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University of Southern Indiana

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USI's fourth annual Symposium on Homelessness to be a multi-institutional event

Those working in health-related fields, social workers and educators often are on the front lines when it comes to interacting with the homeless. For the fourth year in a row, the University of Southern Indiana will host a Symposium on Homelessness to educate students on the challenges related to homelessness they may face when they enter the workforce. This year's symposium will be a collaboration between USI, University of Evansville, Indiana University School of Medicine - Evansville and Ivy Tech Community College Southwest, as well as representatives from a host of local agencies that work with the homeless.

The fourth-annual Symposium on Homelessness will be held from 7:45 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Monday, February 22 in Carter Hall in University Center West on the USI campus. Following a welcome from USI President Linda L. M. Bennett, Evansville Mayor Lloyd Winnecke, who has led his own municipal efforts to curb homelessness, will offer opening remarks along with Jonathan Weinzapfel, chancellor of Ivy Tech Community College Southwest; Dr. Thomas Kazee, president of the University of Evansville; and Dr. Elizabeth Kalb, assistant director of IU School of Medicine - Evansville.

USI has partnered with IU School of Medicine - Evansville all four years of the symposium. However, this year, the collaboration has been expanded to include Ivy Tech and the University of Evansville. "This is an important opportunity for all of us to work together to make this a stronger community," said Dr. Ann White, dean of USI's College of Nursing and Health Professions. "These are the same partners that will be working together in the new multi-institutional medical facility in downtown Evansville. We're not waiting for the brick and mortar buildings to be completed; we're finding ways that we can start working together now, and I'm excited about the future of this collaboration."

"This is our first collaborative event for the partner institutions involved in the new downtown facility," said Mary Kessler, dean of UE's College of Education and Health Sciences. "The opportunity to bring together students from many different academic disciplines to learn about a significant community issue is an important first step. We are looking forward to expanding our scope and continuing our efforts to improve interprofessional collaboration."

"We're very excited to be a part of this for the first time this year," added Cindy Moore, associate professor and dean of the Frank L. Hilton, M.D., School of Health Sciences at Ivy Tech. "This is a great new opportunity for our students and our faculty. It will certainly help educate our students on the needs of the homeless population."

More than 600 participants, primarily senior-level students preparing for graduation, are expected to attend the interprofessional event, which includes representatives from a wide variety of health-related fields as well as social work, teacher education and others.

"It's important that we introduce the needs surrounding homelessness to a variety of different students in the areas of healthcare, education and social work, who will be encountering these people in their professions," said Dr. Elizabeth Kalb, assistant director and clinical professor at IU School of Medicine - Evansville. "I see this as the first of many activities that will help the partners in the new downtown multi-institutional academic health science education and research campus better collaborate interprofessionally."

The symposium also will include a volunteer fair that coincides with the event and will offer opportunities for students to get involved with local community agencies that address homelessness directly. Representatives from local agencies will be on hand to answer questions and sign up volunteers.

This year's keynote event will feature Evansville natives Clay and Tif Hassler, who will screen their award-winning film *Homeless*. Filmed in a homeless shelter with real homeless people, *Homeless* tells the story of a teenage boy lost in the bleak routine of life in a shelter. He feels alone and anonymous in a seemingly connected world. When his circumstances change for the better, he finds himself adapting to a new home, new friends and looking forward to a future that he hopes will last.

USI's Symposium on Homelessness grew out of Destination Home, an effort begun in 2004 to end homelessness in Vanderburgh County.

For more information, contact Julie St. Clair at 812-465-1169 or jstclair@usi.edu.

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Founded in 1965, the University of Southern Indiana enrolls more than 10,000 dual credit, undergraduate, graduate and doctoral students in more than 80 majors. A public higher education institution, located on a beautiful 1,400-acre campus in Evansville, Indiana, USI offers programs through the College of Liberal Arts, Romain College of Business, College of Nursing and Health Professions and the Pott College of Science, Engineering, and Education. USI is a Carnegie Foundation Community Engaged University and offers continuing education and special programs to more than 15,000 participants annually through Outreach and Engagement. USI is online at www.usi.edu.

Ben Luttrull

Media Relations Specialist
University Communications

University of Southern Indiana

8600 University Boulevard
Evansville, IN 47712
812-461-5259 (office)
812-319-7673 (cell)
bluttrull@usi.edu | www.usi.edu

University Communications

812-465-7005
usimedia@usi.edu

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