



**Bridge Communities, Inc.**

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[www.BridgeCommunities.org](http://www.BridgeCommunities.org)

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Sleep Out Saturday Surpasses Goal, Changes Lives**

*Glen Ellyn, IL – December 9, 2011* – Over \$130,000 was raised to help homeless families in DuPage County cross the bridge from homelessness to self-sufficiency through Sleep Out Saturday, Bridge Communities' largest fundraising and awareness-building event, held November 5<sup>th</sup>. Fifty-five youth, church and community groups slept out in parks and parking lots throughout DuPage County. In addition, 41 families participated, sleeping in backyards and driveways. The following communities were represented in Sleep Out Saturday:

- Aurora
- Downers Grove
- Elmhurst
- Glendale Heights
- Glen Ellyn
- Hillside
- Hinsdale
- Lisle
- Lombard
- Naperville
- North Aurora
- Oak Brook
- Plainfield
- Shorewood
- St. Charles
- Warrenville
- Wayne/West Chicago
- Wheaton
- Wood Dale
- Woodridge

The money raised through Sleep Out Saturday will directly benefit Bridge Communities' Transitional Housing Program, which provides homeless families in DuPage County with shelter, case management, employment search and assistance, education and tutoring, counseling, and car donations. Bridge helps 100 families each year transition from homelessness to self-sufficiency, financial stability and permanent housing.

In addition to fundraising, Sleep Out Saturday serves to raise awareness about the invisible homeless – homeless families – and the lack of affordable housing in DuPage County. Bridge

Communities not only provides the Transitional Housing Program but also serves as a tireless advocate for homeless families and for affordable housing options.

Of the 1,500+ participants in this year's Sleep Out Saturday, many offered their perspective on the event.

“One night has completely changed my view on homelessness, and I am eager to do all I can so that no one has to live like this day after day,” says 17 year old Mike.

Even the youngest participants were affected. After her Sleep Out experience, eight year old Molly said, “Homeless people are just like me. There may be someone in my class.”

Heather, a mother of two young children, recalls not sleeping during her family's Sleep Out experience. “I didn't sleep the whole time we were out in the tent, because I was afraid my four year old would get too cold. I spent the entire night covering him and watching over him.”

Shawn, age 13, shared, ““It was life-changing. Think about the homeless people that are cold every night, but we take our warm houses for granted.”

Sleep Out Saturday 2011 is officially in the books, but the need still exists and is greater than ever, as DuPage homeless families struggle to find affordable housing and access basic needs. People interested in learning more about ways to help Bridge Communities in its mission to help homeless families cross the bridge to self-sufficiency should contact Amy Van Polen at (630) 545-0610 ext. 12 or [amy.vanpolen@bridgecommunities.org](mailto:amy.vanpolen@bridgecommunities.org) or visit [www.BridgeCommunities.org](http://www.BridgeCommunities.org).

Bridge Communities, Inc. is a dynamic, grassroots, nonprofit organization committed to transforming the lives of homeless families in DuPage County through partnering with talented, resourceful individuals and groups in the community. Its program of transitional housing, mentoring and supportive services empowers the families to increase life skills and earning power to promote self-sufficiency, sustain permanent housing, and to break the cycle of poverty within the family unit. What began by co-founders Mark Milligan and Bob Wahlgren when they decided, in 1988, to begin to help homeless families, has now become a powerful current of change in the lives of hundreds of extremely low to low income at-risk families. To make a donation to support homeless families served by Bridge Communities, or to find out how to support Bridge in other ways, please call Mark Milligan at (630) 545-0610, ext.10 or visit [www.bridgecommunities.org](http://www.bridgecommunities.org).

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