



OACAA News

Community Action Month a Success in Ohio

As Community Action Month is coming to a close, we can truly say it was a success. Activities planned by OACAA and member agencies received plenty of participation and media attention, garnering the awareness this month is all about.

Food Stamp Challenge

While it is unknown just how many people participated in the Ohio Community Action Food Stamp Challenge, we know we had more than 35 participants and we had several members of the media and church groups participate. The *Toledo Blade* had several staff take the Challenge and actually started their own blog to share their experiences <http://toledoblade.typepad.com/hungergames/>. A software company that works with human services agencies, Northwoods, also started their own blog <http://www.teamnorthwoods.com/two-northwoodians-take-the-food-stamp-challenge/>. The Challenge got a great deal of media attention with eight articles in six different newspapers, and broadcasts on NPR and WNKU radio station. It was also in the Food Research and Action Center's (FRAC) newsletter. The Public News Service that we subscribe to also ran a story on the Challenge, which was played by 30 different media outlets.

Twitter Day

May 8 was Twitter Day where the Community Action Partnership and several state associations, including OACAA encouraged Community Action supporters to tweet about #CommunityAction in an effort for us to trend. While #CommunityAction did not become a trend on May 8, 177 people tweeted (AKA tweeps), sending 832 tweets, reaching an audience of 57,900. Based on the number followers each tweep has and the followers each follower has, Twitter estimates that we made over 240,000 impressions on that day!

Strengthening Ohio's Communities Report

On May 1, OACAA released the *Strengthening Ohio's Communities* report that was conducted by Ohio University to

demonstrate the contribution Community Action Agencies make to their communities' economic development. An article on the report ran in three different newspapers, it aired on NPR, and it appeared in the *Gongwer Report*. Like the Food Stamp Challenge, the Public News Service ran a story on the report as well and it was played by 29 different media outlets.

We also held three different events to recognize the efforts of programs featured in the report. On May 17 amongst a backdrop of large boat engines, WSOS Community Action was recognized for its Marine Mechanics course. Phil Cole, OACAA executive director discussed the report and OU's findings, particularly regarding the Marine Mechanics program. A representative from Senator Sherrod Brown's office shared a video of Senator Brown congratulating WSOS and touting the need for such programs. The president of the Lake Erie Marine Trades Association provided some background on the importance of boating in Ohio, a \$2 billion industry. A representative from Volvo Penta discussed the complexity of new marine engines and the need for well-trained mechanics. Finally, Gregg Sharp, an instructor and graduate of the Marine Mechanics course discussed the benefits of the program. The event was well



Robert Gordon, research associate at Ohio University presents their findings at HAPCAP's event.

attended with board members, county commissioners and members of the media.

On May 24, Hocking, Athens, Perry Community Action held an event at the Athens Community Center for their GoBus program with displays of their marketing efforts and information on the services. In addition to Phil Cole and Robert Gordon from OU discussing the report, a representative from ODOT spoke on the success of the program, and the mayor of Athens and a county commissioner discussed how much it has done for the area. Also, HAPCAP Executive Director Doug Stanley recognized the efforts of his staff. This event was also well attended.

The last event was held on May 30 at the Adams Brown Recycling Center run by Adams Brown Counties Economic



Opportunities. Once again, Phil Cole discussed the report, followed by Adams Brown Counties Economic Opportunities Executive Director Alvin Norris explaining the beginnings of the successful recycling

program that grew from a summer youth program collecting cans in the 1970s. The report indicates that the Recycling Center distributed over \$1.4 million back to the community through their Buy Back program purchasing non-ferrous metals. Adams Brown Recycling determined that throughout their over 30 year history they have given back over \$15 million to the local citizens. To commemorate that, a giant check was presented to the commissioners of Adams and Brown counties. The presentation was followed by a tour of the facility and a demonstration of glass blowing and pressing in the facilities glass refractory where glass mementos are made out of recycled bottle glass.

Agency Events

Several agencies held their own Community Action Month events. Below is a list of the ones OACAA was aware of:

- Northwestern Ohio Community Action Commission organized a “Stuff the Bus” Food Drive on May 11 in conjunction with the Letter Carriers’ “Stamp Out Hunger.” Food donations were accepted at six



locations, representing the six county service area for the agency. They received over 3,000 pounds of food in the one-day food drive! The donations were given to local food pantries. The

event garnered a great deal of media attention in three different area newspapers.

- The Ironton Lawrence County Community Action Organization had Community Family Days in downtown Ironton for the whole community on May 12. They had face painting, an ice cream social, inflatables for children and much more for the whole family. They also dedicated the opening of their new facility.
- The Community Action Partnership of the Greater Dayton Area had their Helping People. Changing Lives Awards. Also, in Greene County they had Community Action Days on May 25 with food, games and raffles. In Darke County they had Senior Citizen Day on May 23, a luncheon with awards and entertainment. In Preble County, they had an open house on May 15 and a Head Start performance on May 16.
- The Council for Economic Opportunities in Greater Cleveland had an open house at their three locations, Central was on May 4, Glenville was on May 18, and Tremont on May 23.
- The Community Action Commission of Erie, Huron and Richland Counties received proclamations



proclaiming May Community Action Month from the county commissioners and mayors of Sandusky, Mansfield, Shelby, Norwalk

and Willard. They also had an open house on May 8. The event was covered on WMFD in Mansfield.

- Pickaway County Community Action Organization had Community Action Day, where agency staff and volunteers conducted community projects, such as yard work, home repairs, and fixing up parks and cemeteries. This event was covered in *Circleville Today*.

- Ashtabula County Community Action had a similar event known as Team Up Clean Up where 130



employees were divided up into 15 teams and did yard work for qualified elderly and disabled residents who requested assistance through their 211 system. The event was publicized in the *Star Beacon*.

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- Cincinnati-Hamilton County Community Action Agency had a Community Action Olympics on May 24 for their staff of over 200 people at a nearby park. The staff was randomly assigned into ten teams of 20 people each. Teams made t-shirts and flags to denote their team and participated in several games, from checkers, jacks and bingo to basketball, a balloon toss, and a three-legged race. There was also a picnic lunch, dance marathon and closing ceremonies. The event was meant as a team building experience. “Building a community within our agency will make us better able to help our community,” explained Stephanie Walker, community relations manager.
- Warren County Community Services had a Community Day Fair on May 16.
- Supports to Encourage Low-income Families (SELF) had a Zumbathon.
- GMN (Guernsey, Monroe, Noble) Tri-County Community Action Commission received proclamations from



the county commissioners in all three counties. They also had Senior Citizens Day on May 15 in Monroe and Noble counties with lunch, entertainment and recognition of those over 90 years young and other honors. Tri-County also received coverage in all three of their county newspapers.

- Mahoning Youngstown Community Action Partnership (MYCAP) held a meet and greet event that was covered by WKBN television station, and announced their planned move to a new location.
- WSOS Community Action visited with their county commissioners in the counties they serve and conducted presentations along with program participants and board members.
- Jackson-Vinton Community Action received a proclamation from the Jackson County Commissioners, which was publicized the *Jackson County Times-Journal*, followed by a five-part series of articles about the agency and the services they offer.



There was a lot of activity around the state this May and Community Action Agencies across the state can be proud of the work they did to get the message of Community Action out.