

Bartholomew County, Columbus, Indiana

A great place to work, to live, to raise a family, to be a child growing up. We have good jobs, with businesses and progressive government working together. We have a strong educational system and a community that encourages solid values, appropriate behaviors, and promotes good choices. It happens because we care.

But we are challenged to make tomorrow better than today. In fact, we are challenged to maintain today's quality of life. **This is about investing in the next generation, investing in our future.**

Like much of the Midwest, in the last 10 years we have seen a major shift towards lower paying jobs with diminished health care benefits.

Economically, the division between "haves" and "have-nots" is growing in Bartholomew County. Median income is unchanged over a 7-year period while the cost of living has increased. In 2005, we had 9,000 residents on Medicaid—participation rates are growing 20% annually. Almost 40% of BCSC children are on free or reduced lunches — a jump of nearly 100% in a decade.

Educationally

- At some schools, as many as 62% of our children don't meet Indiana state standards in reading and math. In our highest performing elementary schools, 15% of our children don't meet ISTEP standards.
- In high school, one quarter of our kids do not meet standards in math or language arts. Better than the state, but not good enough.

Socially

- Reported cases of child neglect have almost doubled in 5 years.
- In our elementary and middle schools, 30% of kids report being bullied.
- In 1005, juvenile offenses included more than 100 cases of battery and almost 200 cases of alcohol and drug abuse.

Our kids are waiting for us to respond.

We have waiting lists here in Bartholomew County.

- Big Brothers Big Sisters has 70 boys and girls awaiting a volunteer mentor.
- Child care assistance helps 252 children from 131 families; 25 families are waiting for help.
- Family School Partners serves about 180 families, but 70 more families are on the waiting list.
- Caring Parents assists 40 families in learning about their newborns, but have 30 families waiting.

This is not "their problem," it is our opportunity. . . to help Bartholomew County continue to be a great place to work, live and raise a family.

The Council for Youth Development is a local coalition, supported by a successful, nationally-recognized program. The Council includes our school systems, youth-serving agencies, Government, United Way, and scores of agencies dedicated to helping prepare our children to be healthy, successful members of society. We support many key programs like the Literacy Task Force, Anti-bullying, and Family School Partners. We identify and plug gaps in service; we convene and leverage the efforts of many youth-serving organizations; we mobilize youth; and we continue to monitor progress. **The Council works to help ALL young people be "Ready by 21™" - ready to learn, ready to work, ready for life.**

Support this proactive and comprehensive approach to youth development, which makes us a magnet for better jobs, creates a stronger community infrastructure, and stimulates a more robust local economy.

You will touch the future.



All Youth Ready for School, Work and Life.

TM
Ready By 21



Our children.



Our opportunity.



Our obligation.



Our legacy.



Our future.