

OACAA *briefing*

News from Ohio's Poverty Fighting Network • April 2010

Garbo retiring from HAPCAP May 28

Bob Garbo has spent most of his life "advocating for an overthrow of the way things are." His latest step in that pattern is to retire after almost 38 years at Hocking-Athens-Perry Community Action Partnership, better known as HAPCAP.

"I'm ready for a change," Garbo said. "I'm thwarting things by not changing. I've got a ton of good young managers. I've got to get out of their way."

Garbo joined the Community Action movement in its beginning as a VISTA sponsored by Appalachian Volunteers which worked in Kentucky, Virginia and West Virginia. He moved to Duncan Gap, Virginia, in 1966 after leaving a Roman Catholic seminary in Chicago. At the time, he didn't realize his working class family and his involvement with an underground newspaper in the seminary were both training him for his future career advocating for the voiceless.

"I was rebellious and didn't even know it," he said. "I fell in love with the VISTA work. It didn't take much."

The Appalachian Volunteers were among many agencies and groups responding to President Lyndon B. Johnson's declaration of War on Poverty by signing the Economic Opportunity Act in August 1964.

"LBJ had some real issues with poverty and the way black people were treated in Texas," Garbo said. "He never lost his values in terms of making life better. The idea behind (the Economic Opportunity Act) was very attractive because it was about what you wanted to do in your local area to solve poverty."

When he arrived in Duncan Gap, Garbo's assignment was to mobilize the people to build a playground with materials that would be provided by his sponsor. He quickly learned that the families in the community were more interested in installing running water in their school. His first taste of resistance to change and what was becoming the Community Action movement came at a school board meeting where he outlined a plan to pipe water into



Bob Garbo, right, congratulates Doug Stanley on being named the next Executive Director at HAPCAP. Stanley will take the job when Garbo retires next month after 38 years with the agency and 11 as its leader. Stanley has been HAPCAP's Director of Housing for nearly 30 years.

the school. The board was unhappy that Garbo was "stirring up the poor people," he said.

Soon after, Garbo had a similar experience reinstating and expanding a hot lunch program in Dickinson County, Virginia. His work earned him a spot as VISTA supervisor just as his initial one-year commitment was ending.

Resistance mounted, however, to work to establish greater rights for welfare recipients or to protect the environment. Appalachian Volunteers was heavily involved in fighting strip mining in northern Kentucky. The group was defunded and shut down by the FBI in 1968, Garbo said.

In the thick of pushing for change, Garbo was part of more forced shut downs. He worked as a field trainer for the University of Maryland training VISTAs in Lexington, Kentucky. The VISTA philosophy had shifted from bringing in outside help to empower a community to

bringing in trainers to demonstrate to the locals how they could empower themselves.

Garbo's group made a proposal to the Office of Economic Opportunity under President Richard Nixon to pay local people in Marrowbone Creek, Kentucky to train volunteers. The concept was to put money directly into the hands of poor people.

"They didn't like the idea, so they shut us down," Garbo said.

He almost left the movement at that point to become a teacher. However, when four students were killed at Kent State University while protesting the Vietnam War on May 4, 1970, his anti-war feelings gelled into a desire to continue to work for those who did not have a voice in their government.

He moved with friends to Marmet, West Virginia where he worked again to

Continued on page 2

Visit the Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies online at www.oacaa.org.

PIPP Plus transition begins with training

The Ohio Department of Development continues to work with Community Action Agencies in preparation for the launch of PIPP Plus this fall.

ODOD held an operations meeting April 9 to announce key changes and upcoming dates for the implementation of the new program. Outreach and education efforts will continue with the release of Frequently Asked Questions on May 3. Regional trainings for CAA personnel will be held between May 17 and August 18.

Two sessions on PIPP Plus are scheduled at the Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies' Annual Summer Conference June 16, 17 and 18 in Sandusky. An educational video and several publications will be released this



summer for use in educating customers about the changes.

In making the transition, the Office of Community Services of ODOD will receive a current list of PIPP customers from the utility companies by Sept. 1, 2010. OCS will load the data into OCEAN and send letters to all customers explaining the new program and any changes in their payment amounts.

Current PIPP customers will be

converted to PIPP Plus automatically. There will be no changes to the Winter Crisis Program processes for PIPP customers for the 2010-2011 winter season.

Other associated programs include Graduate PIPP Plus and Post PIPP Plus. The Graduate program allows customers whose income increases enough to make them ineligible for PIPP Plus to continue to make payments on any arrearages. Post PIPP Plus is designed for customers who have left the utility company and allows them to continue a payment plan on arrearages.

Additional information will be available through OCS and at www.oacaa.org.

Garbo retiring ...

Continued from page 1

create school lunch programs under The Children's Foundation. He also met his wife Linda, a native of Cincinnati, Ohio. Linda had also been affected by resistance to change and defunding of agencies in her work with Roger McCauley. McCauley worked at HAPCAP to put low-income representatives back on its board as required by law. Garbo had been doing the same thing in the Norton, Virginia CAP.

In April 1971, the Garbos were married. A few months later they both had jobs at HAPCAP, now led by Roger McCauley whose changes to the board created several openings at the agency, Garbo said.

Garbo worked as a Neighborhood Center Supervisor and Linda as a director of youth programs. Garbo remembers being "red-baited" or labeled as a Communist because of their work. But even getting shut down a couple of times didn't deter the people who worked at HAPCAP.

"We were advocating for an overthrow of the way things are," he said. "All of us really believed in the war on poverty. We believed this was a good way to empower disadvantaged people."

HAPCAP wasn't alone in the movement, of course. In 1973, when President Nixon tried to use Executive Orders to close the Office of Economic Opportunity, he was sued in federal court for violating the separation of powers. Nixon lost.

"That stopped our death," Garbo said. "If that hadn't happened, we wouldn't be here."

The movement then enjoyed a growth explosion adding energy programs under President Jimmy Carter and forming the National Community Action Foundation

during the presidency of Ronald Reagan.

According to Garbo, Community Action faced a 100 percent cut in 1981 when David Bradley was hired by the nationwide network and wrote the first Community Services Block Grant. CSBG was funded at 75 percent of the previous level but the program survived Reagan's efforts to end it. A few years later, the Ohio General Assembly passed House Bill 412 which made the designated Community Action Agency in each of the state's 88 counties the "presumed receiver" of CSBG dollars.

CAA staff learned how to advocate differently, Garbo said.

"We had to grow up a little bit," he said. "It wasn't the 60s anymore. We had to put our ties on. Politics is an ugly thing, but it works. Gov. George Voinovich was okay. That taught us that not all Republicans are bad. We got an increase under (Speaker of the House) Newt Gingrich" in 1994.

In the meantime, HAPCAP was growing and changing. Macaulay had left the agency in 1976 and in 2009 retired after several years as Executive Director at the Corporation for Ohio Appalachian Development (COAD). Garbo became deputy director under Roger Patton in 1982. When Patton left in 1999, Garbo became Director.

One of his proudest recent accomplishments was to turn a building originally created as a residential drug treatment center for youth into HAPCAP's centrally located headquarters. The \$4 million building stood empty for four years and Garbo purchased it from the Department of Corrections for \$1. The 30,000-square-foot facility on 14 acres in Glouster is now a jewel at the center of

a very poor community. A police station and a six-room medical clinic (affiliated with Doctor's Hospital in Columbus) are attached to the facility. Garbo is proud of the building because it points to the original mission of HAPCAP and CAAs.

"We're still here to make life better for people," he said. "We moved into a poor community and spent money. We buy gas here. We buy food here."

When Garbo retires on May 28 – his 68th birthday – he will leave a solid agency in the capable hands of Doug Stanley, who has been HAPCAP's housing director for nearly 30 years.

"I've grown up here," Stanley said. "I'm very proud of the place. It's my goal to continue that legacy. I know the agency, but I know it from my perspective not Bob's, so I know there will be a learning curve."

Garbo is proud of HAPCAP and how it is known around Ohio and throughout the network.

"You give HAPCAP money, they will spend it right and they will spend it to the penny," he said. "I couldn't ask for a better reputation than that."

Garbo still believes strongly in the Community Action movement and believes that people's faith in the principles of the movement will keep it alive. Poverty may always exist, he said, but that should not discourage people working to help.

"You win a few. It's nice to see kids get a hot lunch or a building get used in a poor community. You see the results in the guy that gets the job," he said. "The most we do is make life better for people who struggle. I can't solve their poverty. Our mission ought to be to make life better for people. If you can do that, you're doing good."

CEOGC Head Start students study nutrition

The Council for Economic Opportunities in Greater Cleveland's (CEOGC) Head Start program teamed up with Cuyahoga County's WIC (Women, Infants and Children) Program to celebrate National Nutrition Month.

"Nutrition from the Ground Up" provided 1,480 three- to five-year-old Head Start students throughout Cuyahoga County with a hands-on opportunity to learn about healthy eating habits by growing their own food.

On March 31, students at the Louis Stokes Head Start Center in Cleveland were visited by WIC staff. The staff members read "I Will Never, Not Ever, Eat a Tomato" by Lauren Child to the class and then helped the students plant their own seeds in a cup to watch them grow over the next several weeks.

WIC staff also helped the children write a thank you note to whoever does the cooking in their home.

"Promoting good nutrition is a major focus in Head Start," said Mary Lou McManus, CEOGC Head Start Nutrition Coordinator. "This collaboration with WIC was a wonderful opportunity to highlight childhood nutrition as being integral to



Head Start students at the Louis Stokes Center in Cleveland learned about nutrition during a visit from WIC staff during National Nutrition Month in March.

good health. The children's awareness of foods, especially fruits and vegetables, at this early age, gives them a head start on healthy eating."

Jiffy Products of America also sponsored this program by donating 3,000 Jiffy soil pellets for the students to plant their vegetable seeds.

CAP Dayton reaches partners with lunch format

Approximately 75 people attended a Lunch and Learn event at the RTA Cultural Center in Dayton designed to help other service providers learn about programs and services offered by the Community Action Partnership of the Greater Dayton Area.

"We're asking you here to learn about

us, to find out if we can partner and work together to make sure our community can thrive and receive all that it needs," said Ivy Williams, Director of Marketing.

Agency directors explained the latest in their program areas and answered questions from the audience. Guests

learned about the agency's weatherization, energy assistance, foreclosure prevention, emergency services, micro-enterprise, computer learning and youth empowerment programs.

Deborah Ferguson, Director of Outreach and Social Services, also encouraged guests to attend the agency's monthly Advocacy and Education Committee meetings.

"It's a chance for that advocate part of you that wants to help everybody, not just your own clients," she said. "It's a chance for you to get involved."

CAP Dayton's work is part of a decades-long movement to fight poverty.

"The commitment to ending poverty didn't go away at the local level," said Tim Donnellan, President and CEO. "It didn't go away at Community Action agencies. That's why we're here. That's why we do what we do. We're all in this together and these are very perilous times for the folks we serve."

CAP Dayton plans three more Lunch and Learn events each targeted toward a different audience: churches, educators and businesses. For information on how to duplicate this program at your agency, contact Williams at 937-341-5000 or ivyw@cap-dayton.org.



Deborah Ferguson, Director of Outreach and Social Services, speaks about the programs she oversees at the Community Action Partnership of the Greater Dayton Area during a "Lunch and Learn" session with other social service providers.

WCCS receives grant for ELC

Warren County Community Services Inc. received a \$50,000 grant from the Jacob G. Schmidlapp Trust in support of the agency's "Early Start...Future Success" project.

The project includes a new state-of-art, \$2.3 million Early Learning Center currently under construction in South Lebanon. When it opens this fall, the new facility will bring jobs to the area and educational opportunities to 150 young children.

Pictured below at the check presentation are WCCS Board Member Bob Craig, Administrator, Village of South Lebanon; Vel Hux, WCCS Director of Program Development and Planning; Marty Hubbell, Esq., WCCS Board

Member; Larry Sargeant, WCCS Executive Director; Kenneth Webb, CRA Market Manager, Fifth Third Bank, trustee for the Schmidlapp Trust; James D. Smith, Mayor, Village of South Lebanon; and Rosemary Raether, WCCS Board Member.

For additional photos and more information about the "Early Start...Future Success" project, please visit www.wccsi.org or contact Vel Hux, Director of Program Development and Planning at 513-695-2206 or velh@wccsinc.org. WCCS is the Community Action Agency for Warren County. For several of its programs it is affiliated with the Community Action Partnership of the Greater Dayton Area. WCCS also receives funding support from the Warren County Area Agency on Aging.



National CAP seeks September presentations

You've spent years honing your skills and developing excellence in programs and services as a Community Action professional. Now share your experience and knowledge by submitting a proposal for consideration as a presentation at the 2010 Community Action Partnership Annual Convention in Boston, August 31 through September 3.

The purpose of the national convention is to provide high-quality education and networking opportunities. The multiple-day, multiple-track format offers self-directed, facilitated learning environments with education sessions and interactive forums. Education sessions focus on current and emerging issues, best practices and challenges facing Community Action practitioners, board members and senior staff. Presentations are designed for all levels of experience: from fundamentals to intermediate and advanced topics.

You are invited to submit a written proposal. By submitting a proposal, you will help shape the educational component of the convention and the future of Community Action. Presentation proposals must be received by April 30, 2010.

Complete information is available at www.communityactionpartnership.org or www.oacaa.org.

MEOAG annual golf outing honors late board member

Muskingum Economic Opportunity Action Group, Inc. (MEOAG) will hold its annual Scholarship Fundraiser Golf Tournament at Eagle Sticks Golf Club in Zanesville on May 24.

MEOAG, Inc., the Community Action Agency of Muskingum County, honors a different person each year, living or deceased, who has contributed to the betterment of Zanesville and the Muskingum County area. This year's honoree is Robert E. Titko.

Mr. Titko served as a board member of MEOAG, Inc. from 1998 until his death in 2006 and also served several years as treasurer.

"Robert's sincere concern for Community Action programs and their importance to the communities they serve were reflected in his outspoken nature," said MEOAG Deputy Director Steve Wilson who nominated Titko for the honor.

Wilson noted that Titko was instrumental in the agency beginning housing programs for the residents of Muskingum County.

"MEOAG Inc.'s efforts to provide decent, affordable housing for the residents of Muskingum County would not have reached fruition if it was not for Robert," Wilson said. "He went above and beyond what would be expected of a Community Action board member and was able to reassure and dispel any concerns of his fellow board members."

The Golf Tournament will begin with a shotgun start at 11 a.m. Each team consists of four people with a \$300 entry fee per team. The fee includes: greens fees, cart, mulligans, play a hole with the pro, lunch, entry to the Golf Poker Run, beverages, skill and door prizes. Cash prizes are awarded in both the Golf Tournament and the Poker Run.

Sponsorships are also available. For \$150, Gold Sponsors receive a tee sign, recognition during the event and recognition in the 2010 MEOAG Annual Report. Silver Sponsors receive a tee sign and recognition during the event for \$100. For \$50, Bronze Sponsors receive a tee sign.

Both team registrations and sponsorships are due by May 19 to Steve Wilson at MEOAG Inc., 828 Lee Street, Zanesville, Ohio 43701.

Proceeds benefit the Scholarship Fund which provides up to \$1,000 to Muskingum County students attending institutions of higher education. To be eligible, students must reside in a household with a total annual income at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Line. Preference is given to students who attend a school in Ohio's Appalachian area.

Registration forms and other information are available at www.oacaa.org or by calling Mr. Wilson at 740-454-3241, ext. 102.

State Rep visits ARRA funded class at LACAA

State Representative Matt Huffman surprised the students in Lima Allen Community Action Agency Early Head Start classroom with a visit on March 4.

Rep. Huffman read Dr. Seuss' "Green Eggs and Ham" to the students in three classrooms funded by American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grants.

This additional funding allows LACAA to assist more low-income people in Lima and Allen County with much needed services. The ARRA funding helped maintain 103 jobs and added eight



new Early Head Start employees. The Early Head Start program serves 70 infants and toddlers up to age 3.

Early Head Start provides comprehensive health, education, nutritional, social and other services to mothers, infants and toddlers. The LACAA program is funded through September 2011, thanks to the ARRA grants.

Rep. Huffman serves the 4th House District which includes Allen County. He is an attorney and former Lima City Council President.

OCATO looking for EITC partners

If you are looking for an opportunity to expand your volunteer tax preparation program or your asset building programs, don't miss this grant opportunity.

The Ohio Community Action Training Organization is looking for partners for the EITC Grant for Tax Year 2010. Applications are due to Jim Danes in the OCATO office by 4 p.m. on Monday, May 17.

The goal of the EITC program is to help Community Action Organizations with the following endeavors: start or expand an EITC program; offer Financial Literacy Education classes; provide tax preparation services to the community.

Such programs allow organizations

to serve more people more effectively while helping individuals and families move closer to self-sufficiency through the CAA's increased ability to offer EITC and other asset building programs.

Examples of programs that can be funded by the grant include: training volunteers in tax preparation; starting a financial literacy class; adding EITC to an existing tax preparation program; individual development accounts and marketing/public awareness campaigns for these programs.

A complete RFP is posted at www.oacaa.org. For more information, contact Danes at 614-224-8500.

Treasury offers free financial conferences

The Ohio Treasury's Community Education and Engagement Department will hold a series of free financial conferences for all Ohioans from May through September.

Smart Money Choices is supported by a variety of state and regional partners. The conferences are part of the Treasury's commitment to provide Ohioans with the knowledge they need to make informed personal finance decisions.

The conferences include an opening session, panel discussion, two breakout sessions taught by financial planning experts and a closing session. Participants can attend for the morning, the afternoon or the full day. Topics include: investments; kids and money; Social Security; insurance; budgeting; retirement planning; consumer

fraud; estate planning; programs to help Ohioans; and credit and debt.

The Treasury has conducted similar conferences for ten years. The conference schedule is as follows:

- May 7 – Cleveland
- May 14 – Cincinnati
- May 21 – Toledo
- June 4 – Youngstown
- June 11 – Lima
- July 16 – Akron
- July 23 – Wright-Patterson AFB
- August 6 – Columbus
- Sept. 17 – Athens

Registration opens approximately six weeks before each conference and can be completed at www.ohiotreasurer.gov or by calling 1-800-228-1102.

Conference early bird rate good til May 14

OACAA's 2010 Annual Summer Conference is scheduled for June 16 to 18 at the Kalahari in Sandusky.

This year's conference includes updates on several critical programs as well as information from new presenters on this year's most talked about topics.

Highlights of the conference this year will again include David Bradley, Executive Director of the National Community Action Foundation.

The Office of Community Services will also present information on the new PIPP Plus program. On Thursday, Booz Allen Hamilton will present a slate of Head Start classes. Other topics include green jobs, aging, lobbying, transportation and communication.

In order to bring members the latest information and to respond to the rapidly changing environment of Community Action, OACAA staff members are still finalizing the agenda. Updates will be posted at www.oacaa.org as presenters are confirmed.

The Early Bird Registration Deadline is May 14, 2010 and the Early Bird Rate is \$275. After May 14, the cost is \$305 for members and \$339 for non-members. There is also a one-day option that costs \$135.

Hotel accommodations must be booked separately by calling 877-525-2427. To receive the discounted room rate, mention the Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies Summer Conference Room Block. The Kalahari is located at 7000 Kalahari Drive Sandusky Ohio 44870.

If you have any questions, contact OACAA at 614-224-8500.

May is Community Action Month

Thank you to all Ohio Community Action Agency employees and partners for your dedication to the people of Ohio.

Tell us about your celebration by emailing sharon@oacaa.org.