

# COMMUNITY ACTION AT WORK

Saratoga County Economic Opportunity Council, Inc.

Fall 2008



## Message from the Executive Director

Julie Hoxsie

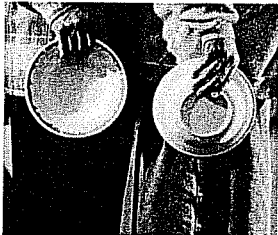


We have all been bombarded with the news of our nation's possible financial collapse. How it will affect us, we are uncertain. Most of us feel financially insecure and some sense of discomfort. What will happen in the future? Can I bear to look at the fallen value of my life's savings? Will we ever be able to retire?

The families we help at EOC are financially insecure much of the time. The number of families seeking food at our food pantry has been higher in the last few months than ever before in the 24 years I have worked at EOC. We consistently serve around 250 families per month, with almost a quarter of those families never having been to us for help before. Why are they here for food? Many can't make 'ends meet' on low wage jobs and make a little too much to qualify for food stamps. Those who receive food stamps struggle to put together meals for the month, due to the rising cost of food. Many that come to food pantry are on disability and are physically or mentally disabled and can not get by on the amount they receive.

Those of us who work with low income populations, are familiar with the term food insecurity. Food insecurity means that you don't know if you will have enough food for dinner, or to last the week, or for the rest of the month. Folks that have food insecurity have many other uncertainties in their life, such as housing, health care and transportation. As we enter the fall months, high home heating costs will only exacerbate insecurity and despair among low income people who seek our help.

Now, in the beginning of October, we are told that the nation's economy is on the verge of collapse. As a nation, we are being asked to come up with \$700 billion to prevent a collapse. The war in Iraq continues, costing over \$124 billion a year, with no real end in sight. It is doubtful that the government has the ability to direct any more funds towards the nation's poor, when it is the nation's poor that need help more now than anytime in recent memory.



In this time of economic instability and uncertainty, I ask you to remember the less fortunate. If you are able to purchase a few extras at the grocery store to drop off at EOC, or if you could suggest a food collection to a group you might belong, it would be most appreciated. Of course, monetary donations are always welcome.

*Julie Hoxsie*

## English for Success!!

By: Krystle Nowhitney

EOC's English as a Second Language Program truly was a success in 2008 with record breaking enrollment and attendance. Classes met twice a week at the United Methodist church, where congregation volunteers prepared dinner for participants and a one and a half hour lesson followed. Students work in small groups led by volunteer ESL tutors. This year approximately 150 students enrolled. Spring session attendance averaged 60-70 students and the fall session has averaged 40 students per class. The overwhelming majority of students are backstretch workers, however, a growing number of year round workers from restaurants have begun to take advantage of the service as well.

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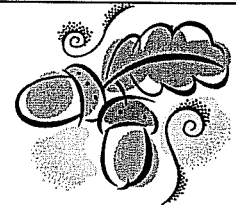
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Years of  
Excellence

Saratoga County

EOC



### Internet Safety

If you are worried about what your child does on the internet, below is a new website that offers child monitoring software and more. Log on to [www.GuardChild.com](http://www.GuardChild.com) to learn how to keep your child safe on the Internet.



# SCEOC – AN ECONOMIC ENGINE TOO!

By: Robert Pasciullo

This month, SCEOC celebrates its 35th anniversary of providing a wide range of services and aid to individuals and families throughout Saratoga County. It has been through the continual generosity of the our community combined with grants from federal, state, county, and city agencies that have sustained SCEOC in touching the lives of so many of our friends and neighbors over these many years, whether at our 6 days a week soup kitchen, our food pantry or our WIC and Head Start programs and other services described in this newsletter. Services to our community members in need are the paramount reason for our existence. However, in addition to these multifaceted contributions, SCEOC takes on a secondary role as an economic engine that is often forgotten in its main role as service to the public members in need.

SCEOC has an annual budget of approximately \$8.6 million of which slightly over \$7 million come from grants or 82 % of budget. SCEOC employs a workforce of 150 professionals and support staff, the majority of whom reside in Saratoga County and spend their earnings throughout the county. In addition to its payroll, SCEOC purchases supplies and services county-wide. Approximately 85% per cent of all the products and services purchased by SCEOC are from Saratoga County institutions and establishments. Of this \$8 million plus budget, it is only the donations that remain from the private sector that can be held over at the end of the year. All the public grants which compose the major share of the annual budget has to be expended at the end of each fiscal year. The federal and state agencies providing SCEOC grants point out that the financial impact of each dollar provided to a community agency can have a fiscal impact or ripple effect from \$5 to \$10. If this federal calculation is applied even at the minimum \$5 for every \$1 provided, SCEOC's economic impact would reach over \$40 million annually.

SCEOC joins the many other excellent not-for-profit social service agencies in Saratoga County in contributing to the improvement of the quality of life for those individuals and families in need of assistance while it also contributes to the county's economic growth and development. SCEOC and all similar county-wide, not-for-profit social service agencies are important components of the area's economic engine too!

## Thanksgiving Baskets

By: Lillian McCarthy



It is that time of year again and the Community Services department is getting ready for another Thanksgiving. Last year we distributed 636 baskets to low income families in Saratoga County. This year given the current economy, we are expecting that number to increase. We are accepting applications from Tuesday, October 14 thru Friday, October 31 at our main office on 40 New Street or through our WIC or Head Start programs. Income eligible families (185% of poverty) are encouraged to apply.

We will be distributing baskets as follows:

Last name beginning with A-L can pick up Monday, November 24 from 9am -4pm

Last name beginning with M-Z can pick up on Tuesday, November 25 from 9am-4pm

Wednesday, November 26<sup>th</sup> is final distribution for anyone who missed sign ups or failed to pick up on their assigned day.

The baskets consist of the necessary items to make a full Thanksgiving meal. We provide fresh potatoes, fresh carrots and fresh apples from local farms. Additionally we provide a box of stuffing, canned cranberry sauce, corn, green beans, applesauce and yams. We also give a packet of gravy. With all of this, we give each family a \$10 gift certificate to Price Chopper to purchase a turkey. The amount of items included in the basket is adjusted depending on the size of the family.

As you can imagine this is a huge undertaking and a great expense. We rely heavily on donations of both food and money from the community to make this program successful. Donations are also appreciated after the holidays in order to restock the pantry.



## Parenting Programs for Head Start

By: Pam Dray

Head Start has many fun and interesting programs scheduled for the fall.

### **Positive Parenting**

Parents will learn skills to make their life as a parent better.

Facilitated by Marie MacPherson

Dates: Mondays, 10/20-11/17

Time: 10:00am-11:30am

Where: 50 West High Street, Ballston Spa

### **This and That- A New Topic Each Week!**

Topics include: homemade toys, reading with children, cooking and more

Sign-up for one or all

Facilitated by Head Start Staff

Dates: Mondays, 10/20-11/17

Time: 10:00am-11:30am

Where: 64 Hamilton Street, Saratoga Springs

### **Science in the Park**

For Head Start families. An evening of good food and fun filled activities.

Date: October 15, 2008

Time: 4:30pm-6:30pm

Where: Kimball-Burgess Park, Ballston Spa

### **Classroom Aide Training (CAT)**

Date: 9/23 & 9/30

Time: 9:30-1:30

Where: 64 Hamilton St.

Learn how a typical classroom operates. In this training, participants will discuss Head Start Policies and Procedures and the role they will play in the classroom. We will discuss our Discipline Policy and talk about positive discipline and using positive language when dealing with children. Curriculum goals and objectives will be reviewed. Room arrangement and how to use it as a teaching strategy will also be part of this workshop. Participants will discuss each area in the classroom, what the children are learning in that area and the role of the adult in that area.

Lunch will be provided.

These programs are open to anyone and you can obtain more information by calling Kathryn Kaehler at 226-0450 ext. 13



## Winter is Fast Approaching

By: Mike Seeley

With the heating season upon us, now is the time to get heating systems tuned and cleaned to insure you're getting the maximum performance from your system. If you are unable to afford a heating contractor, contact your local Department of Social Services or Office of The Aging and apply for assistance. There are new higher eligibility guidelines that have gone into effect as of October 1, 2008. Please check our website for the new guidelines.

Those of you that had applied for Weatherization last year and were over income by as much as a thousand dollars annually, may now be able to receive services. If you have any questions about the Weatherization Assistance Program or know someone who may be eligible and could use our services, please call us at 518-587-3158. We will be glad to help.



Here are a few **Weatherization Assistance Program Facts** found on the Weatherization Assistance Program Technical Assistance Center website [www.waptac.org](http://www.waptac.org).

Nationally, 100,000 homes are weatherized each year.

For every \$1 invested in the program, Weatherization returns \$2.72 to the household and society.

\$1.65 is returned in reduced energy bills.

\$1.07 is returned to the household and community through increased local employment, reduced uncollectible utility bills, improved housing quality, better health and safety by reducing heat-related illness and death and by reducing the risk of death from home fires due to utility disconnection.

Weatherization decreases national energy consumption by the equivalent of 18 million barrels of oil annually and decreases residential and power plant emissions of carbon dioxide by 1.79 tons per year per home.

## Weatherization Awareness Month

By: Theresa Piekarz

The U.S. Department of Energy's Weatherization Assistance Program is the nation's core program for delivering energy efficiency services to low-income households. Professionally trained weatherization crews perform on-site home energy audits using state of the art equipment to identify outside drafts and inspect heating and cooling systems for efficiency. Weatherization crews install insulation, seal off air leaks, make modifications to (or replace) existing heating systems, and make minor repairs to ensure safety. Once installed, these energy saving measures will help reduce heating and cooling costs for years to come.

*EOC operates the Weatherization Assistance Program for Saratoga and Schenectady Counties.*

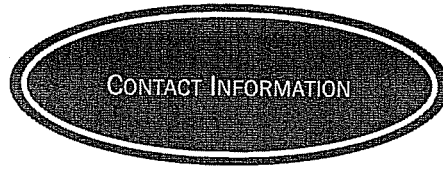


# Saratoga County Economic Opportunity Council, Inc.

"helping people to help themselves"

## **EOC Administrative Office**

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## **2008 Board of Directors**

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Pam Marro  
Crystal Moore  
Shirley Needham  
Lisa Ribis  
Jena Rotheim  
Judi Stephenson  
Scott Tatro

## **Dress to Succeed**

is a special project of the Saratoga County Economic Opportunity Council, Inc. This project was originally created to provide FREE professionally cleaned, business clothing for clients seeking job interviews or for "on the job" use. Presently, we have expanded the project to provide the same FREE terrific outfits to anyone in need, for occasions of their choice.

All donated clothes must be professionally dry cleaned, on hangers, in plastic bags. Please call 587-3158 for more information should you wish to donate clothing to the Dress to Succeed project.

If seeking clothing, please call EOC to schedule an appointment with the Project Coordinator who will arrange a specific meeting at a convenient time.

By: Judi Stephenson

## **New Foods Coming to WIC!!**

By: Cathy Valenty

January will not only mark the beginning of the New Year, it will also bring the first significant changes to the WIC food packages in 30 years! New York State will be one of the first states in the nation to implement the new WIC food packages mandated by USDA. The changes are based on recommendations made by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) in its report: "WIC Food Packages: Time for a Change". NYS WIC will provide participants with a new assortment of foods and enhanced breastfeeding support. The goal of the new food package change is to help families meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, Healthy People 2010 Goals and Objectives, and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations. The new food package will be lower in fat, higher in fiber and more culturally appropriate.

New foods coming to the WIC program beginning in January will be vegetables and fruits – added to the program on a permanent basis, baby food vegetables and fruits, baby food meats, whole grain bread, brown rice, canned beans, salmon and sardines (for exclusively breastfeeding mothers only) and tofu (calcium-set only).

On another note, the Saratoga County EOC – WIC program successfully distributed Farmers Market coupons to 1,115 WIC families from June 1, 2008 through September, 2008! These WIC families received \$24.00 worth of coupons that could be used at our local NYS Farmers Markets to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables. What a wonderful benefit for our WIC families and our local farmers!

More information on the USDA rule can be found at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/regspublished/foodpackages-interimrule.htm>.

**A special thank you to Skidmore College, Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work for helping us print this newsletter!**

COMMUNITY ACTION AT WORK IN SARATOGA COUNTY

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

[WWW.SARATOGAEOC.ORG](http://WWW.SARATOGAEOC.ORG)

