

October is Domestic Violence Awareness month

Especially during the month of October we are reminded of the necessity to continue our agency mission to “promote safe and stable families, neighborhoods, and communities”.

Domestic violence is one of the most pervasive problems in our society, both from a public safety and public health perspective. It is not a private issue—it is a crime.

Excerpt from a Resolution passed at the August 17, 2010 McLean County Board meeting: “The McLean County Board urges all County residents to take a moment to talk to their children about healthy relationships, to remind those in abusive relationships that they are not alone and that help is available, and to encourage the development of domestic violence policies in the workplace”. As Advocates, we commit

to being the help those in abusive relationships need and deserve to replace their fear with safety. We invite families, schools, churches, and businesses to partner with us to have open dialogues throughout the year about the importance of equality and respect in relationships.

On **October 1, 2010** the Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence published “From the Front Lines: Survivor and Provider Perspectives on Illinois Domestic Violence Assistance Gaps and Action Initiatives”. Our next Observer will offer insights from the 900 Survivors in Illinois who participated in this assessment process.

In closing, we celebrate with Survivors as they triumph over tragedy. We honor the memory of those who died and now serve as Silent Witnesses for peace and justice.

Neville House benefits from Beauty Brands fundraiser



Make a difference in our community by participating in the Beauty Brands End Abuse Campaign. Beauty Brands is very excited to open their new store at 311 South Veterans Parkway, Normal!

The grand opening weekend celebration will begin **October 28** with a ribbon cutting ceremony at 4:30pm with the Normal Chamber of Commerce. The Girls Night Out opening celebration will be held from **5:30 – 7:30pm**. During that time, Beauty Brands will donate 25% of salon and spa services booked, retail purchases and gift card sales to Neville House!

The company is also selling End Abuse t-shirts online at www.beautybrands.com, with 100% of the proceeds being donated to local shelters. Quantities are limited, so don't wait to order!

Taking Steps to End Domestic Violence

Please join us for a 5K run and 1 mile family walk at Tipton Park in Bloomington on **Sunday, October 17th**.

This event is a memorial to Duncan Leichtenberg's 11th birthday, while raising money and awareness for Neville House! Complete a registration at www.MCCAinc.org and bring your sneakers, wheelchair, roller blades, skates, strollers, pets and family! Registered participants will receive a t-shirt, and prizes will be awarded in many categories. This activity is sponsored in part by Molly Maids and Original Smith Printing.

Shop for a Cause at Macy's stores nationwide

Purchase a shopping pass for use at any Macy's store on **Saturday, October 16th** and support violence prevention efforts in McLean County. Buying a pass will support Countering Domestic Violence/Neville House! The \$5 all day limited exclusion shopping pass includes many discounts! For more information, please visit www.MCCAinc.org.

Candlelight Vigil

We invite families directly affected by domestic violence to participate in a special evening of healing and hope on **Tuesday, October 12th from 6:00-7:30pm**. Please call (309) 828-8913 to RSVP and confirm location. Activities will include a light dinner, t-shirt decorating to share your story, open mic time to let your voices be heard, and an inspirational message from Rev. McSwain of Mt Pisgah Baptist Church.

All activities and supplies for this family event are free.

Please join us to light candles to remember victims and honor survivors of domestic violence.

Text message: sfty nds 4 2days tech

The Bloomington-Normal Soroptimists are sponsoring a workshop full of practical advice to communicate safety needs for today's technology and dating. Presenter Dakesa Pina PhD., LMFT, will discuss dating safety and tips for staying safe on social websites, and more on **Saturday, October 16th from 9:00am-11:00am** at Busey Bank, 2101 N Veterans Pkwy in Bloomington.

RSVP at (309) 454 2513, or kmfleming1973@yahoo.com

1st Neville House Fundraiser a Success!

"It's a Mystery" brings in \$12,560 to benefit victims of domestic violence

Enjoy these moments from our evening of elegance, enlightenment, and entertainment!

A special thank you to Jeffrey and Madalyn Tinervin for serving as our Ambassador Sponsors for this August 13th event.



McLean County
Domestic Violence
24-hour Hotline
(309) 827-7070

August Program Statistics

Our CDV program served a total of 156 adults and 21 children for the month of August, 2010.

During this month, we responded to 352 hotline calls and sheltered 15 adults and 18 children for a total of 343 days of service. We assisted victims in filing 28 emergency orders of protection and provided 122.5 hours of civil legal advocacy and 30.75 hours of criminal legal advocacy.

Advocates continue to commit to educating, equipping, and empowering those affected by domestic violence on their journey to safety and healing.

Free & confidential services are available in English and Spanish.

Shear Style Challenge a hit!

Thank you to Lynne Norris for designing an evening of "Shear Style" which raised around \$2,500 to benefit Neville House. We encourage everyone to shop at our neighborhood boutiques and salons to show appreciation for their contributions to this beautiful July 23rd event.

Special thanks to participants:

Evy An Boutique

Oh Baby

Penelope's

Girl Friday

Fringe Salon

Shoe Shoe Baby

Allure

Gigi Bottega

Bryant Miller Salon, and

Jack and Beth Bataoel/BlueLine Nightclub



Transitional Housing Program

The Transitional Housing Program at Mid Central Community Action provides homeless individuals and families with adequate housing for up to two years.

MCCA manages one 2-bedroom, five 3-bedroom, one 4-bedroom apartments and one 5-bedroom home. These homes are in high demand and are usually occupied.

This is a very intense program that requires a family to be committed to seriously work on making necessary changes to become more self-sufficient. This is done through open communication, cooperation, and interaction with an MCCA case manager.

Adults (and families) must be willing to meet at least bi-weekly both at the office and in the home. During these meetings goals are identified, reviewed, and modified. Case management may assume many forms: budgeting, family counseling, referrals to needed services, life skills training, broadening education and employment opportunities, and support.

There are income guidelines to meet (less than 125% of poverty level). In addition,



Becky Berry, Community Services Case Worker

PHOTO: EMORY DAVIS

adult applicants must be working full-time or attending school and working at least part-time.

Rent is based on net income. Tenants pay 30% of their net income unless that amount is less than the minimum or more than the maximum program fee which is usually in the range of \$300–\$550. Also, utilities (electric, gas, and water) are the tenant's responsibility.

To be considered for the program, an application, obtained at our office at 1301 W. Washington St in Bloomington, must be completed and submitted. Once completed and returned, the application will be reviewed and kept on file. When a vacancy suitable for the family's needs becomes available in the Transitional Housing program, the family will be notified.

At that time, if the family meets the requirements for eligibility, an assessment interview will be scheduled with the purpose of determining the family's participation. Based on this information, a family will be chosen to participate in the program.

Since February 2010, the Transitional Housing Program has been very busy. Seven families completed two years of participation in the program with varying degrees of success. These families worked on various goals. Overall, families improved and/or stabilized their financial, employment, education,

transportation, and individual/family relationships during this time. The families transitioned into various living arrangements upon completion: One family moved into an apartment independent of financial assistance; one moved into an apartment with the help of Section 8 housing; two families moved into apartments and are now benefiting from Mid Central Community Action's Homeless Prevention Program; one family is sharing an apartment with someone else; one family moved in with family, and one family moved out of state.

Currently, there are two families that will complete their two years in the program by February 2011. The goal is for each of these two families to be ready for successful transitions. And, there are seven newly chosen families that are beginning their journey to becoming self-sufficient through self-evaluation, goal making, education, self-improvement, determination and a willingness to participate in intense case management.

Through the Transitional Housing Program, Mid Central Community Action promotes its mission of "promoting safe and stable families, neighborhoods and communities" by helping families move from homelessness to the goal of becoming self-sufficient.

ARRA funds at work—creating jobs & helping families save money

Weatherization Program

Over 300 hundred households in McLean and Livingston Counties benefitted from the MCCA Weatherization program in the 2010 fiscal year (7/1/09 to 6/30/10)—that's a 245% increase on the previous year!

The Illinois Home Weatherization Assistance Program (IHWAP) is designed to help reduce the energy costs for low income households by making their homes more energy efficient. Increased funding through the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) is the reason for the increase in the number of homes weatherized in the last fiscal year.

The increased funding allowed MCCA to hire additional part-time and full-time staff. Local contractors also benefitted from this program through by hiring more workers to complete weatherization on more than 300 area homes.

The weatherization process involves an inspection by a technician, who records all the required structural information about the house and then uses a computerized energy audit program that tells what weatherization measures will be most cost effective for the home.

Local contractors, specifically trained to install weatherization measures, then perform

the work under the supervision of the MCCA weatherization department.

The final work is reviewed by a trained MCCA Inspector for verification that all work meets State compliance. Gross annual income guidelines (200% of the poverty level) for ARRA weatherization are up to \$29,140 for a household of 3. A maximum of \$5,200 per household is available for all weatherization services.

For more information on the weatherization program, please visit our website at: www.MCCAinc.org

Sustainable Agriculture students give their feedback

My experience in this program has been very positive. I was given lots of responsibility on Epiphany Farms and I feel as though I was part of their team. This program allowed me to better understand what it takes to farm and how important it is to do it sustainably through my daily schedule of chores and harvests.

Every day started with feeding and watering all of the animals which took up to about an hour and from there I would work to complete my list of tasks given at the start of the day. These tasks varied from weeding gardens to building infrastructure to cooking food for lunch. I was fortunate enough to get to farm with cooks and everyday our “family meal” was some of the best food I have ever eaten.

It being their second year in operation, I also played a role in helping them organize and establish managerial styles. This benefited me greatly because when I move on and look to start my own business I have a better feel for how to put work structures and guidelines in place.

This program allowed me to see firsthand how small businesses truly run and allowed me to see that it takes a lot of work to get to the end product we see at the markets and in CSA bags.

This program also provided me with amazing resources through the seminars. Having the opportunity to speak with accomplished farmers, professors and peers has given me confidence knowing that there are people in this community who share some of the same passions I do.

By going through this program and getting paid to do it I have been able to get firsthand experience in the field of farming

and have also been able to save some money as well which is always a good thing.

This internship has changed my life because now I truly understand what it takes to not only be a small business owner but what it takes to be a responsible one.

John Guzaldo



My experience with the sustainable agriculture program through Heartland Community College was truly fulfilling. I was on a small organic fruit and herbs farm in Eureka IL. I had the opportunity to live on the farm and work full time so I was deeply committed to the experience while learning the reality of life on a farm. I learned a great deal about growing, sustainability and even more than that, I was being challenged to learn more about myself.

Each day I was learning something new. The farm is diverse, so there is an overwhelming amount of things to do. Chickens, goats, berries, a small orchard of apples and pears, culinary herbs, and some vegetables for our personal use. I loved being able to walk out my backdoor and eat fresh, organically, good tasting produce. I was always cooking new things and trying new recipes with all the food that had to be eaten.

The deeper values were learned through the work. Some days were



spent weeding for hours on end, hunched down in a pool of sweat. Harvest days were also quite exhausting, spending half a day on my knees picking strawberries. But it was in that act of staying in one place and carrying out such a task that I began to understand the importance of devoting your life to a greater good. The owner of the farm, Teresa, was a great example of that. All the hours that we spent preparing the plant “starts” in the greenhouse, seemed meaningless when you try to figure how much money you are making in comparison to all the time spent. Teresa has devoted her life (literally) to farming so that others may eat, fresh, local and nutritious food.

I think my time on the farm was empowering, and encouraging. I feel like I am capable of doing something similar but I’m still interested in exploring the different avenues that I can take now in the world of sustainability and farming. I think it was a life changing opportunity to meet people involved with agriculture, who are committed to changing the greater problem of industrial farms and the decline of nutritious food.

Thank you for supporting me through this experience. I am truly grateful for your investment in this program.

Keely Scott

The Urban Agriculture conference was awesome! It was so informative and encouraging. Farming is risky business and I admit I have been a bit intimidated. As with most things in life, the more you learn the more you realize you have yet to learn; This leaves me feeling ignorant and inadequate. But through all the classes we had and all the hands on experience I’m learning that planning is important but that I just have to jump. There have been so many other people before me that have expressed a similar sentiment, but they’re out there farming. I heard Will Allen say that “if you’re not making mistakes, you’re not learning”. So, the general consensus says to make a plan, start small, and just start. Mistakes are inevitable; Instead of being fearful of them I need to look at them as continued education. Deborah Cavanaugh Grant has given us so many resources to help us get started on farms of our own. It’s a matter of taking the next step. I have been able to see the areas I’m weak in my preparation and have been given tools to get ready. I’m excited to get started. Thanks Rebecca, to you, HCC and Mid Central Community Action.

Lisa Helgen

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Celebrating Dreams in Action!



June 18th, 2010, marked the occasion of MCCA's 9th Annual Dinner—and the name change to the “Dreamweaver Awards”, with approximately 200 guests celebrating the award winners in the achievement of their dreams.

It was also a celebration of the volunteer service of past Board President Lori Manning, and final well wishes to retiring Executive Director John Burrill.

Dreamweaver Awards were presented to the following:

- Jack Gibson - Community Services
- DeeDee - Countering Domestic Violence
- Chasity Mast - Affordable Housing
- John Johnson - Volunteer
- Stevenson Center - Community Partner

Awards were also presented to 5 employees for 5 - 20 years of service.

Guests were treated to entertainment by local bands Touch of Soul and Soft Spoken, and had opportunities to donate through a silent auction, 50/50 raffle, and a balloon pop.

Sincere thanks go out to the 2010 event sponsors, attendees, and to the planning committee for their vision, their hard work and their crafty fingers!



ALL DINNER PHOTOS: EMORY DAVIS

Em3 Photography

COMMUNITY PARTNER DREAMWEAVERS, THE STEVENSON CENTER
Em3 Photography

PAT HOHULIN & VOLUNTEER DREAMWEAVER JOHN JOHNSON

CHASITY MAST AND KATHY SHUBERT, HOMEOWNERSHIP PROGRAMS COORDINATOR
Em3 Photography

Em3 Photography

2010 DREAMWEAVER RECIPIENTS AND PRESENTERS

A Season of Transition

MESSAGE FROM Pam Pullman, Interim Executive Director



To everything there is a season... and the MCCA, Inc. Board of Directors has chosen to re-evaluate the organization through an agency-wide capacity building assessment and review.

ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENTS can be defined in three categories: a 'start-up', a

'turn-around', or 'realignment'. Realignments occur when an organization, typically with a track record of success and which may appear to be on solid footing, has an assessment (along with other factors) that reveal it has peaked or may even be slipping into decline. Its mission, programs, services and/or business model may be out of date. It is in need of a strategic makeover or restructuring. CAPACITY BUILDING refers to activities that improve an organization's ability to achieve its mission. For organizations, capacity building may relate to almost any aspect of its work: improved governance, leadership, mission and strategy, administration (including human resources and financial management), program development and implementation, fundraising & income generation, diversity, partnerships and collaborations,

evaluation, advocacy and policy change, marketing and planning.

The Board of Directors is strategically creating a roadmap for the agency's future. The Board is committed to continuing the legacy of the founders of MCCA, as it redefines the agency's new operations and leadership to more effectively address the issues of poverty.

Identified goals include, but are not limited to:

- **Increasing Accountability:** The responsibility of MCCA is to respond to human needs by building greater community awareness and credibility through high performance standards and practices.
- **Strengthening Community Partnerships:** MCCA will integrate the organization's services to best meet the needs of clients through identified program priorities as established by the Board of

Directors.

- **Employing Best Practices:** MCCA is committed to efficient and effective delivery of services. MCCA will create a system for conducting internal program assessment and self-evaluation that will help guide MCCA's operations. **Efficient** (things right) + **Effective** (right things) = **Excellence (doing the right things right)**.

I am honored to have been selected, effective July 6th, as Interim Executive Director, and to lead the agency's Vision for Excellence!

I am confident that, with the continued support and compassion shown by the community partners, supporters and stakeholders, MCCA will indeed rise to the challenges of change.

Remember: When spiders unite, they can tie up a lion!

Please consider supporting Mid Central Community Action, Inc's programs by making a donation today.

Please accept my donation of:

_____ \$100 _____ \$50 _____ \$20 _____ \$10 _____ \$5 _____ \$other

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Mail your tax-deductible donation to:

Mid Central Community Action, Inc.

Vikki Baptiste, Marketing Specialist & Fund Development Associate

1301 W. Washington St

Bloomington, IL 61701

Thank **You**

Donate online with just one click at www.MCCAinc.org

Dates to Remember

■ **Friday, October 1**

LIHEAP priority period

See www.MCCAinc.org for eligibility

■ **Tuesday, October 12**

Candlelight Vigil

A special evening of healing and hope

Call (309) 828 8913 for venue

6:00 - 7:30pm

■ **Saturday, October 16**

Macy's Shop for a Cause

Purchase a shopping pass to benefit Neville House

Macy's, Eastland Mall, Bloomington, IL

■ **Saturday, October 16**

Txt Msg: sfty nds 4 2days tech

Practical advice to communicate safety needs for today's technology and dating

Busey Bank, 2101 N Veterans Pkwy, Bloomington, IL

9:00 - 11:00am

■ **Sunday, October 17**

Taking Steps to End Domestic Violence

5K fun run and 1 mile family walk

Tipton Park, E College Ave, Bloomington, IL

Registration opens at 1:00pm

■ **Monday October 25 & Wednesday October 27**

Home Buyer Education Class

4:00pm - 8:00 pm

■ **Thursday, October 28**

Beauty Brands Grand Opening

Percentage of sales benefits Neville House programs

Beauty Brands, 311 S Veterans Pkwy, Normal, IL

5:30 - 7:30pm

■ **Tuesday, November 2**

Free home buyer seminar

Information for new home buyers

Bloomington Public Library, 205 E Olive St, Bloomington

6:00 - 8:00pm

■ **Wednesday, November 3**

LIHEAP program open to all eligible households

See www.MCCAinc.org for eligibility

■ **Tuesday November 16 & Thursday November 18**

Home Buyer Education Class

4:00pm - 8:00 pm

■ **Tuesday, November 30**

Free home buyer post purchase seminar

You just bought your first home, now what?

Bloomington Public Library, 205 E Olive St, Bloomington

6:00 - 8:00pm

Home Buyer Education classes are held at

MCCA, 1301 W Washington St, Bloomington.

For further information or to register,

contact Kathy Shubert, (309) 834-9245

How to contact us:

McLean County Office

1301 W. Washington St.

Bloomington, IL 61701

(309) 829-0691

Livingston County Office

741 W. Washington St., Suite 1

Pontiac, IL 61764

(815) 844-3201

McLean County Domestic
Violence

24-hour Hotline

(309) 827-7070

Mayors Manor

Supportive Housing

504 W. Washington St.

Bloomington, IL 61701

(309) 827-2967

by email:

mcca@MCCAinc.org

on the web:

www.MCCAinc.org

www.facebook.com/MCCAinc

www.twitter.com/MCCAinc

www.flickr.com/MCCAinc



What if Mid Central Community Action, Inc. earned a penny every time YOU searched the internet?

Search the web with www.goodsearch.com and money from Yahoo advertisers will go to MCCA without you spending a dime!



Mid Central Community Action, Inc. (MCCA) is an Illinois private not-for-profit corporation with the mission of "Promoting safe and stable families, neighborhoods and communities." The agency works with government agencies, private corporations and individual citizens, including those we serve, to develop and maintain programs which address this mission.

Incorporated in 1965, the agency today delivers services to the community in three main areas. First, there is a group of countering domestic violence programs; including a shelter, emergency hot line, counseling, and intervention services for victims. We also offer the whole spectrum of traditional Community Action programs including CSBG/Family Services Programs, energy assistance, home weatherization, transitional housing, and supportive case management. The third area is that of housing; a group of programs including home ownership counseling, down payment assistance, foreclosure prevention, and rehabilitation of homes.

In addition to being one of 1100 Community Action agencies in the United States, MCCA is a chartered member of the NeighborWorks® America network of housing development and neighborhood revitalization organizations and a member of the Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

In a typical year, MCCA programs serve more than 5000 families. It also assists some 100 families in various ways to become home owners, which is considered one of the best roads to economic stability for a family.

The **Observer**

Mid Central Community Action, Inc.
1301 W. Washington St.
Bloomington, IL 61701
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit
US Postage
PAID
Bloomington, IL
Permit #72

Our Mission: Promoting safe and stable families, neighborhoods and communities
Mid Central Community Action, Inc. serves McLean and Livingston Counties



Energy **Assistance**

The 2011 Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) opened on September 1 with a priority period for seniors, disabled and disconnected households.

Lola Harris of Bloomington considers LIHEAP program “a blessing”. She came to MCCA with a disconnection notice and no way to pay her arrears.

Lola is on a limited income after having some surgeries and losing her job. She has a child with disabilities, and said “I’d be in really bad shape if my utilities were shut off.” She looks forward to LIHEAP assistance, and also benefitted from the summer cooling program. “The program is good, and kind to people who are disabled, with no family support, single parents and people who lose their job due to the economic climate.”



Sharon Coleman has had no income now for 6 months and has exhausted all her savings. She has transportation issues, getting to Bloomington from Heyworth, but knows that if she doesn’t get assistance she wouldn’t be able to cook or keep her lights on. She came to the office with a disconnection notice, and says that she could reduce her utility bills if her landlord would be willing to have her trailer weatherized.

Lola and Sharon represent just two of the 5,700 households expected to receive assistance this program year.

For more information on the LIHEAP program, visit www.MCCAinc.org