

## **SERVING THE NEED FOR TEMPORARY SHELTER**

As Executive Director of MICAH House, September Turner has a tremendous challenge to meet the needs of families and single women who are experiencing the crisis of homelessness. Turner explained that MICAH House is a temporary emergency family shelter located in Council Bluffs. Last year MICAH House sheltered 322 individuals, about half were children, but turned away 2000 others. Turner noted that MICAH House is supported by donations from individuals, churches, businesses, grants, fundraising events and in-kind donations. The staff and volunteers work 24 hours a day seven day a week providing shelter and meals. They have been in operation nearly twenty years and have a current capacity for 15 families. According to Turner about half of the families served are from Iowa and half from Nebraska. The shelter is usually full and the need for temporary help, especially for single mother families, is great. Turner explained that MICAH House has joined with four other social service agencies in Council Bluffs to plan a combined campus of new structures on 8 acres to provide more effective services. This 28 million dollar project will double the service capacity of MICAH House and allow more efficient exchange of social services between the cooperating agencies. Turner noted that the fund raising has just started and they hope to start construction in 2007. Until then there is an ongoing challenge to serve the need with the space available. Turner emphasized that volunteer help is essential to MICAH House. Volunteers are needed to sort and organize donations, prepare meals, pick up and deliver donations, help with record keeping, cleaning, minor repairs, and provide in-house day care. Give them a call at 323-4416 if you have materials or time to donate.