



# The CAPsule

Bergen County Community Action Partnership, Inc.

Fall 2008, Vol. 2, Issue 6

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## BCCAP Responds to Economic Crisis and Provides Temporary Rental Assistance

It is no secret that while housing costs are declining across the nation, **rentals in Bergen County remain sky high** (over \$1,256

for a two-bedroom unit each month). That alone is a struggle for many. Add to that the spiraling cost of fuel, food, transportation and childcare, and the results can be cataclysmic.

In the best of times, many working families barely make ends meet. In today's economic climate, any emergency can leave an individual or family facing the loss of housing. However, there is now **help available for eligible people facing eviction** in Bergen County.

**Bergen County Community Action Partnership (BCCAP)** will be providing financial help to **families who are being evicted or who lose their housing through a temporary financial problem** (e.g., medical emergency, fire, flood, etc.) that is **beyond their control and occurred through no fault of their own**. This program, which provides temporary financial assistance, also offers participants the opportunity to work with BCCAP's housing counselor on budgeting, learning to plan carefully for the future — and avoid future eviction notices.

	2008 Fair Market rent for 2-bedroom apt.	Increase since 2000	Annual Income Needed
<b>Bergen County</b>	<b>\$1,256</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>\$50,250</b>

Families participating in this program will be required to demonstrate an ability to meet rental payments following the temporary financial help they receive. Rental payments will be made directly to landlords. Client and landlord screenings will ensure that assistance is made to those eligible.

This new and important program is made possible through a grant from the **New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, Division of Housing and Community Resources**.



Tim Robinson, NYTimes.com, 2008

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## From the Executive Director's Desk . . .



As 2008 begins to wind down in an exceedingly challenging economic climate, **BCCAP** has reasons to be optimistic. Now, more than ever before, so many individuals need help to change their lives, and **Community Action is there** for them with **new opportunities and a large measure of hope**.

**BCCAP**, on behalf of the **New Jersey Community Action Association**, recently prepared a position paper on poverty in our state. The report (see next page) highlights the many ways Community Action works to help people make real changes in their lives, changes that will result in opportunities for economic self-sufficiency.

This edition of The Capsule highlights just a few of the ways BCCAP is continuing to make a difference in the lives of people in our county. There are countless challenges for the poor who live in communities

where the cost of living is extremely high. Even with the declining national economy, housing costs, including rentals, remain out of reach for many in our county.

BCCAP is extremely pleased to have recently received a grant from the **New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, Division of Housing and Community Resources**, to provide temporary rental assistance for eligible persons who are facing eviction through no fault of their own.

This “safety net” initiative is the **newest critical BCCAP program to provide people in need with stability** and the opportunity to begin to participate fully in our community. Other programs (i.e., car grant-loan, women’s micro-enterprise, and financial literacy classes) lay a crucial foundation for those most in need, opening the door to life-changing opportunities through economic literacy and asset development.

To meet the growing demand for BCCAP’s assistance, the agency has opened a satellite site at 250 Moore Street, Hackensack, across the street from its 241 Moore Street headquarters. Several Bergen County Head Start classrooms and administrative offices are now located there.

We are extremely pleased that BCCAP’s partners continue to support important programs that impact people’s lives in a variety of ways. **Citibank** recently presented the agency with funds to assist this agency as our programs continue to expand. **PNC Foundation** provided support for math enrichment for Head Start children as well as vocational training for low-income adults to gain career skills needed to become competitive in the fields of food service, maintenance and repair, and customer service.

Numerous BCCAP partners are also supporting the agency’s **Second Annual Fashion Show and Dinner** that is drawing a great deal of interest from friends and neighbors throughout Bergen County and surrounding communities. Many distinguished models will grace the runway, including: **N.J. Assembly-women Connie Wagner and Valerie Huttle, Bergen County Freeholders Julie O’Brien and Liz Calabrese, Vincent Curatola (“Johnny Sack” of the Sopranos)**, and BCCAP Board and staff members. The evening’s fashions will be provided by **Talbots** for women and **SARAR** for men. **Reporter Giovanna Drpic with My9News** will introduce the models and comment on the fashions. While remaining tickets are limited, BCCAP appreciates the sponsorship from so many community partners.

We are pleased to continue providing an environment of hope for people in need during these most uncertain times. As always, we extend thanks to the agency’s numerous partners for their continued support.

*Robert F. Halsch, Jr.*

## ... Strategies for Changing Lives

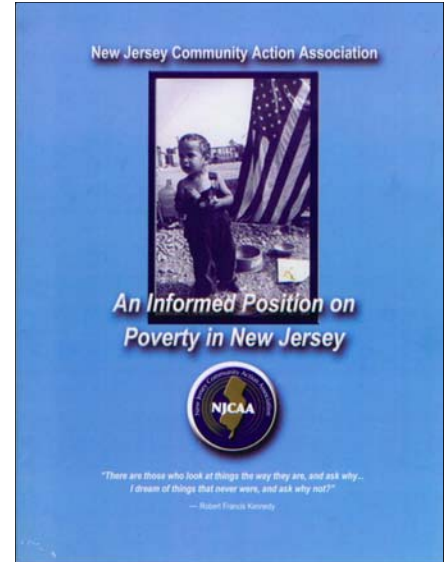
On behalf of the **New Jersey Community Action Association (NJCAA)**, BCCAP took the lead in preparing a position paper on poverty in New Jersey, **The New Jersey Community Action Association: An Informed Position on Poverty in New Jersey**.

The report highlights the many faces of poverty and reminds people that New Jersey has everything a family could want — economic opportunity, desirable homes, good schools, etc. However, along with this array of attributes come the inherent high cost of living and economic challenges for those who are struggling to make ends meet. **The report showcases the many ways Community Action is working in partnership with members of the community to help change lives.**

Community Action is about **help, hope and reassurance**. The report is an important means to deliver an accurate message about Community Action to individuals and agencies.

The full report can be found on BCCAP's website ([www.bergencap.org](http://www.bergencap.org)).

In response to today's economic crisis, BCCAP is focusing more and more of its resources on asset development initiatives to make a meaningful difference in people's lives.



### BCCAP Participates in Community Volunteer Day

Recently, BCCAP participated with several other social service organizations in providing important information to members of the community at the **First Presbyterian Church in Englewood**.



Volunteers gather in front of the First Presbyterian Church in Englewood. **Elaine Miller** (back row, third from the left), is BCCAP's Research and Development Director.

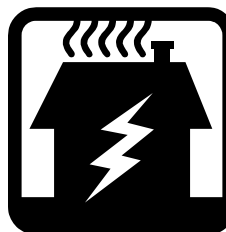
### Home Energy and Weatherization Slated for Significant Increase

The **National Community Action Foundation (NCAF)** has reported that Congress is poised to double the size of the **Low Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP)** and **Weatherization Programs** next year. Taken together, these two programs ease the burden of high energy costs on low-income families.



This year, BCCAP will provide roughly **\$3.5 million** in utility payments to Bergen County households and will spend about \$1.5 million to weatherize homes throughout the county.

**David Wenegrat**, BCCAP's Real Estate Director, says, "While this seems like a lot of money, it does not go nearly far enough. We have a lot of work to do to gear up for this increase, but we are excited that we will have the opportunity to help so many more needy households."



## Head Start Scrapbook Celebrates An Active School Year . . .



### BCCAP To Double Size of Pre-K Program

Under **Governor Corzine's** new initiative, every New Jersey School district must provide a Pre-K program to all needy 3 and 4 year old children, beginning in September 2009. This poses a tremendous challenge for many school districts which do not have the available classroom space, certified teachers or approved curriculum. As a result, many school superintendents have sought **BCCAP** assistance, given our experience operating **Head Start**, along with our collaboration with the Department of Education and William Paterson University with regard to teacher training.

"We believe that the Governor's initiative is good public policy, and we will do all we can to help make it a reality," commented **BCCAP Executive Director, Robert Halsch**. "The state is validating what we have

argued for many years, that disadvantaged children are truly given a "Head Start" through comprehensive Pre-K programs. It helps the entire family."

BCCAP will bring to bear its experience not only operating the "Creative Curriculum," but also a host of health, special needs and family development services. **Dr. Allan De Giulio** of BCCAP commented that "we are operating under an aggressive timeframe. We are seeking classroom space throughout the county given that the size of our program will likely double within the next year."

BCCAP asks that anyone who is aware of available classroom space to contact **Head Start Director, Nancy Griner**, at 201-968-0200.

## ... Through Adventures in Learning



## Appreciation from the Latino Heritage Committee



Amelia Lauria, right, Bergen County Head Start's Health Specialist and Chair of the Health Advisory Board, has recently been selected to receive the **Latino Heritage Leadership Award** at the **Bergen Community College Latino Heritage Celebration**.

This award recognizes Amelia's important contribution to the Latino community.



## Community Partners Are Essential . . .

### PNC Foundation

**PNC Foundation** representatives **Grace Corpuz** (left) and **James Kim** (second from left) recently presented BCCAP's **Allan DeGiulio** (second from right) and **Robert Halsch** (right) with a check to support enhancement of the Head Start math curriculum as well as vocational training programs for adults.



### Citibank Paramus



BCCAP's **Elaine Miller**, flanked by **Freeholder Julie O'Brien** (left) and **NJ Assemblywoman Connie Wagner** (right), receives a check from **Hardeep Singh** of **Citibank Financial Center** at the recent **Kids' Day & Child Safety Expo** in Paramus.

## BCCAP at the Hackensack Street Festival

BCCAP participated in the third annual **Hackensack Street Festival** sponsored by the **Hackensack Upper Main Alliance** and the **City of Hackensack**.

BCCAP staff encouraged literacy by distributing donated **children's books**. Face painting was also available for the children. **Adults completed surveys** to assist the agency in maintaining a pulse on needed services. Families also enjoyed delicious hot dogs.

**A great time was had by all!**



*"To change lives through education, economic opportunities, healthcare, housing and human services."*

**Bergen County Community Action Partnership, Inc.** (BCCAP) is a 501(C) (3), not-for-profit Community Action Agency. Established in 1967, BCCAP is Bergen County's designated anti-poverty agency.

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The CAPsule is the Newsletter of the Bergen County Community Action Partnership, Inc., Hackensack, NJ.

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## ... In Making a Difference in People's Lives

BCCAP's **Ladder Project**, which recently celebrated its twentieth anniversary, is the first licensed halfway house for men in Bergen County. **Alison DuBois**, MSW, CADC, Director of BCCAP's **Ladder Project** says, "This Halfway House provides really important services for men who have alcohol and/or drug



**Alison DuBois**, BCCAP's  
Director of Crisis Services

addictions in a secure, structured and substance-free environment. We follow the 12-step philosophy of Alcoholics Anonymous along with daily rehabilitation, case management, and support services to assist participants in making a recovery." BCCAP has community partners who support the agency's work in many areas, including the **Ladder Project**. The following letters to BCCAP also include references to the **Father Jim McKenna Memorial Fund** that has helped graduating Ladder residents with additional assistance to continue climbing the ladder of self-sufficiency.

letters to BCCAP also include references to the **Father Jim McKenna Memorial Fund** that has helped graduating Ladder residents with additional assistance to continue climbing the ladder of self-sufficiency.

*When I moved into the Ladder Project after coming from a 21-day inpatient rehab center, I did not know what to expect. I was homeless, broke and did not have any hope. All I really wanted was some place to lay my head, and six months sounded like a good enough time... I thought that the world was against me and wanted to see me fail so I had no intention of staying clean...But while in Ladder, I became encouraged to get my life together and I began to love myself...I realized that people really do care...Upon my release from Ladder, the McKenna Fund...donated a security deposit to make it easier for me to find an apartment...This is a thank you letter to...all those associated...I am presently fully self-supporting, still in school, and still making meetings.*

— Rich

*When I first came to Ladder, I cannot say that I was ready to stay clean. I just needed a place to stay to try and figure out my next move. After some time something finally clicked for me. I began to like the person I was becoming. I listened more, talked less, and learned more about myself. I finally gave myself a break...I had to be willing to do the work and as I did I began to have a purpose for living.*

*Since I have completed the Ladder Project, my life has gotten much better. I have a family, my own place and a career...Thanks to all the staff at the Ladder Project. Please keep doing what you have been. You have helped me to reinvent my life.*

— Tony

## United Water Charity Garage Sale

The First **United Water Charity Garage Sale** was recently held on a Saturday in the Harrington Park employee parking lot. The proceeds will benefit Bergen County Community Action Partnership, Inc. and the American Heart Association. Employees from United Water and BCCAP joined together to set up, price and work the tables all day. The partnership worked beautifully for the benefit of all.





Bergen County  
Community Action Partnership, Inc.

*Invites you to join us at our*

*Second Annual  
Fashion Show And Dinner*

Ladies' Fashions by Talbots • Men's Fashions by SARAR

**It's not too late! For reservations or sponsorship, please contact Figen Tabakci at 201-968-0200, ext. 7035.**

*Wednesday,  
October 29, 2008  
6:00 PM - 9:30 PM*



**Vincent Curatola** ("Johnny Sack" of the Sopranos) will be among the evening's models.

*At the Fiesta*

*State Highway 17 South, Wood Ridge, NJ*

*\$500 table of 10 • \$50.00 per person*



**Bergen County Community Action Partnership, Inc.**

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FAX: (201) 968-0240

Contributions to support any of BCCAP's programs may be sent to the above address.