



**Hillsdale County**  

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**community foundation™**  

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**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Amber Yoder, Communications Officer

Voice Reply – (517) 439-5101, Fax Reply – (517) 439-5109, Email Reply – a.yoder@abouthccf.org

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Box City Event Planned to Illustrate Poverty and Homelessness  
Awareness in Hillsdale County**

Hillsdale, MI, November 3, 2011 –

Does Hillsdale County have a homelessness issue? Most county residents would likely say no. However, the statistics indicate otherwise. During a data collection period in January 2011, Hillsdale County showed a homeless count of 141 residents (38 adults and 103 youth). This number includes those who are homeless and those who are “doubled up” (living with other families). In reality, this number is likely much higher.

Many believe that being homeless literally means sleeping on the streets, in cars, in public areas like parks, or in abandoned buildings. However, in today’s depressed economic conditions, the definition of homeless has been expanded to include:

- People about to be discharged from an institution (such as a hospital or prison) who will be homeless upon their exit
- People who will imminently lose housing and lack resources to find other housing
- Unaccompanied youth and homeless families who have not lived independently for a long time, experienced persistent instability, and will continue to experience instability
- Fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence
- People who are living “doubled up” in a home with family or friends (most common to those who are homeless in Hillsdale County)

In order to bring this reality to light for Hillsdale County residents, and to kick off Homelessness Awareness in Michigan, the Hillsdale County Community Foundation YOUTH (Youth Opportunities Unlimited Throughout Hillsdale) will be participating in a “Box City” event on November 12<sup>th</sup> to promote the awareness of homelessness and poverty in Hillsdale County. “Homelessness in Hillsdale County is not as obvious as in bigger cities and more metropolitan areas,” said Amber Yoder, HCCF Communications Officer and YOUTH Advisor. “What we see more commonly here is individuals and families living out of their cars or tents and campers in a local campground, or living with another family or couch-surfing.”

The YOUTH members will hold their “Box City” on the front lawn of the courthouse from 10:00am until 2:00pm. Members will have to “live” in a cardboard box, and will not be allowed the use of any electronic devices. Signage will also be placed around the event area, highlighting poverty and homelessness statistics for Hillsdale County.

The Hillsdale County Community Foundation YOUTH was established in October of 1991. The YOUTH Advisory Council has an ongoing program for studying the assets, needs, and concerns of the young people of Hillsdale County. YOUTH has a special endowment fund, initially made possible by a challenge grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, to make available grant dollars to benefit and involve young people in Hillsdale County. Anyone wishing further information regarding the YOUTH may call the Foundation office at (517) 439-5101 or visit [www.abouthccf.org](http://www.abouthccf.org).

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