



## Program Notes - Staff Notes

### Staff Changes

It seems like there's been a lot of staffing changes lately! Persons who have left EOC include the following: **Ann Birt, Karen Borland, Susan Flasher, Christopher Gnage, Heidi Horduski, and Shelly Poindexter.** Best of luck in all your new endeavors.

EOC also welcomes several new employees. Head Start has hired **Jean Ballard, Sandy Cedrone, and Cindy Gray** as classroom aides/bus monitors. **Shelly Brown** has also come on board as a Family Resource Assistant. Over at Community Services, **Barbara Wood** has joined us as a Case Manager/Job Developer for the Employment and Training Program. **Shari Manges** has also been hired to help complete the Warren County Social Services Needs Assessment.

### Permanent Supportive Housing Available

Applications for Warren Anthems apartments, located at 116 Muir Street, are now available. Units include both one- and two-bedroom apartments. Applications are also being accepted for Presidential Apartments, located on Madison Street, which is a shared living home for up to four individuals.



These units are jointly administered by Housing and Neighborhood Development Services (HANDS) and Warren-Forest EOC, and are designed for persons with chronic mental illness. Rents are federally assisted and include utilities. Contact Melissa Hey, EOC Housing Specialist, at 726-2400 for more information.

### Enrollment Still Open For

### Family Savings Account (FSA) Program

The Family Savings Account (FSA) Program helps people with moderate to low income build assets. Participants earn one dollar for every dollar they put away, as long as it's for an approved goal. Approved goals include, but are not necessarily limited to, homeownership, home improvement/repair, post-secondary education, self-employment, a car purchase, or inmate reentry initiative expenses. Goals are designed to help clients gain self-sufficiency and asset development, and encourage regular savings. Clients must save a minimum of \$10 a week for one year and one day in an approved FSA account. Please contact EOC Community Services at 726-2400 for more information and assistance.

### Pre-K Scholarship Program

The Pre-K Scholarship Program is a new and exciting way to fund early learning for income-eligible preschoolers. Eleven early learning facilities in Warren and Forest Counties are participating in the program, which provides scholarships to eligible families for the cost of pre-kindergarten programming.

The program is funded by business contributions to the Pre-K Scholarship Fund through the Pennsylvania Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program. Nearly \$150,000 has been received from businesses to provide scholarships for the families and children of our community in 2007-08.

For the months of October, November, and December, 58 children have received help with the cost of pre-kindergarten expenses.

If you would like more information about the Pre-K Scholarship program, please contact Tish Montgomery at 726-1361.

### Child Care Help Is Available

Since July 1, 2007, EOC Child Care Information Services (CCIS) has funded child care assistance for 381 children, with 60 children still on the waiting list. Additional funds are expected to reduce that number, but not eliminate it. Statewide waiting lists exist due to more families needing assistance, an increase in provider payments rates, and the Keystone Star add-on rate incentive.

Sixteen new child care providers have signed agreements with CCIS to provide care for eligible families. One of those providers recently became registered through the Office of Child Development and Early Learning.

CCIS has been working closely with facilities participating in Keystone Stars, Pre-K Counts, Head Start, and the Pre-K Scholarship programs. A vital role for all CCIS offices is to counsel parents on quality care and early learning options that best meet their needs. To date, 158 parents have received information, referrals or educational materials. Contact CCIS at 726-1361 for more information on child care options within the community.

### 2007 Dollar Energy Program Opens

The 2007 Dollar Energy program has opened for a new season. Customers of Columbia Gas, Penelec, PPL Gas, and Pennsylvania American Water Company can apply for a grant of up to \$500 if they have had their utility service shut off or have received a shut off notice. Consumers must earn no more than 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, as adjusted for income size, to be eligible. In addition, consumers have to have made established payments. Contact EOC Community Services at 726-2400 for more information and assistance.



FALL 2007  
NEWSLETTER  
Volume III, Issue III

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## Warren - Forest Counties

## Economic Opportunity Council

*Your Community Action Agency*

### Head Start Gets New Playground

There's a new playground at the EOC Head Start center in Lottsville.

"We are exceptionally lucky and blessed to have this wonderful facility," says Head Start Director **Roxanne Carifo.** "All the funding was raised privately by the Hollabaugh family. They also purchased and assembled the playground equipment at the center. At their request, the playground has been dedicated to the memory of Carolyn Witt. We are very grateful for the Hollabaugh family and their amazing generosity."



### Housing Rehabilitation and Weatherization: Keeping You Warm and Safe

**Ron Kramer, Jerome Stiner, and Chuck Byler** are pretty quiet and unassuming guys—the last ones you'd expect to toot their own horns. But thanks to their hard work, hundreds of families in Warren, Forest, and Venango Counties live in homes in that are warmer and safer than they ever were before. In just the 2006-2007 fiscal year, 173 homes received weatherization improvements, while 10 were rehabilitated to correct safety concerns and code violations.

Ron Kramer, the program director, wishes they could do more. "It seems like any house we look at could use at least \$6,000 in work," he says. "But we try to keep it to an average of \$2,000, so we can spread the help around."

And that demand is certainly great, as the long waiting list for assistance can attest. "It used to be up to a year," Kramer adds. "Now it's more like 9 to 10 months, but more calls come in during the fall. We try to prioritize our applications by need, but it seems like nearly everyone is elderly, disabled, or in some other high priority group. So it seems like we basically get to people on a first-come-first served basis."

Every home they do is subjected to an in-depth analysis. "We look at everything—the attic, the heating system, the windows and doors, you name it. And we do a blower door test, which measures how 'leaky' the house is in terms of heat loss," Kramer explains. "We then run all that data through a Savings-to-Investment Ratio (SIR), which lets us design the most cost-effective way to proceed. We don't do a lot of replacement windows, because that can take 20 years to recoup the investment. But we do a lot of attic insulation. And we nearly always have to do something with the furnaces, repair them or tune them. A lot of furnaces just have to be replaced because they are dangerous—we probably end up replacing 60 to 80 furnaces a year."

In addition to keeping a lot of area families warmer and safer, Kramer and his crew also do their part to support the local economy. "All of the work done on the houses is by small, private subcontractors, around 15 of them in total. And all of them buy their materials locally," Kramer notes.

For application information, contact EOC Community Services at 726-2400.

## A Note From Our Executive Director

Welcome to our Warren-Forest Counties Economic Opportunity Council Newsletter. As always, we have lots of new projects that are moving along.

After the usual red tape and complications, our transitional housing project for domestic violence has finally moved past the bidding stage for the first of the two projected sites. We are anticipating (with fingers crossed!) a March completion date, with the second site to be completed in or around July.

I also want to add my personal salute to all the EOC staff who go beyond the call of duty. Your dedication is clearly shown in your commitment to the agency's mission, your leadership, and your pursuit of professional and educational advancement. Congratulations are especially due to Armida Allen, Patricia Lobdell, Laura Myers, and Melissa Hey for their recent achievements.

ROBERT RAIBLE

This Newsletter was financed by a grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development.

## Head Start Begins New Program Year

The Warren-Forest EOC Head Start Program kicked off its new program year with an Open House held on September 6. The Open House welcomed parents and helped familiarize them with the Head Start facilities and classrooms. In total, 158 parents attended. Head Start classes began on September 11 with 200 enrollees.



Kathi Goodwill of Northwest Tri County Intermediate Unit #5 working with Head Start children at the McClintock Center, October 22.

## OTHER HEAD START NEWS...

- Head Start staff participated in **COLOR ME HEALTHY** training on September 17. The staff learned new ways to encourage nutrition and physical activities for enrollees to develop healthy lifestyles that will follow them into adulthood.
- **Health screenings** have been completed on 157 Head Start enrollees. Thanks to the following Head Start partners for their support: Crescent Park Dental Clinic (dental exams), Erie Vision and Blindness (vision screenings), and Northwest Tri County Intermediate Unit #5 (hearing and articulation screenings). Head Start staff performed the Denver Developmental Screenings.
- The **Family Literacy** program is in full swing. In collaboration with Intermediate Unit #5, 18 families are participating in adult education, interactive literacy activities (formerly PACT), and early childhood and parenting education.
- Warren County's **Pre-K Counts** is at full enrollment. Partnering with Head Start are Jefferson DeFrees Early Learning Center and Russell United Methodist Church Day Care, with 16 children enrolled at these facilities.
- How **Head Start meals** are provided has changed for this year. Beginning this fall, the Warren County Central School District's provider, **ARAMARK**, is preparing and delivering meals to all Head Start centers in Warren County.

## AWARDS, ACHIEVEMENTS, AND CERTIFICATIONS

**Armida Allen**, a case manager with EOC Community Services, is now a HUD-certified Housing Counselor. Armida received a scholarship from NeighborWorks America for the training. "Having Armida on board as a certified housing counselor will help us provide more comprehensive services for EOC's housing consumers," EOC Executive Director **Robert Raible** said.



Armida Allen with EOC Executive Director Robert Raible, October 5

**Armida Allen** and **Patricia Lobdell**, the EOC Community Services Director, have also become certified counselors for the Homeowners Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program (HEMAP). The HEMAP program assists homeowners who have received an Act 911 foreclosure notice by helping them obtain loans from the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency.

**Melissa Hey**, a Housing Specialist with EOC Community Services, was recently named Co-Chair of the Northwest Housing Consortium. The Consortium, which is made up of eight counties in northwest Pennsylvania, works as an advocate for housing consumers with disabilities.

**Laura Myers**, a teacher with EOC Head Start, is celebrating 20 years with EOC as of November. Congratulations, Laura!

**Patricia Lobdell** recently extended an Employer Award to the Golden Living Center of Shipperville at the Local Management Committee (LMC) Annual Award Luncheon. "The Golden Living Center is an exceptional employer," Lobdell said. "They have been really great in working with one of our Supported Work clients and helping him become self-sufficient. We need more employers like them!"

Did you know that Pennsylvania ranks 4th in the nation for apple

production with 500 million pounds grown annually?

They taste great, and they're great for you!

## Apple Crisp



### INGREDIENTS:

- 5 tart (like Granny Smith) apples, cored, peeled and sliced
- 1 cup brown sugar, packed
- 3/4 cup long cooking oats
- 3/4 cup flour
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon nutmeg, freshly ground
- 1/4 cup butter, softened
- 1/4 cup apple cider or juice

### PREPARATION:

Preheat oven to 375F. Grease a 9" x 9" pan. Put half of the apples in pan. Blend together remaining ingredients, except juice. Crumble half the sugar mixture over the apples. Cover with remaining apples and sugar mixture.

Pour juice over top. Bake 35 minutes.

Serve warm, topped with your favorite vanilla ice cream.



Melissa Custer of the Forest County Assistance Office, Golden Living Center staffers Terriann Rankin, Natalie Molaskey, and John Warner, and Patricia Lobdell, October 22