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Men to open live-in foster care home for boys in Hoopeston

It's in the wee hours of the morning as a child listens as Mom and Dad fight again. Words turn physical as they batter each other, the volume increases and the police are called. The combatants are going to jail but what to do with the child?

Two men are working on an answer to that question. Doug Swisher of Hoopeston and Ricky Cobbs of Urbana are opening Ultimate Care, a foster home for children in this and other situations.

Ultimate Care, located at 309 S. Market St. next to Price Less Foods, is licensed for six live-in boys between the ages of eight and 18, said Cobbs, who is company president and chief cook. The facility will also provide respite care on a short-term basis for children in crisis and emergency care in cases of domestic situations where both parents are arrested.

At least half the available openings will be reserved for children in the Hoopeston area, Cobbs said. Other children will come from the Children's Home and Aid Society and the Department of Children and Family Services.

Swisher, who is Ultimate Care's board chairman, will live on-site with boys. Cobbs will be at the house daily.

Troubled children run the gamut from those who need a place to stay temporarily to those who are a danger to themselves and others. Children from the extreme end of the spectrum will not be housed at Ultimate Care. "We don't want to put the community in shock with extreme cases," Cobbs said.

Although most children at the home will have gotten there by getting in trouble, Swisher and Cobbs said those mistakes won't count against them. "We don't care about past issues that got him there," Swisher said. "We care about his behavior now. It's a second chance."

Boys at the home will attend Hoopeston Area schools where their progress will be monitored by Swisher and



This home at 309 S. Market will become a foster home for boys ages 8-18.

Cobbs. "Where the kids go from here we'll know because we'll be there," Cobbs said. Boys who disrupt school will not be tolerated. "If they disrupt the Hoopeston Area school system, then they have to have a special aide and that costs the community money," Swisher said. "We are not going to deal with that."


Boys at the home will experience fun times, such as camping. "Every weekend, whatever we do, we'll do as a family," Swisher said.


Boys will also receive discipline. "Without discipline, they'll fail," Cobbs said. Doors to the home will be **See FOSTER CARE on other side**

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rack \$8.50, full rack \$16**

Includes slaw, baked beans, roll & fries.



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Foster care continued from other side

locked at 9 p.m. nightly. Boys will be study and do chores in the home. Outside contact will be monitored. "They have to know 'we're going to scan your calls, scan your friends, scan your phone calls, too,'" he said.

Boys will not be allowed female visitors not related by blood. Music by artists like Tupac and Eminem will be banned, as will wearing gang colors. Each boy will be expected to sign a contract agreeing to the house rules.

Community service will be part of the boys' life, too, including shoveling snow for elderly residents in the winter. "We have to teach them to help other people," Cobbs said.

Money for the project will come from state foster care payments. The men will also apply for grants. Expenses incurred revamping the house have been paid from their own funds. "Believe me, we've gone through some money," Swisher said.

Both men have experience working with troubled youth, working with Youth Services International, an organization affiliated with the Department of Children and Family Services, Swisher said. Each has also

worked with kids through the Illinois Department of Corrections. Additionally, Cobbs has been a foster parent for many years and has served as a foster parent support specialist.

Swisher, who admits he was no angel as a child, served in law enforcement in Green Valley and Homer and said he was the youngest man ever to become a police chief.

Cobbs hopes the community will get behind Ultimate Care. "Can you imagine saying 'we're the only community that says we're behind kids,'" he asked.

One way the community can get behind the project is through volunteerism, both of time and material items. Those who volunteer time must go through a background check and will be trained in CPR.

As for material things, the home needs bunk beds...lots of bunk beds. Twelve to 14 sets are needed, along with linens and pillows. Other items needed include patio furniture, a passenger van and for someone feeling especially generous, land for a horse ranch.

Ultimate Care hopes to make a difference on the boys

and the community, and already has. More than 25 people have asked about becoming foster parents since work on the house began, Swisher said.

As for the boys, "No child is born with an Uzi in his hand," Cobbs said. "We're just trying to make an impact in these kids' lives."

If the program is successful, other homes, including one for teen girls and possibly one for teen mothers, may be started.

For more information on Ultimate Care or to learn what items are needed, call (217) 283-4593.

2 Day Notice
9-1
Saturday
No cover!

Wednesday Is Fajita Night at Wally's Pub & Eatery

119 S. Chicago, Rossville

Corona, Margarita specials

Friday: Shrimp night
Saturday: Filet mignon, chicken, rib eyes

Briefly

Bowling teams needed

Sunday Night Mixed League needs teams! Each four-person team must include one member of each sex. If interested, call Suzanne, 283-5326 or Pla-Mor Lanes, 283-5195. The league starts at 6 p.m. Sept. 9.

There will be a league meeting at 6 p.m. Aug. 23 at Pla-Mor Lanes.

Lunch costs

Hoopeston child care providers are asking parents to pick up free/reduced price lunch forms when they register their students for school this week.

Those who qualify for the program will help child care providers keep state funding for the food program and keep child care costs down.

Ask any licensed child care provider for details.

The agency may be able to assist those call.

Concert slated

The First Presbyterian Church of Hoopeston, 915 E. Orange, will host the nationally-known Christian music group "The Young Continentals on Wednesday, Aug. 15.

An ice cream social, open to the public, will begin at 6 p.m. followed by the concert at 7 p.m.

Both events are free; a freewill offering will be taken during the concert. For more information, call the church at (217) 283-6229.

In the Hospital



Hoopeston Community Memorial Hospital

Aug. 13

Admitted: Donald Gay, Jennifer Schramm, Cathryn King, Hoopeston.

Discharged: Barbara Romero.

Weather



Mostly sunny today. High 82. Tonight, showers, thunderstorms. Low 65. Tomorrow, partly cloudy, showers, thunderstorms. High 83, low 64.

For current weather conditions, call the **Hoopeston Weather Line** at (217) 283-6221.

Classifieds

MISCELLANEOUS FOR SALE

Washer/dryer, \$250; stove, \$25; water bed (king size) \$250; demolition car \$250. Call (217) 283-4632.

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