

Mid Central Community Action, Inc.
923 E. Grove Street
Bloomington, IL 61701

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Mid Central Community Action

the Observer

Creating Hope...One Step at a Time

Over the past twelve months MCCA, along with our numerous community partners, have helped many families move to self sufficiency. On May 6th, we plan to celebrate all we have achieved together and honor the generosity of those assisting us in creating positive change in the McLean and Livingston County communities. The third annual Mid Central Community Action Agency Dinner is sure to be an evening to remember!

Ticket costs are \$25 per person. Throughout the evening, guests will have the opportunity to bid on beautiful works of art donated by local artists; including Angel Ambrose, Mike McNeil and David Regan. Proceeds from the auction will benefit our Countering Domestic Violence Program. We will honor those in the community who work to help us achieve our mission – including the Community Action Family of Distinction. We will also have a chance to hear about the future of Mid Central Community Action. After dinner, The State Farm Swing Band will play as we dance away the evening. Join us in celebrating our 39th year spent building community by helping people move to self sufficiency. Please call 829-0691 for more details.

Programs such as ours cannot exist without community partnerships. We thank the individuals, churches, schools, civic organizations, and corporations who have generously given their time and money to COMMUNITY ACTION for the benefit of the programs. Your gifts do make a difference for the families we serve.

WEATHER—SHALL I GO?

It is that time of the year when spring is upon us and we can leave our “weather” beaten woes behind us. It is time to reflect on the winter months passed and look forward to a new year of assessing and weatherizing homes within the Livingston and McLean County areas. It is time to re-evaluate what the weatherization program is all about and the purpose for which the program was established.

The Illinois Home Weatherization Assistance Program (IHWAP) is designed to help low-income residents save fuel and money while increasing the comfort of their homes. The IHWAP is not a program for replacing windows and doors only. IHWAP is a program that will make your home more energy efficient by repairing and replacing items that are deemed an energy waste for the home. Depending on the circumstances and condition of your dwelling, some of the following weatherization work may be done:

- **Sealing cracks with weather stripping and caulk**
- **Insulating attics and walls**
- **Repairing windows and doors**
- **Repairing some flooring (Health/Safety Issue)**

Weatherization services include having an assessor evaluate the efficiency of the furnace and water heater. The assessor will make sure that the water heater and heating system are safe and in good working condition. Work on the furnace and/or water heaters may include one or more of the following:

- **Clean and Tune (furnace only)**
- **Repair**
- **Retrofit**
- **Possible Replacement of Unit**
- **Replacement of copper gas piping to black pipe**
- **Installation of drip leg**
- **Gas shut-off**
- **Accessible electrical shut-off**

IHWAP look at Health and Safety issues in each home. This may include the following:

- **Smoke Detectors**
- **Fire extinguisher**
- **Carbon Monoxide Detector**
- **Replacement of copper gas pipe to standard black pipe**

It is our goal to ensure that every client receive top notch and professional service; while giving quality service to their home.

Who is eligible for the Weatherization Program? Eligibility is determined by family size and household income in accordance with federal guidelines. Weatherization services are free to households that:

- **Are eligible for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP),**
- **Having an occupant receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Aid to Aged Blind and Disabled (AABD), or**
- **Below or at the following annual income guideline:**

Size of Family	Annual Income
1	- \$13,470
2	- \$18,180
3	- \$22,890
4	- \$27,600

Renters may be assisted if they are eligible and the Landlord/Landladies agree to the program terms. The Landlord/Landladies are responsible for 50% of the contribution for the weatherization that is required for the rental property to be made more energy efficient and payment of a \$150.00 non-refundable assessment is received prior to assessment of property.

When all is said and done, you don't know if you qualify unless you apply. Applications are presently being accepted for the Weatherization Program at 923 E. Grove Street. Call for an appointment. On the day of the appointment, please have the following documentation with you:

-**Social Security Cards for all members of the household**

-**Twelve (12) months check stubs or proof of income prior to the appointment date (Ex. 03/04/03 to 03/04/04) for all members of the household 18 years or older that are employed**

-**Proof of ownership of home**

-**Note: For Landlord and Landladies**

- **The tenant would need to have your signature on the verification form and the Landlords and Landladies would need to provide proof of ownership to accompany the verification form.**

-**Most recent utility bills (Gas and/or Electric)**

HOUSING PROGRAMS

Central Illinois Coalition for Affordable Housing

In October, 2003, MCCA applied for a \$750,000.00 grant through Illinois Housing Development Authority. These funds allow assistance to first time homebuyers through the Central Illinois Coalition for Affordable Housing Program. Mid Central Community Action was notified on March 2, 2004 that the grant is now accessible.

This program assists first time homebuyers that qualify with down payment assistance/closing costs. The Housing Counseling classes are facilitated by MCCA staff who are certified housing counselors. The classes consist of educating borrowers on types of loans, the purchasing process, closing documents, maintaining the home and property, and sustaining ownership of the home. These 8 hour classes are scheduled monthly. For more information call 829-0691 Ext. 245 or Ext. 239.

Transitional Housing Program

In July, 2002 a family of four came into our office to apply for services. They were living in a 3 bedroom trailer with 6 family members. The mother and father were both employed full time and have two children. Their daughter is enrolled in District 87, and their son attends elementary school in Normal. Once approved for the unit, their long term goal was to purchase property upon leaving our program. This family worked together with determination to reach their goal.

Their first step was to start on repairing their credit. They had a significant amount of debt from past medical expenses. Once they started to pay the debt, the mother was injured at her place of employment. This set them back for 6 months. She was able to return to work, and then the father was off work for 3 months and their vehicle needed repairs. The father was able to return to work, and had to carpool to save money for their car repair.

After 20 months of determination and hard work this family has completed their credit repair, applied for a loan and will be closing on their property on April 15, 2004.

HOUSING PROGRAMS

Testimonial Sent by a Client of the Housing Program:



I appreciate the fact that Community Action was willing to sit down and explain their program and how it works and what active role I needed to take to obtain home ownership. Community Action

offered the necessary steps needed and the accountability necessary to prepare for home ownership by keeping me up with my budget, and by obtaining the credit report I needed.

I am writing to say thank you for your assistance in the purchase of my home. We appreciated all of the hard work and time taken to work with my family as our lives changed and evolved for a lack of a better word.

Thank you for your patience as well as your time and diligence in working with our family to bring our dream of home ownership to reality. Through your one-on-one attention and classes given, it allowed us to be held accountable and yet keep us focused in spite of our oppositions that arose during this time. The staff was genuine, committed, and not deterred by me blowing off steam.

The children are still very excited to have their own yard. Home ownership has brought about a sense of accomplishment and pride somewhat, but not in wrong way. We have enjoyed working in our yard and making home improvements by adding screen doors, painting and adding boards, where in leasing apartments there were rules and regulations against doing such things. Leasing apartments does not allow you the freedom to express who you really are.





the Observer

Volume 36, Issue 2 "Community Action News" April 2004

From the Executive Director

When this issue is published, we will be well into another spring and moving ahead with agency planning and program activities. Our Board of Directors completed an all day "retreat" on the last day of January, during which the Strategic Plan was revisited and updated. The Board also addressed governance issues, its committee structure and other policy related matters. A lengthy action list was developed involving the whole Board, committees, and staff in completing the tasks which had been identified.

In general, action is occurring on three fronts. First, a commitment has been made by the Board to develop an affordable housing project in Livingston County. A task force has been established to develop a concept plan for the Board's consideration. A second front is a new and strategic initiative to develop new sources of revenue. Our Board feels it is important to reduce our dependency on government grants by developing new donor organizations and individuals, as well as some projects which might generate some revenue. The third front upon which attention is focused is the involvement of resident leaders in Community Action's programs and planning activities, particularly in the affordable housing development area. A group of Resident Leaders will attend a training session in July to help prepare them for this role.

Mayors Manor, our residential building at 504 West Washington, is fully occupied, and the tenants there will soon be planting their gardens with the assistance of the McLean County Master Gardeners.

Our Countering Domestic Violence Program was a major participant in the development of a collaborative application for a grant from the Illinois Criminal Justice Authority. We have been notified of approval of this grant, which will fund the work of several agencies in increasing victim and offender services within the existing community systems for addressing this area. The grant will be administered by the State's Attorney's office. Our Neville House shelter has been busy this year, a constant reminder of the importance of these programs.

On behalf of our Board of Directors and our staff, we hope you enjoy this issue, and wish all a good summer season.

Board of Directors

Rick Barrera, President	Benjamin Owens
George Braden, Vice President	Judy Ripsch
Angelo Padro, Treasurer	Glen Rustman
Lori Manning, Secretary	Karen Schmidt
Francis Irvin, President Emeritus	Rev. James Sims
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Inside:

MCCA Programs

Come visit us at:

www.mccainc.org

Please let us know if you would like to be on our mailing list.

COMMUNITY ACTION

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Bloomington, IL 61701

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E-mail: mcca@mccainc.org

Neville House - Countering Domestic Violence Office and Shelter (McLean County Only)

Hotline: 309-827-7070

Business: 309-828-8913

Fax: 309-829-2425

Legal Advocacy: 309-888-5521

E-mail: cdvnev@mccainc.org

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Mayors Manor

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Bloomington, IL

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E-mail: casemgr@mccainc.org

Mid Central COMMUNITY ACTION'S mission is building community by helping people move to self-sufficiency and an improved quality of life. In order to accomplish this outcome we form partnerships with a variety of local governmental bodies, private businesses, educational institutions and other human services. We work cooperatively to create and provide both safety nets and life improvement opportunities for individuals and families living in poverty.

At the same time, Mid Central COMMUNITY ACTION establishes partnerships with individuals and families to take control of, and responsibility for, their own life direction. We believe this results in a combination of self-directed action and participation in community improvement activities.