

Winds of Hope



Community Action of Laramie County, INC.

Dream with me...

By Paula Dickson, Executive Director

Have you ever awakened from a dream and wished it would have gone on just a little bit longer so you could see how it finished? I would like to share some of my dreams for Community Action of Laramie County with you. Some we will see happen in the near future; others may take a little longer. For dreams to come true, we must first see it, and then plan, organize and work to make it a reality.

CALC's Vision Statement says a lot about my dreams. It is very simply; **“Leading the way to reducing poverty in Wyoming.”** A big dream? Yes! An Impossible dream? No! Last week our Board of Directors worked on a new Strategic Plan for the next 3-5 years. The components of this plan included building the necessary foundations to facilitate this vision. The plan includes training, board and staff involvement, building collaborations, marketing, diversification of funding and building an awareness campaign. Each of these strategies helps to pave the way to reducing poverty in Wyoming.

I see Community Action of Laramie County at the forefront in leading our community in the understanding of poverty issues, of developing projects, collaborations and awareness that will provide the solutions. This is a dream that can only come true if we work together to make it happen.



Leading the way to reduce poverty in Wyoming



Did you Know:

- The arrow printed on the blue background of the Head Start block symbolizes upward movement for families.
- Laramie County School Districts 1 and 2 donated over 10,000lbs of food and clothing to the Homeless Veterans Housing project.
- 28 families were adopted in WYKA's yearly "Adopt a Grandfamily Program".
- Home Depot selected CALC for the "Framing Hope" donation program
- The Month of May is nationally dedicated Community Action Month.

Hidden homeless

By Paul Wright, Clinic Program Manager

Wyoming has a “hidden” population of individuals and families of homeless who are not often recognized. One important category of the hidden homeless is called “doubling-up” – when an individual or a family is forced to live temporarily with a friend or a relative because of a lack of housing. Nationwide there are studies that suggest that there might be as many individuals and families who are “doubling-up” as there are other homeless. In 2008, the Cheyenne Crossroads Clinic (CCC), a federally-funded Healthcare for the Homeless program, saw 1,035 patients and 3,394 encounters. Nearly 10% of the patients and encounters were considered “doubled-up”. Considering that people

who are “doubling-up” have a higher likelihood of losing housing -due to stresses in the guest and the host, it would make sense that finding and helping them would prevent further economic deterioration for both those who are “doubled-up” and the community in which they currently reside. The CCC believes that healthcare is an important facet of self-sufficiency and fully supports helping those who are “doubling-up” receive primary health care.



Clinic Program Manager Paul Wright

Your world, my world

By Alice Carter, WYKA Program Manager

Grandparents raising grandchildren is common in today’s world. So common that, programs like Wyoming Kinship Advocacy (WYKA) exists to assist grandparents in getting guardianship of their grandkids. WYKA participated in a month filled with recognition and activities for World Elder Abuse Awareness. A committee composed of WYKA, WY Legal Services, Laramie County Senior Services, DFS, Aging Division, Victim Services, The



Elder Abuse Awareness Proclamation

Safehouse and community members chose to honor grandparents raising grandkids.

Volunteers from the

Boy Scouts and local communities tackled the job of cleaning two WYKA participants’ yards. Not only were the yards cleaned, but a “What you Like About Your Grandparent” writing, drawing, and poetry contest was held where three kids were winners for their work. In dedication to Elder Abuse Awareness Day, a tea party was held at the Governors Mansion to honor elders in the community. In addition to the months creative awareness, June 15, was proclaimed Elder Abuse Awareness Day 2009.

WYKA has not stopped gearing up for the rest of the year. The organization is continuing with informational meetings every third Thursday and is focusing efforts on making this years Grandparents Day in the Park a success.

Children of the future

By Bethany Rogahn, AmeriCorps VISTA

How many times have you heard that Head Start is just another day care? Too many! How incorrect they are! Head Start isn't a day care, it's a comprehensive child development program. Since 1965, Head Starts across the nation have been preparing children for school.

CALC is one of many organizations that offers Head Start: Pre-natal to 5 years to their community. The program facilitates several different classrooms that provide services to low-income and homeless families. Head Start successfully implements its mission to ensure that children enter school with the necessary skills to succeed, to empower families to recognize and build upon their strengths and to

Busy little bees

By Mary Bienz, Self-Sufficiency Program Manager

There is buzzing around the Self-Sufficiency department lately as the team works on several outreach projects.

There is a community outreach team consisting of staff from the Self-Sufficiency Department, Crossroads Clinic, DFS and Safehouse. We have been going to Pine Bluffs and Burns for the past year and it is starting to get around. During the month of February, the town of Pine Bluffs inserted information about the team and its purpose and sent it out with the water bills. We hope to expand to Albin this year and welcome any other agency that would like to do community outreach to join us. It is the third Thursday of each month.



enhance the self-worth and social competence of the children and families it serves, by providing a learning environment that will allow all family members to reach their optimal goal. Head Start is a state licensed program that provides services on education, nutrition, parent involvement, creative curriculum, individualized teaching and much more to ensure the success of the children in its program.

Early Head Start is a part of the program that provides services to children pre-natal to the age of three. This program is conducted in home visits with weekly group socializations for the parent(s) and child. Head Start and Early Head Start reach out to all of Laramie County.

Starting in April, CALC will resume its monthly workshops. They had been suspended for sometime due to the lack of staff, moving, etc. Anyone from the community is welcome to attend the workshops. They will cover stress management, career focus, budgeting, communications and health. This is an open invitation to other agencies to send their clientele to our workshops if they are in need of this service.

As the Self-Sufficiency Department continues to work on these workshops, more projects will come about to reach out to the community. 'Queen Bee', Mary Bienz, will gladly help with any questions.



It's all about volunteers, volunteers, volunteers

By Bethany Rogahn, AmeriCorps VISTA

Overcoming obstacles and delays are two vague ways to describe what's been going on with the Homeless Veterans Housing project (HVH). In May of 2007, the ground breaking for the four-unit



apartment that will house eight homeless veterans took place. With various barriers, the building didn't start until March of 2008. These barriers didn't

stop Doug Nickerson of the Housing Department and here it is March of 2009 and much is done.

Over the last 8 months, construction has made headway with the help of donations and community volunteers. Capitol Lumber and A-1 Rental have donated rental equipment and lumber that have made the progress of the project possible. Tools and materials weren't the only contributions. Roofing and landscaping for the property were received, not to mention the food that will feed the veterans when they occupy the apartments. Donations are only one part of the equation; without adding volunteers, you wouldn't get the success of the project, thus far.

Multiple community volunteers have dedicated their weekends to working on the construction of the house. Warren Air Force Base, on several occasions, has come out to put up siding, work on landscape and build various walls. Several soldiers stated that they were more than happy



to do something like this and look forward to helping in the future. In addition to the Air Force, groups such as Up With People, the Air Guard, KRRR radio station and



multiple churches have helped. "Our church is dedicated to volunteerism as part of our ministry," says local volunteer turned CALC employee, Kathy Maggos. Kathy's church, Cheyenne Evangelical Free Church, has contributed hours of building and sorting food for the pantry in the house.

The Homeless Veterans Housing apartment is not quite finished, several projects still need to be completed. "The sheet rock is almost all up and once it's done, then comes the taping, carpentry and the rest will just fly," says Nickerson, "We're always looking for volunteers-spread the word." Currently, CALC is looking for volunteers to help with the completion of the HVH project. VISTA's have been dedicating efforts to recruit volunteers to help with hanging sheet rock, taping and texturing, painting, carpentry and other construction tasks.

Volunteering holds multiple opportunities; the chance to meet new people, learn new skills and build up a resume are just a few. CALC is offering a great chance for the community to help the homeless veterans of Cheyenne. With the continued efforts of donors and volunteers, the Homeless Veterans Housing apartment will be able to soon house eight homeless veterans this year.

In honor of Community Action Month

Could you survive on \$10 a month?

By Bethany Rogahn, AmeriCorps VISTA

Community members, college students from LCCC, state and government employees, as well as volunteers, gathered in the Centennial Room at LCCC for an event to face the hardships of poverty. Did they make it through the simulated “weeks”? The feedback and success of the April 2009 Poverty Simulation was nothing but positive. Upon arrival, all participants were given a different identity, whether it was a homeless individual, a single mother with a crying baby, or an unemployed “breadwinner” of the family. Each individual or family was given a distinct synopsis and when the whistle blew to start the first 15 minute-week they didn’t quite know what they were in store for. As the “week” sessions continued, frustration grew as they impatiently waited in lines and tried to care for their families by making the right decision.

After the simulation, the participants discussed their experience. The overall consensus was that the objective of the event was reached; participants could better understand the hardships and realities of living in poverty. “Even though we weren’t dealing with real time and money, the experience definitely gave me a different perspective,” says community partner, Kristy Hazelton. Several other participants added that the simulation gave them ideas of how to change their approach when working with persons who live in poverty.

The success of the April Poverty Simulation has opened up eyes as well as doors. CALC will be hosting another simulation in Casper this July.

Fighting poverty with passion

By Star Ames, AmeriCorps VISTA

VISTA is an acronym which stands for “Volunteers in Service to America.” For the past 40 years, VISTA workers have built capacity in non-profit organizations to help bring individuals and communities out of poverty. Today, nearly 6,000 VISTA members serve in hundreds of non-profit organizations and public agencies across the country working to increase housing opportunities, improve health services, create businesses or bridge the digital divide.

In joining the AmeriCorps VISTA program, VISTA members have each taken a vow of poverty and agreed to give a year of their lives to build the capacity of Community Action of Laramie County. At CALC, the VISTA team works on project development, marketing and fund development. Under the direction of Assistant Director Cary Brunger, the VISTAs have been very busy. “The VISTA team is instrumental in providing much needed program and funding support. VISTAs are also a key part of fostering community partnerships and

bringing fresh ideas to keep CALC moving ahead.” CALC hopes to bring in several more VISTAs in the near future.



YeHaw of a time

By Bethany Rogahn, AmeriCorps VISTA

Community Action Month started off with a bang at the 2009 Recognition Banquet, “Excellence in



Cowboy Country”. On May 1, CALC employees, board members and invited guests gathered at Terry Bison Ranch to recognize the success of several individuals, families and businesses have made in overcoming poverty and helping others out of hardship.

The recognition focused on personal achievement, community partner awards and service awards to staff and board members. CALC initiated a new tradition with the first Huggie Heart Award to an outstanding employee.

The cowboy themed evening was full of live music, Cowboy Poetry, raffles and a silent auction. The state of



Wyoming honored CALC by proclaiming May Community Action Month.

A Vision for Change

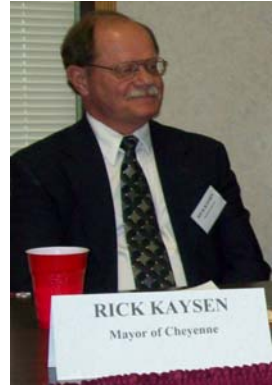
By Bethany Rogahn, AmeriCorps VISTA

May 21, CALC held a Community Forum: A Vision for Change, at LCCC. The forum focused on issues surrounding poverty and the quality of life, allowing for discussion with state and local officials. CALC presented the film, *An American Idealist: The Story of Sargent Shriver*, in which he pioneered a framework of programs such as the Peace Corps, VISTA and Head Start.



After the film, there was a panel discussion of community leaders including Mayor Rick Kaysen, and representatives from the offices of Senator Enzi and Senator Barrasso. The panel was given the opportunity to speak of their personal experiences with poverty and their thoughts on the current and future state of

poverty in the community. The group discussion gave members of local



human-service organizations the chance to ask questions concerning the condition of their organizations and how the government could better serve the lower-income and homeless population. Other topics included grant opportunities and competition to receive monies. A stronger partnership of human-service organizations is very important, was one point raised during the discussions.

The forum closed by reminding everyone that we all need our own vision in fighting poverty. Many shared their great vision of partnership, success of human services, and the voiceless living in poverty finding their voice and being seen.

~CALC Corner~

Limelight

By Bethany Rogahn, AmeriCorps VISTA

My computer just froze. The copier is beeping. The thing on my printer is flashing and I don't know why. These are just a few "conversation starters" that Huggie Heart recipient, Dennis Carter hears on a regular basis. "He's the know-it-all-go-to guy that doesn't hesitate to help out where needed," says fellow co-worker. You may get a little humor when asking for a helping hand, but the job gets done. Most of the time, he's a step ahead and already there towering over you before you even think to ask.

When asked how being the first Huggie Heart recipient made him feel, Carter humorously stated, "It's great. I've stopped suffering from swelled head syndrome...But it's great. If I had a mantle I'd put it on there. I don't so it's on my filing cabinet."



The Huggie Heart award will be given out annually at the Recognition Banquet to an employee that has showed an outstanding performance. The employee that has shined through the heart of CALC.

See You There

July 23

Poverty Simulation: Casper College

August 1– October 3

Every Saturday 7am-12pm
Cheyenne Farmers Market

September 12

Grandparents Day in the Park

October

Head Start Month

We're on the Web

Looking for information on CALC programs? Trying to locate resources? Want to know what events are happening?

Check us out on the web.

CALC has a new, easy to use website to help you answer your questions, find further information on programs, and download forms. Come check it out.

www.calc.net

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Helping People. Changing Lives.



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Community Action of Laramie County, Inc

Community Action Promise:

Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.

CALC Mission:

CALC is dedicated to eliminating poverty by empowering people through education, advocacy, crisis intervention and providing opportunities toward self-sufficiency.

CALC Vision:

Leading the way to reduce poverty in Wyoming.

