



Edwardsville Township  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **EDWARDSVILLE TOWNSHIP HOSTS SOCIAL SERVICES SAFETY NET FORUM**

### ***Township Partners with Glen-Ed Ministerial Alliance to discuss collaborative efforts with more than 45 area organizations***

**Edwardsville, Illinois – June 5, 2015.** Representatives from more than 45 area agencies gathered today at First Christian Church in Edwardsville to discuss obstacles they face when coordinating resources for the clients they serve.

Edwardsville Township, in partnership with the Glen Ed Ministerial Alliance, held a Social Services Safety Net Forum to bring together area social service agencies, organizations, and churches that provide services to residents of Edwardsville Community School District 7. Edwardsville Township offers two assistance programs to residents, General Assistance and Emergency Assistance. These program assist residents with little to know income with shelter, utilities, food, and personal items.

Speaking at the event today, Supervisor Miles said, “We have a few programs in our office to assist residents in need, but we have quickly realized that as these needs grow in our community, we cannot meet them all alone. We know that we are not the only organization in our community trying to help others. What if we had a coordinated effort in our Township where all organizations and agencies established a referral network that maximized the assistance we could provide to those truly in need?”

The Forum opened with a presentation from Edwardsville Police Chief Jay Keevan. Chief Keevan provided information about safely delivering services to those in need. His presentation included recommendations for policies and procedures that organizations may consider implementing to ensure the safety of their personnel. “And don’t ignore that gut feeling,” Chief Keevan said. “I’ve heard it a thousand times where people had a bad feeling about something and didn’t act on it. Trust your gut.”

Supervisor Miles then led a discussion about coordinating services that stemmed from a past experience at the Township. “Last summer a gentleman came into the Township whose needs exceeded the assistance the Township could provide. We didn’t know who to call for help,” said Supervisor Miles. “After working with Pastor Ben Tolly at the Bridge Church, we realized the need for a collaborative coordinated effort in our community.”

Representatives discussed obstacles they face to providing services to their clients as well as finding additional resources. “General themes that were discussed included access to resources, the need for addressing underlying issues instead of providing short term assistance, and coordinating assistance efforts,” said Supervisor Miles after the event.

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“This event was wonderful,” said Pastor Jackie Havis-Shear, President of the Glen-Ed Ministerial Alliance. “This was a great first step in addressing the needs in the community and we look forward to working with the Township to continue this coordinated effort.”

“I think the take away from today’s discussion is the need for a common intake application – a way for all agencies to assess the needs a client has and easily refer them to other resources; the need for a collaborative database – a way to share information about services and coordinate instead of duplicate; and the need for agency education – opportunities to learn about and from other organizations and address more specific issues like chronic homelessness, disaster preparedness, and client education,” said Supervisor Miles. “The Township is excited and committed to developing solutions to these problems.”

For more information about the Social Services Safety Net Forum or to register for the event, please contact Edwardsville Township at 656-0292.

**Edwardsville Township is comprised of the City of Edwardsville, Village of Glen Carbon and unincorporated areas just outside of these two municipalities. The Township Supervisor’s office is located at 300 West Park in Edwardsville and is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Monday and Friday and from 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.**

**Learn more about Edwardsville Township online at [www.edwardsvilletownship.com](http://www.edwardsvilletownship.com) or contact the Township Offices by phone at 618-656-0292.**

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