ACTION
WE MAKE IT HAPPEN...

"Community Action on the move-
Building dreams with real life outcomes"

2011/2012
ANNUAL REPORT
COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY OF ST. LOUIS COUNTY
The mission of CAASTLC is to end poverty. We are committed to helping families who are caught in poverty. We are committed to helping the communities of St. Louis County prevent the conditions of poverty for future generations.
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ANNUAL REPORT

Community Action Agency of St. Louis County, Inc.

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Overland, MO 63114

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Greetings!

It is our pleasure once again to present the 2012 annual report of the Community Action Agency of St. Louis County (CAASTLC). The CAASTLC Board of Directors’ vision focused on making every opportunity available to our service population to achieve their dreams for empowerment and success. The program strategic plan was developed to guide all of the organization’s service efforts toward reaching successful and measurable outcomes in the lives of families and individuals. Although part of CAASTLC vision is to always provide various safety nets for crises intervention and emergency services, it is also our vision to provide a mix of services that are designed to help identify barriers, teach ways to overcome enabling negative factors and to change one’s focus for new opportunities. Some of these strategies are highlighted below.

**Poverty Simulations** is a teaching tool to educate our communities about poverty conditions and the struggles faced by those in or near poverty for a better understanding so that appropriate poverty issues can be addressed. Community forums are used to provide **Energy Education** to low-income households and the communities as to how to conserve on energy consumption and lower household utility bills. **Employment Fairs and Employment Assistance** are service mechanisms to improve household income and give guidance through training referrals for skill development. **Step Up to Leadership** is a curriculum to teach how to engage in civic leadership and learn skills for community advocacy. **Individual Development Accounts (IDA)** focus is household financial management skills and provide a match saving account for the purchase of a home. **Life Skills** are a series of classes and individual coaching to help change behaviors and to embrace new opportunities. **Counseling Services** provide mentoring, coaching, and guidance for skill development toward positive changes through individual sessions and classes. **Community Gardens and CAASTLC Farm Seeds of Hope** provides locally grown vegetables and teaches nutrition for a healthier lifestyle.

All of these strategies are designed to build paths to success. Many of the mentioned projects were provided in both St. Louis County and in the City of St. Louis. CAASTLC was awarded an interim contract for Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) initiatives during this past year to help St. Louis City low-income residents.

The success of CAASTLC work would not be possible without the support of so many community partners, the Board of Directors, volunteers and staff. Our thanks to all for the continued support and we look forward to making more dreams possible and changing lives to end poverty.

Thank you,

Merline P. Anderson  
Executive Director

Thank you.

Rosezetta Eichelberger  
Board Chairman
How the Community Action Movement Started to Make It Happen In St. Louis County

Community Action Agency of St. Louis County, Inc. (d/b/a CAASTLC, Inc.) is part of a national network of federally funded Community Action Agencies (CAAs), created by the federal Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. CAAs administer various programs, on their individual community levels, to assist low-income people out of poverty conditions. Nationwide, CAAs help 11.5 million people toward self-sufficiency. CAAs are now legislated by the Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) that replaced the Economic Opportunity Act in 1981. CAASTLC, Inc. is a 501(C)(3) not-for-profit corporation that has provided a variety of services to low-income people in St. Louis County for over 30 years.

The agency was founded in 1968 as a satellite entity under the Human Development Corporation of St. Louis (“HDC”), which was one of many grass roots organizations formed by the Kennedy and Johnson administrations in response to the increased severity of poverty in the urban areas of the United States. A citizen group organized for the purpose of receiving federal funds to help St. Louis County low-income residents in crisis. The group incorporated as “The St. Louis County Advisory Council to the Human Development Corporation of Metro St. Louis.” The advisory group was made up of twelve devoted community-minded individuals who wanted a voice in identifying the problems and needs of low-income St. Louis County residents.

Less than a year later, the name was changed to Metroplex, Inc. and the Board of Directors was increased to thirty-six members. During early years, Metroplex, Inc. operated from several community-based locations throughout St. Louis County. In 1978, Metroplex, Inc. severed its administrative relationship with the Human Development Corporation of St. Louis and became a separate designated entity to provide anti-poverty programs for St. Louis County. In January of 1996, the name was changed to Services Toward Empowering People, Inc. (d/b/a STEP, Inc.) In January of 2004, the name was change to Community Action Agency of St. Louis County, Inc. (d/b/a CAASTLC, Inc.).

The agency’s focus, from its earliest beginning until present day, remains: To serve as an empowerment service in order to help the poor become self-sufficient. Designated not as an assistance program, but rather as an empowerment service for low-income residents, the national CAA mission is: “Helping the poor to become self-sufficient.”
Board of Directors and CAAStLC Staff

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Delsie Boyd, Chair  Dates of Service
Rosezetta Eichelberger, Vice Chair  12/03-present
Basil Rudawsky, Treasurer  04/08-present
Ethel Teasley, Secretary  02/09-present
Wilma Abernathy  06/06-08/11
Yolanda Austin  12/02-12/12
Rose Cason  08/10-present
Michael Crayton  06/11-present
Paul Davis  04/04-present
Steve Krael  07/06-present
Delores Hardwick  02/12-present
Taressa Hockaday  08/10-present
Cynthia Jordan  02/12-present
Fred Williams  08/09-present
Angela Roffle  06/11-present
Reshia L.Roy-Holman  08/10-present

CAASTLC STAFF

ADMINISTRATION

Merline Anderson, Executive Director
Vacant, Executive Administrative Assistant
James Moore, Government and Community Relations Coordinator

COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND OUTREACH

Georgie Donahue, Director-Program Administration
David Barnes, Associate Director CSBG

Outreach
Paulette Bass
Janet Butler

Employment
James Ingram, Case Manager

Youth Services/Case Managers
Joseph Bates
Keith Robinson
Meredith Hilburg

Education Programs
Janice McKinney, Program Education Specialist
Rich Krueger, Energy Conservation Education/Outreach Coordinator

Family Development
Chris Boyd, Coordinator Case Managers
Sherri Nicholson
Teresa Schneider
Dan Okall
Debra Berry

Counseling
Vern Johannes, Director
Joseph Bates, Group Facilitator
Suzanne Bates, Counselor

Finance
Mark Kurtz, Director
Roger Wolfe, Financial Reporting Accountant
Pat Bulejski, Service Integration Coordinator
Melissa Stumpf, Payroll/Accounts Payable
Shannon Wicks, Payroll Accountant

HOUSING AND SUPPORT SERVICES

John Parson, Director
Process & Operations

Energy & Housing
Ken Haynes, Housing & Facilities Support II
Freeman Miles, Housing & Facilities Support I
Paul Springer, CSR/Receptionist
Christine Watts, CSR
Lisa Pitt, Receptionist

Energy Data Entry Clerks:
Paulette Bass
Janet Butler
Chad Forsee
Patty Barton-Harvell
Judith Hetzler
Gwendolyn Moore
Jamie Roth
Cassandra Spencer

Weatherization
Rochell Thomas, Coordinator of Energy Services
Jarrod Gillespie, Manager Technical & Training
Tim Huber, Special Projects Supervisor
Madeline Buthod, Weatherization Administrative Assistant
Darrell Steed, Quality Control Inspector

Weatherization Auditors:
Andrew Roberts
Anthony Steed
Dwayne Walker
Gary Wilfong
Joe Huber
John Dennett
Richard Rockett
Wayne Wencker

Community Garden and Farm Project
Randy Tempel, Community Gardener
Gabriel Hahn, Farm Manager
Jehad Almaharmeh, Community Farm Apprentice

Human Resources and Public Relations
Katherin Lucas-Johnson, Director
Chelcey Shields, Assistant HR/PR
Willie D. Savage Jr., Administrative Clerk

Contract Compliance
Richard Reinbott, Director
Cedric Jackson, Associate Compliance Officer
July 26, 2012

Dear Friends:

It is my honor to recognize the Community Action Agency of St. Louis County for the vital role it plays within the St. Louis community. The many dedicated efforts of your organization to serve low-income families through services such as weatherization, emergency food, and rent and mortgage assistance are especially beneficial given today’s economic struggles.

The many good works and tireless efforts of CAASTLC resonate throughout the St. Louis community and provide some measure of hope to those who need it the most. CAASTLC’s efforts to fight poverty and provide a helping hand to Missourians in need are truly commendable.

Again, I thank you for your many contributions, and offer you best wishes for your many successful years ahead.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Jeremiah W. (Jay) Nixon
Governor
From the Desk of
County Executive Charlie A. Dooley

September 17, 2012

Ms. Marline Anderson
Executive Director
CAASTLC
2709 Woodson Road
St. Louis, MO 63114

Dear Ms. Anderson:

Please allow me to offer my congratulations to the staff and leadership of The Community
Action Agency of St. Louis on another great year. Your organization provides valuable
resources and services in St. Louis County and without your support many families would
find themselves in dire straits.

Our economy is recovering slowly and though I believe the worst is behind us, we still
have a long way to go. St. Louis County is experiencing an increase in the number of
families needing support to put food on the table, keep utilities on and access necessary
family support services. You provide them with a lifeline and our community is better for it.

Congratulations again on a great year and I look forward to your continued efforts on
behalf of the citizens of St. Louis County!

Sincerely,

Charlie A. Dooley
County Executive
Dear Friends,

I am pleased to recognize the Community Action Agency of St. Louis County, Inc. (CAASTLC) for your strong record of service in the St. Louis region. Your mission to “prevent the conditions of poverty for present and future generations” is admirable and I applaud you for your efforts in the community.

Truly, every person deserves to have the best opportunities in life to succeed. For over thirty years, CAASTLC has equipped individuals and families with the tools for success. Through access to educational opportunities, healthcare, and affordable housing, CAASTLC has helped numerous St. Louisians rise above poverty. Because of your dedicated service, St. Louis is a better, stronger region.

Please accept my sincere appreciation for your generous commitment and service to Missouri residents, along with my best wishes for your continued success uplifting our community.

Sincerely,

Claire McCaskill
United States Senator
From the Desk of Congressman William Lacy Clay

Ms. Merline Anderson  
Executive Director  
Community Action Agency  
of St. Louis County  
2709 Woodson Road  
St. Louis, MO  63114

Dear Ms. Anderson:

It is both an honor and a privilege to commend you and your outstanding staff for the excellent service that you provide to the St. Louis community.

The Community Action Agency of St. Louis County (CAAS/SLC) has been extremely successful in reaching out and helping others. The many noteworthy programs that you offer such as Weatherization, Energy Assistance, Housing and Youth Services programs have made a tremendous difference in the quality of life for countless people in the St. Louis Metropolitan Area. Were it not for the compassion, support, hard work, and leadership that your agency has always demonstrated, many individuals and families would not have been able to receive the assistance that they both need and deserve.

We are very fortunate to have such a wonderful organization in our community. On behalf of the residents of the First Congressional District of Missouri, I extend a responding “Thank You” for your many good works. Best wishes for every continued success.

Sincerely,

Wm. Lacy Clay  
Member of Congress

WLC'12
From the Desk of Congressman Russ Carnahan

October 2, 2012

Community Action Agency of St. Louis County
2709 Woodson Road
Overland, Missouri 63114

Dear Ms. Anderson:

It is with appreciation that I write to you and the Community Action Agency of St. Louis County. Your steadfastness in serving so many low-income people in our community is something to be emulated by us all.

I want to thank you for your Community Supported Agriculture program, which birthed the “Seeds of Hope Farm” in Spanish Lake, Missouri on July 24th, 2012. Your efforts to make locally produced and nutritious foods available in low-income neighborhoods in the city and county should be commended.

Furthermore, as the cold winter months approach, I wish your Winter Energy Assistance program great success. This program aimed at serving the elderly and disabled, is another example of the vital part you play in providing access to basic public services, which every citizen needs and deserves.

Once again, thank you for your service to the residents of St. Louis County, and please do not hesitate to contact my office if I can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Russ Carnahan
Member of Congress
Community Projects

Community Action Poverty Simulations (CAPS)
A poverty simulation is a unique experience that helps community participants understand what life is like with a shortage of money and a lot of stress. We conducted eight simulations with audiences ranging from schools, local businesses and hospital personnel.

H2O Program
American Water Company partnered with us to assist 515 households with $55,484.00 paid toward their bills.

Energy Education (Energy Forums)
CAASTLC, Inc. coordinates a series of community forums on “How to Save Money on Your Home Utility Bills and Make Your Home More Energy Efficient.” These educational forums are conducted throughout St. Louis County to various diverse groups. These groups included churches, local municipal government offices, schools and other non-profit agencies.

Step Up to Leadership
Step Up to Leadership Program helps low-income people develop leadership skills and turn their civic passions into action. Topics cover the value of grassroots participation, goal setting, non-profit boards, successful collaboration, parliamentary procedures, public speaking and negotiation and conflict resolution. This past year we conducted these classes with children for the first time. The Hazelwood Youth Academy and Epworth Children’s Home were the targeted locations for this program.

Veteran’s Stand Down/Stand Up for Women
The St. Louis Area Homeless Veterans Stand Down Project provides homeless veterans with a variety of services: health exams and screenings, legal assistance, clothing, toiletries, a hot meal, haircuts and more.

Home Repair Program
CAASTLC provided funds for minor home repair to St. Louis County residents who were disabled or elderly. This program supplemented St. Louis County funding that would not pay for repairs in this area. This program also collaborated with our Weatherization Department for additional services.
Community Gardens
Ten Community Garden Project sites were developed throughout St. Louis County; making fresh nutritional produce accessible and more affordable for low-income citizens. We assisted in establishing community members to oversee the maintenance of the gardens in each garden site and helped them engage residents on the importance of fresh produce for their local communities.

Above: Volunteers planting the Hazelwood Patch
Right: West County Senior Center Community Garden dedication event
Resource Distribution

**Christmas Programs**
We participated in three programs this past year to help families in need during the holiday season. One program was 100 Neediest Families which provided financial assistance for over 324 people for the holiday season. Along with that program we had 48 adults/children that received Christmas supplies and gifts from our Adopt-A-Family program. This program partnered with local businesses and organizations to fulfill the family holiday wish list. In addition we received toys and clothes from various sources to give out to needy families prior to the Christmas holiday.

**Food Pantry**
During this past fiscal year the CAASTLC Food Pantry assisted over 2,068 unduplicated individuals with 123,615 pounds of food. We continue to collaborate with various agencies associated with the St. Louis Area Food Bank to provide a balanced and nutritious meal to low-income residents of St. Louis County.

Face painting at our holiday party

Holiday theme craft projects

Empty barrels waiting to be filled to help feed hungry families.

Fontbonne Softball team pitching in to wrap gifts.
Counseling Services
(Drug & Alcohol Education and Anger Management)
A twelve week Drug and Alcohol Program employing educational material and discussion is offered at CAASTLC, Inc. Referral sources can be notified of attendance and status with the participant’s signed consent. Last year we had over 935 participants in this program of that 339 maintained sobriety for over the 12 week program. This is an increase from last year’s number. Our Anger Management program has twelve sessions as well and is modeled after a cognitive behavioral approach designed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The classes help to provide personal insight into behavior that results in aggression and assists in implementing alternative ways for handling anger.

Employment Development Program
(Job Readiness, Job Placement)
Our Employment program saw an increase of persons coming in our office for job readiness skills. We had 145 persons participating in that program. We also had 53 persons gain employment from our job placement program. Our program still utilizes an employment curriculum and provides employment supports to each of the participants attending classes as well as one-on-one consultation.

Prisoner Reentry/Employment Connection
We collaborated with the Clayton Correctional Facility to implement an employment ready curriculum to offenders soon to be released. This program offered ex-offenders or persons on probation/parole another outlook on future opportunities. The training program provided an updated resume, employment leads and case management services. Of the 218 people entering into this program, all finished and received a certificate of completion.

Family Case Management
Skilled, degreed case managers provided support and guidance to low-income county residents to move toward self-sufficiency. The program goal was to work to develop and strengthen the family structure via employment and/or educational goals.
Back to School Fair
CAASTLC’s Annual Back to School Fair served 255 pre-registered children grades K-12 with a variety of vendor booths providing students with free information and services targeted at education, safety and wellness.

Youth Services Program
Youth at Risk Program utilizes case management and school presentations for implementation of services. Under our case management program, children are referred for the following reasons: fighting, possible gang involvement and discipline issues (either at home or community). A detailed action plan was established with parental/school support. We continue to collaborate with these school districts: Hancock Place, Hazelwood, Ritenour and Riverview Gardens.
HOUSING ASSISTANCE

Individual Development Account (IDA Savings Program)
The IDA Savings Program model is an asset development program for low-income families who reside in St. Louis County and desire to purchase a home within 2 years while saving for a down-payment. The goal was for participants to save $2,000.00 and receive $2.00 for every dollar saved, accumulating $4,000.00 to obtain $6,000.00 for a down payment and closing costs of a home purchase. During 2011 and 2012 all participants completed a required financial literacy program and homebuyer workshop.

Rent and Mortgage Assistance
CAASTLC’s Housing Program, funded by the Missouri Housing Trust and the Federal Emergency Food and Shelter Grant, partners with several private property owners and apartment complexes to place clients with challenged credit into permanent housing. CAASTLC, Inc. provides Rent and Mortgage Assistance to families financially unable to obtain housing or in threat of eviction or foreclosures and unable to make housing payments. In addition to financial assistance, the rent and mortgage program also advocates re-negotiation of unfair lease agreements and inappropriate living conditions. CAASTLC was given $30,000 to assist St. Louis County residents who met the requirements of this program.

Credit Counseling
CAASTLC, Inc. is a HUD Certified Credit Counseling Agency, assisting potential homeowners who want to learn to save and budget to qualify for a mortgage loan. Individuals learn about the pitfalls of sub-prime lending and work with lenders who offer products to assist low-income families succeed in meeting their goals. During the past two years CAASTLC continued to provide credit counseling to help individuals better manage a budget and develop long term goals of saving and investing.

ENERGY SERVICES

Energy Services
Energy Services is a combination of several programs offered and regulated at the federal, state and local levels. The major component is LIHEAP, (Low Income Household Energy Assistance Program), a federal program disseminated to the states for administration and regulation. It is composed of two components; EA (Energy Assistance) and ECIP (Emergency Crisis Intervention Program). The program assists low income families (focusing primarily on heating) October through March.

Cooling is the primary focus June through September. In addition to LIHEAP there are local funding sources such as Dollar More and Dollar Help/Dollar Help Crisis. During the past two years these programs provided combined services to an excess of 22,066 households during the winter and summer seasons. Some of these households received some or all of the stated energy related funding sources.

Weatherization Assistance Program
Weatherization Assistance is a program sponsored and regulated by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, (DNR). In addition to the DNR funding, Ameren UE and Laclede Gas contribute monies to the program. Weatherization identifies what can be done to the home to reduce utility consumption by low-income families. Homes are air infiltration tested by energy auditors. Test results indicate what measures must be taken in order to make heating and cooling systems effective. Heating systems are valuated, upgraded or replaced for energy efficiency. In 2011, 1001 households benefitted from improved energy efficiency.
Nothing could more exemplify the Community Action effort and how we make it happen throughout the year than the office of Public Relations & Human Resources for CAASTLC, Inc.

Public Relations
Public Relations is always on the move; providing various events to educate the St. Louis community about the cause and pervasive and degenerative effects of poverty on the disadvantaged of St. Louis County and the surrounding area. During 2011/12 Public Relations played a major role in promoting the efforts of the Community Gardens Project and “Seeds of Hope” Urban Farm and assisting with City Services Programs. We continue our outreach to the community by working with other non-profit and professional organizations, businesses, the media and faith based groups.

Human Resources
Over the past two years we have provided the staff with several opportunities for development through in-service on-site trainings and outside educational opportunities. The implementation of City services during 2012 doubled our capacity and provided the capability to expand our already diverse staff. High standards throughout the agency placed special emphasis on recruitment, management, employment law and leadership training. Our regular Weatherization staff and the ARRA staff provided opportunities for training and development which constructed a highly credentialed and expert energy efficiency team. CAASTLC continues to strive for excellence through teamwork and customer service, which continues to be our focus this year and through the up coming years.

Contract Compliance
Ensuring program compliance for our agency is a vital component of our mission. Because of our unique relationships with many different entities and people, we must remain diligent in our accountability to the various agencies that fund our programs and to the public we serve. As a recipient of funding that always remains subject to being reduced, we strive to ensure compliance on a greater scale than ever before.

We conduct a thorough review of every contract and associated regulations, followed by a summarization of key points, changes, and documentation requirements that are communicated to all relevant staff persons. Regular meetings are held to review any program and financial issues that may arise in order to facilitate better communication and to implement timely corrective action. Internal audits are conducted to ensure quality and complete program documentation, forms are implemented and updated to match current requirements, and written client surveys are conducted to better gauge the quality of services we deliver to the community.

Because compliance must be achieved with a high level of consistency, we continually look for ways to improve our processes. We look forward to meeting the many challenges that maintaining compliance continuously presents.

The Public Relations Department continues to inform the community of the CAASTLC mission and program services by using media opportunities and outreach activities whenever possible.
# Statement of Activities
For the years ended September 30, 2010 and September 30, 2011

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<td>(Actual)</td>
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<td>Grants</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td><strong>Total Public Support and Revenue</strong></td>
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<td>Outside Professional Services</td>
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<td>Equipment, Rental, and Maintenance</td>
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<td>Communications</td>
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<td>Insurance</td>
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<td>Supplies</td>
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<td>Public Relations</td>
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<td>Vehicle Expenses</td>
<td>16,631</td>
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<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>74,477</td>
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<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td>12,314,010</td>
<td>11,133,140</td>
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<td><strong>Changes in Net Assets</strong></td>
<td>1,211,646</td>
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<td><strong>Fund Balance</strong></td>
<td>$2,880,710</td>
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Community Action Works – Participation Profile

COMMUNITY RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
2011-2012 PARTICIPATION PROFILE

Youth Services
• 1623 youth participated in classroom instruction
• 84 individuals received 1155 hours of direct service

Family Support Case Management
• 67 families received 769 hours of direct service

Anger Management Counseling
• 352 individuals received over 1337 sessions

Back to School
• 250 children received school supplies and resources

Counseling Drug and Alcohol
• 561 individuals received over 2475 sessions

Intake, Assessment and Referral (IAR)
• 5847 individuals assessed
• Over 9603 referrals for services given

Life Skills Classes/Training
• Family Strengths 73 individuals received 1024 hours of instruction
• Energy Conservation-1427 individuals received 3786 hours of instruction
• Family Development-21 individuals received 495 hours of instruction

Resource Distribution
• 2743 households received goods and clothing

Employment
• 765 hours of Job Readiness Classes
• 186 individuals received job and/or provided work counseling services
• 51 people obtained employment

Individual Development Account
• 21 participants in program saved $10,849.00 for home purchases
• 2 individuals purchased homes
• 1 used savings to pay for college tuition
Community Resources Department (Interim-City Services)

Central City Services
GATEWAY CLASSIC FOUNDATION

PROGRAM PROFILE
• Anger Management
• Youth Employment Program (YEP)
• Case Management
• Youth Case Management
• Bryan Hill Elementary School
• Utility Programs:
  • Dollar Help Dollar More and Keeping Current
• Food Pantry
• Holiday Programs:
  • Toys for Tots
  • Thanksgiving Baskets
• Employment Fairs

CENTRAL STAFF
Jackie Hutchinson,
  Director of City Services

Case Managers
Kim Banks
Shardai Collins
Yolanda Holmes
Mike Win

Intake/Receptionist
Sheila Hart
Diedra Villery
Tarshie Burgess

South City Services

PROGRAM PROFILE
• Youth Employment Program (YEP)
• Case Management
• Utility Programs:
  • Dollar Help Dollar More and Keeping Current
• Food Pantry
• Holiday Programs:
  • Toys for Tots
  • Thanksgiving Baskets
• Gardening Programs

SOUTH CITY STAFF
Jamie Kirk, Site Coordinator

Case Managers
Kimberly Bryant
Pamela Robinson
Ronald Kightlinger

Intake/Receptionist
Charlotte Lampkin
Darlene Miller
Pasha Mitchell

City Gardener
Dennis Potter

North City Services
WEST END MOUNT CARMEL

PROGRAM PROFILE
• Youth Employment Program (YEP)
• Case Management
• Utility Programs:
  • Dollar Help Dollar More and Keeping Current
• Food Pantry
• Holiday Programs:
  • Toys for Tots
  • Thanksgiving Baskets
• Financial Literacy
• Yeatman Middle School
• Mentoring Program

NORTH CITY STAFF
Myron Gray, Site Coordinator

Case Managers
Stanley Miller, Employment
Lisa Potts, Financial Literacy
Sundy Whiteside
Jessica Freiberger
Kandis Taylor
Karen Wilson

Intake/Receptionist
Lisa Roger
Gwendolyn Moore

Yeatman
Shelly Collins, Case Manager

Supporting the community with hot meals and social activities.
CAASTLC guided community gardeners through another successful growing season. Our extreme heat wave stressed out some plants, and planters! But thankfully we all played it safe and got a fresh start again with a generous mild fall. The dedication put into numbers? Over 7,000 hours spent in the gardens by 155 community members. Delicious harvests were proof of the initiative that gardeners showed: almost 2,500 pounds of food was produced that many were eager to share with friends and neighbors!

Since 2010 CAASTLC has collaborated with local charitable agencies to serve their communities through community gardens. In 2010 and 2011 ten gardens were established and they are growing in membership and on the path to independence. They are vehicles for empowerment, community-building, and learning towards self-sufficiency. When families plant, tend, and prepare fresh fruits and vegetables they are insulated from rising food costs and gain more power over their own personal health and the family food budget. We strive to involve more and more young people in gardening, which can give some purpose and intention on long summer vacations but even more importantly can lay the foundations for a lifelong passion for learning about the natural world.

In September CAASTLC celebrated its first annual Seeds of Hope Benefit Event in the Trolley Room at Forest Park Visitor Center. The event enjoyed success raising funds from corporate sponsors and community members to support our efforts in nutrition education, community gardens, the urban farm project, and food pantry services.

Seeds of Hope Farm was established in March of 2012 as a tiered CSA farm to increase access to produce in Spanish Lake. CSA means Community Supported Agriculture, a marketing system that bonds farmers and consumers through community involvement in the farming process. Our tiered CSA features two groups: a sponsorship group that pays a little over the value of the produce they receive so that people of lesser means can afford the same produce at a subsidized cost. CSA members receive a bag of produce weekly through the growing season, called a share, as their payments and participation gives them an ownership in the farm.

Education is a primary function of the Seeds of Hope Farm Project. In conjunction with Lincoln University Cooperative Extension, the farm hosted weekly cooking demos of farm produce on its shared site with the Helping Hands Food Pantry. Also, farm members and interested community members took part in monthly cooking classes and dinners led by Operation Food Search.

Between May and November, Seeds of Hope Farm has accrued 23 members and distributed 256 shares across an 18 week period. The farm produced about 15000 lbs of organically grown fruits and vegetables on .6 acres. Produce overage was donated to local pantries or sold wholesale. Seeds of Hope will be experimenting with winter production. Three of its farm share members opted to continue participation into December, receiving a smaller amount of winter-grown produce to initiate the learning process.
A morning of hands-on work at Seeds of Hope Farm, yielded a yummy al fresco lunch of fresh vegetables.
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