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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **STEBEN COUNTY FAMILIES GETTING HELP**

Families in Steuben and surrounding counties are receiving services designed to reduce child abuse, neglect, and delinquency. The number of families needing help continues to increase as the pressures of the current economy make their way into households.

“The ‘desperation factor’ is getting higher,” stated Doug Beutler, Vice President of Family Services for Lifeline Youth & Family Services, Inc. “Many families have never experienced prolonged unemployment, collection calls, foreclosure threats, and in some cases, not having enough food. Some can’t get to the store or food bank because their car is out of gas.” Not everyone is able to handle the pressure and they end up taking their frustration out on other family members. If children are at risk, the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) may have to get involved.

Lifeline has been providing services to families in DCS Region 4, which includes Steuben County, for several years under contracts with DCS. Lifeline provides direct care services, or coordinates other community resources, to help families referred by DCS. Over 140 families in Steuben County are expected to receive services this year. An assessment of each family’s situation is made to determine the quantity and type of services needed. A unique aspect of the services is that the Lifeline staff meets with the family in their home, allowing Lifeline to better understand what the family is experiencing while protecting the privacy of the family.

Lifeline is providing similar family services in over 60 Indiana counties for DCS. “We are also seeing more interest in self-referral, private pay cases. Many families need help but want to avoid being in the state system,” said Beutler. For more information about family services, call 800-509-6884.

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Lifeline Youth & Family Services, Inc. provides programs for children and families at risk for abuse, neglect, and delinquency. Lifeline will fulfill its mission of “changing hearts and bringing hope to a generation at risk” by working with over 8,000 individuals throughout the state this year.