



Victories Everyday

Cincinnati-Hamilton County Community Action Agency

We help make things happen

Summer 2007

Helping Hamilton County Youth Build Brighter Futures

Right To Read Month

During the month of March, CAA encouraged parents and community members to be a guest reader in our Head Start classrooms. Our preschoolers were eager to listen and to join in, often reciting their favorite lines along with the storytellers.



Many Head Start parents read in addition to numerous City and County officials including Hamilton County Commission President Todd Portune pictured above.

Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP): The City of Cincinnati awarded stewardship of SYEP to CAA. SYEP is providing 360 youth with entry-level jobs at community-based organizations, government agencies, corporations, law firms, and health care facilities. The program will introduce youth to the workplace, impart valuable employment skills, and provide youth with a summer income. In addition, this work experience will help youth to gain confidence in their strengths and abilities, learn financial management skills, and improve their interpersonal skills — all of which will be valuable throughout their careers and lives.
513.569.1840 x 2417

2007 Spring Youth Summit: On May 19, 2007, CAA held our first annual Spring Youth Summit in partnership with Mayor Mark Mallory's Office and the University of Cincinnati. Approximately 250 youth attended the event, comprising 15 different youth groups. Summit discussion topics, chosen by the youth in CAA's youth programs, were violence, drugs, and self-image.



The Summit was not simply another opportunity to lecture this City's youth. Instead, the small group sessions were interactive experiences in which the opinions and ideas of the participating youth were crucial to framing the issues. The afternoon session provided an opportunity for the youth to develop community service projects based on the morning discussions. Through these projects, CAA hopes to make a difference in the lives of those who attended, in addition to reaching out to many other youth in their local neighborhoods and throughout the county.

Legislative Breakfast

On Friday, May 11, 2007, CAA held our annual Legislative Breakfast to share our successes and future goals with local, state, and federal officials and their representatives. Legislators also shared the ways in which they are helping to reduce the poverty that affects thousands of Hamilton County



residents each year (including Ohio General Assembly Representative Tyrone Yates pictured above). This event is an effort to go beyond simply assisting the individual through direct service. By partnering with legislators, we are also attempting to address the political and economic structures that allow poverty to persist.

Dates to Remember

June 1—Aug. 31: Our Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) is providing summer cooling assistance. 513.569.1850

August 9: Grand opening of the Bond Hill/Roselawn Public Library Branch on our second level.

Sept. 4: The Head Start 2007-2008 school year begins.

Nov. 2: 43rd Annual Luncheon

Getting a Head Start in More Ways than One



The American Journal of Pediatrics reported last year that children who were overweight during their preschool years were five times more likely to be overweight at age 12. CAA's Head Start program understands that good physical health and exercise are an important part of development. Preparing preschoolers for kindergarten through early literacy and math education is simply not enough.

To promote good physical health, Head Start organizes a soccer league every spring. This year, 850 preschoolers on 40 teams gathered for five Saturdays to chase after a soccer ball. However, these Saturday afternoon games provide so much more than exercise. The soccer league also encourages the development of healthy social skills.

In addition to running up and down the field during the games, preschoolers also huddled with their teammates and bonded with their excited, supportive parents, who were helping put on shin guards or cheering on the sidelines. And for most of the children, the afternoon ended with a congratulatory hug from mom and dad after a game well-played. 513.569.1840 x 1464



Community Partner Spotlight: GCMI

In 1998, CAA and the United Way partnered to form the Greater Cincinnati Microenterprise Initiative, Inc. GCMI is a non-profit organization that promotes individual self-sufficiency and community economic development by supporting entrepreneurship among low- and moderate-income individuals. As a micro-lending and small business support organization, GCMI provides entrepreneurial training classes designed to help clients develop business plans, secure small loans, and receive one-on-one technical assistance. GCMI also provides ongoing assistance and mentoring once a business is established. 513.569.4816

Finding Employment With a Less Than Perfect Record

Finding a stable job that pays a decent wage can be extremely difficult, even for the most qualified applicants. But finding employment with a criminal record, a lack of marketable skills, and minimal job experience is almost impossible. Furthermore, unemployment is consistently associated with high recidivism rates. The *Hamilton County, Ohio Correctional Master Plan* recently reported that 58% of persons arrested in 2004 were unemployed.

Through Fresh Start, our re-entry employment services program, CAA provides ex-offenders with an alternative to returning to the correctional system. Most ex-offenders who come to CAA have experienced lingering hardship in securing employment. Without steady income, these individuals risk being unable to meet their basic survival needs. Through CAA's re-entry employment program, which began two years ago, 162 ex-offenders have secured full-time positions and the peace of mind that comes from being gainfully employed. 513.569.1840 x 1072

Home Weatherization Brings Year-Round Benefits

CAA's Home Weatherization Assistance Program (HWAP) isn't simply about making homes more energy efficient. The program also aims to eliminate health and safety problems, ensure the durability of the residence, and improve the comfort level of the home. HWAP works hard to achieve these goals all year long, not just during the winter months. In months when the air conditioner is constantly running to beat the summer heat, a properly weatherized home can help keep utility bills manageable. By eliminating the financial woes associated with high utility bills, CAA helps families focus on improving their lives in other ways. The program is currently accepting new clients, so please recommend this important service to anyone who may qualify. 513.569.1840 x 1133

Did You Know

...that children in families on welfare are only exposed to 10 million words by age 3, while children in working class families are exposed to 20 million words and children in professional families are exposed to 30 million words by the same age? CAA's Head Start and Early Head Start programs help address this inequity by working with children on their vocabulary, understanding of spoken English, and letter recognition. Please call 513.569.4510 for more information on Head Start.

