

VICTORIES EVERYDAY

WINTER 2018

From the President/CEO

The start of a new year is usually a time that many of us make resolutions for the next 12 months only to break them before spring arrives. I keep saying I'm committing myself to visit the gym at least two days a week. So far, though, I haven't lifted a single dumbbell!

One resolution I made that is holding true is rededicating myself to the Agency's mission of providing support, advocacy and compassionate responses to the less fortunate in our community, and not letting the noise of today's sometimes heated commentaries distract us from our important work.



Just like many nonprofits in our city and across the nation, CAA is facing a time of transition. With the possibility of challenging budget levels that may not meet the needs, it's critical that all of us at CAA be innovative and efficient as we do the valuable work of service.

Just as we need bread and water to feed our bodies, helping others nourishes our souls. Let's remember that it is an honor to serve others, and approach our work with respect and humility.

As Booker T. Washington said, "In proportion as one renders service, he becomes great."

Please join me in pledging that we will do our absolute best to make sure CAA thrives in the coming year, so it can remain a lifeline for our friends and neighbors who need us the most.

Gwen L. Robinson



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Ohio

Development
Services Agency

CAA Works For You!

Head Start Awareness Month

The Community Action Agency joined Head Start programs across the nation to celebrate Head Start Awareness Month in October!

In honor of Head Start Awareness Month, centers and delegates planted daffodil gardens in the Helping Hands Head Start Garden. A special thank you to Fredericka Lawlor and members of the South-west Ohio Daffodil Society for donating one hundred daffodil bulbs.

Students at the center also celebrated by participating in Read for the Record. CAA Board Members, community leaders, police officers and firefighters read this year's book, *Quackers*, to classrooms across the program. A special thank you to all of the readers who brought smiles to our students' faces.

CAA's Health & Nutrition Coordinator Nikki Underwood and Rynne Mitchell, Head Start Outreach & Recruitment Coordinator, appeared on Lincoln Ware's *Cincinnati Issues* TV show on Star 64 to discuss the Head Start program and Head Start Awareness Month.



CAA Receives Community Partnership Award

The Community Action Agency, in partnership with the Freestore Foodbank, received the Academic-Community Research Partnership Award from the the UC College of Medicine for our work distributing produce through the Mobile Food Pantry program. The award is given to partnerships that work collaboratively to improve the health of children, adults or communities.

To date, the Mobile Food Pantry has provided healthy foods and produce to more than 900 families and 2,300 individuals. During the cold weather months of January, February and March, CAA's Mobile Food Pantry is temporarily moving from Bond Hill to the YMCA's Melrose Branch in Walnut Hills, so people won't have to stand out in the cold.



CAA Offers EITC Tax Prep Services

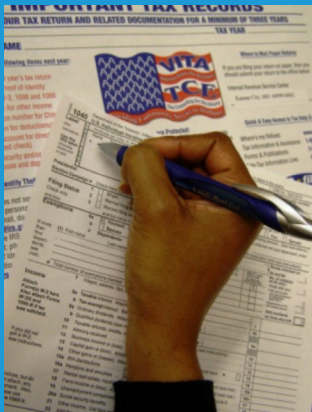
CAA is ensuring that low-income workers receive the maximum refund amount from their 2017 tax returns. CAA is once again collaborating with Fifth Third Bank to offer free tax preparation services to qualifying individuals, helping taxpayers avoid paying high fees to commercial tax preparers. Last year, CAA helped more than 1,200 taxpayers claim \$2,089,546 in refunds. With more money in their pocket, working citizens were able to reinvest their refunds back into the local economy.

"It's a Great Time to Be a Dad" Event

In November, CAA supported Health Care Access Now at the "It's a Great Time to be a Dad" event. Panelist Lamont Taylor, CAA's Community Engagement Specialist, informed the participants on the benefits of the "three S's" for safe sleep,



For more information on the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) program, please visit www.cincy-caa.org or call 513-924-2018.



HEAP Continues Successful Winter Crisis Program

HEAP's Winter Crisis Program is in full swing! Since its launch in November, HEAP staff have assisted more than 1,200 eligible households who have been threatened with disconnection due to high energy bills.



Individuals interested in receiving Winter Crisis assistance must schedule an appointment by calling the hotline at 513-569-1850 and pressing option 2 to make a same-day appointment. Calls are taken from 9 a.m. until 11 a.m. Monday through Thursday in order to receive a walk-in timeslot on that same day between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. Assistance is also available through CAA outreach sites including Roll Hill in Fairmount, Churches Active in Northside and Freestore Foodbank.

The Winter Crisis Program will run through March 31, 2018. For more information on HEAP or Winter Crisis eligibility requirements, please visit www.cincy-caa.org.

Shark Tank Inspires Great Ideas

CAA employees showed off their creativity during the holidays when the Agency held its own version of the popular ABC show, *Shark Tank*.

Just like on the reality TV show, a panel of judges reviewed ideas from contestants and picked a winner. In CAA's case, the contestants were our employees and the ideas were about possible ways to help the Agency. Five teams, with a total of 18 employees, participated.

The winning team was comprised of Head Start workers Dawn Vest, Linda Gray and Dan Schaefer. They proposed an ad campaign entitled, "CAA Works for You!" Elements of the team's idea will be rolled out in the coming months.

The judges were impressed by the quality of all the ideas submitted, and want to hold a similar competition next year. Congratulations to all who participated.



smoking cessation and spacing. He also shared some of his own personal experiences on fatherhood. Also, the Agency's Head Start fathers were busy recruiting other men to the program.





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GCMI Launches Neighborhood E-Spark Program

Skills like creativity, problem solving, and the ability to learn from experience and apply that knowledge to new situations are crucial to successfully starting a business.

The Greater Cincinnati Microenterprise Initiative (GCMI) recently collaborated with the Madisonville Community Urban Redevelopment Corp. to offer E-Spark business development training, which teaches those skills.

GCMI's E-Spark program involves three weekly, two-class sessions centered on the topics of idea development, building capacity, and preparing for financing. The sessions are designed to help business owners and entrepreneurs understand the resources needed to make informed decisions.

"Our next goal is to take our GCMI E-Spark to other neighborhoods that are advancing community and urban development to improve the quality of life for all residents," said Willie Hill, GCMI's Executive Director.

GCMI's staff understands the struggles and risks associated with starting a business, which can be confusing. They help participants simplify the startup and lending process with expert advice.

For more information, visit GCMI online at www.gcmi.org or GCMINATION on Facebook or Twitter; or call 513-569-4816.

