

# VICTORIES EVERYDAY

SUMMER 2015



**Cincinnati-Hamilton County  
Community Action Agency**

## From the President/CEO

Here at the agency, we often refer to ourselves as Greater Cincinnati's best kept secret. It's time we change that. The first step in this process is the re-design and expansion of our newsletter so that we can share more of the great things happening at CAA. And yet because of the sheer size of our agency and volume of our collective work, there will still be worthy stories that won't make it to the official newsletter. That does not mean these stories will go untold. We continually post agency news on Facebook, Twitter and our website; please follow and visit us there as well.



We are also in the process of re-branding the agency, which we are very excited about. We recognize that many people view us as a governmental agency. While it is true that we receive governmental grants, we remain a privately run non-profit organization and operate as such. Our new branding efforts, rolling out in 2016, will reflect this. It is important that the broader community know our story and understand who we are and the impact we make.

Our commitment to improve the lives of those in need has never been greater. Please take a few moments to read up on our current news and events and I think you will agree.

Gwen L. Robinson

## CAA Early Head Start Program Wins \$2 Million Grant

CAA's Early Head Start program (EHS) has been awarded a \$2 million grant from The Administration for Children & Families (ACF). This grant comes as part of President Obama's Early Learning Initiative, which is distributing \$500 million across the nation for Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships to expand high quality learning opportunities for infants and toddlers in poverty. With the additional funds, CAA increases their Early Head Start program by over 50%, creating openings for children who have been waiting for their opportunity to enroll.

EHS is a federally-funded early education program for low-income expectant mothers, infants and toddlers. The program provides prenatal education, health resources, social skills and education to ensure children receive a strong and enriching start in life. Currently, CAA's EHS serves 300 children in Hamilton County. Through the ACF grant, the program will be able to reach an additional 152 students and families through new partnerships.

### In This Issue

- Early Head Start Program Wins Grant
- New Program for Veterans
- Head Start
- Congratulations Ms. Robinson
- Community Caring Give Back Event
- Client Victories

[www.Cincy-CAA.org](http://www.Cincy-CAA.org)  
513.569.1840



@CincyCAA



Cincinnati Hamilton  
County Community  
Action Agency

Chandra Mathews-Smith  
Board Chair

Gwen L. Robinson  
President/CEO

Send comments or questions to  
Mason Gray: 513.569.1854 or  
[mgray@cincy-caa.org](mailto:mgray@cincy-caa.org)



## CAA Launches New Program for Veterans

CAA is pleased to announce a new partnership with State Farm through a grant of \$10,000, presented on April 23rd by local State Farm representatives. With these funds, CAA was able to launch the Veteran Supportive Services Program on May 1, 2015. The new program offers opportunities for gainful employment to veterans and those recently released from active duty. The agency's goal is to assist veterans through comprehensive case management, employment training and a continuum of care services. For more information on the program, contact Deborah Wiley at 513-569-1840 ext. 1033.



State Farm local agents Leah Brantley and Deatria Walker present grant check to CAA President/CEO Ms. Gwen L. Robinson

## Head Start Victories

It's been another successful year for Head Start! Recently 976 children grantee-wide participated in the Going Forth Ceremony and will be moving on to kindergarten next year.



In addition to its thriving students, CAA's Head Start program has been selected by the Department of Health and Human Services, in partnership with the National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness, to be part of an initiative to support school readiness and the success of African American male preschoolers. The initiative is called Communities of Practice and aims to train staff on creating culturally responsive learning environments that are conducive to social and academic achievement of young African American boys.

Research shows that African American male students, even in preschool,



are generally perceived by educators as problematic, which sets up unnecessary barriers to their success at a very young age. By addressing ingrained biases and stereotypes, and building on strengths rather than chipping away at preconceived weaknesses, educators can help African American preschoolers develop important skills, knowledge, attitudes and behavior to succeed in preschool and far beyond.

Head Start is also excited about new programs that have begun or will soon go into effect including a summer partnership with Su Casa, soccer for students and a Brush Ohio grant that will stress the importance of dental care.

## CAA Legislative Coffee

CAA hosted a Legislative coffee event on May 22, 2015. City, county and state legislators visited our facility and mingled with CAA Directors and Board Members, discussing issues and learning more about the agency's impact on the community.



Ms. Robinson and Councilwoman Yvette Simpson

## Welcome New Board Chair Chandra Mathews-Smith

We are pleased to announce that the CAA Board of Directors has elected Chandra Mathews-Smith as its new Board Chair. Chandra succeeds Mark

Lawson, who has served in the role for over 10 years. Chandra is Vice President of Program Operations for the Council on Aging of Southwestern Ohio.



Chandra Mathews-Smith

Prior to COA, she enjoyed a twenty year tenure at Beech Acres Parenting Center (BAPC). Chandra earned both her bachelor's and master's degrees in Social Work from Michigan State University and is a Licensed Independent Social Worker in the state of Ohio. She is the proud recipient of the Beech Acres Excellence Award and The CAA's Brienza-Lindsay Board Award. We look forward to Chandra's leadership, and we thank Mark Lawson for his many years of support and dedication to the CAA community.

## Summer Crisis Program

begins July 1st and runs through August 31st, or until funds run out. Check [www.Cincy-CAA.org](http://www.Cincy-CAA.org) for full details.





*GCM staff with graduates of Business Class II.*

## **Congratulations GCM Graduates!**

GCM celebrated the graduation of 7 students who successfully completed the thirteenth Business II Class. The graduation ceremony, held May 20th, commemorated and celebrated the achievements of each student. Congratulations Business II Class #13! We wish you the best of luck.

## **Congratulations Ms. Robinson, 20 Years of Service**

The Cincinnati-Hamilton County Community Action Agency (CAA) congratulates Gwen L. Robinson on 20 years of service as the President & CEO of CAA. Since taking the reins as President & CEO, Robinson has transformed a struggling agency, positioning CAA as a major human services and economic development organization recognized throughout the state for its quality service of children and families in need. Through several large development campaigns led by Robinson, the agency built two new multi-million dollar facilities. The corporate headquarters in Bond Hill, which allowed the agency to consolidate programs and services to better serve clients, and the Theodore M. Berry Head Start Center in the West End. During her time in Cincinnati, Robinson has served on many boards and proved herself a leader in the community. She has received numerous awards including Cincinnati Enquirer Women of the Year, Leading Women of the Year, YWCA Career Women of Achievement and the Radio One Women Empowerment Award. Thank you for your service Ms. Robinson, and we look forward to many years of continued success at CAA.



## **CAA Foundation Hosts Community Caring Give Back Event**

The Cincinnati-Hamilton County Community Action Agency Foundation's (CAA Foundation) mission is to support the expansion and development of Programs, Services and Facilities at the Cincinnati-Hamilton County Community Action Agency. On May 28 the foundation held its premier Community Caring Give Back Event sponsored by Fifth Third Bank at the beautiful Theodore M. Berry Head Start facility.

Following a cocktail hour and silent auction, guests attended a program that featured successful former program participants Kournie Daugherty and Harold Brown. Each inspired the audience as they relayed personal testimonies regarding the impact of Community Action Agency programs. (After graduating from the Blueprint for Success program, Ms. Daugherty became a star employee in an industry dominated by men and has continued her success as the lead carpentry instructor for a program known as Rosie's Girls. Mr. Brown, a Harvard University graduate, was a Head Start student and

believes the experience deeply contributed to a solid educational foundation, motivating his pathway to success. He is currently the President of EDWorks, a subsidiary of KnowledgeWorks, an organization that works to ensure all students are prepared for college and a meaningful career.)

The evening continued with keynote speaker Sharon Draper, a professional educator and accomplished author. She has been honored as the National Teacher of the Year, is a New York Times best-selling author and a five-time winner of the Coretta Scott King Literary Awards. Ms. Draper stressed the community impact of CAA programs including Head Start, Housing Support HEAP, Youth Services, and Workforce Development, and emphasized the need for donor support. With funds raised through this and future events, the foundation

will continue its vision of growing the agency. To learn more about the CAA Foundation, or to donate online, please visit [www.cincy-caa.foundation](http://www.cincy-caa.foundation).

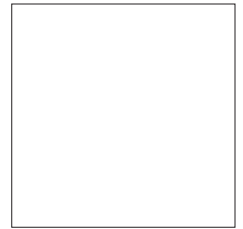


*CAA client Kournie Daugherty speaks about the impact of Blueprint for Success and other programs.*



## Cincinnati-Hamilton County Community Action Agency

1740 Langdon Farm Road  
Cincinnati, OH 45237



# VICTORIES EVERYDAY

## Client Victories

Nathaniel Gresham, a graduate of the 2014 Cincinnati Manufacturing Certificate program (MSSC), credits his recent employment and growth to the hard work and dedication of the CAA Workforce Development (WFD) Staff.

Prior to starting the program, Gresham found it difficult to find employment due to a criminal record from 20 years ago. Because of his lack of work, Nathaniel had no reliable housing and was forced to stay in the homes of family and friends. He was extremely discouraged and looked to CAA for assistance in finding gainful employment to improve his situation. Nathaniel enrolled in the MSSC program and became a top student. He successfully passed all 4 tests in the class and earned the status of Certified Production Technician.

During a meeting with Sun Chemical Manufacturing Company, Shawnte Hodge and our WFD team presented information on the CMC program and explained how graduates like Nathaniel could help with their company's hiring needs. The Sun Chemical represen-



tatives agreed to an ongoing partnership, and Nathaniel Gresham received an offer for a full-time position making \$20 per hour.

In April 2015, Sun Chemical offered Nathaniel the opportunity to take an internal competency test. He passed this test and attributed his success to the MSSC curriculum here at CAA. Based on his scores, Nathaniel was chosen for on-the-job training in operating a higher level industrial machine, and now earns \$27 per hour. Through this training,

Nathaniel has greatly improved his quality of life and is self sufficient. He now has reliable housing in his own apartment and was able to purchase a car for transportation needs.

