

Keys to Hope officially marks opening

By JESSICA O'BRIEN Staff Writer | Posted: Wednesday, June 10, 2015 5:16 pm

MICHIGAN CITY — Although Keys to Hope Resource Center has been helping the city's homeless and disenfranchised for the past two months during their "soft opening," the official opening was marked on Tuesday during an open house and ribbon cutting ceremony.

Operating under the umbrella of Citizens Concerned for the Homeless — along with Grace Learning Center and Sandcastle Shelter for Homeless Families — Keys to Hope was created as a resource center targeted at helping the city's homeless, jobless, needy and poor.

Jim Musial, director of Sandcastle Shelter, said Keys to Hope operates based on an idea of "the ABCs of self-sufficiency," which stands for appearance, behavior and case management.

Since opening on April 13, Keys to Hope director Lesley Saliga said she has conducted comprehensive intake assessments of 75 clients, with more than 150 individuals stopping in for assistance in some way.

These people, many of which are homeless or needy, can take advantage of amenities offered by the center such as showers, laundry facilities and computers — helping them to maintain hygiene and search for employment, housing and other assistance.

Saliga added that a handful of clients have landed and maintained employment since getting help from Keys to Hope. She said over the past two months, the center has received 1,144 visits and has had 1,114 uses of amenities.

Further, the center has provided 23 free haircuts given by local hairdresser Bethany Howard, and has held 22 class sessions in helpful topics such as smoking cessation and stress management offered by Musial and Michelle Alexander.

Other agencies with which Keys to Hope has formed partnerships include A Hand Up, an organization focused primarily on helping women veterans; Covering Kids and Families, offering health insurance; the Swanson Center; Healthline; and the sister agencies of Citizens Concerned for the Homeless.

"To this point, having only been open a couple of months, the successes we are witnessing every day are just spectacular and we couldn't be more pleased with the progress we are having here," Musial said. "Lesley is doing a fantastic job and we have wonderful community partners."



Keys to Hope

Tom McCormick, board president for Citizens Concerned for the Homeless, cut a ribbon to mark the official opening of the Keys to Hope Resource Center on Tuesday, a facility to help the city's homeless, needy and disenfranchised.

Keys to Hope is currently open for business Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. However, Saliga said she is working to bring enough staff to open seven days per week.

More information about Keys to Hope is available by calling 219-809-9903 or emailing keystohopecrc@gmail.com, or visiting the center at 1802 Franklin St.