

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Community Action Month Highlights
- What CSBG means to Community Action
- Employment
- Program success Story
- Information on CAASTLC Drive

Merline Anderson;
Executive Director

Georgie Donahue;
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Director Process & Operations (WX)

Community Action Aides Victims of Tornado



FOX Channel 2 Reporter Bonita Cornute Interviews Phae Howard from the National Center for Prevention of Home Improvement Fraud; in a tornado ravaged Berkley residential area.



Pictured to the right-Birdseye view of tornado damaged home in the small Municipality of Berkley.

The Community Action agency of St. Louis County, the St. Louis County Executives Office and the National Center for the Prevention of Home Improvement Fraud held a series of free workshops for tornado survivors

The week of May 2-6 in the nine municipalities hardest struck by the Good Friday tornados. Phae Howard from the

National Center for the Prevention of Home Improvement Fraud addressed the issues of

hiring a contractor, building permits and typical scams. Experts were on hand to discuss; working with your insurance agent, how to apply for various forms of assistance and various resources available to storm victims. The Workshops were held at Florissant Valley Community College, Westview Middle School, Ferguson Municipal Public Library, Berkley Civic Center, Pattonville Sr. High and Bridgeton Community Center.

Sponsors included; St. Louis Community College, Missouri American Water C., Ameren Missouri, Montgomery Bank, Enterprise Leasing, LHM Corp, Riverview Gardens School District, University of Missouri Extension, United

Way of Greater St. Louis, St. Louis Better Business Bureau, The Salvation Army's. Louis County Dept. of Highways & Public Works host sites and the municipal governments in the affected communities

May is Community Action Month

During the month of May CAASTLC acknowledged Community Action Month .

Wednesday-May 4
All day fundraiser (11 am-10:00 pm)

Happy Hour: 5-8pm for CAASTLC Staff & Friends Fundraiser at Casa Gallardo; hosted by CAASTLC's

Young Professionals group Casa Gallardo will donate 25% of food sales from open to close to CAASTLC.

CAASTLC will use the funds raised by this event to aide our St. Louis County neighbors affected by the Good Friday Tornado,

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through the Family development Program.

Friday- May 13 Employee Walk for Hunger—The Walk began at 1:00 pm after lunch. The staff and clients, and guests walked from the Community Center down south Woodson until they reach the Roots and Shoots Garden. At the Garden where they had a short rally and in reference to food insecurity and feeding the poor. A proclamation was presented to CAASTLC by Louise Aboussie from the office of 1st District Con. Lacey Clay. Roots and Shoots garden founder Jim Schmitz gave a presentation on the history of the Overland community garden.



CAASTLC WX Auditor Eartha McMiller holds sign as she takes the “Walk for Hunger”

“A proclamation was presented to CAASTLC by Louis Aboussie from the office of 1st District Congressman “Lacy” Clay. Pictured to the right-



CAASTLC staff, volunteers and guests stand watching The festivities at the Rally held at Roots & Shoots Community Garden

Pictured to the right– CASA Gallarado Fund raiser at Westport- CAASTLC Associate Director, David Barnes and CAASTLC IT contractor Sean Dreste enjoy a pleasant sunny evening on the CASA patio on the plaza



An Editorial-What CSBG Means to Community Action by Cedric Jackson

The Community Service Block Grant program has been around since 1981, helping low income families and individuals struggling with day-to-day necessities. Its purpose has always been to help stem the tide of poverty, and where possible, help to empower a growing class of citizens perpetually in need. Through funds provided by the Community Service Block Grant, Community Action Agency of St. Louis County offers programs for low-income recipients such as counseling for individuals as well as families.

Without funding for Community Service Block Grant, unfortunately, people who are economically disadvantaged would have nowhere else to turn when dealing with debilitating issues such as anger management, drugs and alcohol, along with many other of life's constant challenges. They certainly cannot afford to pay professional hourly fees, or to check themselves into expensive treatment programs. Community Action

Agency of St. Louis County utilizes the Community Service Block Grant to help bridge the gap between those individuals who are challenged economically and the help that many of them need in order to live sustainable lives.

And yet the scope of Community Service Block Grant extends far beyond just counseling in terms of how it touches lives in the community. Unlike many in the middle and upper class, who may have the means to respond to a financial emergency by tapping into savings or other financial reserves, low wage individuals do not have the same luxury. The reality is, that old expression of "living paycheck to paycheck," for those fortunate enough to even have a job, adequately describe how the economically disadvantaged live their daily lives. So when a single paycheck or any portion of that single paycheck is missed, or cannot be stretched far enough, those individuals often have to rely on the kind of emergency services, be it the Food Pantry, Back-to-School Fair, or the Winter Wonderland Program, as provided by Community Action Agency of St

Louis County.

Without assistance from the Community Service Block Grant many low-income communities would be devastated and caught up in poverty for generations to come. Imagine Community Action Agency of St Louis County having to turn people away seeking energy assistance to prevent their utilities from being disconnected, or individuals seeking to have their homes weatherized to help lower their energy costs, or those in need of any number of other vital programs, all denied because there is no place like CAASTLC to offer them help. Just because you turn people away does not mean their unfortunate circumstances go away as well. Think of it in this manner, if the flow of critical resources at one end of the social fabric were to stop, the ripple effects will only move further along and eventually fray and tear at some point down the road, usually at a much greater cost.

Perhaps it should be noted: Should we misunderstand the human will to survive, and somehow become convinced those in need will simply tiptoe quietly away and disappear once the arms of humanity are firmly folded, we greatly delude ourselves.

CAASTLC Brings a Helping Hand to LeMay by Madeline Buthod

“She was also referred to the Home and Water Repair Program which was able to fix her tub faucet so she could have hot and cold water again.”

Sherry T. of Florissant first heard about CAASTLC when she called the United Way’s referral service, 2-1-1, last fall because she was needing help with her gas bill. Sherry is a disabled, single mother struggling to stretch her social security check in enough ways to make ends meet.

Through the United Way, Ms. Sherry also learned about the Weatherization Program offered. When she came to the office to apply she was also enrolled for the 100 Neediest Program for help at Christmas time, and received groceries from the food pantry. She was also referred to the Home and Water Repair Program which was able to fix her tub faucet so she could have hot and cold water again. Because of her small disability check, Ms. Sherry would not have been able to pay her bill and make the home improvements her house needed.

Mary G. lives with her elderly father in South County. They had been without heat in their home 2 years before they were told about the County Older Residents Program (CORP). When CORP found out about their bro-

ken furnace, they immediately contacted CAASTLC’s weatherization program for assistance. The Weatherization Program was not only able to install a brand new Furnace for Ms. Mary and her father, it was also able to repair large holes in the ceiling where they were losing lots of energy.

They also were able to benefit from the LI-HEAP program and received a credit on their gas bill to help during the cold winter months. Shirley B. of Lemay first heard about the Community Action Agency through some friends who had had their homes weatherized and also through Lemay Housing Partnership (LHP). She was able to get substantial repairs done to her home through the two organizations. Ms. Shirley is also a founding participant in the Lemay Community Garden. She had asked her condo complex for years to have a garden but was routinely turned away. So when she heard that CAASTLC and LHP were starting a garden near her home, naturally she was thrilled. The

garden got off to a start last August, and Ms. Shirley was able to grow beans, spinach and lettuce. She is going to a gardening meeting next week to prepare for the upcoming growing season.

Mohammad of Ballwin does his best to care for his wife and 5 children, one of which is severely disabled. When money is tight he goes to CAASTLC for assistance. Over the last couple of years, he has had his home weatherized, gotten gas and water bills paid, received school supplies, and has attended several energy conservation classes. Mohammad has a lot of weight on his shoulders and CAASTLC is happy to take some of the load off.

CAASTLC helps families like the ones mentioned above on a daily basis. For many families suffering through the current economic crisis CAASTLC is the saving grace, without assistance from CAASTLC it could mean coping through freezing winters with no heat and putting children to bed hungry.

GOOD PEOPLE

Despite Adversity Client's Integrity Shines Through

By James T. Ingram

Conservative commentators (and even some past Presidents) have depicted and characterized those in-need, unemployed and underemployed as unworthy of empathy, success and that, left to their own devices, they would even resort to criminal means as their first recourse in furthering themselves.

However, for anyone working within Community Action Agencies, that misperception quickly dissipates in the daily interaction and provision of service to those who, simply, need an opportunity to elevate themselves and their circumstances.

One recent Employment Readiness client very poignantly underscored that point with her honesty and integrity, despite being faced with a choice between morality and opportunism.

Rachel Kozma was returning, from lunch, to her Employment Readiness class at CAASTLC only to stumble upon a wallet containing credit cards, cash and the potential for Rachel to make a quick profit.

Conservative social pundits would have bet that Rachel would have made off with her ill-gotten gains and never returned.

They would have lost that bet for Rachel returned the wallet, which happened to belong to a very grateful CAASTLC employee.

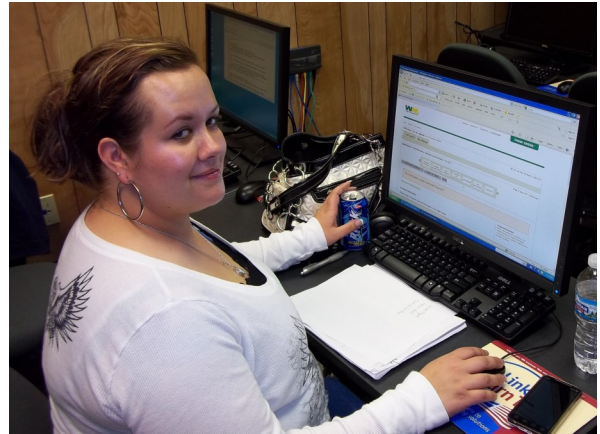
It speaks to the character and integrity of Rachel who, despite being an ex-offender and single mother, completed a degree in Business Administration and gained experience in office administration.

After recently losing her job, Rachel could have easily chalked it up to being another bad break and seen the lost wallet as some dumb "stroke of luck".

Not Rachel. "I know how it feels to have things taken. It's hard enough out here", she said.

It's called having honesty, integrity and character; things which are best tested when no one else is around to see us do the right thing.

That's what Rachel exemplified on that day and it is typical of those who walk through the doors of Community Action Agencies on any given day; people whose lives have dealt them a challenging hand, yet they maintain their dignity until they are provided with an opportunity to achieve economic security and opportunity



CAASTLC Employment Program living success story, Rachel Kozma

EMPLOYMENT READINESS WORKSHOPS HELD BI-MONTHLY

The Competitive Edge Workshop can help YOU master the following topics:

- Successful job search techniques
- Acing the online application
- Attention grabbing resumes
- Champion interview techniques
- Keys to promotions and raises

**Tues 9-5, Wed 1-4, Thu 1-5
(Attendance is mandatory for each session)**

After completion of the 3-day program, job-seekers will receive to one-on-one assistance in locating job leads. Bus tickets available.

**Class sizes are limited!
To register please call 314-446-4431 or
314-863-0015 Ext. 720**



Community Action Agency of St. Louis County, Inc.

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**CAASTLC FOOD DRIVE
TO BENEFIT PEOPLE IN NEED
DUE TO DISASTER
AND OTHER ECONOMIC STABILITY ISSUES**

**Please donate non-perishable items such as:
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& bottled juice, granola bars, baking mix, diapers, wipes,
toothpaste, soap, toilet tissue & pet food.**

**Call: (314) 446-4440 for more information
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