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## The DOWNTOWNER

**R**andy's  
Ramblings

By Randy Allman

**The Columbus Way...**

On March 17 Sam Gustin, "Living in Poverty," wrote for Daily Finance that nearly 43 million Americans or 15% of the nation's population live at or below the official poverty level. This includes 14.5 million people under the age of 18, or 20% of all children! In other words, nearly one in five American kids live in poverty. Unfortunately, one of the fastest-growing impoverished segments is the "working poor," adults who spent at least 27 weeks either in the labor force or looking for work. These numbers reinforce the toll the Great Recession has taken on working families and the poor across the United States.

Gustin cites the Census Bureau's report showing the average poverty threshold for a family of four in 2008 was \$22,025. The study's author, Labor Department's Jim Borberly, reports that the department is currently compiling its 2009 figures for release early next year and in spite of the already dismal numbers, Borberly believes the worst news is yet to come. "There will probably be an increase in these figures next year because 2009 was either just as bad or a little bit worse than 2008 for the labor market."

As one would expect, the likelihood of being classified as working poor, greatly diminishes as workers attain higher levels of education. Among families with at least one member in the work force for at least 27 weeks, with children less than 18 years of age are 4 times more likely than those without children to live in poverty.

In downtown Columbus (Census Tract 101), there are 2,200 households (Lincoln-Central Neighborhood). That's roughly 5,000 children, youth and adults. Of this group, 70% are low to moderate income earners and 40 % live below the poverty level. These are real families and not just mere statistics. They're all our neighbors, and many are our friends. It's difficult to watch them struggle but at the same time, it is amazing to watch them endure! Hoosiers are resilient and resourceful!

Even during these uncertain times, the LCNFC has never waived in its mission to provide a greater quality of life for all downtown residents. Yes, like many other human service organizations, we have witnessed diminished funding, overwhelming need and incredible stories of sacrifice. And, through it all, the LCNFC remains committed to serving downtown residents. We've had to work harder, longer and more creatively than ever before. The number one thing that keeps us all going is the unbelievable generosity, care and concern we witness every day from the numerous individuals and organizations that care enough to give back. This legacy of giving is what separates Columbus from most other communities.

Though the future is uncertain, history tells us we will survive. We will bounce back bigger, better and stronger but it will take some time. Just know, as we move forward, there are those that care and those that are working feverishly behind the scenes to ensure that the light at end of the tunnel remains aflame. This is the Columbus way.

*Building tomorrow's neighborhoods... TODAY!*

**THE DOWNTOWNER is a monthly newsletter for the Lincoln-Central Neighborhood Family Center. Our office is located at 1039 Sycamore St. See our enclosed calendar for the activities and programs that you or your family might be interested in or jump online at [www.lcnfc.org](http://www.lcnfc.org). Please call the LCNFC at 379-1630 for additional information.**

