

## **A Weatherization Success Story**

**By James Trout**

Usually we don't hear back from our weatherization clients, they have very busy lives just surviving and providing.

Today, we heard from a relative, Rhonda Smidtz, to one of our weatherization clients, Mona Catizack. She wanted to make sure that everyone at the Community Action Agency knew how important our work was. Her sister has seen her health decline significantly these past few years even though she's only 65. Her doctor held out little hope, and so did the patient, Mona. At the very least, she was headed toward relocation into a geriatric care residence.

Then change began to happen. A church kicked in to repair a vinyl floor. A non-profit helped with her porch. The St Louis Home Builders helped with repairs too.

And then Community Action Agency of St Louis County, Inc. (CAASTLC) took its turn. Our auditor found multiple carbon monoxide and natural gas leaks. Mold was everywhere. The owner showered in the dark and froze in the winter. She had flu-like symptoms that just wouldn't go away, and she felt hopeless and sickly. CAASTLC went to work. We replaced a furnace and repaired leaks, fixed doors and installed ventilation. We sealed up the building and provided better indoor air quality.

We made the home safer, healthier and more efficient. 1<sup>st</sup>, the home changed - it's no longer a parasite draining resources, energy and life. 2<sup>nd</sup>, Mona changed. She enjoys life today, feels better and is better. Her sister Rhonda tells us that mentally and physically she is a different woman. The sister who some mistook as Rhonda's mother now passes for her younger sister again. The lethargy, flu and distress are gone. The 100 pound 65 year old living on less than \$900 a month now can stay in her home, and she likes the life she got back. Rhonda says thanks for giving me my sister back.