

ADVANCING EDUCATION  
INCOME AND HEALTH

EMERGENCY SHELTER FOR  
FAMILIES RIBBON CUTTING

# MEDIA PACKET



GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.

United Way of Champaign County  
[uwayhelps.org](http://uwayhelps.org)



# WELCOME HOME.

Family homelessness takes many forms. A mom with two children sleeping in a car. Two parents with children, “couchsurfing” between family and friends’ homes. Several years ago, the United Way office received a heartrending call about a family with school-age children that had made a home next to a dumpster.

The Emergency Shelter for Families at Maple Grove (ESF) is a dream realized. For so many years, service providers in Champaign County have lamented the lack of temporary, emergency shelter for homeless families with children – a place where a homeless family could go tonight.

Due to shelter regulations, it is often challenging to house a family all together – men and women often had to go to separate shelters. Some families declined shelter because they would have to split up. The opening of the ESF fills this gap in services and allows families with children facing homelessness to stay together in the same place.

It is important to note the difference between emergency shelter – a place to sleep tonight – and transitional housing, which is a long term program. There are several transitional programs in our community. They are excellent and often have wait lists.

The ESF is a wonderful example of people from all across the community coming together to solve a problem. The Lead Partners, along with the ESF Steering Team, have put thousands of hours and over one million dollars into this project. Two pilot programs were held that tested the model and allowed us to identify challenges and create the best program for our community.

Because of the many partners involved and the careful testing of the model during the pilot phase, we're confident that this program will be a great success and will result in many families securing permanent, stable housing.

## AGENDA

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| 10:45am         | Opening Remarks – <b>Sue Grey</b> , President & CEO, United Way of Champaign County  |
| 10:50am         | Remarks<br><b>Ed Bland</b> , Housing Authority of Champaign County<br><b>Lisa Benson</b> , Social Services Director, Champaign County Regional Planning Commission<br><b>Beverley Baker</b> , Director of Community Impact, United Way of Champaign County |
| 11:00am         | Ribbon Cutting   |
| 11:05am-12:00pm | Open House   |

# FACTSHEET

Full Name: **Emergency Shelter for Families at Maple Grove**

Tentative program opening date: **January 1, 2016**

## LEAD PARTNERS

Maple Grove Development Corporation, a non-profit related entity of the Housing Authority – Property Owner

Housing Authority of Champaign County – Management Agent and Funder

United Way of Champaign County – Convener and Program Funder

Champaign County Regional Planning Commission – Program Provider

## EMERGENCY SHELTER FOR FAMILIES STEERING TEAM

Council of Service Providers to the Homeless

Kerri Spear - City of Champaign

Kelly Mierkowski - City of Urbana

Regina Parnell - Champaign-Ford Counties Regional Office of Education

Katie Sissors - UIUC School of Social Work

Jason Greenly – Courage Connection

## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

There are 8 units: 7 two-bedroom units and one efficiency. There is an on-site office for a case manager.

Each 2-bedroom unit can house up to 6 family members.

The goal of the program is to provide short-term, emergency shelter for families with children for up to 30 days. During their time in the shelter, families will work directly with an onsite case manager to find safe, permanent housing and get on a path to self-sufficiency. Working with a case manager is a condition of housing.

The shelter is unique in the community because family members of all ages and sexes will be able to stay under one roof. It eliminates a need for families to split up to receive shelter. It is also unique because it is temporary emergency shelter, not transitional shelter.

Families will be referred to the program by nonprofits in the community. No self-referrals will be accepted.

The building has undergone a significant renovation, led by Housing Authority of Champaign County.

Furnishings were donated or provided at reduced cost by Roland Realty, Slumberland Furniture and Habitat for Humanity's ReStore. There is not a need for additional furnishings at this time.

United Way of Champaign County has committed to funding the program up to \$50,000 in year 1 and \$65,000 in year 2 and 3.

Individuals can donate to the Emergency Shelter for Families by making a gift to United Way of Champaign County's INCOME building block.

One of United Way's goals is to be able to have solid funding for case management for many years to come. Families, individuals or companies can make a 2-year commitment of \$50,000 (\$25,000 a year). This would provide case management for many years to come.

# HISTORY

## THE COMMUNITY CHALLENGE

For many years community leaders, concerned citizens, and service providers in Champaign County have heard about the need for emergency housing for families with children: stories of families doubled up in small apartments, and documented instances of children attending school while their families resorted to living in a car. Needless to say, homelessness is not conducive to a child's academic and social development, and creates stress. These children aren't worried about their next book report or test - they are worried about where they will sleep tonight. These worries can become barriers to success in school and can affect a child's chances to graduate from high school. According to the Regional Office of Education, last year in Champaign County 676 school-aged children were homeless.

It is important to note the difference between emergency and transitional housing. Emergency housing is temporary and immediate, while transitional housing is designed as a longer-term program. Transitional programs for families are available in our community. They often have a waiting list.

In 2011 United Way, who is a member of the Council of Service Providers to the Homeless, committed to bringing the right people to the table and studying the issue in-depth. A steering team was established. Many models were considered, including one involving churches and volunteers, but many obstacles were encountered. When the church model was deemed unsustainable, an RFP for a pilot program using hotels coupled with case management was developed.

## PILOT PROGRAM DETERMINES NEED

Pilot Phase I took place from February 2013 – August 2013. Pilot Phase II was offered from February 2014-September 2014. Case management was provided by Champaign County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) and was funded by United Way. Sixty-one unduplicated families were housed during Phase I and Phase II of the pilot project - 82 adults and 130 children. Over 200 families were turned away during the pilot due to lack of capacity. This pilot provided significant data and proved the need for emergency shelter for families with children in Champaign County.

## A PERMANENT SOLUTION

While the pilot served families, the steering team continued to investigate and research sustainable permanent models. In fall 2013, Housing Authority of Champaign County (HACC) stepped forward with a property they were actively pursuing. HACC offered 9 units to be used for the purpose of emergency shelter (8 for housing and 1 office for on-site case management).

In October 2013 HACC Board approved the purchase of the property and its' intended usages. From late 2013 - spring 2015 HACC actively pursued a grant and its requirements to renovate the property, and the first funds were granted in spring 2015. Significant renovation began shortly thereafter. During summer 2015, the Steering Team developed a program outline and released an RFP to provide permanent case management and shelter oversight. CCRPC was chosen to administer the program. Necessary agreements were signed and roles clarified as the shelter renovations came to a close.

The permanent Emergency Shelter for Families program is on track to open around January 1, 2016. Because of the many partners involved and the careful testing of the model during the pilot phase, we're confident that this program will be a great success and will result in many families securing permanent, stable housing.

# FACTS ABOUT CHAMPAIGN COUNTY

## HOMELESSNESS

Across Champaign County, 696 children were identified as homeless at some point over the 2014-2015 school year.

42% of homeless youth in Illinois are Pre-K age or younger, and another 42% are K - 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Displacement or frequent moving can result in 4-6 months of education lost.

*(Source: Champaign-Ford Regional Office of Education, United Way's 2015 community report)*

## FAIR-MARKET RENT AND RENT-BURDENED HOUSEHOLDS

As of 2014, the local assessed market value or fair market rent for rent of a two-bedroom residence in Champaign County is \$862 per month. However, an employee earning the mean (average) wage in our community can afford only \$487 per month.

An individual making minimum wage would have to work 73 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom apartment and utilities.

Across Champaign County, renters make up half of all households; one-third of these households are severely rent-burdened (50% or more of income is spent on housing).

*(Source: United Way's 2015 Community Report)*

The consistent number one reason people dial 2-1-1 in our community is for rent and utility assistance. This is also the top unmet need in our community.

*(Source: 2-1-1 Quarterly Reports)*

## SELF-SUFFICIENCY

A family or individual's ability to pay for their basic costs of living – such as food, housing, childcare, and transportation – without public or private assistance. Self-sufficiency rates vary with household size and composition, generally increasing with the number of family members.

The self-sufficiency wage, after taxes, in Champaign County for one adult and one child is \$33,336. The self-sufficiency wage, after taxes, in Champaign County for two adults and one child is \$29,940.

*(Source: United Way's 2015 Community Report)*

THE EMERGENCY SHELTER FOR FAMILIES AT MAPLE GROVE IS A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT BETWEEN



**Housing Authority  
of Champaign County**



**United Way  
of Champaign County**



THIS PROJECT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT FROM



**CHAMPAIGN-FORD REGIONAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION**

**COUNCIL OF SERVICE PROVIDERS TO THE HOMELESS**

FURNISHINGS PROVIDED BY



A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO



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(217) 789-9515

## **MISSION**

United Way of Champaign County brings people and resources together to create positive change and lasting impact in our community.

To do this we are...

- Galvanizing and connecting all sectors of society - individuals, businesses, nonprofit organizations and governments - to create long term social change that produces healthy, well-educated and financially-stable individuals and families.
- Raising, investing and leveraging millions of funds annually in philanthropic contributions to create and support innovative programs and approaches to generate sustained impact in local communities.
- Holding ourselves accountable to this cause through our steadfast commitment to continually measure - in real terms - improvement in education, income and health.

## **BUILDING BLOCKS FOR A GOOD LIFE**

### **EDUCATION**

United Way focuses on lifelong education strategies that provide a firm foundation at an early age and continue to help develop our children into successful adults who can contribute to their communities. Education is a cornerstone for success in school, work and life.

### **INCOME**

United Way empowers people to get on stable financial ground with proven methods like job training, financial wellness classes and more. We focus on lasting income solutions (that go beyond charity) to help people build skills and education necessary to get, keep and advance in a good job.

### **HEALTH**

United Way is building healthier, more resilient communities by promoting healthy eating and physical activity, expanding access to quality health care and integrating health into early childhood development. Healthy communities foster an active lifestyle and encourage people to care for and support each other.