



**Executive Director
Andrew J. Devany**

CONNECTIONS

Quarterly Newsletter

September 2021

From the Desk of Our Executive Director



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I had planned to start this article off with the phrase IT IS OVER – instead I must say HERE WE GO AGAIN. The unwelcomed and unwanted return of COVID is upon us again. This time, unfortunately, we know what to expect: sick staff and customers, quarantines, masks, additional shots, and more daily surprises. During the past 18 months Community Action has continually adjusted to the challenges we have faced on a daily basis. It is not fair and it is very disappointing for all of us. Just when we think we are seeing the light at the end of this long, seemingly unending tunnel a new variant darkens our view.

Well, what do we do? We say here we go again and we continue to serve clients and families on a daily basis the best that we can. At the Centers in Marion, Crawford and Morrow Counties we are assisting with HEAP, personal needs and food, mortgage assistance, rental assistance, prescriptions, and in October we are anticipating the beginning of a water assistance program. This year (at this time) we are giving clients the option of remote or on-site assistance with our center programming.

In the energy area we will continue to find and weatherize homes through our HWAP Program as well as operating other energy cost reduction programs such as EPP, AEP, Community Connections through First Energy, and Warm Choice through Columbia Gas. We look forward to changes and expansion in our future energy programs and perhaps working closely with more community partners to preserve energy and improve the environment. As has been the case for the past year, our staff will travel to the homes of customers observing appropriate safety measures while giving clients the option of delaying assistance until the pandemic challenge waivers.

Over the course of the past 18 months we have seen our greatest daily challenges occur at our sites that operate Head Start and Early Head Start. There is no reason to believe that this challenge will subside with the Delta variant over the next few months. There is even more concern in that the Delta variant seems to be having a greater impact on younger children than we have seen in the past and the possibility of the development of a vaccine for children in our programs is not readily available. This will result in a very challenging and stressful work environment at all of our Head Start and Early Head Start Centers.

With all of these unknown situations that are occurring, and will continue to occur, I can only repeat what I mentioned in our agency orientation. The Community Action Agency staff at Ohio Heartland Community Action Commission and their counterparts throughout the Ohio and National Community Action Networks have proven themselves to be HEROS operating daily in the front lines battling the Corona Virus.

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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 Pantry (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)
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
- 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

BOARD MEMBERS

The Early Head Start classrooms began their program year on July 19th and the rooms have been at full enrollment. One of the new EHS rooms at Marian Clark is operating remotely while waiting for a building inspection. The Head Start classrooms began their year on August 16, 2021 and we still have some openings in the classrooms. We are currently 85% enrolled in both programs.

| HEAD START | FUNDED | PLACED | ENROLLED | PERCENT ENROLLED |
|--------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------------|
| Morrow | 40 | 33 | 27 | 68% |
| Crawford | 88 | 84 | 75 | 85% |
| Marion | 152 | 151 | 147 | 97% |
| Richland | 195 | 177 | 157 | 80% |
| All Counties - HS | 475 | 445 | 406 | 85% |

| HS & EHS | ENROLLED / FUNDED | PERCENT |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Total – Placed | 558 / 587 | 95% Placed |
| Total – Enrolled HS & EHS | 518 / 587 | 88% Enrolled |

We were granted a Waiver of Education Credentials for a Head Start Preschool Center-based Classroom Teacher at our Marion Center in Marion County. The waiver lasts for three years, but the Lead Teacher should have her degree in spring of 2022.

We have faced many COVID-19 challenges in the last few weeks with several staff and children testing positive for COVID-19 and having to quarantine. Currently, we have 7 classrooms closed and we have approximately 6 children that have tested positive or are presumed positive because of contacts. We have approximately two staff with COVID-19 and several contacts of staff with COVID-19. We are certainly wishing everyone a speedy recovery. Everyone must wear a mask in the Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms and in buildings where children are present. We are continuing to clean classrooms and busses.

We are continually recruiting qualified staff, but we have numerous openings for Bus Drivers, Lead Teachers and Associate Teachers. There is a statewide Bus Driver shortage and we are short four drivers. Please ask any qualified applicants to apply online at: www.ohcac.org.

Debbie Schuster, OHCAC Head Start Director

Marion County

- Vacant
- 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
- 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

BIRTHDAYS

October

Happy Fall from the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) Department!

The 2021 Summer Crisis Program (2021SCP) is finishing up. The program began on July 1st and will run through September 30th. We will have until October 15th to finish up any pending/incomplete applications that were started during the 2021SCP season. No new 2021SCP applications can be started after September 30th. If a client still needs to finish their pending or incomplete application, please call the automated appointment hotline at **419.718.0047** and press the option for the county you live in, or schedule online through www.app.capappointments.com.

At the time of this printing the **2021SCP** had: assisted 565 households with utility assistance and referrals; completed 17 central air repairs; provided 250 window air conditioners, 4 casement units and 245 fans; and processed 1,045 State HEAP applications and 832 PIPP Plus applications.

Thank you to the intake/outreach workers, office managers, center directors, and the fiscal department and maintenance staff for all your hard work and dedication to our families during our hot weather season.

The 2021-2022 Winter Crisis Program (**2022WCP**) is fast approaching. In October, staff will be gearing up for the WCP by attending webinars from ODSA and our in-house training October 27th and 28th, if needed. The 2021-2022 WCP will begin on November 1st and operate through March 31st.

Please continue to utilize our website... www.ohcac.org. The HEAP department has a drop down box that has been updated with the most current information we have to date. Watch the website for more information and for when the appointment hotline will open to schedule your 2021-2022WCP appointment.

To make an appointment for HEAP/WCP/SCP/PIPP Plus in one of our three locations (Marion, Crawford or Morrow County), please call the appointment hotline at **419.718.0047** or schedule online at www.app.capappointments.com.

| | |
|---------------------|----|
| Erma Dible | 3 |
| Lauren Fraysier | 3 |
| Jean Kleinknecht | 5 |
| Karen Marshall | 7 |
| Amy Daly | 9 |
| Josue Feliciano | 10 |
| Jason Lilly | 11 |
| Sandy Brown | 12 |
| Richard Murphy | 12 |
| Jennifer Rita | 13 |
| Sharonda Wilson | 13 |
| Brinnley Belcher | 14 |
| Kelly Showecker | 21 |
| Jena Fischer | 22 |
| Lisa Lewis | 22 |
| Anita Major | 27 |
| Wendy Bennett | 27 |
| Rockie Jones Bigham | 28 |
| Jennifer Phelps | 31 |



Crawford “Egner” Center

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

Our School Supply Program went well this year. Thank you, Walmart, for working with us again this year.

Thank you to Firelands Federal Credit Union for the generous donation of \$500.00 toward our School Supply Program. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Our Back Pack Program will kick off on Sept. 3, 2021. This program is for Galion City School children. Students can apply through their teacher or parents can call 419-468-5121 x 1619.

Christmas is coming!!!! We will begin our Christmas Program in October. This is for Galion residents only and recipients must be below 200% poverty ratio. Please call 419-468-5121 x 1619 for details.

We have rent, mortgage, and utility assistance available.



©www.ClipProject.info

Morrow Neighborhood Center

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

Everyone here at the Morrow County Center is excited to welcome the fall/winter season. We are pleased to congratulate Nicole Schreck on her position change to Morrow County Outreach Specialist. We also extended a warm welcome to our new HEAP Intake Worker, Pasheauna Smith.

The CAA-HRG program will continue to be an asset to Morrow County Residents throughout the winter season. Staff members have been doing great in coming together to understand these programs and assist our clients in ways that we have not been able to in the past.

Services available through the Morrow County Center include (but are not limited to): Car repairs, internet service, water and trash bills, rent or mortgage payments, and utility assistance.

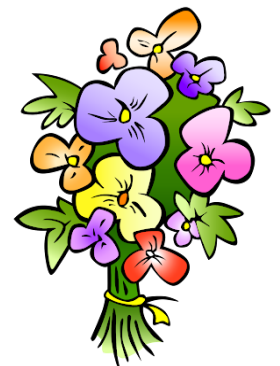
The Personal Needs Pantry is open and serves area residents with toiletries, diapers and household items. Individuals can call the Morrow Center on Wednesdays to request assistance. Prescription assistance and medication lockboxes are also available.

BIRTHDAYS

November

| | |
|------------------------|----|
| Theresa Henning-Scales | 2 |
| Amy Huckaba | 4 |
| Amanda Siwek | 9 |
| Kelly Brough | 10 |
| Reina Riegel | 14 |
| Sherita Catchings | 16 |
| Megan Cockrell | 16 |
| John King | 17 |
| Trinity Van Vilet | 18 |
| Rosie Brough | 18 |
| Laura Wixtead | 25 |
| Brenda Ramey | 26 |
| Rhonda Oliver | 27 |
| Sara Nemeth | 29 |

Happy Birthday



Home Weatherization Assistance Program

Joseph Main, Deputy Director/Energy Coordinator

740-387-1039 x-1121

With most of our programs starting a new grant year, we are in full swing at the Energy Office. EPP and Community Connections started the grant year well with big production months for both programs. AEP has come back till the end of the year. Due to the current rate of deliveries we have till the end of September to order new refrigerators for the program. We are still waiting for the approval of the HWAP Enhancement Grant, which allows us to work on roofs and various other needs. Our inspectors have been very busy working on getting jobs to our Weatherization Contractor to get jobs completed for the new program year.

Nine Ways to prepare your home for fall:

1. Clean, or possibly replace, your gutters.

If they're clogged, you can end up with a flooded interior and damaged exterior. Clean them, and if necessary, replace them.

2. Check for drafts.

Heat loss through windows is responsible for 25-30 percent of heating energy use, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. Weather-stripping is a simple cost-effective way to keep heating costs down.

3. Drain your outdoor faucets.

Drain and disconnect all garden hoses from outside spigots to prevent any water freezing. Not doing this can result in pipes bursting.

4. Bring your outdoor furniture in.

If you don't have anywhere to store the items, you should cover them in waterproof furniture covers.

5. Fix any cracks in your driveway.

Enough small cracks can turn into big cracks, and eventually the concrete can crumble.

6. Change your filters.

FYI: Disposable filters can be vacuumed one time before you replace it, and foam filters can just be vacuumed and not replaced.

7. Fertilize your lawn.

Applying fertilizer will prevent winter damage. Doing this will also help your lawn turn green faster in the spring.

8. Test winter equipment.

Check it all now and make your life easier later.

9. Change your batteries.

Once a year you should be checking to make sure all smoke detectors and carbon monoxide devices are working.



Safety Committee Members

740-387-1039

| | |
|--------------------|-----------|
| Bev Kuenzli | Ext. 1104 |
| Bob Foreman | Ext. 1201 |
| Debbie Shuster | Ext. 1109 |
| Paula Langenderfer | Ext. 1130 |
| Tammy Crabtree | Ext. 1619 |
| Tracey Rector | Ext. 1313 |
| Sara Herrera | Ext. 1905 |

BIRTHDAYS

December

| | |
|------------------------|----|
| Christine Jones | 1 |
| Marilyn Brumenschenkel | 2 |
| Michael White | 2 |
| Melissa Conely | 5 |
| Mindy Sinclair | 16 |
| Isolene David | 16 |
| Julie Owen | 17 |
| Melissa Shirley | 17 |
| Lori McCune | 18 |
| Nedra Ernest | 21 |
| Kevlynn Bails | 21 |
| Camille Arndt | 24 |
| Sheryl Holt | 24 |
| Jammie Roberts | 27 |
| Diane Howard | 30 |
| Eric Withrow | 31 |



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

I love fall, football and cooler weather, but I also love helping people. Although none of us enjoyed our world being rocked with the COVID 19 virus, the assistance we were able to provide was wonderful. As we continue to get funding for households that have been affected by COVID 19, we also still have programs for all households under 200% of the federal poverty level that were not affected by COVID 19. The chart to the right is gross income based on household size for one month. We can deduct for health insurance as well as child support paid out.

| <u>Family Size</u> | <u>Monthly</u> |
|--------------------|----------------|
| 1 | \$2,146.67 |
| 2 | \$2,903.33 |
| 3 | \$3,660.00 |
| 4 | \$4,416.67 |
| 5 | \$5,173.33 |
| 6 | \$5,930.00 |
| 7 | \$6,686.67 |
| 8 | \$7,443.33 |



Programs available to all households are: a personal needs pantry one Wednesday afternoon per month from 1:30-3:30; assisting with the purchase of a birth certificate and/or a state ID for employment; gas to get work while waiting on your first pay check; a payee program for those who are unable to manage their personal finances; Marion County Council on Aging Senior Levy assistance; and prescription assistance for those who cannot afford their medication. As always, we are a good resource for information.

Please don't hesitate to call with questions: 740-383-2154, ext. 1300.

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.

Fiscal Factoids

Anita Major, Fiscal Office Manager

740-387-1039 x-1103

It is coming up on the end of the year and taxes. Staff should make sure addresses, names, and social security numbers are correct in Kronos. If there are any corrections that need to be made, please contact Anita Major at extension 1103 or via email at anitam@ohcac.org.

A. You can check your information in Kronos by logging on to Kronos and clicking the 3 blue bars in the top left corner of the home screen.

B. Then click on the single headed icon... Click on My Information... Click on My Profile.

C. You can review your information here.

Remember, if you are scheduled to work and are not at work, a time off request is required.

Time off requests must be done, if at all possible, prior to the absence. Otherwise, they are to be done first thing the day you return to work from an absence.

Policy states you are to use all paid leave prior to requesting unpaid time.

If you have any payroll issues, questions, or concerns, contact Anita Major at extension 1103 or via email at anitam@ohcac.org.



Bits from Benefits

Beverly Kuenzli

Benefits/Assistant Office Manager

740-387-1039 x-1104

Hello All!

Thank you for your cooperation and attentiveness at our Annual Orientation/In Service Half Day. I wanted to thank David Wirick for all of his help coordinating the Zoom calls and managing our meeting. It went smoothly and without a hitch! And... Don't forget to thank Joe for the donuts!

I want to remind everyone that we will be updating the FormFire in September. When we send the notice out, please don't procrastinate and just do your updates or register. We will send out complete directions when the time comes. Here's a quick reminder of FormFire and how it works.



FormFire allows Brokers to provide multiple quotes in an employer ready proposal. Using FormFire's online quoting software, Brokers can quote any of their Groups or prospects using basic census data. Don't worry while using FormFire - it is a very secure system and we have been using it for years! Also, use a password that can be used year after year and record it somewhere. That makes it easier for you to access your account!

Have a Safe and Happy Autumn Season!

Benefits Bev

2021 OACAA Annual Service Awards

10-Year Award (2011)

| | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| Jamie Baumberger | Michael White | Tracey Rector |
| Janice Blozy | Sara Nemeth | Dennis Hardie |
| Sherita Catchings | Gladys Shipley | Lori McCune |
| Jessica Elswick | Teddy Sherman | Anita Major |
| Amanda Holsinger | Ashley Hisey-Buchanan | |



15-Year Award (2006)

Melissa Castle
Elizabeth Feliciano
Robert Foreman

20-Year Award (2001)

Crystal Cox
Rachael Elliott

20-Year Award (2000)

Janet Reed



25-Year Award (1996)

Mildred “Becky” Dutton

40-Year Award (1981)

Barbara Beal

45-Year Award (1976)

Linda Green Hartle

