



# INC LINKS

South Kane County Townships Working Together

## Agency Highlight: Family Counseling Service of Aurora

**F**amily Counseling Service (FCS) of Aurora began providing services to Aurora area clients in 1925. The agency was initially started as collaboration among local business and community leaders to meet the basic needs of area families.

FCS's Behavioral Health program offers a wide array of services. Services to children and adolescents include psychiatric evaluation and treatment, individual and family counseling, post-trauma evaluation and treatment and child abuse prevention. Services to adults include psychiatric evaluation and treatment, individual, couples, and family therapy, domestic violence offender treatment, older adult in-home counseling, outpatient substance abuse assessment and treatment and DUI evaluation and treatment.

FCS's clinical staff are master's level, licensed therapists and social workers. The agency works with board certified psychiatrists.

Consumer Credit Counseling has kept over 900 families in their homes by preventing foreclosure and won the Home Free award for outstanding service in the Midwest Region. Big Brothers and Big Sisters have doubled the number of children served in the last year.

Local partnerships and collaborations are important to FCS. Working with Rush Copley's Family Medicine program, FCS staff provides mental health care to low-income children and their families who might not otherwise be able to access services. The Continuing Education Network program, in partnership with INC, offers low-cost, local educational seminars to area clinicians to help them stay abreast with changes in the behavioral health field. Through a partnership with Communities In Schools, FCS is able to provide behavioral health services to children in Aurora area schools.

For more information, visit FCS's website at [www.aurorafcs.org](http://www.aurorafcs.org) or call (630)844-2662.



## Rally!



**A** rally was held in support of social services in South Kane County on June 19, 2009. Over 500 clients, social service workers and others who share their concern for further cuts in funding and services gathered on the grounds between Mental Health and Mental Retardation Services, Inc. and the Association for Individual Development under gray skies and umbrellas. Agency leaders and a police officer spoke about the impact of state funding cuts on their abilities to assist vulnerable people with life skills, safety and survival. Clients spoke of the effects receiving services had on moving their lives forward. Mayor Tom Weisner, Representative Linda Chapa La Via, Senator Chris Lauzen also attended, offered their support and discussed their views of the situation. The latest news is that services will be funded at approximately 86% of last year's funding levels, which were already too low.



## Working With Our Homeless



**N**ational statistics indicate that between 50% and 65% of the chronically homeless in our country suffer from a diagnosable mental illness, a substance abuse disorder, or both. Ryan Dowd and his staff at Hesed House, south Kane and Kendall Counties' only homeless shelter, can testify that their guests are no different than the national norm.

In seeking to address these issues for the persons who take shelter at Hesed House, Dowd reached out to the behavioral health and substance abuse provider network. Collaborations with The Association For Individual Development (AID), Breaking Free and Hope For Tomorrow were developed. With the assistance of grant funding from the City of Aurora and the State of Illinois, AID and Breaking Free have been able to position staff on-site at Hesed House to work on behavioral health and substance abuse issues.

Dowd reports a “revolutionary change” in the culture of substance abuse with Hesed guests. He states, “Before it was ‘I’m addicted and stuck’, whereas now it is, ‘I may be addicted now, but I don’t have to be’”. Hesed has seen a 400% increase in getting clients into substance abuse treatment.

On the mental health side, AID’s expertise has “allowed Hesed House to help this population beyond simple food and shelter.” Dowd cited the example of one guest with mental illness who had previously been homeless for 15 years. He has now been able to maintain permanent supportive housing for a year and a half.

With the goal of moving persons from their homeless state to one of being employed, with a permanent roof over their head, Ryan Dowd and the Hesed House staff have worked hard to nurture the necessary community partnerships to help make this happen for their guests. Our congratulations and praise go out to Ryan and his partners in trying to improve their quality of life. To volunteer your time or donate resources to the effort at Hesed House, contact them at 630-897-2156 or go to their website at [www.hesedhouse.org](http://www.hesedhouse.org)

Editor’s note: Having recently spent a night camping out in front of Hesed House with Ryan, his staff, guests and friends, I personally have a greater appreciation for everything they do and how they approach their life’s calling. They have my personal support, too.

Jerry J. Murphy

### Welcome Back

INC staff would like to welcome Howard Katz back to the Batavia Township Community Mental Health 708 Board as a volunteer. Good to see you, Howard! If you are interested in volunteering as a board member, contact Jerry or Marti at 630-892-5456 for details.