

# LEGACY FOR OUR MISSION:

*For Our Children and the Future*

## HOLY FAMILY SHELTER PLANS LARGER FACILITY TO MEET GROWING DEMAND

**H**oly Family Shelter opened its doors in Indianapolis more than two decades ago to provide temporary emergency housing for people in need. Today, demand has outpaced the shelter and a larger, more modern facility is needed. Blueprints have already been drawn up for the center. “*Legacy for Our Mission*” funding will be instrumental in making this happen,” said Director Bill Bickel.

“The need for shelter has simply exceeded our capacity,” Bickel said. “We’re providing for the poorest of the poor in our community, and it is vital that we have adequate facilities to serve them.” A former convent designed for 25 nuns now houses nearly that many families every day.

“The new facility will allow us to greatly expand our services and programming,” Bickel said. “For instance, we’ll be able to accommodate 30 families, one-third more than we can today. We’ll have space for classrooms, so families won’t have to travel off-site for tutoring and other educational programs. And we’ll have a confidential space for legal consultation and for resident meetings that now must be conducted in the dining room, often while meals are being served.”

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The new shelter will be built on the grounds of Holy Trinity parish on the near west side of the city. “The site will be ideal for our clients who rely upon public transportation and social services, many of which are readily available nearby,” Bickel explained.

Holy Family Shelter provides emergency care for people going through difficult times. The numbers define the scope of the program: in 2006, the program served 306 homeless families that included 866 individuals, of whom 490 were children. The numbers also portray its success: 75 percent of



employable adults have found jobs and a similar percentage of families have improved their housing situation, according to Bickel.

Located on the near south side, the shelter has never closed its doors in its 23 years. It admits families 24 hours a day and is usually at its limit of 35 to 85 people (depending on the type of accommodation required) who may stay 30 to 45 days. Holy Family was the first shelter in Indianapolis to keep the entire family together, rather than sending the father to one shelter and the mother with children to another.

Demand for shelters in Indianapolis is part of a statewide problem, Bickel explained, that has only exacerbated with the closing of 30 such facilities in the last three years.

“Holy Family’s larger mission is to break the cycle that otherwise might lead to a life of homelessness and dependency,” said David Bethuram, associate executive director of Catholic Charities, which administers the shelter. “We try to address the multitude of issues these people face, from medical problems that threaten their jobs to lack of health insurance to domestic violence. Our program is designed to move homeless families to self-sufficiency.”

Families are the fastest growing segment of the homeless community, and affordable housing is required to address their needs. Since becoming director five years ago, Bickel said he has observed an “enormous” lack of such housing in the community, a problem that has only gotten worse. Construction of the new Holy Family Shelter is still in the future, Bickel added, but it can’t come too soon. The demand is so great, and continues to grow.

*Legacy for Our Mission, the archdiocesan capital campaign, is guided by the principles of Christian stewardship and addresses the needs of archdiocesan ministries such as Catholic Charities. By contributing to Legacy for Our Mission through your local parish, a portion of your gift will be allocated to Catholic Charities and distributed to programs such as Holy Family Shelter.*

Please visit the new online home of the *Legacy for Our Mission* campaign at [www.archindy.org/legacy](http://www.archindy.org/legacy). It can also be accessed at [www.LegacyforOurMission.org](http://www.LegacyforOurMission.org).

### Self-sufficiency—the Best Christmas Present

Christmas 2006 came early for a former Holy Family Shelter resident. Bickel told the story of “Lisa,” a 26-year-old single mother with a son, 9, who had struggled unsuccessfully with housing costs before turning to the shelter. In the first meeting with her case manager, Lisa thought she would be lectured for making bad decisions but instead was told the shelter staff was only concerned about the future for her and her son.

For the first time, Lisa said she felt motivated, supported and encouraged to make a better life for herself. Lisa’s case manager found her a job during her first week at the shelter and she has now enrolled in college. Her son continued to attend his same school and did not miss a single day. In mid-December, the two moved into their new home. Lisa says it was the best Christmas present she could receive—not just the home, but a real sense of self-sufficiency she did not previously have. Lisa describes the shelter staff as great motivators and very caring—her second family.