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AREA RESIDENTS REBUILDING THEIR LIVES WITH HELP FROM UNITED WAY'S LONG TERM RECOVERY COMMITTEE

Bloomington, Ind. – Nearly one year after historic flooding throughout the Midwest, many Monroe County residents are still rebuilding their lives. The Monroe County Long Term Recovery Committee (MCLTRC), a program of United Way of Monroe County, is providing support and resources to those affected by the severe storms and floods of 2008.

On June 4 through 7, 2008, torrential weather brought heavy rain to south central Indiana – making this one of Indiana's worst disaster in over 100 years. Monroe County was declared a Disaster Emergency by the State of Indiana effective June 6. Hundreds of families found their homes and workspaces filled with mud and water. The MCLTRC has been working with area residents to rebuild or restore their homes by providing everything from mold remediation, labor and materials, and housing replacements, to new furnaces and financial assistance for low- to middle-income residents and seniors.

With representatives from nonprofits, faith-based organizations, government and business, the committee formed in fall 2008 and began collecting data from all known sources about existing cases. In December, the committee made over 1,200 contacts through a household telephone assessment, focusing on the areas in Monroe County most impacted by the flooding. In addition to the known damages, many new cases were identified, and the committee is still receiving calls from residents reporting damages. With a full-time director, two part-time case managers, and a construction coordinator, the MCLTRC has closed 213 cases and is currently providing support and services to 160 individuals and families.

Donna Oswald had just had her basement living space waterproofed, and was shocked when her front door burst off the hinges and a wall of mud and water rush into her home. She smashed through a window – breaking her hand in the process – to escape the rising water. Gary Frame and his wife lost everything as their house was lifted off the foundation and the floors broke away from the walls. They escaped their property by walking 700 feet in chin deep water to their daughter's house – where his wife experienced a mild coronary. More information about these community members can be found on the following page.

Joe Newman, a single father living in Ellettsville, came home with his three children to discover ankle deep water in his son's bedroom and their family room. Their entire basement living space had to be gutted and later discovered their rusting furnace was leaking carbon monoxide. Cappi Phillips, a local artist, experienced severe flooding and subsequent mold in her home workspace in downtown Bloomington. She lost two weeks of production time during her busiest season.

The MCLTRC is helping residents achieve pre-flood status with an emphasis on their health and safety. The scope of the committee's work consists of everything from furnace replacement to total home rebuilds/replacement. Aside from the direct physical damage, the committee is working to help address health concerns caused by ongoing mold issues, mental health issues, and situations that involve predatory lending.

To support these recovery efforts, the MCLTRC has been fortunate to receive help from many local volunteers and has been awarded a generous grant from the Indiana Natural Disaster (IND) Fund. The IND Fund was established through a disaster relief and recovery grant from Lilly Endowment for \$45 million made to the Indiana Association of United Ways in June 2008.

United Way of Monroe County was awarded up to \$1,790,031 by the IND Fund to support MCLTRC assistance to individuals and families. In addition, MCLTRC received an IND Fund grant of \$228,500 for the replacement of 3 buses and a van for Area 10 Agency on Aging, to replace carpeting that was destroyed at the office of Big Brothers and Big Sisters, and to assist the Hoosier Hills Food Bank replace a scale used to weigh donated food that serves a six-county region.

The Monroe County Long Term Recovery Committee includes representatives from the American Red Cross, Area 10 Agency on Aging, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, City of Bloomington, Congressman Baron Hill's Office, The Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce, Hoosier Hills Food Bank, Indiana University, Monroe County Commissioners, Monroe County Emergency Management, Monroe County Health Department, Monroe County Planning Department, Purdue Cooperative Extension Service, Salvation Army, Sherwood Oaks Christian Church, South Central Community Action Program, St. Paul's Catholic Center, and United Way of Monroe County.

In addition to the members of the MCLTRC, the following businesses in the community have either donated or offered their services at discounted rates to help ensure the speedy recovery of our residents who were affected by the disasters of 2008: Aim to Please Plumbing, Brad Blackwell Construction, Carpets Plus ColorTile, Terry Deckard, Environmental Risk Services, Fiscus Construction Company, Lowes, Naylor's Ditching, John Newlin, Steve Pollitt Contracting, Doug Roll, and Thompson Furniture.

United Way of Monroe County is a nonprofit organization that improves people's lives by addressing critical needs today and working to reduce those needs tomorrow. Through its Community Action Fund, it allocates resources to 26 member agencies that ensure Monroe County residents have the building blocks for a better life: education, earnings, and the essentials. You can find more information at www.monroeunitedway.org.

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