



PO Box 80487  
Fort Wayne, Indiana  
46898-0487  
800-509-6884  
[www.lifelineyouth.org](http://www.lifelineyouth.org)

Contact: Mike Martin  
Date: July 27, 2009  
Phone: 800-509-6884  
Cell: 574-551-7828  
Email: [mmartin@lifelineyouth.org](mailto:mmartin@lifelineyouth.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **ELKHART COUNTY FAMILIES GETTING HELP**

Families in Elkhart and surrounding counties are receiving new 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 Region 3 for several years under contracts with DCS. Elkhart, St Joseph, Kosciusko, and Marshall Counties make up DCS Region 3. Lifeline provides direct care services, or coordinates other community resources, to help families referred by DCS. Over 500 families in Region 3 will 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.

If you would like additional information about this topic or to schedule an interview, please contact Mike Martin by phone at 574-551-7828 or by email at [mmartin@lifelineyouth.org](mailto:mmartin@lifelineyouth.org).