



# NEW VIEW NETWORK

Volume 21, Issue #5

October, November, December 2011

## SANTA NEEDS YOUR HELP!



As the holiday season approaches, Operation: New View Community Action Agency is gearing up to provide a brighter Christmas for hundreds of needy families in Dubuque, Delaware and Jackson counties.

The Santa's Helper Program uses donations of money, gifts, or services from individuals, businesses, and service groups to provide direct assistance to low-income households in our three-county service delivery area during the Christmas season. The goal of the program is to identify and help low-income families needing financial assistance during the holidays.

While need has no season, and this fund helps families on a year-around basis, the need for donations at this time of year is great in order to handle the increased demand for assistance. Please consider making a brighter Christmas for a needy family by adopting them or making a contribution. We truly appreciate the helping hand provided by the generous donations that we receive. You may send your gift along with the form provided within this edition of the [New View Network](#).

Thank you in advance for your support and best wishes for a happy holiday season.

*Tom Stovall*, CCAP  
Executive Director



### NATIONAL COMMUNITY ACTION PRESIDENT VISITS AGENCY

President Obama conducted a White House Rural Economic Forum on August 16<sup>th</sup> at the NICC Campus in Peosta. This was not a public meeting and attendance was by invitation only. One of those among the select group who were invited by the White House to attend was Mr. Don Mathis. Don is the President and CEO of the National Community Action Partnership, our national association of Community Action agencies, which is the voice of our Community Action network and the low-income people that we serve. Don provides outstanding leadership to our network and is truly a champion and advocate for the people we serve.

Don paid a visit to our agency on August 15<sup>th</sup> at a reception in advance of the President's "forum. This was a wonderful opportunity for all



of our agency board members and staff to personally meet Don and hear from him on the work of Community Action during these uncertain and challenging times.

Don also talked about the issues that needed to be addressed at the Forum.

Our thanks to Don Mathis for this very special visit and to all of the board and staff members that were able to attend this unique opportunity



## MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY AND WEATHERIZATION CHALLENGE EVENTS PLANNED FOR DUBUQUE AND MAQUOKETA

On two separate Saturdays in October, caring volunteer teams will spread out across the Dubuque and Maquoketa communities in a one-day blitz to perform various helping services for the homes of their elderly, disabled, and low-income neighbors. The goal of the event is to provide homes with simple weatherization measures and other improvements that will help residents to be more comfortable and save money.

**The Dubuque Area Make A Difference Day** will take place on Saturday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>. This will be the fifth year for this event. Last year 225 volunteers weatherized 70 homes in Dubuque. Complete details and volunteer team registration information is available on the event website at [www.thonline.com/difference](http://www.thonline.com/difference).

**DUBUQUE MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY**  
OCTOBER 22, 2011



**The Maquoketa Area Weatherization Challenge** will be Saturday, October 29<sup>th</sup>. This will be the third year for this event. Last year a total of 19 homes were weatherized by 80 volunteers. Information is available on the website at [www.maquokeachamber.com](http://www.maquokeachamber.com).



The success of each project will depend on the number of volunteer teams that sign up to participate. Each team will consist of 6 volunteers who will be assigned to 2 homes that day. They will report to a central

location for breakfast and training before heading out to their assigned homes. They will report back after their assigned homes have been completed.

The volunteer teams will come from organizations within the community.

This is a great opportunity to lend a helping hand for service clubs, civic and fraternal groups, church groups, neighborhood associations, businesses, employee groups and other organizations. All community groups are invited to participate and to recruit one or more 6-person teams to help with this worthwhile and much-needed project. Sign up your team today!

Cash donations are being accepted to provide for the great amount of supplies and materials that will be needed for this project. The project will cost around \$50.00 per home.



## DUBUQUE COATS FOR KIDS

The 21<sup>st</sup> annual "Coats for Kids" drive is scheduled for Wednesday, October 19<sup>th</sup> through Thursday, October 20<sup>th</sup>.

Co-sponsored by DUPACO Community Credit Union, Cumulus Broadcasting, Operation: New View Community Action Agency, and Courtesy Cleaners and Coin Laundry, the "Coats for Kids" program allows usable children's coats to be dropped off at any DUPACO location during the drive.



The collected items are dry-cleaned, compliments of Courtesy Cleaners and Coin Laundry, and distributed to needy tri-state-area families by Operation: New View Community Action Agency.

Distribution will take place at St. John's Lutheran Church, located at 12<sup>th</sup> and White streets, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 19<sup>th</sup> and again on Thursday, October 20<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.



### STOVALL ATTENDS WHITE HOUSE PARTNERSHIP FORUM

On August 16<sup>th</sup>, Tom Stovall, Executive Director, attended a special forum conducted by the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnership held at the NICC Campus in Dubuque. The theme of the forum was "Connecting Communities for the Common Good" and was attended by midwest leaders upon invitation by the White House.

The forum explored partnership opportunities resulting from special initiatives and progress of the White House in connection with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Health and Human Services, Education and Homeland Security. White House staff provided information and panel discussions related to resources available to communities and agencies.



### KEEP OUR NEIGHBORS WARM FUND NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

The 2011-2012 winter heating season is now upon us and many low-income families will be struggling to pay their heating bills and keep their utilities on. The U.S. Department of Energy winter heating forecast predicts that staying warm will cost more this winter. Natural gas prices, are expected to increase along with heating oil and electric.

Many low-income families must spend as much as 25% of their total household income on energy (electric, Natural gas, heating oil, or propane). This is particularly the case in households with elderly and disabled people on fixed incomes and families with small children. The crisis is compounded by the fact that numerous low-income households enter this winter owing huge energy bills from last year and already shut off from utility service. Put simply, energy is becoming less and less affordable for low-income families.

Operation: New View Community Action Agency expects to assist over 5,000 low-income households this winter through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) in Dubuque, Delaware and Jackson counties. Congress is expected to drastically cut funding for this important program. The increases in the cost of home energy as well as everything else in our current economy, puts a large burden on low-income families.

The purpose of **Keep Our Neighbors Warm Fund** is to supplement this funding gap and provide help to low-income families to better meet their winter energy burden. This specific need-based fund was created in 2005 by the Board of Directors of Operation: New View Community Action Agency and enters it's sixth year of helping people and changing lives.

Donations to the **Keep Our Neighbors Warm Fund** are truly needed and deeply appreciated. Tax-deductible contributions may be sent to Operation: New View Community Action Agency, 1743 Central Ave., Dubuque, IA 52001. Be sure to write "Keep Our Neighbors Warm" in the memo portion of checks.

## ENERGY ASSISTANCE

Letters to low-income households that are automatically eligible for the Energy Assistance program were mailed out in September. A total of 999 letters were sent and many of them have been returned. The following is required to be automatically eligible:

- ◆ At least one member of the household must be 60 years of age or someone in the household must be disabled.
- ◆ The household was approved and income documentation obtained within the last 3 program years, and major sources of income are unchanged.
- ◆ Major income sources are fixed such as Social Security, Supplemental Social Security, Veterans Benefits or any other pensions being received.
- ◆ Savings of all types are \$15,000 or less.

A three year re-certification is also required for all auto eligible households that include a face-to-face meeting with the head of household.

The latest word on funding for the Energy Assistance Program is that major cuts are possible. Currently the program, and other government programs, are

operating on a 'continuing resolution' until November 18<sup>th</sup>. In preliminary committee meetings the Senate Appropriations Committee has approved a bill funding LIHEAP at \$3.6 billion with \$200,000,000 in emergency funds, while the House Committee has approved funding at \$3.39

billion, without any emergency funds attached. The funding difference between the Senate and House could mean a difference in \$26 million for the State of Iowa. Last year, federal funding for Energy Assistance was \$4.7 billion, with Iowa receiving \$71.5 million. Although cuts are almost a certainty, let's hope they will not be as dramatic as proposed.



And to add fuel to the fire, energy prices are at near record highs according to the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship. The average price across the State for Liquid Propane is at \$1.90/gallon, and fuel oil is listed at \$3.32/gallon. Prices are up over 250% over the last ten years.

The only good news is natural gas prices have remained stable and are actually lower this fall than last. So, now is not the time to cut any type of funding for the low-income population.



Community Action Data Users Groups are working with their software companies to enable households to apply for Energy Assistance over the Internet. When fully implemented anyone will be able to apply for assistance over each community action agencies' websites. This should be operational by November 1<sup>st</sup>.

*Jim O'Toole*

Community Services & LIHEAP Program Manager



## JACKSON COUNTY OUTREACH

In July, August and September many calls were received at our office regarding the upcoming fuel assistance program. A few households were beginning to experience furnace problems and needed assistance to either replace or repair them. Some households were beginning to receive shut-off notices from utility vendors, and needed some assistance in setting up payment

agreements. Staff spent a great deal of time budget counseling these and other households, and making calls to the utility vendors to avoid shut-offs and to assist with needed utility



payments to either restore service or maintain their service.. Our office once again expects to have more new households apply for the fuel program this season.

Anyone knowing of a household that they feel would qualify for the fuel assistance program, should refer them to our office to make an appointment to apply for that program. Jackson County residents may stop in at 904 East Quarry Street, Maquoketa, or call 563/652-5197 for that appointment process. Applications will be taken until April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

Seventeen referrals were made to other agencies, along with 31 households receiving regular advocacy assistance. Sixteen individuals were assisted in July, August and September with needed clothing and household items. Eleven households obtained recipe packets and 56 households received nutritional items.

In-kind for the months totaled \$6,728.60 in value for donated items and time donated by volunteers at our office.

Information regarding Operation: New View Community Action Agencies and other agency program assistance was made available for client use in 856 instances.

Twenty-three additional applications were taken for the Jackson County Head Start centers. Anyone knowing of three and four year old children, should continue to refer them to our office for that application process. The program is free to qualifying households.

In August, Jackson County children were assisted through the Dubuque Telegraph Herald's Christmas in July project, even though our donations were down from previous years. Through this project, these children headed back to school with needed school supplies and clothing due to our donors; plus the Dubuque Telegraph Herald's assistance. Our office is very grateful for everyone's help to make this a successful project this summer.



This project would not have been possible without our donors generosity toward others in need.

### *Emilie Daniels*

Jackson County Outreach Center Coordinator



### DELAWARE COUNTY OUTREACH

Thank goodness this summer was relatively quiet and brought us no major catastrophes like the flood of last year. But we still found plenty to do. In the past 3 months Delaware County Outreach has assessed the needs of 264 households and advocated for clients and did vendor negotiations for 72 families. The Alliant Hometown, Black Hills Care, Keep Our Neighbor Warm and the Emergency Assistance helped 32 families by providing funds to avoid disconnections.



The program activity summary report also showed the following: 22 applications were taken for Emergency Childcare, 12 fans were given out, 83 food pantry orders were requested, 4 Green Family Funds were utilized, 42 hygiene orders were filled, and 18 Head Start applications were completed. 82 households were given information and made referrals to other agencies and 137 people contacted us about fuel assistance. And then we got busy.

Happy New Year!! Officially October 1<sup>st</sup> is the beginning of the new year for the fuel assistance program. LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program). Thus begins another happy new year.

October, November and December are the busiest months of the year due to fuel assistance which is a significant program. In 2010 the total dollar amount of the heating assistance paid out in our three counties was \$1,448,740.00. That is big bucks in my

book. But fuel assistance is not the only thing keeping us busy in the next three months.

But we are dealing with a variety of problems in some form all the time; fuel assistance keeps us busy this time of year as well as utility shut off preventions and advocacy to help set up pay agreements, and client advocacy to get people who have been shut off, reconnected.



**Don't Miss**

We take applications for crisis and emergency childcare, submit food orders, purchase hygiene products and transport them to our offices and put together hygiene orders to help extend the family budget.

We are also an information resource. We get many calls for phone numbers of other agencies as well as requests for information on housing and emergency assistance. Then comes the holidays and all the excitement of the season; work with Operation: Santa Claus for Christmas, making referrals for Holiday baskets for Thanksgiving and Christmas. By January 1<sup>st</sup> we are ready for another new year and hope it is much quieter than the one that began on October 1<sup>st</sup>.

October also brings our annual all agency staffing scheduled for October 31<sup>st</sup>. The purpose is to provide information, communication, training, team work, and inspiration to all staff of the Operation: New View agency. A planning committee, with representatives from each county, helps plan this day. Much thought and innovation is being utilized to make this a worthwhile endeavor. We try to make it fun as well as educational. That can be a challenge! But I love it when a plan comes together!!

*Sheila Freiburger*

Delaware County Outreach Center Coordinator



## DUBUQUE COUNTY OUTREACH



Dubuque County Outreach distributed school supplies to 118 individuals. Thanks to all that participated in that program. Children as well as parents were very happy when they came into pick up their school supplies.

September 14, October attended an Iowa Utilities Customer service fall meeting in Cedar Falls.

Dubuque County Outreach will distribute "Coats for Kids" on October 19 from 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. and then again from 5:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. October 20 from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. coats again will be distributed. Donations are up again this year, lots of new and good used coats to distribute.

Share was purchased by 54 households, 399 referrals to the Dubuque Food Pantry were made, client advocacy was made for 292 households and housing advocacy for 211 households.



Staff is extremely busy working with LIHEAP applications. The month of October is for elderly and disabled persons to apply. Starting November 1 any person can apply for the program. Staff continue to work with households who have received disconnects and shut offs.



Outreach is distributing applications for safe-link. Safe-link is a government program that provides free cellular phone service and airtime each month to income-eligible individuals who apply and qualify for the program. This free cellular service is limited to one per household.



Thursday, November 3, we will be taking applications for households that are in need for Christmas.

### *Mary Billmeyer*

Community Services & LIHEAP Program Assistant



### HEAD START

In the last newsletter, we were about 6 weeks away from classes starting. We are now 6 weeks in the start of a new school year! August was spent in providing professional development opportunities to our staff through the Mississippi Valley Early Care and Education Conference and our Head Start pre-service. September was spent trying to get back into a routine that we hadn't experienced for a few months! While we always plan for a smooth start to the beginning of the school year, there will always be a child without a physical or shot card; missing the van; coming to school late; and not wanting to separate from mom or dad. As I write this, I'm realizing why I don't remember much about September.



Our enrollment count for September was at 284, however, we continue to take applications and enroll children. As of this writing, we need children at the Dyersville center. If you know of any eligible children in the area, please let them know about our program. Income eligible children must be 3 or 4 on or before September 15<sup>th</sup> to qualify for our program for the 2011-2012 year. Also, I'm back at



making my yearly request to find some time to visit and volunteer at one of our centers. The children and

staff love the company and help.

Coming up on October 21<sup>st</sup>, we will be having our third year of Dental Days at the VNA. We set aside a time twice a year, to walk or bus children to the VNA to have an exam done by an area dentist. Children also receive fluoride varnish. Some children have not been screened for lead, so this is done as well. When the day is over more than 130 children have been seen. Many thanks go out to Dr's Snyder, Stoffell, and Peckosh for volunteering their time. I would, also, like to thank Head Start staff and VNA as well.



Congratulations go out to Brenda Sullivan our Program Design and Management Specialist on earning her BA in Early Childhood Education Administration! We are all so very proud of you!!

I hope all of you have been enjoying the weather and the fall foliage. Hopefully, the winter months will be kind to us as well. Happy Thanksgiving and Happy Holidays, they'll be here before we know it!

### *Peggy Hanniford*

Early Childhood Programs Director



#### THE PROMISE OF COMMUNITY ACTION

Community Action changes people's lives,  
embodies the spirit of hope,  
improves communities,  
and makes America a better place to live.  
We care about the entire community  
and we are dedicated to helping people  
help themselves and each other.

## SPECIAL PROJECTS

The next round of financial literacy classes will begin in November. We have moved the classes back to Monday nights at the Prescott Community Center, 1159 White Street, Dubuque. The next class schedule is as follows:

- Monday, November 7  
Budgeting to Create Savings
- Monday, November 14  
Debt Reduction 7 Asset Building
- Monday, November 21  
Building a Good Credit Score
- Monday, November 28  
Consumer Protection & Financial Institutions

Individuals are encouraged to attend all sessions. Please RSVP to Becky at [bjenkins@operationnewview.org](mailto:bjenkins@operationnewview.org) or by calling 563.556.5130 extension 14.

Interested in volunteering or learning a new skill? The VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) Program is currently recruiting for the 2012 tax season. The following positions are available: greeter, tax preparer, and reviewer. Training is provided *free* by the IRS. Operation: New View Community Action Agency will host classes in December. You can go to our website [www.operationnewview.org](http://www.operationnewview.org) or stop in our Central Office for an application. Feel free to contact me with any questions.



## HOLIDAY SHOPPING TIPS

The holiday season is a stressful time for many individuals. If we haven't saved for holiday gifts throughout the year it makes the holiday season nerve-racking. The holiday season is a time for family and friends to show others how much they appreciate them. This doesn't require you to spend a lot of money on gifts for everyone. Here are some tips to

help make your holiday season a bit less stressful:

- \* Make a Present List with a Workable budget
  - Carefully review and prioritize your present list. Who is most important on your list to give a gift to?
  - Your present list is already made, now set a price limit for each gift.
  - Go to [www.operationnewview.org](http://www.operationnewview.org) to print your own Holiday Present Planning Worksheet.
  - If you will travel over the holiday season, include this amount in your budget as the gift. This could reflect the amount of money you have available for presents.
- \* Pay with Cash
  - It can become a habit to automatically use your credit card or debit card for holiday purchases. Make it a habit to pay for all presents with only the cash you have on hand. This will also assist you in keeping track of how much you are spending on each gift. You will think twice before making an impulse purchase and really stick to your budget.
- \* Coupons
  - Unless something is already on sale, I try to use a coupon. It's hard for me to pay retail price for something. Many businesses will E-mail consumers coupons if they sign up for their E-Newsletter. My suggestion is to set up a separate E-mail account specifically for coupons to stay organized.
  - Make coupons. Do some friends of yours have children? Make them a coupon for a free babysitter for a date night. Or how about a fresh baked pie of your choice? These are great gifts from the heart that are really appreciate d.



## \* Gift Receipts

- Always ask for a gift receipt. This way if something goes wrong with your gift or the person would rather exchange it, it will be less stressful.

## \* Homemade Gifts

- I give away a lot of goodie platters as holiday gifts. I truly enjoy baking and know goodie platter recipients truly enjoy the gift too.
- Theme Baskets are always a fun idea. A movie theme basket with a \$5 DVD, \$1 candy and \$1 popcorn makes a great gift for a college student.
- Brainstorm what you excel at. Is it baking, cooking, sewing, or photography? Think of creative ways to incorporate your strengths into a gift to share with someone else.

## \* Gift Wrapping

- Take full advantage of free gift wrapping when you purchase gifts. This saves you time and money.
- Make your own paper. This is a great activity for children and they are able to help put the present together.
- Not all gifts need to be wrapped. If you are using a basket for instance, tie a ribbon or bow on the handle to dress it up.

Start preparing for the 2012 holiday season now! Open a Christmas Club Savings Account with your local bank or credit union. This opportunity allows you to automatically have money directed into this account. I always keep a supply of versatile gifts on hand year long. The key is to purchase these items when on sale, or better yet, clearance with a coupon! A lot of businesses mark down seasonal holiday items which will make great presents next year, like ornaments, storybooks or photo frames. Start to brainstorm gifts you can



purchase throughout the year that will last well past the next holiday season. Some of the items I keep on hand are scented candles, scented hand soaps, scented lotions, coloring books, books (for children and adults), notepads, and photo albums. This supply comes in handy if I forget to purchase a birthday gift for someone throughout the year or when I start making my present list each holiday.

I always browse the clearance section whenever I need to go shopping I keep a calendar with me to check if someone's birthday is coming up or to check who I may need a present for. Remember just because something is on clearance does not mean you need to buy it.

I hope these holiday tips assist you during your gift buying Happy Holidays!

*Becky Jenkins*

Special Projects Coordinator



## WEATHERIZATION

The weatherization staff attended the Iowa Weatherization Conference in Cedar Rapids on September 12 thru 14<sup>th</sup>. The workshops attended by staff include *Updates from Utility Companies*, *Mold and Weatherization Fraud Awareness*, *Weatherization Plus Health*, *Introduction to Thermography* and *Geothermal*. The courses were very informative and interesting.

*Mike Strader*

Weatherization Program Manager

