

# CURRENT IN WESTFIELD

TUESDAY  
May 19, 2009  
FREE



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ALL NIGHT / P5**



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## A HELPING HAND

**WESTFIELD RESIDENT  
TIM HAHN ASSISTS  
THE CITY'S POOR THROUGH  
HIS ORGANIZATION,  
HELPING HANDS / P2**

Photo by Karl Ahlrichs

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 Clarian North Breast Care

# A HELPING HAND

## WESTFIELD RESIDENT TIM HAHN ASSISTS THE CITY'S POOR THROUGH HIS ORGANIZATION, HELPING HANDS

By Brandie Bohney

Current in Westfield

A small crowd has gathered in the Roadside Cafe parking lot on State Road 32 in Eagletown. Many of the faces are Hispanic.

After a brief discussion lead by volunteer Tim Hahn and translated for the crowd, each family takes a numbered stick and gets accordingly in queue. The line passes several tables of food laid out as in a grocery store: canned goods, laundry detergent, paper products, fresh produce, breads, eggs, meats and cheeses. In the trunk of a nearby car are dozens of half gallons of milk and bottles of water.

Everyone in the line is polite. There is no pushing or shoving. No arguing. And no check-out.

Helping Hands provides food for Westfield's needy each Saturday morning either in the parking lot, or when the weather is poor, in the Westfield Playhouse just a few hundred yards east of the lot. The organization is the work of Tim Hahn, who started his work for the poor in 1996 with Lucious Newsom in Indianapolis.

"I stayed with him for about 10 years, but before I left ... I told him, 'I'll be your first missionary,'" Hahn said.

Like Newsom, Hahn doesn't provide a hand-out. He provides a help-out. That help comes in the form of food and lots of other assistance. One form of assistance is in the English language classes that begin this summer.

"If they learn the language, they've got a better shot," Hahn said.

Knowing the needs of the recipients comes from getting to know them personally. Hahn knows almost all the people in line by name. He knows their situations. And they know him, too, which makes it easier for them to ask him for help when they need it.

But he wants the recipients of his help to be as independent as possible, and he wants them to give back whenever and however they can.

"When I take a bill, I never give money out," he said. "I'll say, 'How much do you have towards this?' ... and sometimes I'll pass the hat."

Hahn doesn't do the work alone, either. Ray and Pat Stouffer – Hahn's neighbors – also volunteer every weekend, and Pat does all the grocery shopping each week – a monumental task. Hahn jokes that although the Stouffers started in small ways at the beginning, "Now they've signed a lifetime contract."

Another couple – who prefer to remain anonymous – is involved financially with the project. When it started a year ago, Hahn explains, Fresh Market donated much of the food. Now, he says, "Most of the food ... is purchased by a couple who subsidizes us."

And again, as Pat explains, "(The recipients) help. They help get everything out and on the tables and organized."

The three core members have chosen not to become affiliated with a church or other organization to keep the operation as simple as possible.

"(Larger organizations) have the best intentions," Hahn said, "but if you get involved with one, the next thing you know there's an ad hoc committee." Plus, the simplicity allows for no overhead, meaning every penny in donations goes directly toward helping the needy.

And while Hahn didn't have a lifetime goal of helping the poor, he has found that it calls to him.

"I see this poverty, and I can walk away from it; but they can't."



Submitted Photo



Photo by Karl Alhrichs

### YOU CAN HELP!

If you would like to help Helping Hands, there are several things you can donate:

**Groceries:** Non-perishables are especially helpful. Paper products such as toilet paper, paper towels and tissues are always needed, as well as canned food items, boxed pastas and other foods.

**Money:** Everyone at Helping Hands is a volunteer. One-hundred percent of donations go to purchasing food and other necessities for families in need.

**Time:** Additional volunteers are always welcome.

**Services:** If you can provide a service for community members in need (medical services, home repair or other services), let Hahn know so he can contact you when a need arises.

**Contact Tim directly via e-mail or phone.**

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Submitted Photo