).

Who are the homeless families?

- The average homeless family is a mother in her late 20's with two children.
- Many family shelters do not accept men into their programs, causing families to separate when they become homeless.
- Twenty-nine percent of adults in homeless families are working.
- Forty-two percent of children in homeless families are under age six.
- Families experiencing homelessness are usually part of the 40 million American adults who do not have a high-school diploma or G.E.D.



Housing Programs

Interim Housing Program

In the 13-month Interim Housing Program, families live onsite for four months in a fully furnished apartment. Upon entry into the program, adults take a self-sufficiency assessment. Each family is assigned a Family Coach who partners to help them achieve their short- and long-term goals. A Housing Specialist works with families to transition them to permanent housing. While living onsite, adults and children participate in supportive services aimed at building self-sufficiency.

Each family lives in an apartment at no cost and with utilities paid. Families are required to save 50% of their income to reduce the debt that prevents them from obtaining permanent housing and to save for rent and utility deposits for permanent housing.

Prior to leaving Community LINC, participants meet with Case Managers to ensure they understand next steps and secure wraparound services, such as food stamps, childcare, TANF, mental health care, etc. Once families exit to permanent housing, they continue to receive wraparound services for nine months.

Immediate Housing

In the 9-month Immediate Housing Program, families meet with our Intake Specialist upon their entrance to Community LINC. Families identified to have fewer barriers to housing enter our Immediate Housing program. These families meet with the Housing Specialist to identify housing priorities, preferences and action steps to be self-sufficient. Families are then moved directly into permanent housing and provided nine months of Aftercare Services that deliver the same core competencies as our Interim Housing program. Participation is not mandatory, but we have high involvement rates.

Aftercare

In-home Aftercare Services last nine months and begin with weekly meetings with Case Managers. Lack of support during this crucial period often results in recurrent homelessness. Community LINC employs the Critical-Time Intervention case management model, which involves focused, time-limited assistance during the family's critical transition to community living. After three months, meetings move to bi-weekly. Aftercare Case Managers link families with community resources and provide ongoing advocacy. Meetings move to monthly for the last three months. Families are expected to use the support network established throughout the entire program.

Core Competencies

Housing Services

Our first goal for each family is for them to realize that their homelessness will end. Our Housing Specialist meets with families upon entry to create a targeted goal plan to remove barriers to achieve permanent housing.

Employment Services

Our Employment Services Center is staffed 40 hours per week and assists participants with job searches, completing applications, developing a resume, and mock interviews. Unemployed residents spend 20 hours a week in the Employment Center until employment is secured.

Budgeting

One-on-one sessions with volunteer budget counselors teach adults financial management. Housing and utilities at Community LINC are free, however residents are required to save 50 percent of their income to pay down debt and save for permanent housing. Most residents have no experience with budgeting; making this is a critical program component.

Coaching

Each family works with a Family Coach to identify and work toward short- and long-term goals. Coaches help families work through challenges, identify barriers, celebrate successes, and develop skills necessary for maintaining self-sufficiency.

Life Skills and Healthy Lifestyles Classes

Classes cover topics included in the vast array of challenges faced in day-to-day living, such as parenting, time management, conflict resolution, housekeeping, life insurance, job retention, healthy eating, meal preparation, safe sex and domestic violence. Topics are covered in-depth and time is allowed for role-play, questions, and discussion.

Adult and Children Mental Wellness Counseling

Masters-level trained therapists help residents break through the barriers to self-sufficiency, many of which arise from profound trauma. Therapists use trauma-centered care to provide counseling for adults and children.

Children's Programs

We deliver programming in life and resilience skills and academic support and tutoring for the hundreds of children we serve each year. The goal is to address the deficiencies that perpetuate the cycle of poverty.



Outcomes and Results

Why we're successful

Our programs follow proven, Evidence-Based models, and our data collection and analysis drive continuous program improvement.

Housing Placement (and indirectly Employment Services) **ends homelessness** by convincing landlords to take a risk on our families.

Employment Services **impacts poverty** and increases **self-sufficiency** by equipping clients to find and keep a job.

Budgeting & Financial Education show parents how to manage money, often for the first time.

Family Coaching (Case Management), Aftercare, Mental Wellness Counseling & Healthy Lifestyles, and Life Skills classes **remove barriers to self-sufficiency** by preparing parents to be responsible for themselves and provide for their children.

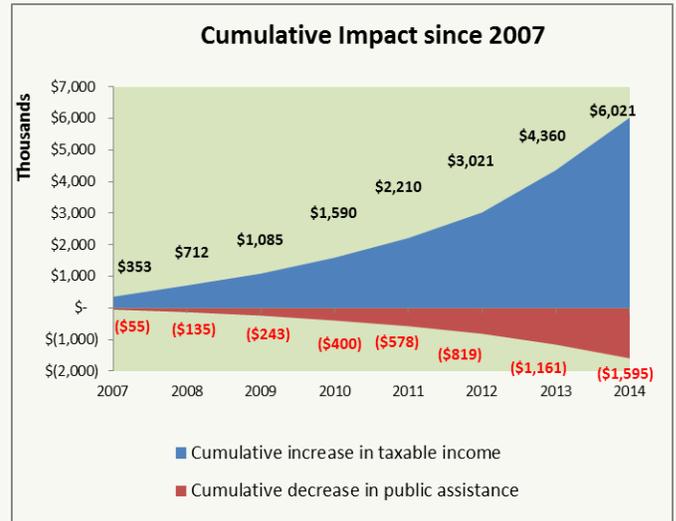
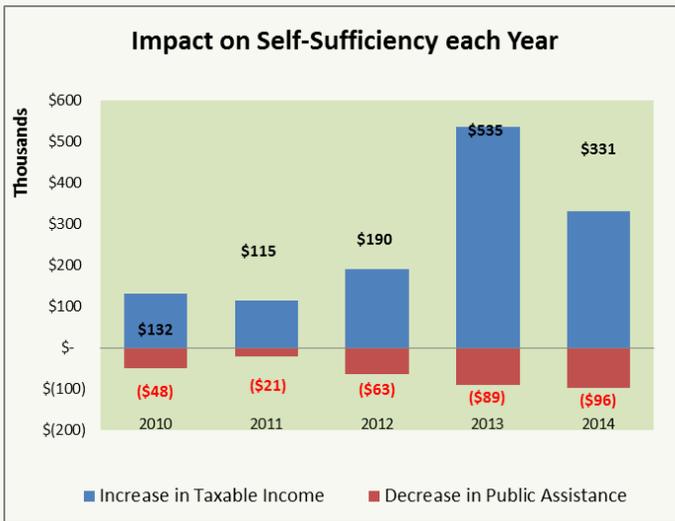
Children's resilience and life skills, academic assistance, and Mental Wellness Counseling reduce the damage of homelessness and awaken children to new life options.

As stewards over our resources, we are very careful to screen and make sure we serve the most vulnerable homeless families.



Client Community Impact

Cumulative Economic Impact since 2007:



In 2014, our Housing Programs provided 25,521 bed nights of shelter serving 423 people, including 123 families and 315 children and achieved the following results:

- The most significant outcome Community LINC achieved is our 94% success rate. A five-year study from 2008-2013 shows that 94% of the families who left for permanent housing in the last 5 years did not become homeless again.
- 2013 was the best year since 2007 for increases in client taxable income and for the percent of families exiting above the poverty level.
- If all families sustained their increases in income from 2007 to 2013 and decreased dependence on public assistance since they exited, the cumulative economic impact would be nearly \$6 million in ADDITIONAL taxable income and \$1.5 million LESS in public assistance going to these families.
- Increased Financial Security – whether or not families leave for permanent housing, nearly all made progress in resolving judgments (debts adjudicated by the courts) and retiring delinquent debts.

The McPhersons

Pregnancy is a wonderful, magical time that can also be scary for all mothers. Preparing to provide for your baby is time-consuming and stressful, especially when you already have three children. Tomeka was experiencing all of this when both she and her boyfriend, Tyree lost their jobs. Bills began piling up and their financial difficulties multiplied before they could find new work. Before they knew it, they went from stable and independent to homeless.

Tomeka was in her third trimester of pregnancy living with her family of five in their car when they were referred to Community LINC. The family was in debt, and Tyree encountered legal issues, furthering their housing barriers. They were lost and scared, but Community LINC provided them with a safe home for their children, and a chance to get back on their feet.

Soon after they entered Community LINC, baby Maria was welcomed into the world. A joyous and a frightening time, this family worked hard to gain stability.

They diligently participated in all of Community LINC's programs, including budgeting, life skills classes and employment services. With some assistance and new skills and resources, the family overcame all of their barriers. Since they exited for a home of their own last year, Tomeka received a promotion and has nearly doubled her pay. They are living independently and are on top of their finances. Recently, they met with a bank to discuss home loans, and are preparing to buy their own house!

The McPherson's not only ended their homelessness, they have thrived with their new skills and outlook on life, and are providing a stable and fulfilling path for their children.



How You Can Help

Speaking Opportunities

Help us spread the word. Invite us to speak to your social, civic, faith or corporate group!

Party Host

Host a party with family and/or friends to help share the good work of Community LINC or take up a financial or in-kind collection of bedding, cleaning supplies or children's items.

Volunteer

Making an impact may not take as much time as you think! Our success depends on the partnership between our volunteers, families and staff. **Individual and group opportunities include:**

- Help teach resilience and life skills in our children's program Tues/Thurs 5:45-7:15.
- Provide office help.
- Prepare apartments for new families.
- Assist with building maintenance and repairs.
- Assist with gardening and playground area.
- Serve on a professional committee.

If you are interested in contributing your time to Community LINC, please contact Lonny at volunteer@communitylinc.org or 816-531-5862 to learn more.

In-kind Donations

Each year, Community LINC provides housing to 150 families. Our families often need basic supplies to full their new homes. From necessities such as blankets, bath towels and diapers, to seasonal items such as school supplies or coats, our families have a wide range of material needs. **Our Wish List includes:**

- New/gently-used furniture and mattress sets
- Bedding and towels
- Kitchenware
- Bathroom and toiletry necessities
- Gift cards for groceries and or incentives for residents and their children
- Family sponsors during the holidays

Monetary Contributions

- \$25 can provide one day of shelter for one family.
- \$50 can provide warm bedding for one child.
- \$100 can provide one month of Children's Programming for one child.
- \$250 can provide one month of employment counseling and services.
- \$500 can provide four months of Aftercare Services for one family.
- \$1,000 can provide shelter for five families for one week.

Visit www.communitylinc.org to donate today!