



The CAPsule

Newsletter of the Bergen County Community Action Partnership, Inc.

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HEAD START Wins PRISM Review Team Praise

It was all thumbs up from the **PRISM** review team! Their comments echoed over and over again, “Extraordinary!” “Excellent!” “Outstanding!”

During the week of November 14th, a team of professionals from around the country conducted an intensive review of every aspect of **Bergen County Head Start**. Using a tool called **PRISM** (Program Review Instrument for Systems Monitoring), the team determined



The Head Start PRISM Review Team prepares to conduct an impartial review of Bergen County Head Start.



Nancy Griner, Head Start Director, (left) and BCCAP Directors Allan DeGuilio and Bob Halsch meet with Joanne Lacey-Ward, Federal Team Leader.

that the program was in compliance with **all national standards** and is providing quality school readiness services to almost 400 children and their families.

Overall, the quality of the program, the creative use of the curriculum, attention to bilingual needs of the families, the numerous and vitally important community partnerships, the outstanding food service provided for the children, and the staff’s “**commitment to excellence,**” led the reviewers to conclude the **PRISM** process by summarizing — “*this is a phenomenal program.*”

There was unanimous agreement among the nine reviewers that **Bergen County Head Start** is a tremendous program for children and their families as well as for the entire community.

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From the Executive Director's Desk...



On a daily basis, BCCAP staff work with hundreds of low-income and/or homeless children and adults, helping them take one step at a time to **change their lives**. For many, those small steps result in a giant leap forward to **new hope and opportunity**. This edition of **The CAPsule** highlights just a few of the many individuals who have walked through **BCCAP's** doors accessing the crucial help to attain new levels of independence.

Nowhere is that success more heartwarming than in the **child development classrooms** where young children (and their parents) make tremendous academic and social strides that can last a lifetime.

Page 5 of this news-letter highlights the impact that this program has had for one family in particular. There are so many who are reaping the benefits of quality childcare, enabling parents to pursue employment and/or education while their children thrive through the program's numerous supports. Many are now participating at **Bergen County Head Start's new Fairview location**. (page 5)

Our cover story speaks to the overall success of **Bergen County Head Start**, which just went through a thorough federal review process to ensure that the program is in full compliance with **national standards**. We are extremely proud that our comprehensive program with its dedicated staff and extensive community partnerships received **high praise** from the reviewers. Please browse the "**Head Start Scrapbook**," which showcases just a few of our program's extensive activities and partnerships.

It is possible for many people to make changes in their circumstances at any stage of life. One individual in BCCAP's **Ladder Program** (halfway house for male substance abusers) shares his story (page 6) of how he received support in moving from a life of substance abuse to one of stability and promise.

We are also proud of the very fine work accomplished by our Weatherization team of professionals

whose efforts result in making homes safe and energy efficient, **improving the quality of life** for many. This year, BCCAP's **Weatherization** program was the recipient of the **Golden Hammer Award** from the **New Jersey Department of Community Affairs' Office of Low-Income Energy Conservation**. This distinguished honor is awarded annually to the **agency** that leads all others in demonstrating "*superior performance in all aspects of operating a Weatherization program.*" The family featured on page 3 is representative of hundreds of other low-income individuals who receive support with energy services.

BCCAP is pleased that we have been able to help so many persons meet their challenges and progress along the journey to self-sufficiency.

Robert F. Halsch, Jr

Hurricane Katrina

The disturbing pictures and stories of families struggling to survive in the aftermath of Hurricanes Rita and Katrina are an all-too-vivid reminder that we must remain steadfast in our commitment to the **War on Poverty**.

Over 67% of the population in New Orleans is Black. Nearly 28% live in poverty; it is estimated that **half the children in Louisiana live in poverty**. Only neighboring Mississippi has a higher child poverty rate.

Here at BCCAP, we work daily to help lift Bergen County residents from poverty to self-sufficiency. We know that across America people are reaching out to the evacuees, now newly homeless. BCCAP is prepared to address the needs of evacuees who seek help in our area. It is only through the efforts of concerned individuals that those most in need will attain a measure of independent living.

Driving Home Success

Pat S. (not her real name) is a single parent of four who lives in Hackensack and works in Paterson. She had to take two buses to get to work and drop her children off at daycare, which often resulted in her being late to work and at-risk for job loss; that is, until Pat enrolled in BCCAP's **PACTran** (**Providing Access to Careers and Transportation**) — a grant-loan program for Post-TANF clients (**Temporary Assistance to Needy Families**).

Pat participated in financial literacy classes led by BCCAP's professional staff. She was also eligible for the grant-loan component of the program, which **enabled her to purchase a used car**. Staff assisted Pat in establishing a loan repayment schedule. Now she drives her children to childcare and arrives at work on time!

Mary Mulvaney, Director of BCCAP's Education and Training Division says, *"Not only does this client have the support to help her learn how to save and repay a loan — she's even taking some additional courses to help further her career — and, of course, she drives to*



Debbie Nicholson, PACTran Program Coordinator, instructing some participants in the rudiments of financial literacy.

class!" The PACTran program is funded through a grant from **the Bergen County Department of Human Services**. For information, call 201-968-0200, Ext. 7001.

A Golden Hammer for CAP



On June 23rd BCCAP's Weatherization Program received the **Golden Hammer Award** from the **New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Office of Low-Income Energy Conservation**. This award recognizes *"superior performance in all aspects of operating a successful Weatherization Program and achieving the highest overall rating for the past year of any program of this kind in the state."*

One Case in Point:

Recently, the 'M' Family (retired senior citizens) had an energy emergency and recalled that several years before, BCCAP had successfully weatherized their home, so they reached out to us again for help.

Mrs. M. urgently explained that there was a problem with her heating system and that her air conditioner wasn't working either. She desperately needed it to help keep her asthmatic condition under control.

BCCAP's **Weatherization team** responded immediately, performing a system analysis. They determined that the **furnace required major repairs and the air conditioner unit needed to be replaced**. The team, understanding the urgent need, worked aggressively to facilitate the installation of a new central air conditioning unit (CAP received authorization from **NJ Department of Community Affairs** and worked with the appropriate community partners) in a **timely manner and within budget**.

The result—Mrs. M. says, *"I couldn't have afforded the huge expense of replacing what is a lifesaver for me. BCCAP's program saved my life. In addition, efficient energy equipment saves us a lot on energy bills—that's critical, too, especially for senior citizens."*

Head Start Opens Fairview Site

This September, **Bergen County Head Start** opened the doors at its **new Fairview** location. Staff welcomed the children from the community as well as from several former Head Start sites in Ft. Lee, Rutherford, Hackensack (Second St.), and Lodi, which were **consolidated** at the new center.

The Fairview center provides a variety of important, enhanced services, including **comfortable** classroom space for



Teachers greet the children on the first day of classes at the new **Fairview Head Start** site.

lots of **learning and fun**. A newly refinished gym allows children to fully participate in an age-appropriate **physical education** curriculum. A comprehensive **library-media center** houses **bilingual reference materials** for the children and families. Through a donation from **United Way of Bergen County**, the media center is stocked with computers to keep young minds engaged in the world of technology. Food service staff in the state-of-the-art kitchen are well equipped to serve up **nutritionally-balanced** breakfasts, lunches, and snacks.



Children enjoy a **nutritious breakfast** to help them get a **healthy head start** on the day.

Krafting a Head Start on Nutrition

BCCAP's **Allan DeGiulio** (right) recently received a check from **Rich Keller** (left) of the **Kraft Employee Fund New Jersey (KEF)** at the company's East Hanover site.



KEF New

Jersey is a workplace-giving program managed, administered and supported by **employees of Kraft Foods**. This award enables Head Start to enhance its "Getting a Head Start on Nutrition" program, teaching **parents and children new ways to prevent childhood obesity** and develop **healthy lifestyles** that will have long-lasting benefits for all.

Recognizing Dedication to Bergen County Head Start



Bergen County Head Start Director Nancy Griner (center) congratulates **Doris Ortiz**, intake coordinator (right) and **Shirlene Payne**, volunteer (left) at the **New Jersey Head Start Association's 40th Anniversary Celebration**. The women were presented with awards for "*demonstrating both exceptional service to Head Start and a commitment to improving the lives of low-income children and families.*"

Head Start Scrapbook



Head Start Enables A Fresh Start

Mariela is a young, single mother who has lots of ambition for her child as well as herself. However, she was unable to follow her own dreams without having reliable, affordable childcare services for her preschooler.

Therefore, she initially sought this support through **Bergen County Head Start**. Having the right childcare enabled **Mariela** to put her mind at ease and pursue her own academic goals. She recently completed her high school education and **enrolled in college** where she is now pursuing a career as a medical technician.



Mary Lou Continere (left) and **Mariela** discuss schedules for mother and son.

Due to her dedication and commitment to her education, she was offered a position as a teacher's aide,

enabling her to work part-time while also going to school. As for her son — he's an active and curious four-year old who is blossoming in the classroom. Mother and son have much to look forward to in the future.

Mary Lou Continere, Associate Director of Education for Child Development Programs, says, "The impact of low-cost childcare coupled with supportive services enables children to benefit while families work to improve their employment situation and overall life circumstances."

Look Who's Brushing Now!



Parents look on as their children learn the **proper brushing techniques**. The preschoolers are having fun using a giant-sized toothbrush to ensure that their stuffed animal pals also have "bright smiles."

Partners for Literacy

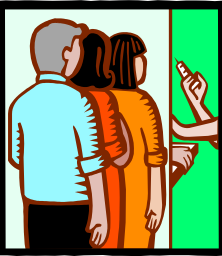
At its recent opening celebration, **Barnes & Noble** announced its plan to donate a portion from the first night's revenue to **Bergen County Head Start**.

BCCAP's **Dr. Allan DeGiulio** said, "*Any time an outstanding organization comes into the community, we have an obligation to support their work. It's ...doubly gratifying when they provide us with a portion of the proceeds of their first evening's business!*"

This donation will enhance Head Start's library with titles in English and Spanish, encouraging literacy among the program's ethnically diverse families.



Left to right: Hackensack Deputy Mayor **Karen Sasso**, Councilman **Chuck McAulliffe**, Barnes & Noble Store Manager **Kimberly Hightower**, Mayor **Marlin Townes**, BCCAP's Deputy Executive Director **Allan DeGiulio**, and Barnes & Noble Community Relations Manager **Jill Fisch**.



Partners in Prevention

Winter is coming and with it, **flu season**, which can leave many vulnerable to influenza, especially those who are homeless.

Therefore, BCCAP has partnered with **North Hudson Community Action Corp. (NHCAC)** to

administer flu shots to our shelter clients for the **first time**. This fall, nursing staff from NHCAC stopped in at the shelter, and gave our clients the shots to help them remain healthy during winter.

This partnership of serving the uninsured/underinsured will continue when **BCCAP's Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC)** opens next year in Garfield. The **NHCAC** will provide primary health care services. BCCAP will provide social services and access to programs through **Crisis Services, Education & Training, Weatherization and Home Energy/Utility Assistance**.

Freeholders' Support

Bergen County **Freeholder Chairwoman Bernadette McPherson** and **Freeholder Vice Chairman David Ganz** recently presented



BCCAP's **Bob Halsch** with a check in support of the agency's anti-poverty initiatives.

Moving Beyond Substance Abuse

Larry is a client in BCCAP's **Ladder Project** (a residential halfway house for males who suffer with substance use). Now in his late 40s, Larry has a 36 year history of abusing alcohol and other drugs. He was referred to the **Ladder Project** after completing a rehabilitation program in the county jail. In addition, Larry has had a spotty work record and a knee injury to overcome.

He says, "BCCAP's case managers have helped me a lot." Larry received intensive alcohol and drug counseling as well as vocational support (assistance with job search, resume development, etc.). Case management also helped Larry with daily living skills — for example, scheduling work and medical appointments, budgeting and saving, etc. Larry has been in compliance with all house and program rules. He has begun working, and is on time for work daily.

"*Miracles do happen,*" says Larry, "*BCCAP staff have given me the support to reach this point where*

I feel productive and have the tools to reconcile with my family." He is now looking forward to preparing for follow-up services and a move into BCCAP's Ladder II project, the final step before living independently.



Luis Sanchez, Director of the Ladder Project, counseling a client.

"To change lives of those in need through education, advocacy and a broad range of 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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Raising SMART Kids

This past spring, BCCAP received a grant award from **Altria Employee Fund** to provide an academically-based afterschool program. BCCAP's newest initiative, **SMART Kids (Students Mobilized to Achieve through Reinforced Teaching)** provides homework assistance and standardized test preparation to 15 children in grades 1-5, leading to their increased academic success. All students also enjoy creative activities such as art and music.

The program is held at **Mt. Calvary Baptist Church (Englewood)**, a BCCAP partner, located in close proximity to the elementary schools in the neighborhood. SMART Kids responds to requests for additional academically-based afterschool slots, and operates between September and June during the school year. For information, contact 201-968-0200 (Ext. 7001).



Together for SMART Kids—Left to Right: **Elaine Miller**, BCCAP, **Tania Snyder**, Altria Employee Fund, **Joan Freling**, BCCAP, **Jennifer Goodale**, Altria Employee Fund.

BCCAP's Board President Reaches an Important Milestone



Lois Braithwaite speaks of the importance of making a difference in people's lives.

St. Cecilia's School in Englewood recently commemorated the retirement of **Lois A. Braithwaite** after 45 years of teaching. The "Evening to Remember" included tributes from family, friends, and local pastors, along with a presentation by **Bob Halsch**, Executive Director of BCCAP.

Lois is the Board Chair of BCCAP, and will continue in that capacity. She has exhibited **selfless dedication** to others, not only through her inspiring teaching career, but also as founder of

Camp Piggyback, as a member of the **City of Hackensack Youth Guidance Council** and **Hackensack Recreation**, as a trustee of the **Mary McLeod Bethune Scholarship Fund**, as a **Girl Scout and Brownie Scout Leader**, and as the Teen Program Director of the **Social Service Foundation**, to name a few.

BCCAP is proud to have this steadfast individual continue to help fulfill the agency's mission of **helping to change the lives** of those in need.

The Business of Helping

BCCAP and the **Hackensack Upper Main Alliance** are working together to help the residents of the community. The Alliance is currently collecting coats and blankets to donate to BCCAP for its shelter clients during the cold winter.

Pictured left to right are **Jerry Lombardo**, **Jerry Some**, and **Leo Pflieger** of the Alliance as well as **Bob Halsch**, **Allan DeGiulio**, and **Alison DuBois** of BCCAP.



Softening Winter's Woes

With the encroaching winter, **BCCAP** is well aware that energy costs are anticipated to **skyrocket to previously unsurpassed heights**. Too many will be left in the cold unless they receive assistance with their heating and utility bills. To accommodate the growing need, BCCAP offers the flexibility of **evening hours** and provides services at **two locations**:



BCCAP
241 Moore Street
Hackensack, NJ 07601
201-968-0200

Hours:

Monday – Thursday, 9 a.m. – 11 a.m.
and 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.;

Thursday evening, 5 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.



BCCAP's satellite site
in the **PSE&G Customer Service Center**
214 Hudson Street
Hackensack, NJ 07601
201-287-3544

Hours:

Monday – Thursday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.



BCCAP's **Claudia Vasquez** and **Maria Gonzalez** reviewing applications for energy assistance.

Services include:

- **Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)**
- **Universal Service Fund** (*home energy assistance*)
- **NJ Shares** (*home energy assistance*)
- **United Water Cares** (*assistance with water bills*)
- **Verizon New Jersey's Communications Lifeline** (*assistance with phone service*)



Bergen County Community Action Partnership, Inc.

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