

VICTORIES EVERYDAY

SPRING 2017



Cincinnati-Hamilton County Community Action Agency

From the President/CEO

At this time of the year, as the weather slowly starts becoming warmer and we begin to see plants come back to life, our thoughts often turn to a theme of renewal.

That also holds true for our Community Action Agency. We all have an opportunity to recommit ourselves to the important mission of helping the less fortunate members of Cincinnati and Hamilton County. The next 12 months will be a time of change at the federal level, and we don't yet fully know how this will impact CAA.



One thing that won't change, however, is our focus on helping people not just survive hard times, but providing them with the tools and resources to build bridges of hope and self-sufficiency. This will empower our families to create a better, brighter future for themselves.

It will require us to pull together, as a community and an agency, and use our best efforts to make this happen. As the famous businessman Andrew Carnegie once said, "Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision; the ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results."

No matter what happens in Washington during the next few months, the future doesn't have to be bleak. There is also cause for hope.

A report released last June by Annie E. Casey Foundation found that Ohio's child-poverty rate included 1 in 4 kids, or nearly 600,000 children overall, but it also had some good news. It found more Ohio teens are graduating high school, fewer are getting pregnant, and fewer are using drugs.

That's due, in part, to the work by CAA and its sister agencies across the state. We can take some pride in that trend but, as you know, there's more work to be done. I urge all of us to stay focused on helping our clients.

Onward and upward!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gwen L. Robinson".

Gwen L. Robinson

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Agency Partner



Ohio

Development
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Dad's Head Start Forum

Dad's Head Start hosted the annual Fatherhood Forum this winter at the Community Action Agency. Attendees were able to learn about how to better navigate through the challenges of fatherhood, mental health and wellness. Eric Hollie from Sound Mind Counseling spoke to fathers about the importance of being mentally strong and how to recognize the signs of mental health disorders and their effects. Chuck Futel from PrimeAmerica spoke about the three keys of financial success and the importance of financial freedom. A vendor resource fair included representatives from the Head Start Policy Council, CAA Workforce Development, Talbert House, Hamilton County Office of Re-entry, Cradle Cincinnati, Cincinnati Police Department, Ohio Department of Job & Family Services, 4C for Children, Antonelli College and HW Staffing Solutions.



Join the GCMi Fiesta Fundraiser!



All CAA staffers and their friends, families and neighbors are invited to support GCMi at its First Annual Fiesta Fundraiser at Mazunte Taqueria, the unofficial mecca of Mexican cuisine. A percentage of your total bill will be donated back to support GCMi efforts in building impactful small business communities and strengthening advocacy for entrepreneurial education in Cincinnati. GCMi is especially proud to have provided

startup funding to Mazunte, who was voted "2017 Best New Restaurant" by Cincinnati Magazine.

Sponsor Host: **Mazunte Taqueria Mexicana** — www.mazuntetacos.com
Location: **5207 Madison Rd. Cincinnati, OH 45227** Phone: **785-0000**

GCMi has been providing Entrepreneurship Education and Business Development training with a focus on low to moderate income and disadvantaged communities for over 18 years, as well as access to capital to Cincinnati small businesses and new entrepreneurs for over 14 years. The program has been partnering with the City of Cincinnati Community & Economic Development Division to administer the Microcity Loan fund. GCMi has been providing funding to promote Business Development in several disadvantaged, yet emerging, communities such as: Over the Rhine, College Hill, Bond Hill, Fairmount, and Madisonville.

C-10 Graduates Ready for a Career

In March, 28 graduates received their certification in Commercial Construction through the new C-10 Jumpstart Initiative, a program was created in partnership with the Ohio Valley Construction Education Foundation and the City of Cincinnati.

Following a 12-week construction career training program, students graduated with a guarantee of employment or trade apprenticeship. As of the graduation date, there were 85 job offers within the group of 27 students. Graduate Mark Davis was recognized as the program's top performer and was awarded a car ensure he has transportation to begin his new career with Cincinnati Air.

Congratulations to all of our C-10 graduates!





Head Start Earns 5 Stars

CAA's Head Start program has achieved prestigious five-star quality ratings for both the Life Learning Center in Bond Hill and the Theodore M. Berry Children & Family Learning Center in the West End. The awards were given after an extensive review by the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. Banner ceremonies were held in December and April. Congratulations, Head Start!



New Director of Strategic Initiatives Joins CAA

Please help welcome Tenola Oliver to our CAA family. Tenola was recently hired as Director of Strategic Initiatives, an important role as CAA evolves its mission moving into the future.



Tenola has more than 18 years of business development experience and an extensive background in program development including consultative sales, economic development, fund development, sales management and contract negotiating. She holds a Bachelor's degree in psychology from Central State University; a Master's in Business Administration from Indiana Wesleyan University; and is pursuing a Ph.D. in Industrial Organizational Psychology.

CEO Receives President's Volunteer Service Award

Gwen Robinson, CAA's President and CEO, recently received a prestigious award from President Obama's administration for her long record of community involvement.

Ms. Robinson was given the Lifetime Achievement Award as part of the President's Volunteer Service Award (PVSA) program. PVSA recognizes United States citizens who have volunteered the required number of hours of community service over a 12-month time period or cumulative hours over the course of a lifetime.



The Lifetime Achievement Award is the highest honor, for those who contribute more than 4,000 hours of service during their lifetime.

"I was surprised and honored to receive this award," Ms. Robinson said. "This was about the last thing I expected to receive, and I was really honored to get it from our last President, who I admire a great deal."

In addition to her work at CAA, Ms. Robinson serves on several boards including Every Child Succeeds and the Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority. She also is active with the Corinthian Baptist Church.

"Everyone has to find their purpose in life, and I've been fortunate to have figured out mine early and follow it for most of my life," Ms. Robinson said. "The desire to help others comes from my mother. I do it because it's in my DNA and I enjoy it."

Serving others helps create a happier, more fulfilling life.

"Apathy is such a destructive force in people's lives. I've found that apathetic people usually are unhappy people," Ms. Robinson said. "You need to be willing to get involved and take some risks, step out and put your neck on the line for something you feel strongly about. It makes you more about to life's possibilities. After awhile, you'll find it doesn't just help the community, it also helps you grow and learn."

SAVE THE DATE!

CAA's 10th Annual Big Top Yard Sale & Head Start Open Enrollment Fair will be taking place on Saturday, June 3rd. Join us from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. for bargains, food, entertainment and fun. For more information or to rent a table, call 513-569-4371.





Cincinnati-Hamilton County Community Action Agency

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Client Victories

Rodni Chambers exemplifies the success that can stem from a second chance. When you first meet with Mr. Chambers it is immediately apparent that he is intelligent, determined, and exemplifies a desire to become an expert in areas of interest to him. After a short time spent incarcerated and away from his family, Mr. Chambers sought out the Community Action Agency in an effort to develop a new skill which would allow him to start his own business and provide for his wife and three children in a legal and respectful way.

Rodni had done his research and decided on a career in the transportation business. He knew the first step was to obtain his Commercial Driver's License (CDL). After being turned down at several other organizations due to a lack of funding, Rodni was given a spot in CAA's CDL program. "The program was wonderful. It provided me

with all of the knowledge and tools I needed to progress to where I am today." After attending all of the required classes and trainings Rodni was able to receive his CDL. "The instructor was great. I learned everything I needed to know, because I passed my exam on the first try. If

you are willing to show up and listen then you will learn. It's that simple."

Mr. Chambers is grateful for the education and licensing he received through

CAA and is optimistic about his future in the trucking business. Shortly after he received his license Rodni purchased his first truck and trailer with the financial support of family and friends. He is currently running his own business and is excited to see where the future takes him. "I hope by this time next year I have three trucks, three trailers and three employees. I'll be ready to get off the road and focus on managing the company as it grows."

