



# The CAPsule

The Newsletter of the Bergen County  
Community Action Program, Inc.

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## PARTNERS IN VOTING

**W**ith the national election just weeks away, BCCAP's Education and Training Division invited the Superintendent of Elections to meet with the agency's New Americans clients and students in the ELCE (English Language and Civics Education) classes.

Mary Mulvaney, Director of Education and Training, says, "BCCAP staff work with students in the classroom, teaching them about civics and citizenship. What could be more appropriate than partnering with the Superintendent of Elections to take that classroom education a step further."

Patricia DiCostanzo, Superintendent of Elections, met with the enthusiastic group of students on August 4<sup>th</sup>. She began by saying, "Voting is something you should do as an American citizen." She explained that every vote counts and offered a dramatic example, stating that "in Bergen County, one vote has changed an election." She encouraged everyone who has U.S. citizenship to register to vote. She explained the registration process and provided appropriate forms.

DiCostanzo detailed how the system works, and everyone had a chance to enter the voting booth, which was set up in the corner of the room. Daryl Mahoney, Assistant Director of Voting Machines, provided everyone with the ABC's of casting a ballot.

Theresa O'Connor, Deputy Director of Elections and Linda Aprile-Soldwedel, Election Supervisor, also participated in the presentation, which was offered in English as well as in Spanish by Marina Ariza, Elections Clerk. For many of CAP's clients, November 2nd



A glimpse into the voting booth—Daryl Mahoney, Assistant Director of Voting Machines, illustrates how to cast a ballot.

will be their first time participating in an election as American citizens.

The August 4<sup>th</sup> Day of Voting was a department-wide effort. BCCAP's ELCE instructors, Figen Tabakeci and Julissa Alava, as well as New Americans Coordinator, Yolande Neptune, prepared the students to take the next steps in learning about the voting process and its impact. BCCAP is grateful to our summer intern, Catherine Schwenkler from the College of William and Mary, who researched, organized and coordinated the activities for the agency's "Day of Voting."

For information about any of the programs offered through BCCAP's Education and Training Department, call 201-968-0200.



Let's Vote—L to R: Yolande Neptune, New Americans Program Coordinator with BCCAP Summer intern Catherine Schwenkler from the College of William and Mary discussing the activities for a "Day of Voting."

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

This year, we celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the **War on Poverty** and the **Economic Opportunity Act of 1964** that **created Community Action** and paved the way for **so many wonderful programs**. (The bill signing was in August of '64.)

In Bergen County (as elsewhere in the country), individuals in need have the freedom to **choose enrollment in programs leading them from poverty to self-sufficiency**. BCCAP's clients can **elect** to participate in integral services to improve their lives. They also have the freedom to **elect** their public officials and vote their choice on community, state, and national issues.

As we anticipate the upcoming election, I feel a sense of pride that all American citizens have the **right to vote**. It is a **privilege and a habit** for many of us. And, it's exhilarating to realize that some are anticipating voting for the first time.

**Some first-time voters in Bergen County will be BCCAP clients; many will be the foreign born and other limited English-speaking individuals.** Our agency has a successful history of working with these populations, helping clients move toward their goals in a variety of ways. BCCAP's **New Americans** program provides participants with an array of services, including the support to prepare for the U.S. citizenship exam. (I was pleased to accept the grant award recently from **Susan Bass Levin** (above) for the continuation of BCCAP's **Hispanic Seniors Outreach Program**. BCCAP's Spring 2004 edition of **The Capsule** highlights the story of an 82-year old who became an American citizen—through assistance from this program.)

Further help for the foreign born comes through BCCAP's **English Language and Civics Education (ELCE)** program. ELCE **prepares more than 336 students annually** with the skills to participate fully as members of the family, workplace and community. (Page 6 highlights a recent class trip to **Ellis Island** for a snapshot of immigration past and present.)

On August 4<sup>th</sup>, BCCAP's clients gathered for a presentation from an important community partner, **Patricia DiCostanzo, Superintendent of Elections**, and her staff. Participants had the opportunity to hear a nuts and bolts approach to what voting really means and how important each individual is to the process. The presentation was offered in English with translation into Spanish, accommodating BCCAP's highly diversified audience. I am gratified to hear that since BCCAP's "Day of Voting," more and more students are completing voter registration forms. They are proud of their increased knowledge and value the opportunity to participate where they, as citizens, can make choices that will impact their future.

Upon reflection, we can say that the **August 4<sup>th</sup>** presentation was a fitting way to remember **President Lyndon B. Johnson and the War on Poverty**. Some 40 years later, Bergen County Community Action Program **continues its commitment to those most in need by equipping them with the tools to become responsible and active citizens—climbing another rung on the ladder to self-sufficiency.**

*Robert F. Halsch, Jr.*



**Continuing Support—NJ Department of Community Affairs Commissioner Susan Bass Levin presents grant award of \$20,000 to Robert Halsch for BCCAP's Hispanic Seniors Outreach Program.**



The Superintendent of Elections, Patricia DiCostanzo (center), with her team: (from left to right) Linda Aprile-Soldwedel, Theresa O'Connor, Marina Ariza, and Daryl Mahoney.

**Project ACES** (Access to Careers, Education and Supports) – the **Collaborative for Out-of-School Youth in Bergen County** – has helped more than 125 out-of-school youth attain their educational and career goals since the program’s inception over two years ago.

On June 9<sup>th</sup>, the Project ACES staff, family, friends, and public officials gathered at the **Westfield Shoppingtown Garden State Plaza** to honor two outstanding individuals, **Adam Diaz** and **Robert Dinardo**. These fine young men embody the **determination, diligence, and discipline** required to overcome barriers to succeed in the program and in further educational and career pursuits.

Certificates and commendations were presented to the honorees by **Dennis McNerney**, Bergen County Executive; **Jim Carroll**, Bergen County Board of Chosen Freeholders Vice Chair; **Rocco Mazza**, Bergen County Freeholder Director of Communications and Public Policy; **Charlie Gonzalez** of the Bergen County Workforce Investment Board; and **Angela Caffrey**, Westfield Shoppingtown Garden State Plaza.

**Freeholder Carroll** addressed the students: “Clearly we share a common vision. There is no substitute for hard work. Giving back to the community is what makes it great.”

Parents also recognize the contribu-



**Following the Award Presentation—** Left to Right: **Dr. Allan DeGiulio**, BCCAP’s Deputy Executive Director; **Adam Diaz**, Project ACES Student Honoree; **Robert Dinardo**, Project ACES Student Honoree; **Dennis McNerney**, Bergen County Executive; **James Carroll**, Bergen County Freeholder Vice Chair, **Charles Gonzalez**, Bergen County Workforce Investment Board.

tion of Project ACES. **Adam Diaz’s** mother, writes, “(Project ACES) *has DEFINITELY made a big difference in my son’s life, not only in helping him get ‘back on track,’ but by allowing him to see the support he has from those outside the family, who truly believe in him ...thank you for all that this program is about and for the people involved that make it work... and make it worthwhile.*”

Project ACES is an “academy without walls” that helps participants improve their long-term employability, eliminating barriers to education and career success. The services provided include: education (basic skills, GED preparation) and vocational training (entry-level food service, maintenance/repair, and cus-

tommer service) with certificate, counseling, job placement and follow-up, leading out-of-school youth (ages 16-21) to attain the skills necessary for self-sufficiency.

BCCAP is the lead agency for Project ACES whose partners include **Mt. Calvary Baptist Church, Englewood; Hackensack High School Drop-In Center; North Arlington Public School GED Program; Teaneck Women Train and Work** as well as **Bergen’s Promise; Bergen County Probation; Bergen County One-Stop Career Center; and Westfield Shoppingtown Garden State Plaza.**

For information, call: 201-968-0200 (Ext. 7001).

## Meet The Students Of The Year

**ADAM DIAZ** enrolled in Project ACES through its **Hackensack High School Drop-In Center** partner. His first goal was to earn his GED. Adam was referred to the ACES partner at **North Arlington High School** to gain basic skills and prepare for the test. (Adam was determined to garner a slot for the exam, and lined up outside the testing center at 3 a.m.) His wait was worthwhile. Adam earned a seat and passed the GED exam with flying colors! His next goal was to find employment. Assisted by the Hackensack High School Drop-In Center, Adam landed his first job. With his newly-found credentials, coupled with his new driver’s license, job and earned green belt in karate, Adam has developed the confidence, discipline and skills needed for a successful future.

**ROBERT DINARDO** was referred to Project ACES through its

**Teaneck Public Schools** partner just after he turned 16. Robert’s goal was to achieve his GED and to attend college as an accounting major. Through the Project ACES **North Arlington** partner, Robert realized his dream and passed the GED test with high scores. With that good news in hand, he applied to college and has decided to enroll as a full-time student in **Bergen Community College** for the upcoming semester. Robert’s determination to succeed carried him through some trying times. Just a few months after starting a job and earning regard as a highly-valued employee, the establishment went out of business. Robert quickly found another job. He also obtained his driver’s license and increased his self-sufficiency through using his earnings to purchase a car. In addition to an already packed schedule, Robert finds the time to do volunteer work for the **American Cancer Society.**

## A New School Year Begins with a New Director



Head Start Director **Nancy A. Griner**

BCCAP began the Head Start school year this September with

the addition of a new **Head Start Director--Nancy A. Griner**. With a Master of Arts in Education Administration & Supervision, a broad range of teaching experience, and a Certification in Teaching Grades K-8 and Principal's Certification and Supervisor's License, Nancy is well equipped to provide the leadership and innovative educational direction that will help Bergen County's Head Start children and their families meet the complex challenges of the twenty-first century.

Nancy's philosophy as an educator is to provide a variety of learning opportunities and intellectual experiences for all students, parents and Head Start staff. Creating a caring environment, which encourages each individual to reach his or her maximum potential, is this Director's primary goal. Nancy will seek to develop within each individual child the life-enriching skills of effective communication, problem solving, decision-making and creativity.

Welcome Nancy!

## Head Start and CNBC

Our Head Start Program was recently selected to receive a \$5,000 donation through **CNBC's** parent company **General Electric's Information Technology Excellence Leadership Award**.

This special recognition is provided to the CNBC leadership team responsible for successfully implementing a multi-million dollar on-air broadcast operation center at

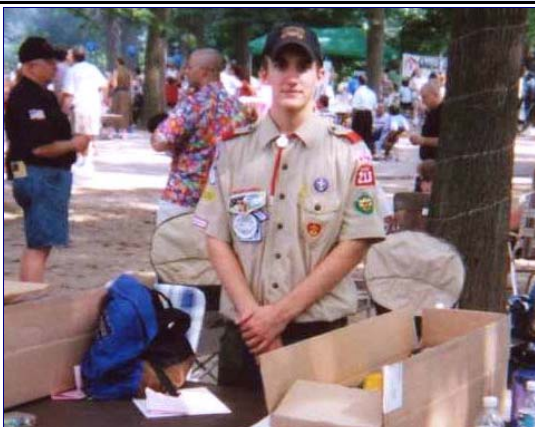
their new Englewood Cliffs location. The CNBC team under the



direction of **Tony Alicea, Director, On-Air Broadcast Operations**, has selected Head Start because of the important work the Program undertakes in preparing and educating our community's future leaders.

This donation will assist **Head Start** in upgrading existing computer technology. Thank you to Tony Alicea and his team at CNBC and General Electric!

## Scouting Out Supplies for Head Start



**Bryce Kopp**, a member of **Boy Scout Troop 213** in Saddle Brook, is working to attain the honorable rank of **Eagle Scout**. As part of this program to provide service to the community, Bryce recently chose to organize a drive to collect school supplies from Saddle Brook residents.

The result — Head Start children are having a wonderful time using a variety of pens and pencils to enhance their writing skills. They're also exploring art through watercolors and finger paint.

Thank you, Bryce.

# Head Start Scrapbook



## Life is a Picnic



The **end-of-the-year school picnic** provided the opportunity for exercise, games, arts & crafts, a lesson in **cultural diversity**, and a visit from **Mickey Mouse** himself!



BCCAP's **SPICE** (Special Program of Instruction for Culinary Employment) provided nutritious snacks. The Head Start families proudly celebrated many wonderful cultures by preparing palate-pleasing favorites, (e.g., **Mexican, Middle Eastern**, and traditional **American** fare) and displaying flags and photos of their native countries.

## Kicking off the 2004-2005 School Year

More than 100 teachers and staff attended the **Bergen County Head Start Professional Development Training** at the **Ciarco Learning Center** in Hackensack the week of September 1<sup>st</sup>. Head Start staff gathered to prepare for another school year filled with learning and fun for the children and their families. **Community partners** were front and center, sharing some new program enrichment ideas.

**Nancy D. McGlade, MAS, BSN, RN, BC**, County of Bergen Department of Health Services, addressed health issues.



**Diane Stelling**, author (second left), sharing poetry with some Head Start teachers.



"**You can do it, too,**" says **Heather Dodge** of Liberty Science Center (right), as **Paula Tinsley**, assistant teacher, tries her hand at an experiment. Head Start Teacher, **Abbregail Pope** (left), looks on.

**Judy Pucciarelli**, Division of Youth and Family Services, discussed children's safety.

**Vonda Scipio** of the Quality Improvement Center of New York University spoke of the importance of helping every child learn to believe—"I can succeed." **Heather Dodge**, Educational Specialist from the Liberty Science Center offered some hands-on experiments to enhance the Head Start curriculum for budding scientists. **Diane Stelling**, local author (*The Giant and the Mouse* and *One Little Voice*), discussed poetry as a literacy component.

Staff left the training geared up for an exciting and successful year.

## ELCE VISITS ELLIS ISLAND

On August 27<sup>th</sup>, **Figen Tabakci** and **Julissa Alava**, instructors for BCCAP's **ELCE** (English Language and Civics Education) program took their classes to visit **Ellis Island**. There, the students were able to see and feel the experiences of the first immigrants who came to America through that once vital port of entry. (Ellis Island opened for immigration in 1892, and became a museum in 1990.)

A guided tour provided a historical account of Ellis Island and those who followed their dreams of finding a **better life**. The ELCE students discussed that they, too, came to America in search of the same goals as the earlier immigrants. However, they expressed gratitude for a "modern-day" immigration experience rather than one

filled with the hardships of yesteryear.

One student says, "I feel so lucky to be in America. I have good experiences and my family is happy."

Both classes were prepared for the trip with a list of questions. They scouted out the answers in the museum, helping to maximize their knowledge. A great time was had by all. Many expressed the desire to return to Ellis Island with their families.

BCCAP's **ELCE** program offers classes to the foreign born and other limited English-speaking adults, including senior citizens. The program is funded through a grant from the **NJ Department of Labor**.

For more information, call: 201-968-0200 (Ext. 7001).



Enjoying the view—Instructors **Julissa Alava** (L) and **Figen Tabakci** (third from left) with students exploring **Ellis Island**.

## SUCCESS AT PHASES

**Alison DuBois**, Director of Crisis Services, and **Yolanda Baldwin**, Case Manager for **PHASES** (Program for Homeless Adolescents Seeking an Environment of Stability) at **Chadwick House**, recently sat down to review client progress.

Alison says, "It's rewarding to know that although the young people come to us with such heavy burdens, they leave the program with much promise." She recounts the recent success of a PHASES resident.

"*Vicki* (name changed to respect confidentiality), a young woman without a home in which to thrive, entered **PHASES** nearly a year ago. She found the **support and encouragement to identify and pursue her goals**. *Vicki* was successful in high school, and worked with our staff to complete her application for college. We also helped her with key life skills needed for self-sufficiency. The outcome — in late summer, she packed her bags, hugged us all, and moved onto the campus of **Bloomfield College** where she began a new chapter of her life as a freshman student."

**PHASES** is home to formerly runaway or homeless youth, ages 16-21.

Funding for PHASES is provided by the **NJ State Division of Youth & Family Services** through the **John Chaffee Foster Care Independence Act of 1999**.

For more information please call: 201-488-5100.



Sweet Success!—**Alison DuBois** (right) and **Yolanda Baldwin**, Case Manager, discuss client progress.

*"To change lives of those in need through education, advocacy and a broad range of human services."*

Bergen County Community Action Program, 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. BCCAP's mission responds to the emergency and long-term needs of the needy through an array of services designed to relieve the crises associated with poverty and facilitate the transition to and attainment of self-sufficiency.

Housing & Shelter  
Education & Training  
Clinical Support Services

The Capsule is the Newsletter of the Bergen County Community Action Program, Inc., Hackensack, NJ.

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## Weatherization = Safety + Savings + Comfort



**A Team Effort**—Amanda Clyne, Weatherization Technician, and Jim Lewis, Weatherization Program Manager, working up just the right plan for home-energy efficiency..

Oppressive heat and frigid winters are difficult for most of us to endure. However, for individuals living on low income—or those who are elderly and frail, residing in homes that are not energy efficient or where water heaters are broken and air conditioners don't work, the situation can be downright dangerous.

That's where **BCCAP's Weatherization program makes a huge difference by providing assistance to eligible Bergen County residents in need.** One client wrote to BCCAP:

*"My 22 year old furnace was failing and needed to be replaced. The oil company that I had been dealing with for 30 years let me know of the assistance available for the furnace. I'm living on a fixed income and the cost of repairs would have been a tremendous burden."*

BCCAP came to her rescue. "**Ms.**

**Clyne** (BCCAP Weatherization Technician) *came by and evaluated my house for just about everything. She was great; she coordinated the efforts of subcontractors and replaced my furnace, basement windows and provided insulation where necessary."* All staff took care of what needed to be done in a courteous manner.

This client expresses how the Weatherization support eased the client's burden. *"I felt the difference in my home overnight; the drafts were gone and the heat felt very comfortable. With the weather we had this past winter, I really want to thank you and your program for being there to assist me. This program saved me and I hope it will continue to be available to others requiring assistance."*

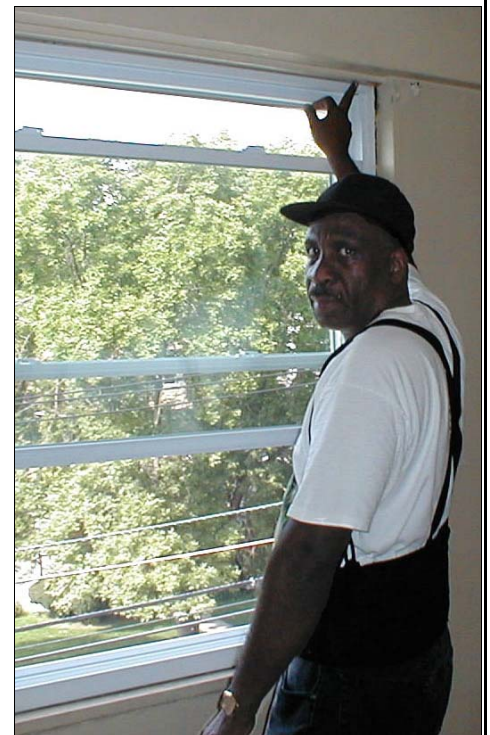
BCCAP's Weatherization program ensures **client health and safety** in addition to helping them **save energy**

and the cost of high heating bills.

Jim Lewis, Manager of the Weatherization Program, says, *"Clearly, the client's health is our number one priority. Therefore, our staff provides tests for carbon monoxide. They also test for heat loss, and then proceed to provide any insulation and seal-up work. That includes repairing windows and doors. BCCAP also arranges to replace refrigerators and boilers that are not energy efficient. That undoubtedly helps reduce energy bills."*

BCCAP has been recognized by the **New Jersey Department of Community Affairs** for its commitment to staff training, keeping up with the most current and efficient weatherization technology.

For additional information about BCCAP's Weatherization program, call 201-968-0200 (Ext. 7050).



**Saving Energy** — Fergus Whyne, Weatherization Technician, caulking around the window to make an airtight seal in a client's home.

## Keeping Children Safe

The New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Youth and Family Services announces a statewide, toll-free, 24/7

### CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE

**1-877-NJABUSE**  
**(1-877-652-2873)**



On July 1, 2004, for the first time, people from all across the State of New Jersey will be able to call **one toll free telephone number**, any time of the day or night, to report suspected child abuse or neglect. This is a dramatic improvement from present practice. Before instituting the statewide toll free hotline, police, teachers, doctors, nurses, neighbors and others who saw signs that a child

might need help, had to call one of over 30 District Offices during business hours or a different number after 5 p.m. and on week-ends.

The toll-free abuse hotline will ensure:

**Better reporting:** Suspected abuse or neglect will more likely get reported because everyone will know how to make a report.

**More consistent outcomes:** Trained hotline screeners will make decisions that are more consistent across the state and from case to case.

**Lower-risk reports** will be diverted to more appropriate referrals: fewer cases will be referred for abuse or neglect investigations as reports of problems with lower levels of risk to a child will be referred to appropriate services.

**Prompt investigations** of abuse or neglect allegations: hotline screeners will be trained to get complete information rapidly so response priorities can be set (i.e., immediate response or within 24 hours of the call) and investigators can get into the field with effective, efficient investigations as quickly as possible.



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