

# OACAA *briefing*

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## Recycling supports economy, environment

*A tale of two centers: Adams Brown and Lancaster Fairfield*

Recycling has existed for centuries around the world for a variety of reasons. Historically, it has allowed families to make the best of use of limited resources.

Ohio's Community Action Agencies started recycling because it was another way to fulfill their mission of helping people become self-sufficient. Gathering cans on the roadside could be done by anyone and became a source of income for many.

Today, those can collecting operations still exist. However, they have grown to include more and more materials and to become a source of jobs for the community as well as a way to conserve energy as the movement to "go green" grows.

Adams Brown Community Action Program (ABCAP) and Lancaster Fairfield Community Action Agency (LFCOA) both began recycling efforts in the late 1970s.

"We started recycling when I was director of summer youth programs," said Al Norris, Executive Director of ABCAP. "It started as a litter pick up program. We would sell aluminum cans and then throw a picnic for the kids who picked them up. We made \$400 our first year."

In 1988, Ohio law established Solid Waste Districts throughout the state to find



The opening of the new Materials Recovery Facility at Lancaster Fairfield Community Action Agency was so highly anticipated the Fairfield County Commissioners hosted their State of the County event in the building, before customers started bringing in materials.

a solution to dwindling landfill capacity. Recycling quickly became a large component of the Solid Waste District programs.

Norris' program and center are subsidized by the Brown County Solid Waste

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## Glass reFactory creates one-of-a-kind items

They said it couldn't be done.

A decade later, it's not only being done, it's being marketed nationally.

Adams Brown Community Action Partnership operates The Glass reFactory as part of its recycling facility making suncatchers and similar items from 100 percent recycled glass.

Glass makers said making a product from recycled glass would be chemically impossible. Each type of bottle is chemically different, if the types are mixed, the chemical makeup wouldn't allow the product to set up or would cause cracking. Some new glass would have to be added to counteract that effect. Pure, 100 percent recycled content just wasn't possible, chemists said.

ABCAP's solution: don't mix them.

"We sort our bottles by the bottle," said Recycling Direc-

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Sam Bradford shows a mold used to create custom sun-catchers for the National Ivy Society at the Glass reFactory.

See how it's done! View a video of The Glass reFactory at [www.oacaa.org](http://www.oacaa.org).

# ARRA funds certification program at Cincy CAA

A stimulus funded program in Cincinnati has already produced almost 60 certified graduates with better employment prospects.

Cincinnati-Hamilton County Community Action Agency used a direct grant from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to create the Cincinnati Manufacturing Certificates (CMC) program. Four classes totaling 57 people have completed the program with an improved production and technical skill set.

The program targets production workers seeking to sharpen their manufacturing skills, secure employment, or earn promotions, higher pay, and job security. Using the national curriculum developed by the Manufacturing Skills Standards Council (MSSC), CMC students can earn four different certifications: quality, safety, production processes and maintenance awareness. Over four and a half weeks, CMC trainees learn a variety of essential production processes, including hazardous materials procedures; data collection and documentation; reading blueprints; and more.

CMC has seen its graduates outshine their workforce competition. Stephanie, a member of CMC's first graduating class, was in need of employment so that she could support herself and her two children. After Stephanie completed the training course, CMC staff helped her get an in-



**Cincinnati-Hamilton County CAA has helped nearly 60 people earn certification in manufacturing skills with an ARRA funded program that enhances their employability.**

terview with a local packaging company. Stephanie's extensive manufacturing training and knowledge landed her a lead worker position, managing a product line of six people.

"Very seldom in life is something everything that one hopes it will be, but the MSSC program was just that. I couldn't be more thrilled [with my new job] and I owe it all to you," wrote Brad, another CMC graduate now working for a top auto com-

ponents maker.

Employers who hire CMC's MSSC-certified graduates receive benefit from reduced internal training costs and knowledgeable workers who are able to keep pace with technological changes.

To learn more about the Cincinnati CAA's CMC program, visit [www.cincy-caa.org](http://www.cincy-caa.org) or stay up-to-date with the graduates through CMC's blog at <http://www.cincinnati-mssc.blogspot.com>.

## SELF prepping for visit from Group Workcamps

Supports to Encourage Low-income Families (SELF) of Butler County will host several hundred youth working with the Colorado-based Group Workcamps Foundation this summer.

The campers typically come as part of church youth groups or other organizations. They will be matched with homes in Hamilton that need a variety of repairs. The campers will be able to work on approximately 20 homes while they are in Hamilton between July 5 and 9. SELF hopes to double that number by rallying local volunteers to work at the same time and for the rest of July.

"We've had a lot of questions from local groups about how they can help," said Kim Weigel, Community Relations Director for SELF. "Anyone can get involved."

City of Hamilton firefighters recently signed up to help.

"We are incredibly excited to have the firefighters join our list of supporters," said David Hastings, SELF's Housing Coordinator. "We are working out the details on even having some of them repair a home or two."

Repairs can include anything from painting to building a wheelchair ramp, Weigel said. Hastings and representatives of Group Workcamps are in the process now of visiting potential sites, taking measurements and talking to homeowners.

In addition to seeking volunteers to extend the program's reach, SELF is looking for donations and volunteers to support the individual campers. Welcome bags are being created and groups are needed to provide refreshments and support at the sites. Large vehicles for collecting trash and ladders of all sizes are also needed.

Weigel said the ramp up process for working with Group Workcamps is lengthy. SELF has already applied to host a camp in Middletown in 2011. Anyone applying now would be doing so for the summer of 2012, she said. More information is available at [www.groupworkcamps.com](http://www.groupworkcamps.com).

Co-sponsorship of the SELF camp is another way to support it. Interested agencies should contact Geoff Frahm, Project Manager at the Group Workcamps Foundation at [gfracm@groupworkcamps.com](mailto:gfracm@groupworkcamps.com) or 1-800-385-4545, ext. 4256.



**SELF staff visited a Group Workcamp in Racine, Wisc. to learn more about the program and the types of home repairs campers complete.**