



The CAPsule

Bergen County Community Action Partnership, Inc.

Winter 2008, Vol. 2, Issue 5

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BC Head Start Receives \$1 Million Plus Grant

Bergen County Head Start has been awarded a **Pre-school Quality Enhancement Award** of \$1,046,000 from the **New Jersey Department of Education**. The grant, included by **Governor Jon S. Corzine** in the fiscal year 2008 budget, will improve the quality of education for well over 300 Head Start children from families that are living below 100% of the federal poverty level. **Bergen County Community Action Partnership's Head Start** program is one of only 14 providers selected state-wide.

Education Commissioner Lucille E. Davy visited **BCCAP's** Bergenfield Head Start site in February to discuss the grant, and view firsthand the children's active participation in **Creative Curriculum**, the curriculum used throughout Head Start in Bergen County.

The funds will be used to support **certification efforts for classroom teachers and teacher assistants**, to enhance staff



From left to right, **Suzanne Burnette**, Head Start State Collaboration Project Director, **Education Commissioner Lucille E. Davy**, and **Bergen County Freeholder Julie O'Brien** at Bergenfield Head Start.

knowledge of current trends in pre-school education and readiness for kindergarten, and to provide workshops to involve **parents** in the classroom and learning activities of their children. In addition, each classroom will be equipped with **computers** and printers for hands-on instruction to enable the incorporation of technology into the curriculum. **Classrooms will be refurbished** to replace worn furnishings, materials and supplies. **Playground equipment** will be purchased and will provide handicapped access to special needs students.

According to **Allan De Giulio**, BCCAP's Deputy Executive Director, "This significant investment will yield positive outcomes both immediately and going forward, as present and future educational objectives of hundreds of economically disadvantaged children are met."



The Education Commissioner at Bergenfield.

From the Directors' Desks...



Robert F. Halsch, Jr.
Executive Director

There is much reason to be optimistic and energized at BCCAP. During the past year, this agency has accomplished a great deal in helping to change lives, and plans are in place to continue creating new opportunities for the economically disadvantaged in Bergen County. In addition to the news of the Head Start Enhancement grant on page 1, we are pleased to share news of the following accomplishments:

- For the past three years, BCCAP has been diligently pursuing State licensing for Ladder — our halfway house for men in recovery. After a rigorous programmatic and facility review to ensure compliance with state statutes, necessary building renovations were completed, and policies and



Allan De Giulio, Ph.D.
Deputy Executive Director

procedures were developed and implemented. The result was notification from the **NJ State Division of Human Services, Division of Addiction Services** that BCCAP has been issued a **license** to operate the “Ladder Project, a Residential Substance Abuse Treatment Facility, consisting of Halfway House Beds for 20 Adult Males.”

- A homeless crisis has been averted: the emergency sit-up shelter has now opened as a result of partial funding of \$40,000 by the **County of Bergen**. The sit-up shelter, which provides warmth and shelter to the homeless who can not be accommodated in the 38-bed shelter, will remain open until early March.
- In partnership with the **County Executive** and the **Bergen County Department of Human Services**, BCCAP hosted the second annual statewide resource event – **Project Homeless Connect** – at 67 Orchard Street on January 29th. Other partners included Advance Housing, Bergen County Board of Social Services, Bergen County Department of Health, Comprehensive Behavioral Healthcare, and the Salvation Army. The point-in-time survey was simultaneously conducted to gather data on the homeless within Bergen County necessary for planning and resource allocation.
- **U.S. Dept. of Housing & Urban Development (HUD)** has just renewed three BCCAP supportive housing services grants for 2008, totaling over \$250,000. These residential programs provide both housing and essential life skills to youth, ages 16 – 21, men in recovery from substance abuse, and adults with disabilities.
- The **Family Shelter** at 40 Passaic Street has been completely renovated by the County of Bergen and BCCAP has been selected as the provider of case management services for 31 TANF families, in partnership with the Bergen County Board of Social Services, the Hackensack Housing Authority and the Bergen County Department of Human Services.
- **Bergenfield Head Start** has been funded by **B.C. Community Development** for a new outdoor playground.
- **Operation Holiday 2007** was a big success helping hundreds of families. The PHASES (Program for Homeless Adolescents Seeking an Environment of Stability—see next page) clients were the recipients of a generous donation of gift cards by Panos Brands in Saddle Brook. The Bergen County Bar Association once again “adopted” the children in our child development programs.
- As always, **Bergen County Head Start** children continue to delight their families as they grow and develop through the program. **PNC Bank** selected our program to receive support through their “**Grow Up Great**” initiative. In addition, through a grant from the **Bergen County Bar Foundation**, families will participate in workshops that teach them the important basics of when and how to access the *right type of legal assistance*.

We would like to express our gratitude to both our partners in the community and our dedicated staff for their tremendous efforts in working to create an opportunity society for all of us.

*Bob Halsch
Allan De Giulio*

Note: Mr. Halsch returned from sabbatical Jan. 1, 2008; Dr. De Giulio served as Executive Director for 2007.

Housing + Training + Support = Success for Youth

Andrea C came to **Project ACES (Access to Careers, Education and Supports)** as an out-of-school youth who was in need of a GED plus career skills. She signed up for **BCCAP's C-SERVE (Customer Service Employment Realized through Vocational Education)** training and the GED prep classes. When she enrolled in the program, she had no home phone and her housing situation was unstable.

With help from Project ACES staff, she quickly found housing at **BCCAP's** residential program for homeless youth, **PHASES (Program for Homeless Adolescents Seeking an Environment of Stability)** at **Chadwick House**. This provided Andrea with a stable living situation while she also received support with the daily living skills she needed to live independently.

Through BCCAP's ACES program, Andrea completed her **C-SERVE** training and received a certificate, which is a nationally recognized customer service credential. She also passed her GED test and found a job. With several major accomplishments under her belt, Andrea was able to move from Chadwick house to reside independently. She is



Fatima Roberto, C-SERVE instructor with a few of her students.

attending post-secondary school to enhance her career opportunities.

*(BCCAP is the lead agency for **Project ACES**, a unique collaboration of agencies, schools, and businesses dedicated to providing education and training opportunities that foster the successful transition to adulthood and careers for out-of school youth in Bergen County.)*

Taking AdvANTage...

Cathy, a single mother of four was on **TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families)** when she found a job in a retail shop and was also given information about **BCCAP's Bridges to Success*** car grant and loan program. She met the guidelines for enrollment and worked hard to reach all Bridges program benchmarks, which led to the purchase of a van. Equipped with her reliable transportation, Cathy



A Bridges to Success Van

obtained a new job that included benefits and salary increases. While she was making progress at work, she had one more dream to fulfill. She wanted her own landscaping business! She needed a van in order to be successful

as a landscaper, *and she already had it!* However, she lacked a major element to help her fulfill her goal, and that was the “how to” of operating a micro-business, but she was in luck.

Cathy found out that she was also eligible for the **NJ Women's Micro-enterprise** program at BCCAP. In the program, she learned to develop a business plan and participate in the classes leading to an entrepreneurial certificate program through BCCAP's **Bergen Community College** partner. In addition to formal classroom training and certification, Cathy is also receiving one-on-one coaching to help her succeed in her own business. She has come a long way and is well on the road to realizing a long-standing dream.

*(*Bridges to Success is a car grant and loan program that provides financial literacy classes and for those eligible, a grant-loan to purchase a vehicle for work.)*

Leaders Rally for Children's Healthcare



Senator Lautenberg speaking to those gathered outside the HELP Center in Garfield to learn about the State Children's Health Insurance Program (S-CHIP).

the program.

BCCAP's Allan DeGiulio presided over the event that featured comments from members of congress, including Senator Frank Lautenberg, Senator Robert Menendez, Congressman Steve Rothman, Congressman Bill Pascrell, and Congressman Rush Holt. Freeholder Vice Chairwoman Elizabeth Calabrese provided welcoming remarks. Other speakers included Lou Magazzu, President of the NJ Association of Counties, Roy Garcia, Service Employees International Union, and Mary Coogan, Association for Children of NJ.

Over 100 participants attended

Bergen County Community Action Partnership, Inc. (BCCAP) recently hosted an event to raise awareness of the **State Children's Health Insurance Program (S-CHIP)**, which provides health care to children who do not qualify for Medicaid, but whose low-income families do not have private health insurance. This is an important matter for low-income families and children in Bergen County. Individuals, the medical and education communities and public officials recently came together to discuss and learn more about

the event that was held at 535 Midland Avenue, Garfield, site of BCCAP's **HELP Center (Healthcare, Education and Lifechanging Programs)**, home to Bergen County's first **Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC)**. The FQHC is a partnership between BCCAP and sister Community Action agency, **North Hudson Community Action Corp.** In addition to providing access to healthcare and human services at the HELP center site, **Bergen County Head Start** is expected to operate classes there in Fall 2008.



Two happy and enthusiastic Head Start children participating in a sign recognition activity recently during class.

Child Development Associate Training at BCCAP

BCCAP received approval to be listed in the *Directory of Instructional Resources* (Kean University, NJ Registry/Scholarship Office). The approval allows BCCAP to provide



BCCAP's team (from left to right) Nancy Griner, Mary Lou Continere, and Mary Mulvaney.

the required courses and work experience for individuals to prepare for the test leading to **CDA (Child Development Associate)** credentialing. Head Start administrators and the Director of Education and Training have been approved as instructors to provide the necessary in-house training.

Science: More Fun than Ever



Dell Pickens-Dover (left, standing) from Lakeshore Learning presents a workshop to teachers helping them learn how to incorporate some new “hands-on” learning tools into the science curriculum. Head Start recently received a grant from PNC to enhance **Bergen County Head Start’s science curriculum** and related activities.



Being Prepared

Robert West from Lifeline (front and center) teaches Head Start staff how to administer first aid and CPR. The entire Head Start staff is trained in these areas...just in case of an emergency.



Families & the Law in Bergen County

The **Bergen County Bar Foundation** recently awarded **Head Start** a grant to provide workshops tailored to increasing families’ knowledge of **how to navigate the legal system**. Each workshop has been designed to provide a step-by-step approach, helping attendees learn the how-tos of becoming educated consumers and where they can access the support to tackle situations requiring legal assistance.



Bend and Stretch

Head Start children are having a great time with **Stretch** from Funtastic Entertainment as they learn some interesting and creative movements.



They’re Real Dolls



Members of the Garfield Senior Center (from left to right: Ann Krasnik, Ester Mansala and Rita Vargo) creating masterpieces.

The women at the **Garfield Senior Center** have enjoyed crocheting dolls for the Head Start children. The cuddly creations make wonderful companions for the children during naptime, storytime, and playtime.



First Steps to Citizenship

BCCAP was recently awarded a grant from the Bergen County Department of Human Services to provide a “First Steps to Citizenship” program to eligible individuals in the county. The program offers ESL classes (with a focus on citizenship) and is an important enhancement to BCCAP’s current English literacy program as it helps the agency address the growing demand for services to the large Hispanic population in Bergen County.

“First Steps” equips students with the English language knowledge they need to participate in citizenship preparation activities, including the CIS (Citizenship Immigration Services) naturalization exam.

As students gain English language and citizenship skills, entire families will benefit from their success. Beyond that, the impact will be felt in the workplace and community as *English language learners* develop the ability to contribute more fully and



Figen Tabakci, ESL instructor/program coordinator, (standing, right rear) and Lilliam Cartagena, citizenship instructor, (standing, left rear) with a few of their First Step students.

productively.

For information about BCCAP’s First Steps, New Americans, ESL, or other literacy programs, please call 201-968-0200.

BCCAP’s Website is now Bi-lingual

Visit BCCAP’s website (www.bergencap.org) for updates and information about the agency’s programs and services. To continue to meet the needs of the large foreign-born population in Bergen County, all material on the website is **now available in Spanish** in addition to English.



“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.

Editor-in-Chief: *Allan De Giulio, Ph.D.*

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Project Homeless Connect 2008

BCCAP's Alison DuBois teamed up with Angelyn Cheung (Bergen County Department of Human Services) to once again provide a successful Project Homeless Connect event on January 29, 2008.

Agencies from Bergen County joined together on that day to provide information and assistance to the homeless at BCCAP's Drop-In Center at 67 Orchard Street.



Valerie Dargan, Director BC DHS (left) with BCCAP's Alison DuBois, Crisis Services Director.

BCCAP participated along with the Department of Human Services (DHS) and its Human Services Advisory Council in the 9th Point-In-Time survey held the same day that counts the number of homeless people in our community. The survey is required by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to help assess service needs in neighborhoods throughout the nation.

BCCAP's Gala Dinner and Fashion Show is a Huge Success

On September 18th, BCCAP held its first gala dinner and fashion show at the Fiesta in Woodridge. Over 200 guests enjoyed an evening of camaraderie, and a viewing of some of the season's most stunning fashions provided by Lord & Taylor (Fashion Center, Paramus). Parisian Beauty Academy (Hackensack) added touches of artistry in the make up and hairdos of the models.

the event will help to support BCCAP's programs and services that provide assistance to individuals and families in need in Bergen County.

Watch for an announcement of the date for this year's event.



Giovanna Drpic

Giovanna Drpic from My 9 News served as the show's narrator while some very elegant models strolled the runway, including Bergen County Freeholders Julie O'Brien and Elizabeth Calabrese, and Mrs. Valerie Coniglio, Clerk to the Freeholders. BCCAP's Robert Halsch, Cesar Estrella, Bessie Osborne, JeanetteTaville, Lilliam Cartegena, and President of the BCCAP Board of Directors, Lois Braithwaite, also joined in the fun and

helped to grace the runway with flair and style.

The fashion show was a huge success and was supported by BCCAP partners representing business, banking, social services, public officials, and the community. Proceeds from



BCCAP's Mary Mulvaney (far right) with Mary Healy (center, with guest), the personal shopper from Lord & Taylor who helped coordinate the show.

Partnering for Fun and...

BCCAP recently joined in the fun at the Hackensack Street Festival sponsored by the Hackensack Upper Main Alliance and City of Hackensack. Young fair-goers stopping at BCCAP's booth enjoyed face painting, balloons, and lollipops, while the adults received information about the agency and its services.



Home Energy Assistance

Oil prices are soaring almost daily, but BCCAP's staff is ready to help eligible low-income people apply for assistance with home heating bills.



Locations:

**241 Moore Street
Hackensack (BCCAP)**

**214 Hudson Street
Hackensack (PSE&G)**

Hours:

Monday-Friday:
9 a.m.—11 a.m., 1 p.m.—3 p.m.
Thursday evening: 5 p.m.—7:30 p.m.

Hours:

Monday-Thursday:
8:30 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

In addition, BCCAP's Home Energy staff is also making home visits to help individuals who are disabled and cannot come to the office. Appointments can be scheduled for Mondays, Tuesdays or Wednesdays. Call 201-968-0200 (Ext. 7008) for information.

Health Matters

Medical costs continue to spiral upward, but there is help available for low-income senior citizens and disabled individuals who receive Social Security, Medicare or Medicaid.

BCCAP's Home Energy Assistance staff will assist eligible individuals in applying for a special card that can be used for **reduced-rate medication purchases**. For additional information, call 201-968-0200, ext. 7008.



Bergen County Community Action Partnership, Inc.

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Contributions to support any of BCCAP's programs may be sent to Director of Research & Development at the above address.
