

## Press Release 2008

Brown County's "We Care Gang" has been recognized as a 501(c)3 tax exempt organization by the Internal Revenue Service. The "We Care Gang" came together as a group in 2005 working under through the Brown County Community Foundation as Pass Through Account which allowed for tax deductibility for donors. In March of 2006, the group was formally organized as a non-profit Corporation in the State of Indiana. As the group continued to evolve, members of the group and other supporters within the community recognized the need to work towards becoming a stand alone 501(c)3 organization. A small worship group from Nashville, Indiana generously donated the \$750.00 application fee and Brown County Attorney Michael O'Neil, working through the Law Firm of Sommer Barnard, PC, of Indianapolis, Indiana, offered to assist the group with the application process. Mr. O'Neil worked with, and consulted with, the group as the application and required documentation was assembled for submittal. Thanks to him sharing his experience and legal expertise, the "We Care Gang" application was submitted and accepted by the IRS, with the effective date of the 501(c)3 status being made retroactive to March of 2006.

"We Care Gang" began as small group with two parallel goals; 1.) to build community by producing a community event where the entire county(including visitors) is invited to spend the day together enjoying good food, fun, and live music. 2.) at the same time, raise money to help needy persons in Brown County with food and shelter related needs.

"Abe Martin's County Picnic" was the first event planned with the vision of roasting a pig on the Village Green and inviting anyone that desired, to come and join in. As the first planning progressed, one pig grew to three and finally to five pigs. The group wanted to include a variety of live music throughout the day but was still seeking some sort of unique and fun event that people would come away laughing about. During a discussion about "We Care Gang" plans for the first picnic, local resident Howard Hughes suggested having an Outhouse Race and that was it, "NashCar" Outhouse Racing was born. Food supplies were all donated/sponsored by both businesses and caring individuals making it possible to serve over 1000 people the first year and charging a "Free Will" donation for it with all profits earmarked for food and shelter related needs in Brown County. Four different musical groups provided high quality, live entertainment throughout the day and volunteers joined together throughout the event to help set up, prepare food, serve food, tear down, and clean up after the event.

On July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2007, the group held its first Old Fashioned Ice Cream Social at the Gazebo on the Village Green. The Social was organized to provide another family oriented community event during a different time of the year. It was scheduled in the afternoon so as to compliment the community Fireworks activities while not conflicting with them. Locally made ice cream was purchased at a discount from the maker and sold by the cup to those attending.

The "We Care Gang" has learned from each event and strives for continual improvement each year. Plans are underway now for the 2008 Ice Cream Social which is to be held on Saturday, July 5<sup>th</sup>, along with other activities currently being planned by the CVB and the Chamber of Commerce. The 2008 "Abe Martin's County Picnic" which will be the 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive picnic event, is to be held on Saturday, September 13<sup>th</sup>, centered at the Village Green. The "NashCar" Outhouse Races are to be held again this year. The races have also evolved since 2005, changing from "people push power" to gravity power as each heat not begins at the top of the hill in front of the Hobnob Restaurant, with gravity propelling each entry and its driver down the hill towards the Village Green. The race is not limited to a run down the hill though, each entry's team must first complete some specialized skill activities including; The Plunger Toss and Corn Hole competitions.

The "We Care Gang" offers aid to county residents in need of short term assistance for food, shelter (rent), basic living, and some health related needs. The primary target group has been those who may fall through the cracks of traditional assistance programs, including the elderly and those that suffer silently. The group relies on other established organizations and respected community leadership, for case screening and references. The "We Care Gang" does not respond directly to individuals requesting aid but instead reacts to the referral process with payment made directly to the landlord, food source, or service provider. Assistance is provided on a case by case basis and is always subject to the availability of funds and the number of cases submitted.

All donations to the organization are tax deductible and volunteers are always needed and welcomed. The "We Care Gang" can be contacted by writing the group at: P.O. Box 1492, Nashville, Indiana. The group is also in the process of setting up a Website at: [wecaregang.org](http://wecaregang.org), which is expected to be up and running by June 1.