

RED FLAGS: OUR PROGRESS SO FAR

Community Focus reports of 2004 and 2005 listed red flags that pointed to selected community problems needing immediate attention.

The intent of these red flags is to focus the community's response. When these reports were published, the sponsoring organizations and others re-worked their own agendas and developed plans to address them.

We know it will take time to measure the success of our response. Solutions do not come in just two or three years. However, we are making progress in addressing these specific concerns:

CHILDREN IN POVERTY. The 2004 and 2005 Community Focus reports noted an increase in the number of children growing up in poverty.

Local charities responded by joining their efforts in the Grantmakers' Challenge for Children, a five-year plan, coalescing more than \$9 million in local resources for preventative solutions to targeted children's issues in Springfield and Greene County. Fueled by 26 grantmakers and philanthropists, the Challenge called on others to make their own charitable investments for the future of our children. Community Foundation of the Ozarks is the lead agency.

Perhaps the most notable outcome of the Grantmakers'

Challenge has been the opening of Isabel's House, a crisis nursery established by the Junior League of Springfield. There, children are cared for and their families receive respite, support and training. Partners in the project are Burrell Behavioral Health, City of Springfield, CoxHealth, St. John's Health System, Community Partnership of the Ozarks, Missouri State University, Springfield-Greene County Parks, and United Way of the Ozarks.

Community Foundation of the Ozarks also initiated the ECHO project—Enhancing Children's Healthy Opportunities—a five-year \$1.1 million project partnering CFO with Springfield Public Schools, Missouri State University, Community Partnership of the Ozarks and Burrell Behavioral Health. Two elementary schools with high percentages of students living in poverty will receive \$200,000 in 2007–08.

HEALTH CARE ACCESS. Jordan Valley Community Health Center has emerged as a medical home for thousands of low income families. In 2006, more than 15,000 Southwest Missouri residents used Jordan Valley for comprehensive medical, dental and mental health care.

Lack of access to dental health care is being partially addressed by the Ozarks Regional YMCA's tooth-brushing campaign in its before and after school program in 13 low-income area schools. The Head Start program has shown remarkable gains with a dental health education program for its youngest participants.

METH TRAFFIC. In 2005, Southwest Missouri had the bleak distinction of being a top site for methamphetamine production in the United States. Then Missouri passed a law restricting access to over-the-counter medications containing a principal ingredient used in making meth. Law enforcement agencies in Greene County report a drop in the number of meth labs seized, from 78 in 2004 to just six in the first six months of 2007.



Isabel's House Dedication