

HILLSDALE  
**DAILY  
NEWS**

PROJECT CONNECT

## **Annual event planned to host those in need**

January 29, 2013 By Andy Barrand

HILLSDALE — Human service agencies and other Hillsdale County organizations will come together to make a difference in the community Wednesday during the fifth annual Hillsdale County Project Homeless Connect. The event will be from 1-4 p.m. at the Hillsdale Free Methodist Church. The event is a place where those who are homeless or who are in danger of becoming homeless can turn for information and assistance. It is sponsored by the Hillsdale County Housing Continuum of Care.

“Project Connect is a very nice event,” said Maxine Vanlerberg, Hillsdale County Director for the Community Action Agency. “It allows (the homeless) to make connections they wouldn’t otherwise.”

The event will showcase a variety of services, food, housing and clothing assistance, resources for veterans, domestic violence services, assistance for homeless and runaway youth, mental health resources, disability employment and transportation services, services available to senior citizens, employment and training services, legal advice and more.

The Hillsdale County Salvation Army will be on hand serving a hot meal along with distributing information about its services. Local beauticians will be giving free haircuts and free flu shots will be available for children. The Community Action Agency will be taking free family photographs. Personal care packages will also be distributed. Vanlerberg said several residents will take advantage of the free haircuts, because it is something that they need. “We have had people in tears after getting their hair cut,” she said. “It makes them feel good about themselves.”

Event organizers are expecting around 250 people to take part in the event as it continues to grow.

Vanlerberg said it is important for everyone who is homeless to attend the event because it will serve as a HUD Point and Time Count location. She said getting an accurate number on the number of homeless individuals in the county is crucial because it helps to bring HUD funding to the community. Members of the Pittsford National Honor Society have once again stepped up and volunteered to help with the event. Vanlerberg said the students are there to do whatever is needed.

“It has been huge to have their help,” she said. “It is a good opportunity for them. It is a real eye-opener for them.”

The event will feature 30 non-profit agencies and volunteers.

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