



**Executive Director
Andrew J. Devany**

**CONNECTIONS
Quarterly Newsletter
March 2021**



From the Desk of Our Executive Director
Andrew J. Devany

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We are approaching one year of working with the Covid pandemic and it continues to be a challenging year where our line staff continue to meet the challenge. Our frontline has been there every day. Staff at our Community Centers in Marion, Crawford and Morrow Counties have provided daily services to clients without interruption, but with numerous changes. For over 50 years Center staff have provided emergency services to clients in need on a daily basis through face-to-face contact. They had to, according to all the regulations and requirements that they faced and the myriad of grants and funding sources that we had to satisfy. All of that changed on March 13, 2020. Suddenly we had to figure out a way to work directly with clients in need without personal contact. By March 17 we had set up a system of drop boxes and telephone appointments and, voila, our customers were being served. Bills were paid and food orders and prescriptions were filled while clients and staff avoided contact and Covid, thanks to our dedicated Center Staff.

In all our other facilities we were able to close down programs, work from home, and figure ways to realign our office spaces to insure safety. Since January we have been back to work full force in all locations providing all services. Everyone continues to pitch in, working with clients, parents and children to solve problems and provide services. In our weatherization program we have been working on our agency annual goals and assisting a neighboring agency that is facing some staff and training challenges.

Recently, my wife mentioned to me that she ran in to a former co-worker of hers from the Marion YMCA. The co-worker/parent started telling her about the wonderful experience her children were having in our Head Start program and how she was thrilled to be participating in the program. The Head Start parent raved about the kindness, dedication and professionalism of these staff and the learning experiences her children were receiving, having no idea that my wife knew anything about Head Start or had any family association with the program. Good work Head Start staff. You are appreciated.

I cannot end this month's newsletter article without mentioning the March 12 retirement of OHCAC Deputy Director Karen Wise, OHCAC's longest serving employee. Karen has been solving problems and working with everyone for 47 years – all of her adult life. She has definitely paid her dues, helped a lot of people, both staff and customers, and done a great deal of God's work – as you all do every day.

OHCAC Services Offered

**Ann and Jaime
Administration - Receptionists
740-387-1039 x-1100**

- Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)
- AEP Neighbor to Neighbor Program
- Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)
- Food Pantries (Galion)
- Personal Needs Pantries (Marion, Morrow)
- Home Weatherization Assistance Program (HWAP)
- WARM CHOICE Program
- Electric Partnership Program (EPP)
- Community Connections Program
- Emergency Food and Shelter Program (ESFP)
- Community Service Block Grant (CSBG)
- Rapid Rehousing and Homeless Prevention (Marion and Crawford)
- Drug & Alcohol Awareness Program (Morrow)
- Clothing Outlet in Crawford County (also available to Marion and Morrow County residents)
- Prescription Assistance Program
- Senior Commodity Boxes (Galion)
- Payee Program (Marion)
- Water Assistance
- Emergency Senior Funding Grant (Marion)
- Work boots (Crawford)
- Gas to work assistance
- Early Head Start and Head Start in Marion, Morrow, Crawford and Richland Counties
- Columbia Gas Fuel Funds
- First Energy Fuel Funds
- Resource and Referral
- Assistance obtaining state identifications and birth certificates to gain employment.
- Medication Lock Boxes (Morrow)
- Summer Reading Program (Marion)
- School Supplies (Crawford)
- Backpack Program (Crawford)

Agency Directors

Joe Devany
Executive Director
740-387-1039 Ext. 1118

Joseph Main
Deputy Director / Energy
Coordinator
740-387-1039 Ext. 1121

Jim Lavelle
Chief Fiscal Officer
740-387-1039 Ext. 1117

David Wirick
IT Manager
740-387-1039 Ext. 1108

Debbie Schuster
Head Start Director
740-387-1039 Ext. 1109

Robert Foreman
HEAP Director
Energy Programs
740-387-9703 Ext. 1201

Tracey Rector
Marion Co. Director
740-383-2154 Ext. 1313

Sara Herrera
Morrow Co. Director
419-946-2009 Ext. 1905

Tammy Crabtree
Crawford Co. Director
419-468-5121 Ext. 1619



Head Start

Debbie Schuster, Director

740-387-1039 x-1109

In our four-county program during the month of January, we served approximately 1,215 Breakfasts, 1,258 Lunches and 1,221 Snacks to our Early Head Start children and 4,582 Breakfasts, 4,622 Lunches and 4,575 snacks to our Head Start children. We are completing registrations every day and are working on being at full enrollment, as soon as possible.

We have 52 children on the waiting list for Early Head Start which includes 10 children in Richland, 25 children in Marion, 12 children in Crawford and 5 children in Morrow. We expect to hear about the status of our expansion grant by the end of this week. We served 489 children in Head Start and 80 children in Early Head Start during the month of January. Early Head Start is full in all four counties and Marion County is at full enrollment for both Head Start and Early Head Start. Due to the pandemic, we are currently under enrolled in Head Start by approximately 66 children. We are completing registrations every day and are working on being at full enrollment as soon as possible.

We have purchased a new program called Ignite from Hatch that is a research driven adaptive learning platform that provides 203 sequenced skills for real time child assessment data. The assessment data is collected as each child plays Ignite. Ignite can be installed on classroom computers or accessed from home computers or smart phones. The goal is for each child to play Ignite for about 15 minutes per week enabling us to document outcomes for children that are having in-person classes and children that are remote learners. Ignite will be directly linked into the Teaching Strategies Gold. The teachers will be trained within the next week and the information distributed to parents and families as soon as the teachers are trained.

We are considering applying for a conversion request with the new 2021/2022 grant due to a decreased number of children enrolled in Head Start in Morrow County. We currently have the ability to enroll 60 Head Start children in Morrow County and we only have 34 Head Start children enrolled. We have struggled to maintain full enrollment for Head Start due to all the surrounding school districts providing preschool services. We would like to convert one Head Start classroom in Morrow County into an Early Head Start classroom. If we are able to convert one Head Start classroom in Mt. Gilead, our new enrollment numbers would be 40 Head Start children and 16 Early Head Start children in Morrow County.

The situation with the COVID-19 pandemic is ever evolving and we are trying to be flexible so that we can meet the needs of the children and families we serve. I fully believe that we are taking every precaution to keep every staff person and child in our program as safe as possible. If you have any suggestions or ideas that would help us ensure the safety of staff or children that we serve, please email me at debbies@ohcac.org. I have given the same message to staff and have received some awesome ideas that have been very helpful.

BOARD MEMBERS

Marion County

Marilyn Schraff
Kerr Murray
Staci Thomas
Jan Hulse
Sherry Russell
Stephanie Shaffer
Robert Concepcion
Laura Detweiler

Crawford County

Richard Genzman,
Board President
Larry Schmidt
Thomas O'Leary
Joe Stafford
Tina Bloomfield
Crystal Wilson
Douglas Court
Darrin Harvey

Morrow County

Fawn Mollenkopf
Tracy Blackburn
Kelsey Lewis
Darci Hendrickson

Richland County

Theresa Alt
Tamea Jobe
Fred Boll

Home Energy Assistance Program

Robert Foreman, Director
740-387-1039 x 1201

The 2020-2021 Winter Crisis Program (2021WCP) started on November 1 and runs through March 31, 2021. At the time of this printing, staff have assisted 1,290 households with the Winter Crisis Program and processed over 3,900 Regular HEAP applications and over 4,000 PIPP Plus applications.

We ended last year (March) with calling our customers over the phone for their WCP appointments and continued that through both the 2020SCP and 2021WCP seasons to keep both staff and customers safe during the pandemic. Both the staff and our customers are working hard to make sure they have the proper documentation for their phone interview appointments to complete their WCP/HEAP/PIPP Plus applications.

Per Ohio Development Services Agency (ODSA), we are continuing to call customers for their appointments. Customers will still need to provide all required documentation before their scheduled appointment. Customers can email, fax or drop off documentation at one of our 3 CAC centers in the black drop-off boxes located near the front doors. If required documentation is not provided at the time of an appointment, you may need to reschedule until documentation can be provided. For more information, please contact one of our county CAC offices.

We are also requesting that customers have a good working email that they check regularly so that we can send documents to this email for signature. More information on this to come later.

To schedule your WCP / HEAP / PIPP Plus appointment by phone, please call the toll-free automated appointment hotline at **(419) 718-0047**. To schedule your appointment on the **online web scheduler** using *google chrome*, go to <http://app.capappointments.com>.

We have two additional fuel funds: AEP Neighbor-2-Neighbor and, coming March 1, First Energy Fuel Funds. If you are still in need of utility assistance with one of these utilities, please contact your local county CAC office for more information and to schedule an appointment.

Thank you to all intake/outreach workers, center directors and fiscal staff for all their hard work and dedication to the HEAP department...you have done an excellent job assisting our families with their home energy needs.



BIRTHDAYS

April

Jessica Elswick	2
Chasity Channell	5
Robert Foreman	7
David Wirick	8
Karrie Starr	11
Samuel Starr	15
Scott Payne	15
Barbara McLernon	17
Shelly Mabrey	20
Karmann Ross	24
Nicole Ditmars	24
Hannah Adamson	27
Nikita Lee	29
Jamie Graska	30



Crawford "Egner" Center

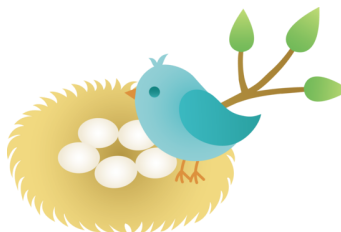
Tammy Crabtree, Center Director
419-468-5121 x-1619

COVID-19 has certainly brought challenges to the Crawford Office, but we have risen to the occasion. Our Food Pantry remains open to all of Crawford County. We have extended the hours for the Pantry to accommodate our clients' needs.

Our new CSBG Intake Worker, Kim Barker, has been busy preparing for Rent, Mortgage, and Utility Assistance. Please call Kim at 419-468-5121, ext. 1606 if you have questions.

Our Clothing Outlet remains closed to the public. However, we are still assisting those that have a need. We are focusing on "essential" donations. We need kitchen supplies such as utensils, pots & pans, cups, plates, bowls, and small appliances. We are in need of new or gently used towels, sheets, blankets, etc.

We have decent winter coats and give them away to those in need. If you know someone that could use a winter coat, please have them call Tammy at 419-468-5121, ext. 1619.



Morrow Neighborhood Center

Sara Herrera, Center Director
419-946-2009 x-1905



Salutations from the Morrow County Center. We are excited to offer several different assistance types to our community. The pandemic has left many households in economic crisis and we are eager to help relieve some of the burden. Along with HEAP and Winter Crisis programs, we can assist clients with rent, mortgage, water, sewer, internet, and even burial expenses (to name a few).

The Morrow County center welcomes Jennifer (Jen) Cole to the team. Jen has assumed the position of intake worker and will be focusing on CSBG programs and the Morrow Co. Personal Needs Pantry. The Personal Needs Panty is available Wednesday afternoons and provides individuals with household items and toiletries.

The prescription assistance program remains a big success in Morrow Co. We are looking forward to distributing 65 medication lock boxes to community members, in hopes of ensuring their medication and families remain safe.

BIRTHDAYS

May

Ashley Hisey-Buchanan	1
David Wright	1
Joyce Branam	2
Brook Koepfel	6
Sheila Nickum	6
Kristen Metelsky	6
Ryan Kessell	6
Benjamin Main	6
Sherry Mabe	7
Sabrina Hershberger	8
Jennifer Deas	10
Nikita Wright	11
Tammy Crabtree	12
Sara Herrera	12
Elizabeth Hoffer	14
Paula Langendefer	14
Cierra Roberts	20
Susan Schuler	20
Katelyn Hamilton	21
Jessica Miller	26
Nicole Schreck	26
Karla Granlee	28

**wishing you
the BEST
birthday
ever!**

Marian Clark Center
Tracey Rector, Center Director
740-383-2154 x-1313

I am one of the few people who love snow. The office on Bellefontaine Avenue is nestled in a group of trees and is just beautiful with the frozen frost on the trees, or the fall leaves, or the full summer green. Just like the changing seasons in Ohio, we have all had to adapt to changes over the past year.

The Marian Clark Center has additional resources to assist households who have been affected by COVID. We have just begun the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA) and we are still allowing individuals to come pick up personal need items such as shampoo, paper towels, deodorant, etc. All of these programs look different, but we have remarkable staff at Ohio Heartland Community Action Commission who brain stormed and never missed a beat.

Our clients have also stepped up to the changes, understanding we can't see them face to face, getting us the documents we need to process applications, and telling us how much they appreciate us being here for them.

Home Weatherization Assistance Program
Joseph Main
Deputy Director/Energy Coordinator
740-387-1039 x-1121

All Energy Office Programs are able to provide services to our clients during this pandemic. As we near the end of many of our programs' grant years, we are on target to meet all of our goals. With the ending of the AEP program, many of our clients were left waiting for appliances that AEP was no longer able to pay for. OPAE was able to work through a process with ODSA to get the appliances paid for and we are currently in the process of getting those appliances ordered for our clients! HHWP Community Action is experiencing a personal shortage, and has contracted with us to help them with inspections. Our Staff has been spending a lot of time helping them with their inspections and structuring their procedures.

The Energy Office would like to remind everyone to stay safe and warm.

Guard your water pipes. When indoor plumbing pipes run through exterior walls, take care to monitor them in the winter and make sure wall insulation is up to recommended standards.

Seal holes and cracks. Even small holes where cable wires or phone lines enter your home can be an entry point for freezing air—or places where precious indoor heat can escape.

Keep water flowing. If any of your indoor faucets are located on exterior walls that aren't adequately insulated, set your faucets to a slow drip whenever temperatures dip well below freezing. This is usually necessary only during especially bitter cold spells. Faucets and pipes located along exterior walls are especially susceptible to freezing.

Keep the water shutoff accessible. Should a water line ever freeze and burst, you will need to shut off the home's water supply immediately. If junk is blocking easy access to your main water shut valve off, rearrange your basement or garage so that it will be easily accessible in the event of a plumbing emergency.

Safety Committee Members

740-387-1039

Bev Kuenzli	Ext. 778
Bob Foreman	Ext. 028
Debbie Shuster	Ext. 810
Paula Langenderfer	Ext. 777
Tammy Crabtree	Ext. 163
Tracey Rector	Ext. 832
Ashley Hisey-Buchanan	Ext. 661

BIRTHDAYS

June

Natalie Basilone	7
Sierra Thompson	7
Whiley Smith	10
Jeneeyah Beasley	11
Teddy Sherman	11
Sharon Thomas	17
Beverly Kuenzli	19
Carl Woodring	20
Ashley Hecker	24
Amy Davis	26
Cheyenne Nickum	27
Kathleen Edler	30



Fiscal Factoids

**Anita Major, Fiscal Office Manager
740-387-1039 x-1103**

Help payroll pay you accurately, completely, and on time by doing the following five (5) things:

1. Check your email. This is how we communicate with you when there is an issue or we need to distribute information.
2. Check your paystubs. Look at your taxes, leave accruals, and deductions as well as your hourly rate and hours worked. Don't assume it is correct because the net direct deposit seems right.
3. Enter your time worked into your timesheet. I recommend daily.
4. Request your time off as soon as possible. This means as soon as you know you will need time off.
5. Submit your timesheet on your last day worked for the pay period.

And remember, if you are scheduled to work and are not at work, a time off request needs to be done for that time. As always, please contact me with any questions.

OHCAC Mission Statement

The Ohio Heartland Community Action Commission (OHCAC) will foster and promote planning services and developmental efforts for the mobilization and utilization of resources, public and private, for coordinated attack upon conditions of poverty affecting the inhabitants of the area.

OHCAC will continuously support economic self-sufficiency. It will encourage the provisions of services, and other activities toward developing employment and economic opportunities, improving human performance, individual and group motivation, productivity, housing and bettering conditions under which people live, learn, and work.

OHCAC will solicit, contract for, receive, administer, and disburse any funds, grants, bequests, devises, and other resources for the execution and implementation of specific or general programs in carrying out its purposes.



*Proud member of the National
Community Action Partnership*

Helping People, Changing Lives