Now what?

Peg Stice heard that question posed during the panel discussion that followed Bloomington’s “Food Stamp Challenge,” which had involved about a dozen community members voluntarily living on a food-and-beverage budget of $3 a day for a week in November.

“One of the participants who’d had some previous experience with food stamps very sincerely thanked the city officials and others who had taken up the challenge, but then asked ‘Where does this go from here?’” Stice said last week. She’s director of Indiana University’s American Humanics program.

Where it goes could well be determined, at least in part, today through Wednesday in Indianapolis as the annual American Humanics Management/Leadership Institute convenes.

American Humanics, founded in 1948, is an alliance of more than 70 colleges and 60 agencies to prepare new generations of leaders for the nation’s nonprofit sector. The institute is the capstone for students earning humanics certification. With this year’s event coming to Indianapolis, IU and Bloomington have a major presence and will be in heavy recruiting mode, with more than 700 young people attending.

Many institute attendees will participate in a case study on domestic hunger policy based upon Bloomington, in part as an outgrowth of the Food Stamp Challenge. Bloomington is anonymous, called “Utown” for the case study, but its people, organizations and situations are recognizable.

So some of the best and brightest young minds in the nation will brainstorm and role-play about addressing hunger in a place such as Bloomington, under the auspices of established experts in the field, and that could prove very valuable in a time of fiscal recession when demand for services is rising but funding is dwindling.

Many of those experts are local or already have ties to Bloomington and IU. They will help provide 20 of the institute’s workshops.

Jim Morris, president of Pacers Sports and Entertainment, is a former IU trustee and former executive director of the United Nations World Food Programme who will deliver the institute’s opening address. He co-chairs the host committee with Eugene Temple, president of the IU Foundation. Also on the committee are IU School of Public and Environmental Affairs faculty members Beth Gazley and Les Lenkowsky, and Erika Albert, a former graduate assistant for
IU’s American Humanics program who is now development director for the Monroe County YMCA.

Julio Alonso, executive director of Hoosier Hills Food Bank, will be among those responding to student policy recommendations from the case study and the related National Collegiate Dialogue on World Hunger at the institute. The case study and dialogue were developed by a team of IU SPEA faculty members Lenkowsky, Gazley, Stice and Ann Marie Thomson, IU SPEA student Susie Puskar and alumnae Elizabeth Gensler and Kerry Brock. Stice and IU student representative Tiffany Guridy joined IUPUI counterparts on the advisory council that organized this year’s institute.

Stice, former director of Monroe County’s United Way, said “We’re lucky in Bloomington,” citing IU President Michael McRobbie’s call for service learning and outreach and the collaboration her office enjoys with Bloomington’s nonprofit agencies and professionals. Ivy Tech’s Bloomington campus also emphasizes service learning.

“We have extraordinary nonprofit professionals, managers and board members here in Bloomington,” Stice said. “Once you get to know people such as Julio Alonzo and Toby Strout, you realize they’re amazing people who can do so much with so little.

“But when I was directing United Way, I knew that even with great leaders and great ideas, we didn’t always have the resources or staff positions we needed to properly follow up. It’s gratifying our (American Humanics) program can now help provide interns.”

The IU American Humanics program has, through internships funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, supplied 11 staffers to organizations in just the past two years in coordination with the United Way-sponsored Nonprofit Alliance and the City of Bloomington Volunteer Network.

Local internships during that period have included three at Girls Inc., another at the Boys and Girls Club and another at the Monroe County Humane Association. Three more local internships are set to start this spring, including one at the Boys and Girls Club, another to help start a Boys and Girls Club in Ellettsville and one at Fairview Elementary.

The YMCA’s Albert relished the experience she gained as an intern at Big Brothers/Big Sisters.

“When I was an undergraduate, I knew I wanted to have a career that would make a difference but didn’t know how to go about it or what that would look like until American Humanics provided me an introduction to the nonprofit sector,” Albert said. “And along the way I had the opportunity to work in the nonprofit sector locally while learning tools and techniques in areas like fundraising.”

Albert noted that United Way is funding any local agency wishing to conduct interviews at the institute in search of either interns or full-time employees. And the agencies are benefiting from the increased professionalism that comes with American Humanics certification.
“We have to get better, smarter and more professional in our approach, better at doing more with less,” Albert said. “We have to know how to attract and engage volunteers and donors.

“A lot of nonprofit personnel feel overwhelmed right now. The need is always right in front of us, and it’s growing, but our resources are often shrinking. But that just means it’s time to step up, really respond, really collaborate, really come up with new approaches and solutions.”

Institute attendees will have four practical tracks to pursue with institute workshops — fundraising, diversity, youth development, management leadership — all with IU or Bloomington contributions. For example, the Youth Development track will benefit from expertise from The Journey, a new training program in Bloomington funded by the Lilly Foundation.

IU’s Lenkowsky said the institute experts and organizers want their student participants to put the training into the context of their own lives, to answer that “What next?” question:

“So when you go back to campus and your communities, what are you going to do?”

Making connections

20 workshops involving Indiana University and Bloomington experts scheduled for this week’s American Humanics Management/Leadership Institute in Indianapolis:

**Diversity Education: Beyond Food, Fun & Festival**
Melanie Castillo-Cullather, IU Asian Culture Center
David A. Suzuki, IUPUI Asian Culture Center

**Students Empowering Students**
Lillian Casillas, Latino Culture Center IU
Maricela Alvarado, Latino Culture Center IUPUI

**Marketing Your Passion**
Eric Love, IU
Beverly Calender-Anderson, City of Bloomington

**Advocating and Encouraging Gender Equality through Empowerment-Based Youth Programming**
Liz Rice, Kim Mathews, Stacy Jansen, IU American Humanics students

**Jazz Masters in the School**
Monika Herzig, IU SPEA

**Building Voice through Publishing**
Joelene Bergonzi, IU
Paul Burt, Pen & Publish Inc., Bloomington

**Jumpstart Your Career in Youth Work**
Sara Pennington-Busick, IU Career Development Center

**Giving Back to Africa**
Ann Marie Thomson, IU SPEA
Dani Walker, GBA Student Association

**North-South-East-West: An Exercise in Understanding Preferences in Group Work**
Beth Gazley, IU SPEA
Cultivating & Maintaining Effective Community/University Collaborations
Nicole Schonemann, IU Office of Service-Learning
Sarah Pennal, IU student
Diversity Re-examined: Understanding Cultural Imperialism, Racial Superiority and Paternalism
Rasul A. Mowall, IU HPER
Writing Appeal Letters
Jen Shang, IU Center on Philanthropy
A Jewish Perspective on Faith, Service and Philanthropy
Amy Jackson, Hillel Foundation at IU
Grassroots for BIG impact: The Mother Hubbard’s Cupboard Story
Brooke Gentile, Mother Hubbard’s Cupboard
What’s the Plan?
Mindy Hightower King, IU’s Center for Evaluation and Education Policy
First Nations Shouldn’t Come Last in Higher Education
Rebecca Riall and Nathen Steininger, former board members, IU First Nations Educational and Cultural Center
Youth in Governance/How to Break Into the Board Room
Ann Burnworth, Youth Resources of Southwestern Indiana
Laura Ferguson, IU student
Blind Spots and “The Politics of Dignity”
Claire King, IU Center for Research and P-16 Collaboration
Lotus Blossoms: Nurturing Children’s Curiosity About Different People and Places
Deborah Klein and LuAnne Holladay, Lotus Education and Arts Foundation
Lobby 101
Sarah Hayes, CEO, Monroe County Humane Society
Anne Sterling, Indiana State Director, Humane Society of the United States