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January 2010 Newsletter



Arizona Community Action Association

Advocating, Educating and Partnering to Prevent and Alleviate Poverty

In This Issue

- Budget Update
- EITC Update
- Operation Santa Claus
- Apply for SNAP Online
- New ACAA Staff Members
- ACAA Website
- Choosetohelp.org
- Find us on Facebook
- People's Information Guide
- Bashas' Shop and Give

Happy New Year!

The staff at the Arizona Community Action Association wishes you and yours a happy new year. We look forward to continued collaborations with our members and friends as we strive to face the challenges and celebrate the successes of 2010!

Cynthia
Kelly Renee Monique
Miquelle Katie
Cathy Norma

The Legislature is in Session

The Arizona Legislature is back in session, with Arizona facing a budget deficit projected by some to reach \$3.5 billion in fiscal year 2011. ACAA will be following the session and updating our members when issues arise that need your attention.

Foremost of the minds of many is the budget, and the cuts programs are sure to face in the coming session. Lawmakers have reduced the DES general fund budget by more than 30 percent, or about \$250 million, in the past two budget cycles. The reductions have led to layoffs for more than 800 employees and eliminations or reductions in programs serving tens of thousands of Arizona's disabled, elderly and poor, as well as virtually all prevention and in-home services for children at risk of abuse. Additionally, DES met with stakeholders recently and outlined their plans to implement a 15% reduction, resulting in the following cuts:

- \$1.6 million cut to aging and adult services, which will eliminate in-home services for an estimated 700 elderly who need some help to live independently in their homes.
- Eliminating the grandparent/kinship care program which provides a \$75 monthly stipend for about 1,000 children in the care of their grandparents.
- Eliminating the sight conservation program, scrapping eye exams, glasses and other vision treatment for 9,000 low-income adults.



- Continuing a cap on the child care subsidy program, growing a waiting list of nearly 10,000 children whose working parents would otherwise qualify for help paying for child care.
- Maintaining the cuts imposed in fiscal 2009 throughout the current year, including a 20 percent reduction in monthly cash assistance payments to families with children.

Not yet implemented under the 15 percent plan are cuts that would wipe out entire programs serving larger and more vulnerable groups of people, including \$15 million in CPS services for abused and neglected children, \$9 million by shrinking the cash assistance program and \$8.2 million worth of services to infants and toddlers with developmental delays.

(Thanks to PAFCO for this summary, and special thanks to Eddie Sissons, Emily Jenkins, Bruce Liggett, Guy Mikkelsen, Jackie Taylor and Mary K. Reinhart of the Arizona Guardian for supplying detailed information..)

EITC Updates

National EITC is on January 29th, and will feature a statewide media campaign. A number of local agencies will kick off the beginning of tax season on or before this date with agency PSA's, mailers, distribution of VITA information, and the use of a 3ft by 22ft banner that will start in Pinal County, and travel to an additional four cities where it will remain for 1 to 2 weeks in each location. Brochures and posters have been distributed to task force, partnering agencies participating in VITA. There may still be time to pick up additional brochures and posters by contacting Annette Mc Guern at the governor's office. Students from both Arizona State and Grand Canyon University's accountancy programs will be volunteering at VITA sites as tax preparers for the coming tax season.

The finalized list of VITA locations will be available soon at <http://cir.org/seasonal-tax-vita.html>.

Would you like more information about the Earned Income Tax Credit? Please visit the IRS website at <http://www.irs.gov/individuals/article/0,,id=96406,00.html>.

Operation Santa Claus: A Huge Success for Community Action and Choose to Help!

For all of us this year it seemed that as the holidays drew closer there was more and more evidence of the struggles families are having just meeting their basic needs. Never have the challenges created by these hard economic times been more apparent. Community Action Programs reported closed holiday program lists and increasing needs as they continued to receive calls from desperate mothers and fathers hoping for help bring some holiday joy to their loved ones. ACAA received numerous calls too and the waiting – “hope” - list grew! But this year, with a huge thank you to Sanderson Ford and Channel 15, help was on its way through Operation Santa Claus.

As reported in last month's newsletter this event is sponsored annually by Sanderson Ford.

Donations of food, clothing and toys are collected and distributed on December 23rd to selected agencies. This year through Arizona Community Action Agency, Choose To Help was selected to receive donations and the distributions were made through CAP agencies.

The event itself was almost indescribable! There were literally thousands of items that made their way to our waiting trucks. Volunteers from the CAP agencies that chose to participate this year, City of Phoenix's UMOM Shelter, Gila County CAP, Maricopa County's Chandler CAP and Vista del Camino Scottsdale CAP, and Mesa's A New Leaf, along with ACAA staff stood in the 'human chain' and unloaded items, *non-stop* for two and a half hours! It was an amazing event!

Kathy Breen from Vista del Camino stated that "this event was a reflection of how generous our communities are", and that, "you could tell by the many, many individual donations present that this was a reflection of individuals giving what they could – a true measure of generosity". Vista del Camino was able to assist 530 families with gifts and donations this year, and to celebrate they hosted a Community Party where 170 children received a 'bag' of toys. Breen said, "Thank you Sanderson Ford!"

Malissa Buzan from the Gila County CAP reported that when they returned to Globe after the event they were able to distribute gifts and donations to 8 families with children who didn't get on any of the local Christmas programs. Malissa said, "There was a lot of relief and a few tears on the faces of our parents and grandparents raising their grandchildren that they were able to provide something for Christmas for their kids".

A New Leaf and Chandler CAP filled their trucks to the brim and were able to help many more families this year. On behalf of the City of Phoenix, UMOM received an amazing amount of clothing and toys – they were able to make a significant difference in families lives this holiday.

While ACAA does not typically have the opportunity to work one on one with our families this year Katie Kahle, Norma Gallegos and Renee Ouellet delivered toys, clothing and food to seven families – 15 children in the Phoenix area. These were families who had contacted ACAA looking for help providing a Christmas to their children, and who had extenuating circumstances.

There was much joy on this day experienced by all. We are grateful to Sanderson Ford for recognizing this community need and taking action to help make the holidays a little brighter for our children and families. We want to thank them for selecting Choose To Help as one of the recipients of this generosity. Many benefited from this endeavor both those in need and those that were able to help. In these days of many challenges it is nice to know that Community Action has a partner who is really willing to go the extra mile with us.

Thank you Sanderson Ford!

You can check out the event on their website: <http://givetotheclass.com>

Apply online for SNAP and AHCCCS

The Department of Economic Security has launched its online application, Health-e-Arizona, for enrollment for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), medical coverage and cash assistance. You can use Health-e-Arizona even if you have applied before or are already receiving

benefits. Visit [Health-e-Arizona](#) to get started.

Welcome New ACAA Staff Members!

The ACAA office is now fully staffed, and we couldn't be more excited about the newest additions to our team! We hope you will take some time to welcome them to the ACAA community.

Monique Barrios - Administrative Assistant

Monique recently joined ACAA in December 2009 to provide administrative support to the Executive Director, Board, committees and staff. Monique graduated from Arizona State University with her Bachelor's in Communication and is interested in returning to ASU to get her Master's in Social Work. She looks forward to working with the professional staff at ACAA and helping them make a difference in our community.

Monique is currently working in the ACAA office Wednesday - Friday, and can be reached at mbarrios@azcaa.org.

Norma Gallegos - Program Manager, Energy Programs

Norma Gallegos obtained her Bachelor's Degree in Social Work from Arizona State University in Tucson. She was employed with Pima County for twenty three years. Twenty one of these years were with the Pima County Community Action Agency working with various social service programs and partnering with many community-based organizations serving the low-income community in Tucson. She decided to embark on a new journey and recently joined the Arizona Community Action Association as the Program Manager for the Energy Assistance Programs.

Norma is in the ACAA office Monday - Thursday, and can be reached at ngallegos@azcaa.org.

Kelly McGowan - Program Manager, Strategic Initiatives

Kelly McGowan graduated from Marymount Manhattan College with a Bachelor's in English Literature. She also completed her Master's in Social Work at ASU, with an emphasis on Planning, Administration, and Community Organizing. Prior to joining ACAA, Kelly worked for the Arizona Department of Economic Security as a Special Projects Coordinator; focusing on strategies to increase economic self-sufficiency.

Kelly is in the ACAA office Monday - Friday, and can be reached at kmcgowan@azcaa.org.

For a complete staff listing, please visit our website at www.azcaa.org/about-us/staff.

A Brand New ACAA Website!

With a new year comes a new look for the Arizona Community Action Association! Our website (www.azcaa.org) has gone through many changes in the past year, and finally arrived at a look and feel we think best reflects ACAA as an organization. In addition to a

clean professional look, the ACAA website aims to be user-friendly. Our most popular publications, the People's Information Guide and the Poverty Report, are featured prominently on our homepage, as is a link to the Arizona Self Help Website. Navigation tabs across the top of the page feature drop-down menus to access information about ACAA, our publications, donating, and how to find help. You can also easily link to the Choose To Help blog to see what's happening with our Changing Face of Poverty Campaign.

We hope that you find our new look both refreshing and user-friendly. If you have comments about the site, would like to have your event listed, or are having technical issues accessing any of the website's features, please contact us at info@azcaa.org. Thank you for hanging with ACAA through our website's transitions!

Choose to Help: Website and Volunteerism Blog Up and Running!

ACAA's Changing Face of Poverty Campaign has a new website at www.choosetohelp.org. You can make a donation to Choose to Help, which goes directly to helping families and individuals in need within your community, via a link to ACAA's secure donation portal found on the site. If you wish to donate to your local food bank, you can find listings statewide through the Choose to Help site. Our newest feature is a link to the Choose to Help volunteerism blog (<http://choosetohelp.wordpress.com>), which has information about volunteer opportunities statewide.

If you're interested in volunteering and giving back to your community, please check out the opportunities listed. If you work for an organization that is looking for volunteers on an ongoing or onetime basis, please contact Katie Kahle (kkahle@azcaa.org) for information on how to get listed on the blog!

Friend Us on Facebook!

ACAA has joined the world of Facebook, and it's our goal to share stories and information with our Facebook friends which brings to light issues our membership is concerned with. We invite those of you on Facebook to follow us. We can be found at the following link: <http://www.facebook.com/business/dashboard/#/pages/Phoenix-AZ/Arizona-Community-Action-Association/180364475597>

Please join us and encourage your friends to join as well!

People's Information Guide: New Edition Coming Soon!

The People's Information Guide: Where to go for help is undergoing a revision! Our 2007 - 2009 Edition was wildly popular, with 300,000 English and 100,000 Spanish printed and distributed across the state. Our new Edition will be available soon, so stay tuned for updates. In the meantime, we still have some copies of the 2007 - 2009 Edition available. If you need a copy, please email ACAA at info@azcaa.org and be sure to include your contact information. Once the

printed version is gone, you can still access it on our website at www.azcaa.org.

Interested in helping ACAA with our 2010 revision? Have some time to donate to verifying information and proofreading? Please send us an email at info@azcaa.org and let us know how you'd like to help!

Bashas' Shop & Give Program

Looking for an easy way to support ACAA? Bashas' shoppers can help us raise money through the Shop & Give Program, which donates 1% of purchases made by Thank You Card holders to the non-profit of their choice, and if you are a card holder you can designate ACAA to receive your donation! Registering to donate to ACAA is simple!

All you need to do is give Bashas' our Organization ID # 24432 either in the store next time you use the card, or online through this link: <http://www.bashasshopandgive.com/cardno.php>.

If you choose to do it online, please have your Thank You Card with you as they will ask for your Card Number, located on the back of the card. It's important to register every year or your donation won't be linked to ACAA. The Program runs September through April, and now is the perfect time to make sure your card is linked to ACAA! We appreciate you taking the time to designate ACAA to receive 1% back on all your purchases at Bashas' stores!

Please feel free to contact us at info@azcaa.org with questions.

Questions? Comments? Suggestions for the next newsletter? Please email us at info@azcaa.org.

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