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Indiana Community Action Network Newsletter

May 2009

May is Community Action Month

National Community Action Month (NCAM) was created in May 1997 as "National Community Action Week" and became "National Community Action Month" a year later. NCAM offers the network a specific time frame to spotlight the creative ways Community Action is helping people and changing lives, to demonstrate our strength and unity as a network, and to increase our national visibility as the country's largest anti-poverty network. Community Action Agencies embody the spirit of hope for 10 million Americans everyday. But May is our chance to take time out to "toot our own horns" and show the community what we do. The month is filled with a variety of events, special projects, and ceremonies highlighting our success stories, partnerships, volunteers, and program participants. NCAM is a time for us to increase media coverage and expose our work to a wider audience. Most importantly, it shows us and the rest of the community how we live the **Promise of Community Action**, *"Community Action change's people lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the Community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other."*

IN-CAA would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Indiana Community Action Agencies and their staff for all they do to serve low-income Hoosiers and local communities throughout the state.

Community Action Program of Western Indiana Hosts 3rd Annual Community Baby Shower

Community Action Program hosted the third annual Community Baby Shower on April 18th at the Williamsport Christian Church. The primary goal of the event was to reach pregnant women and expectant parents with educational information on a variety of relevant topics. Community Action Program had several programs involved in the event. WIC (Women, Infant and Children), Head Start and Early Head Start, Housing (Lead Poisoning), and the Fountain/Warren Co. Tobacco Prevention & Cessation Program. Other organizations that participated in the shower through educational presentations or displays were; Fountain/Warren Health Dept., Purdue Extension (both Fountain and Warren counties), St. Vincent North Clinic (Dr. Sharma), Lakeview College, Healthy Families (Families United), Wabash Valley, Health Emergency & Lifecare Programs (HELP), Inc., First Steps, and the Women's

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About the Indiana Community Action Network

The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 (EOA) established over 1,000 Community Action Agencies (CAAs) at the local level to implement EOA programs. EOA programs included: VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America); Job Corps; Neighborhood Youth Corps; Head Start; Adult Basic Education; Family Planning; Community Health Centers; Congregate Meal Preparation; Economic Development; Foster Grandparents; Legal Services; Neighborhood

Resource Center. "It was great to have such a collaboration between all these organizations. We have a huge need in our counties to help educate expectant parents about all aspects of pregnancy and early childhood. We had twenty different topics that were presented in some format either as a twenty-minute presentation or as a display. This event helped to reach families with the information they need to make good decisions and enhance the overall health of their children and families," said Kathy Walker, chairperson of the event. During the event, childcare was provided by Lori Bonebright and Barbie Bennett as well as several youth from the Student Council.



Many organizations donated some wonderful door prizes, which were given out at the end of the shower. Wolf's Homemade Candies, McDonald's, Fountain/Warren Co. Health Dept., Head Start/Early Head Start, WIC, Childcare Resource Network, Tri Kappa, Old National Bank, Women's Resource Network, Purdue Extension, and several of the presenters themselves donated items. Every participant went home with something thanks to the efforts of the planning committee and the donations from the community. Robie's provided a fabulous lunch for all who attended. Community Action Program provided funding for the luncheon.



Forty individuals attended the Community Baby Shower from the two counties. On evaluations completed by all participants one attendee commented, "I just feel that what you have done is so special. I became a mother after eight years. A lot has changed. It's important to brush up on things." Another attendee commented, "It's a great clean place for mothers and mothers-to-be to meet and talk, thank you."

"This was our third Community Baby Shower and we have plans to continue the event in the future, alternating between Fountain and Warren counties. The event has grown each year. One of the reasons I chair this event is to reach pregnant women who smoke and to provide families with information about the dangers of secondhand smoke. Indiana has one of the highest smoking rates

Centers; Summer Youth Programs; Senior Centers; and others.

CAAs vary widely, with some being non-profit groups, others being city agencies, and some being community-controlled groups. Many CAAs vary greatly in how their agencies are organized and in the type of services they provide to their local communities. In fact, the number of CAAs has increased and it is now estimated that CAAs serve over 80 percent of all U.S. counties. Although CAAs were established over 40 years ago, they have a rich history of advocacy for and service to low-income people and remain important in domestic social policy to the present day.

We have 24 Community Action Agencies that serve all 92 counties of Indiana. Each Community Action Agency periodically analyzes community needs to identify strategies that will work best in attacking poverty. Each CAA is different because its programs reflect the needs of their local communities. These agencies are unique in their ability to deploy diverse program activities and services in meeting their mission. They operate an array of programs which include, but are not limited to: Head Start; the Energy Assistance Program; the Weatherization Program; Individual Development Accounts; Homeownership Counseling; Owner Occupied Rehabilitation; Housing Development; Foster Grandparents; Child Care; and many more programs and services.

during pregnancy in the country, " says Kathy Walker, Program Coordinator of the Fountain/Warren Co. Tobacco Prevention & Cessation Program.

In 2006, Fountain Co. had a 27% and Warren Co. had a 12.8%, rate of smoking during pregnancy. The Fountain Co. rate is well above the state average of 17.3% and has slightly increased since 2005. Smoking is very harmful to the user and affects the unborn directly and in detrimental. Smoking during pregnancy can cause birth defects, increased risk of miscarriage, SID's, stillbirth and pre-term labor. Low birth weight is associated with smoking during pregnancy and presents many health problems for the newborn. Many problems stemming from smoking during pregnancy may not be recognized until later in life when the child may experience difficulty learning, behavior problems such as lack of self-control and hyperactivity. Even if a mother doesn't smoke during her pregnancy, there may still be risks from exposure to secondhand smoke. There are many negative health effects for non-smoking mothers and the unborn as well as young children. Exposure to secondhand smoke increases the risk of bronchitis, strokes, heart attacks, lung cancer, pneumonia, asthma, allergies and ear infections. Any amount of secondhand smoke for any amount of time can be harmful to non-smokers and especially pregnant women and young children.

For help in quitting tobacco, call the Indiana Quit Line at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) or call the Fountain/Warren Co. Tobacco Prevention & Cessation Program at 793-4881.

To find your local CAA or to learn more about the Indiana Community Action Network or State Association, please visit www.incap.org.



Client Spotlight

Volunteer Day Brings New Hope for Real Services Client

REAL Family Development Programs of REAL Services in South Bend, host Volunteer Days twice each year to offer opportunities for clients to give back to the community. Enrolled clients and Family Development Consultants work together during monthly meetings where clients receive information and various types of assistance personalized to each client's goal plan.

When clients begin to stabilize and start to progress, they are able to look beyond their own situations, and transform from a "usually receiving" to a more giving mindset. The Volunteer Day held on Thursday, May 14th provided the perfect opportunity to give back.

Family Development clients volunteered to work side-by-side with their Family Development Consultants in a brand new way, outside the normal meeting setting. This time, staff and clients offered their helping hands of physical labor to client cohort, Tonjohnique, who is

in the final stage of completing her new Habitat home.

Clients signed up for two hour shifts, and, after a night of heavy rain, the REAL Family Development Program staff and volunteers were all set to work on laying sod. It was a beautiful day to work outside: the sun was shining and the temperature was great!

During the first part of the morning, after we greeted each other over coffee and donuts, the Family Development volunteers began the day by sweeping out the basement of Tonjohnique's brand new Habitat for Humanity home. Eventually, we progressed to the main level where we installed shelves.

By afternoon the atmosphere was much more comfortable; folks had worked well together while the sun had dried some of the wet ground and it was time to move outdoors to work on the acre of mud that lay ahead. As we raked and removed debris to transform the mud to receive sod, a conversation began when one client volunteer shared with Tonjohnique that "this is a beautiful house and not some little box," very different from what this client had envisioned about Habitat homes.

With the accurate and acceptable home layout established, the door of communication opened and Tonjohnique was able to share her journey as she described how applying for a Habitat Home actually worked. After Tonjohnique laid foundation of hope for homeownership, she encouraged the client volunteer to apply by saying, "Don't be afraid, just try it; it's a lot of work but it's worth it in the end."

By the end of their conversation, something personal had occurred similar to the leveling the muddy ground. The one client volunteer who had never considered owning "some little box Habitat home" announced her newfound hope of Habitat homeownership by promising, "I'm going to apply in the next round" and Tonjohnique pledged "I'm going to look for you!"

Hand In Hand Fatherhood Project Developed by Human Services, Inc.

In 2003, Human Services, Inc. Head Start program applied for and attained a grant through the Department of Health and Human Services to develop and administer a Fatherhood program.

The grant was awarded and the Fatherhood Project was established to provide positive intervention to low income and at risk fathers/father figures and their children in order to build positive relationships between the Father/father figure, children, mother, and extended family members to deter risk of child abuse/neglect, reduce non payment of child support, promote consist and positive interactions, and to teach fathers/father figures to actively be a part of their children's current and future educational experiences.

The fatherhood project consists of three components:
- Dinner provided to father/father figure and their children

- Educational programming for the father/father figure - provided by a male facilitator

- Father/Father figure and child time together - This is a time specific for the father/father figure and children completing a project together

An annual project brochure is created and distributed out in the communities to recruit enrollment. The brochure provides the details of the dates, times, and locations of each of the project sessions. Each session lasts approximately 3 hours. Due to limited resources of staff and space, each group was limited to 40 adult participants per session. Child care was provided for children 3 to 8 years of age. The December session was a large group session during the holiday season. The entire family is invited to celebrate the father/father figures participation in the project. Program graduation takes place in April. Each father/father figure that attends and participates in no less than 4 of the 6 sessions receives a certificate of completion. To celebrate their accomplishments - all immediate family members are invited to attend the graduation celebration.

Since the projects inception, the original funding source no longer was available, however, because the project proved to be successful the agency chose to fund it through Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) dollars in order to open the project up to a broader audience and who need positive intervention. Many fathers deal with low self esteem, extended families, and as more grandfathers are raising grandchildren.

Human Services would like to share our project and successes with other Community Action Agencies who might be interested in pursuing similar activities. If you would like more information about this program, please contact Deb DeBord with Human Services at ddebord@hsi-indiana.com.



Statewide Conference for Indiana's CAAs

Registration for the 2009 Statewide Conference for Indiana's Community is now open! **DO NOT register for the MACAA conference, that registration is for non-Indiana CAAs only.**

To register for the conference, visit IN-CAA's web site at www.incap.org, and click on the Community Action Training section. **Registration is once again based on room occupancy and the registration deadline is July 29, 2009!**

Also there is a button on IN-CAA's home page that links to conference web page where all the information about conference

and updates will be posted. The general conference information brochure is posted on this section of IN-CAA's web site.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Lisa Travis at ltravis@incap.org or 1-800-382-9895.

Indiana Institute for Working Families Hosting Policy Symposium June 26, 2009!

The Indiana Institute For Working Families, a program of the Indiana Community Action Association, is pleased to announce the release of its report, " Investing in Indiana's Adult Workers: Increasing Financial Aid Opportunities."

Please join the Institute for a policy symposium focusing on the economic demand for skilled workers in Indiana and how to increase access to postsecondary education for adult workers through financial aid opportunities.

At the symposium, the report's findings and its recommendations will be highlighted along with presentations and a panel discussion with state officials from Indiana's Department of Workforce Development and Commission on Higher Education

To learn more about this event; including the agenda and registration instructions, please visit www.incap.org and click on the Community Action Training Section. **The registration deadline is June 17, 2009!**

This report and the policy symposium were made possible through generous support from Lumina Foundation for Education.

We look forward to seeing you on June 26, 2009! If you have any questions about the symposium, please contact Jessica Fraser at jfraser@incap.org or 317-638-4232.

Registration Now Open for Indiana Training Institute Trainings

The Indiana Training Institute (ITI) Trainings for June through September 2009 are now posted Community Action Training section of IN-CAA's website at www.incap.org. Training information posted includes trainers, training descriptions, training times, and registration deadlines.

Trainings currently posted include:

- **Public Relations Training** - June 24, 2009
- **IHCDA Meeting with Executive Directors** - July 8, 2009
- **Goal Setting for Your Agency** - July 29, 2009
- **FMLA and ADA Regulations: Updates for 2009, presented by CAPLAW** -August 3, 2009

- **Indiana CAA Conference**- August 10-11, 2009
- **Family Development Matrix Training** - August 26, 2009
- **Weatherization Database Training** - August 26, 2009
- **Crystal Reports Training** - August 27, 2009
- **Weatherization Database Training** - September 14, 2009
- **Crystal Reports Training** - September 15, 2009
- **Weatherization Database Training** - September 16, 2009
- **Crystal Reports Training** - September 17, 2009
- **North EAP Meeting** - September 21, 2009
- **Central EAP Meeting** - September 22, 2009
- **South EAP Meeting** - September 23, 2009

More ITI training have been scheduled for 2009 and the training and registration information should be available online in the coming weeks.

If you have other questions about the training, please feel free to contact Lisa Travis, Team Leader, CAA Network Support, at ltravis@incap.org or 1-800-382-9895.

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