

# The Seed

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## LUM tax program brings in over \$300,000 for local families

Through the efforts of 16 dedicated volunteers, Lafayette Urban Ministry has helped about 300 workers file their taxes. As a result of this free program, over \$300,000 in Earned Income Tax Credits (EITC) has been claimed. This is real money that is making a difference for Tippecanoe County workers. One family used their EITC to make a down payment on a home and get out of a difficult rental situation. A single mother of three essentially increased her salary by 33%! Many use their returns to pay utility bills and rent and to buy groceries.

By having their taxes done at LUM, clients save the cost of commercial tax preparation and the exorbitant interest rates of rapid-refund loans. They can have their refund deposited directly in a bank

account within 10 days of filing. The Lafayette Savings Bank has made it possible for clients without a bank account to open one on the spot and to use the account free of fees for one year.

The LUM Tax Assistance Program will continue to serve people on Monday and Wednesday evenings and Thursday afternoons until April 15, 2005. Many thanks to LUM's tax assistance volunteers, including employees from Bison Financial Group and Lafayette Savings Bank, LUM Board members, and Purdue students.



Some of our tax volunteers, L-R:  
Sallie Janowiak,  
Jenny Tuttle,  
Kirk Eicher-Miller, Arlan Stavnheim,  
Gary Jackson,  
Mort Imamura,  
Julie Daisey,  
Brian Melchi,  
Rex Daisey

### About EITC

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is a federal tax credit that provides targeted relief to low and moderate income Hoosiers and encourages self-sufficiency for these working men and women. It is a "hand up" (not a hand-out) that helps working families escape poverty. EITC supplements wages – it is a refundable tax credit, meaning workers can get back more than they actually paid in taxes.

Many families don't claim the Earned Income Tax Credit because they don't realize they're eligible for it. **In tax year 2002, \$1.7 million in federal EITC went unclaimed in Tippecanoe County.** Lafayette Urban Ministry is working to bring that money back here for people who need it, while benefiting our entire community by reducing reliance on social services and pumping more dollars into the economy.

### LUM impacts legislation

LUM's Public Policy Director Patti O'Callaghan has been working with the state legislature, advocating on behalf of low-income families. She and other advocates have succeeded in moving a bill through the House of Representatives to ensure the continuation of the state's Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). The state's current EITC will expire at the end of this year. The proposed legislation, HB 1083, will make the EITC permanent.

EITC directly benefits low-income families. Most poor children live in families with a working parent. The current EITC program reduces the state income tax burden on a struggling family of four by nearly \$200.

LUM is also advocating for legislation to remove state sales tax from Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) utility payments. LIHEAP is federal money that comes to Indiana for low income energy assistance, yet when agencies pay utility bills with these funds, the state takes sales tax.



## The power of two little words: *because of*

by Mary Anderson, Acting Executive Director

Not long ago, a client left our morning advocate program with the words, "You are good people here." That meant a lot to me. We try hard to be

nice, to be kind, and to be accepting. I know our volunteers are good people doing good things.

Many of us have heard or read the famous quote from Anne Frank, who spent years in an attic, hiding from the Nazis during World War II: "In spite of everything, I still believe that people are good at heart." Those are brave words from a young woman whose life was surrounded by evil, fear and death.

Her words still apply. When the headlines are filled with stories of courthouse shootings and carnage at a church worship service, of child abuse and domestic violence, of hate crimes and discrimination, it's good for us to remember "in spite of everything..." and to try to look for positive traits in the world around us.

But I also urge you to try thinking "Because of everything, I believe that people are good at heart." Look at the unprecedented outpouring of generosity following the Asian tsunamis. Consider how local communities rally around children with special medical needs or families who have lost everything in a fire. Think about how our local congregations support missionaries, food pantries, church camps and day care programs.


Our advocate client knew that our advocate volunteers are good people. We also know the good hearts of the supporters of LUM. It's Annual Fund time at Lafayette Urban Ministry. You can read more about this major effort elsewhere in this issue of *The Seed*. The gifts are large and small, one-time and on-going. They are the foundation of all that happens in this place. We know that the dollars we receive from government funding will continue to decrease dramatically over the next few years, and we must depend on our donors to fill

that gap. Because of you generous people, we at LUM *know* people are good at heart.

It's also Easter! It is a season of hope and promise, of resurrection and new life. We have left behind the long gray days of Lent and winter, and (hopefully) by the time you read these

words we will be enjoying warmer days and the glorious bloom of spring flowers. In liturgical churches, the alleluias come back into our services, and many of us feel a similar joy in our daily lives.

I thank all of you who have responded to our Annual Fund campaign, and all who will join in that support. I wish you all a joyous Easter season. And I hope all of you can see those good things around you that allow us to say that "because of everything, I still believe!"

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**D**uring the month of April we take time to express our deep gratitude to the hundreds of volunteers who make LUM's work possible. Whether you are an advocate, an overnight shelter volunteer, a bulk mailer, a food pantry helper or an office worker, or helped provide a meal at the shelter, helped with Jubilee, Thanksgiving Celebration, the Afterschool Program or summer camp, or helped in some other way, know that your contributions of time and talents are important and much appreciated. (And watch your mailbox for a special thank-you in the mail later this month!)



## 2005 Annual Fund Campaign Update

Each year during the months of March and April, the Lafayette Urban Ministry makes a concerted effort to thank each of our donors for their generous financial support and encourage them to continue and increase that support in the current year.

Over 3,000 individuals, churches, businesses, and civic organizations are contacted by mail. Each of LUM's board and staff members are also asked to participate. LUM needs to raise \$60,000 in gifts or pledges in order to meet our 2005 budget. Annual Fund proceeds are used to support LUM's 26 programs of service, self-help, and social justice advocacy. These programs are important because they make up the major portion of Greater Lafayette's social safety net. As of March 31, over 150 donors have pledged \$32,500— leaving us with considerable dollars yet to raise.

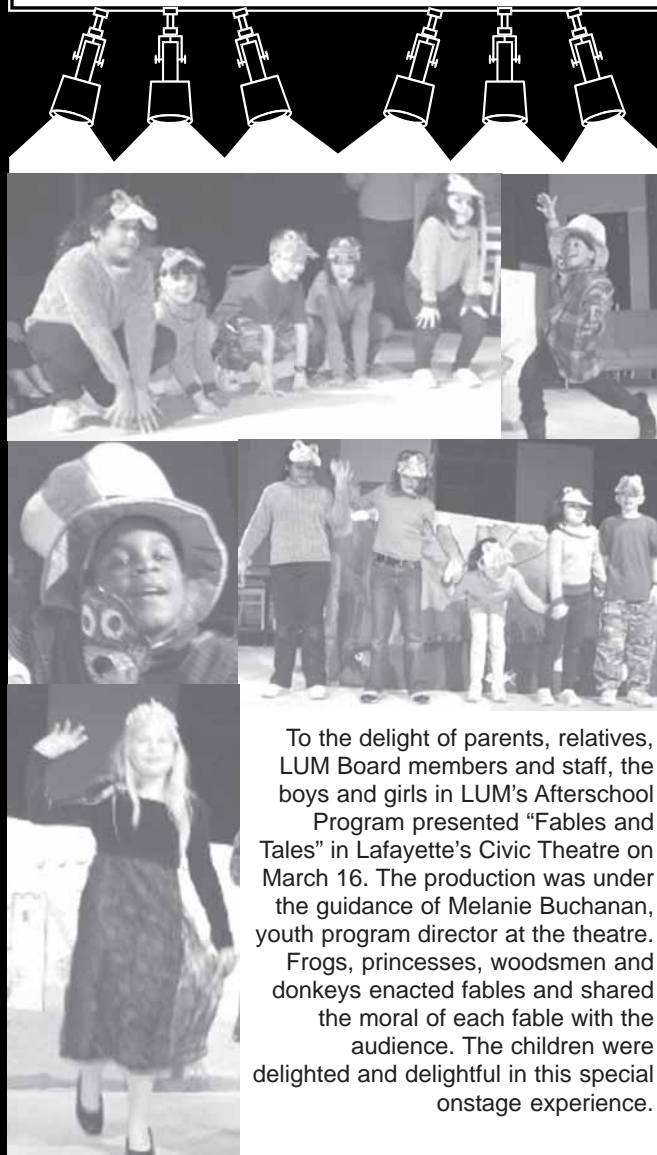
It is especially crucial that this year's Annual Fund Campaign meet its goal. Due to anticipated cutbacks in public funding to several of LUM's programs, we are in desperate need of new revenue.

If you have already responded to this year's LUM Annual Fund Campaign, please accept our heartfelt appreciation. **If you haven't yet responded, please consider doing so soon. Send your pledge or one-time gift in the enclosed envelope at your earliest convenience.**

The following individuals serve on the 2005 LUM Annual Fund Committee and are hard at work discussing LUM's accomplishments and challenges with our donors. Thanks for your help!

*Mary Anderson, Mike Bowman, Sally Byrn, Kevin Klinker, Sue Hermodson, Jim Mailloux, Carolyn McGlone, Ann McKenzie, Joe Micon, Bill Powers, Mike Roe, Kim Reisman, Joe Seaman, Beth Stull, and Janice Weedon*

## Afterschool kids present play at Civic Theatre



To the delight of parents, relatives, LUM Board members and staff, the boys and girls in LUM's Afterschool Program presented "Fables and Tales" in Lafayette's Civic Theatre on March 16. The production was under the guidance of Melanie Buchanan, youth program director at the theatre. Frogs, princesses, woodsmen and donkeys enacted fables and shared the moral of each fable with the audience. The children were delighted and delightful in this special onstage experience.

## LUM testifies on Voter ID bill

An Indiana Senate bill requiring all voters to show picture ID at their polling site has passed the House and is moving toward approval in the senate. While LUM has not taken any position on the over-all issue of voter fraud, Mary Anderson did submit testimony to the House Committee on Elections and Apportionment, voicing concerns over the picture ID requirement.

The testimony explained, "SB 483 would be particularly harmful to the voting rights of low income individuals. Obtaining picture identification in Indiana—even if the \$9 fee were to be waived—is still a very difficult and often impossible process for our low income clients. In 2004, we had almost 150 requests for assistance in obtaining picture

ID, mostly for employment or benefit procurement. Fewer than 75 of those individuals ever received their picture ID. In most cases, clients were denied picture IDs because they did not have certified copies of their birth certificates. But in virtually every state, including Indiana, a request for a birth certificate must be accompanied by a copy of a valid photo ID.

"Our clients are caught in this bureaucratic catch-22—no birth certificate without picture ID, no picture ID without a birth certificate—and as a result have no way of obtaining valid picture ID. SB 483 would take away their fundamental right to vote because of this process."

## **The SEED • April 2005**

**Change Service Requested**

### **Here comes summer!**

#### **LUM Camp is moving!**

After many years of wonderful LUM camp experiences at Pine Creek Camp, we are moving both in place and time. This year's camp will be at a new location and will be held during a different week! **We are scheduled to have camp at Hanging Rock Christian Camp outside of Williamsport, Indiana, the week of August 8-12.**



The new venue will give us an opportunity to explore some new activities in a new setting. Mark your calendars now, and plan to join us as a volunteer counselor, special needs counselor or program presenter. You may get counselor application forms from the office or e-mail Joe Micon at [jmicon@lafayetteurbanministry.org](mailto:jmicon@lafayetteurbanministry.org). Read the coming issues of *The Seed*, and check our website for more information as it becomes available.

#### **Remember the shelter this summer**

Our homeless shelter remains open 365 nights a year. In the summer, without the Purdue student volunteers, we face some special needs. Please consider attending shelter volunteer training and spending an occasional night with us during the summer months. Call the office or check the web site for training dates.

Or perhaps your church group or civic organization—or your family or friends—would like to prepare a meal to feed 50 and bring it to the shelter. Staying to serve the meal is optional.

And as always, the shelter is in need of bleach, coffee, paper towels, toilet paper, dish soap (both liquid and dishwasher soap), laundry detergent and all-purpose cleaner (Mr. Clean, Lysol liquid etc).