

PUTNAM COUNTY RETIRED TEACHERS
September 10, 2024

Thirteen were present for the meeting and lunch at the Putnam Inn. President Alan Zerkel welcomed us and introduced Sam Draper, president of the board of directors for Beyond Homeless Shelter, as our guest speaker, who spoke about the shelter following our lunch.

The shelter serves homeless and at risk of being homeless women and children in Putnam, Clay, Hendricks, Montgomery, Owen, and Parke Counties. There are 24 beds and residents are expected to stay no more than 30 days. They may reapply to stay longer. When residents apply they enter a program to gain independence and employment. Fuller (formerly Habitat for Humanity), the City of Greencastle, and Beyond Homeless are working together to solve the problem of males who are homeless. Part of the shelter serves as an emergency overnight shelter and also a daily shelter during inclement weather. Beyond Homeless has a homeless prevention program as well. The fastest growing population of homelessness are those 55 and older. Latest Indiana statistics show that there has been a statewide increase of 42% in homelessness in the last year and in Putnam County there has been a 22% increase.

The cost of operating the shelter is \$30,000. Government funding is \$35,000 per year. November is Homeless awareness month. 1% will get a full meal served by waiters and waitresses, most will get a self serve buffet, but those designated as homeless will get a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

Following lunch and the speaker, Alan Zerkel convened the meeting. He announced that the 2024 Fall Advocacy workshops will be held September 24 at the Hendrick's County Fairground in Danville. Ben Chadd is planning to attend. Others may register on the state IRTA web site for free by September 24. Legislators did not award retired teachers a COLA in the last legislative session. Alan pointed out that the cost of membership is \$35 per year and associates may join for \$15. Alan pointed out that legislators notice that there is a lack of interest in joining IRTA and vote accordingly. IRTA is only way we have of lobbying for that COLA. Other advantages of membership are active teacher grants for those currently in the classroom, the Hands Up Fund for those experiencing a one time financial crisis. The Education Foundation is trying to establish an endowment fund.

The next meeting will be October 8.

Sincerely,
Lucy Wieland, Recording Secretary