

COMMUNITY ACTION AT WORK

Saratoga County Economic Opportunity Council, Inc.



Spring 2008

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A Message from the Executive Director

Many of you may be aware, Dennis Brunelle retired from SCEOC in January of 2008 and I was appointed to the position of Executive Director. Dennis was with SCEOC for over fourteen years and will be missed. We all wish him well in retirement. Although I have been with SCEOC since 1984, first as Director of Finance, then Director of Finance and HR and most recently as Deputy Director, I am very excited about the new position and look forward to strengthening the agency and working with the community in order to improve the lives of the lowest income in Saratoga County.

Recently Saratoga and Putnam County ranked way above all other New York State counties in The Business Council's Economic Growth Index receiving a rank of A, based on job growth, average wages per job, total personal income, per capita personal income and population growth. At the same time, the number of persons living below the poverty level, a measure of extreme poverty, has increased to over 6% of the county's population. The level established as poverty is below \$16,600 for a family of three.

Many of our customers work in low wage jobs, usually with no benefits. Some of our customers are mentally or physically challenged and unable to work. We administer a variety of programs to empower low-income individuals and families to obtain the skills and knowledge necessary to work towards self-sufficiency. We have 150 dedicated staff and more than 50 core volunteers to work diligently to help the less fortunate in these goals.

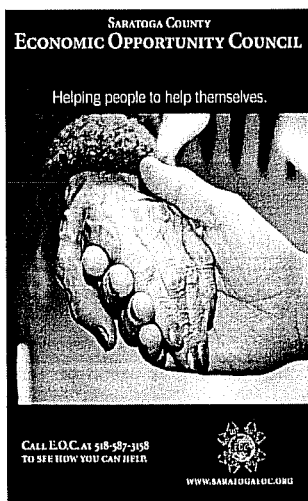
I hope you are able to take the time to read the newsletter and learn more about our varied programs. Please feel free to contact me with your comments and suggestions.

Julie Hopie

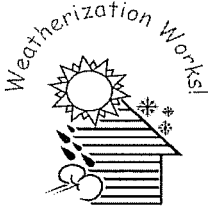
Latino Community Advocacy Program

The Latino Community Advocacy Program (LCAP) addresses the special needs of the Spanish speaking immigrant population in Saratoga County. Our activities also promote cultural understanding and recognize the positive contributions of immigrants and long tradition of immigration in our communities. Our bilingual staff provides assistance by facilitating communication and access to health, legal, and educational services.

The goal of our program is to extend EOC's mission of promoting economic self-sufficiency to immigrants in our community. Services include: English as a Second Language Classes, interpreters, consultations and referrals, crisis services, and cultural events.



Every county in New York State has a Weatherization Assistance Program available to the HEAP eligible households



Saratoga County EOC Housing Department

The Housing Department at EOC consists of the Weatherization Assistance Program for Saratoga and Schenectady Counties and the Empower NY program.

The Weatherization Assistance Program serves HEAP (Home Energy Assistance Program) eligible households at no cost to the applicants. EOC received a 17% increase in funding for the 2008 program year. This increase in funding allows for a greater capacity to serve more targeted households. Our crews and subcontractors work year round providing services that will not only reduce the amount customers spend heating their homes during the winter, it also helps reduce their electric bills throughout the year. This program is limited to homes that have not received Weatherization Assistance since September of 1993.

EOC also provides energy reduction services through the EmPower New York program. The EmPower NY program has guidelines set for the HEAP eligible population. Homes that are not eligible for the Weatherization Assistance Program because services were provided from September 1993 to present are still eligible for the EmPower NY program. All services are provided at no cost to the applicant. This program is funded by NYSERDA (New York State Energy Research Development Authority). Visit them on the web at www.nyserda.org.

All of our customers are encouraged to fill out both the Weatherization and EmPower applications so we can coordinate both funding sources and provide the best energy related repairs for the situation.

Saratoga County EOC Community Services Department

The Community Services Department is composed of many programs. These programs are funded through the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP) funds, Federal Emergency Management funds (FEMA), agency fundraising activities and private donations. In kind donations, community partnerships and volunteer support are also vital to the success of this department.

Emergency Food Programs include: Community Lunch Program Lunch is served 6 days a week from 11:45 - 1:00 pm. It is open to the public and is located in the New England Congregational Presbyterian Church, 24 Circular St., Saratoga Springs, NY. Many community volunteers help keep this operation up and running. Emergency Food Pantry The pantry is located at our 40 New St. location. Current operating hours are 1:00 - 3:45 pm., Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. In addition to receiving a 3-day supply of food, customers are counseled on strategies for extending their food budget dollars and healthy eating. Extra Helpings This is a food-buying club sponsored by the Regional Food Bank of Northeastern NY. EOC acts as a host site for this cooperative. Food units may be purchased with cash or food stamps. Payments for food units are collected at the EOC office from the 1st through the 10th of each month. The distribution day is the 4th Thursday of each month. The retail value of the 'food unit' is approximately twice the amount that the customer pays. Rural Food Delivery The Rural Food Delivery program is a home delivery food program that provides well-balanced food baskets to low-income disabled individuals. This program is provided in cooperation with the New England Presbyterian Congregational Church of Saratoga Springs. Summer Youth Feeding This project provides a nutritious lunchtime meal to low-income children during the summer months when there is no school. In collaboration with the Saratoga Springs Housing Authority, bag lunches are disbursed at the Jefferson/Vanderbilt Terrace Monday-Friday, between July 1 and August 31.

Crisis and Family Services include: Crisis Intervention Services: Crisis intervention is the practice of working with customers to address emergency needs. A plan is developed to alleviate the situation. Effective crisis intervention is based on the theory that appropriate and sufficient help given at the right time will enable a customer to reach their goals. This service is folded into all Community Services Department programs.



We are always looking for volunteers who can make a long term commitment to help us carry out our important work.



Saratoga County EOC Head Start/Early Head Start

Head Start and Early Head Start are free federally funded programs for low-income pregnant women and children birth to age 5. Saratoga county EOC Head Start serves 434 children and pregnant women through out Saratoga County.

Our goal at Head Start is to get children ready for kindergarten by learning to get along with others as they develop reading, language, and math skills.

In our pre-school classrooms 3 and 4 year old children participate in full day NYS Daycare licensed classrooms, including integrated classrooms for children with special needs and Universal Pre Kindergarten classrooms for children who will be attending kindergarten in the next year. Many classrooms are open during the summer for a 6 week program.

We operate a Toddler room at the Corinth YMCA and an Infant/Toddler mixed age room at Ballston Spa High School. Infants and toddlers participate in a variety of activities in a safe, nurturing NYS Daycare licensed rooms.

We have a large home base program, as well. In our home base experience, parents and children participate in weekly home visits and regularly scheduled group activities called PACTs (Parents and Children Together). Family Educators work with parents to achieve goals they have set for their children and themselves.

At Head Start, we also offer medical, dental, health, developmental and behavioral screenings. Nutritious meals and snacks are provided for our classrooms and PACTs. Nutrition education is provided for our children and parents. We offer support to parents through adult education workshops and referrals to community resources. We also have limited transportation services available to assist parents in connecting with community resources.

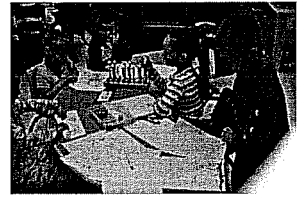
At Head Start, we believe that parents are their child's first and most important teacher. We offer a variety of ways for parents and guardians to become involved in their child's program by volunteering at the site, at home or participating in program decision making through Policy Council and Family committees.

To be eligible for Head Start, a family's income must be at or below Federal poverty guidelines. 10% of children may be over-income, but have special needs/circumstances that impact their well-being. Families must consist of a pregnant woman and/or children from birth to age 5. Families must live in one of our current serving areas which are Ballston Spa, Clifton Park, Corinth, Galway, Mechanicville, Saratoga Springs, Stillwater, Schuylerville, South Glens Falls, and Waterford. Serving areas follow local school district boundaries.

Community Services Department (continued)

Family Development: This is a case management program in which the customer and EOC work together to establish short and long term goals. The case manager meets regularly with the customer to assist in reaching goals such as education plans, safe or affordable housing, effective parenting, and financial stability. Family Development Credentialing Training: The FDC training program is primarily geared to front line workers. It prepares workers to help customers using self-empowerment techniques.

Affordable Housing Initiatives include: SCEOC owns two multi-family houses to provide affordable housing units in the City of Saratoga Springs. The Community Services Department provides oversight of and family development services to families who rent these units. House to Home: This project utilizes mobile homes as a means of affordable housing. Volunteers provide labor to rehab donated mobile homes and these mobile homes are then sold to consumers for a minimal cost.



Head Start Classroom



At Head Start, we believe that parents are their child's first and most important teacher.

SARATOGA COUNTY ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY COUNCIL, INC.

"helping people to help themselves".

Contact Information



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Housing Dept.: David Krause @ ext.15 / email: d.krause@saratogaecoc.org

WIC: Cathy Valenty @ ext. 29 / email: c.valenty@saratogaecoc.org

Wheels for Work: Lori Staigar @ ext. 31 / email: l.staigar@saratogaecoc.org

LCAP: Krystle Nowhitney @ ext. 13 / email: k.nowhitney@saratogaecoc.org

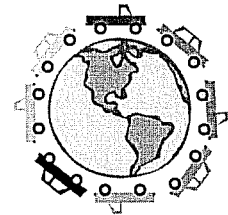
Head Start: Pam Dray @ 518-226-0405 ext. 11 / email: p.dray@saratogaecoc.org

General Information email: info@saratogaecoc.org

Wheels for Work Program

Wheels for Work program provides reliable used cars to low income Saratoga County residents supporting one or more children in order to secure or maintain employment. We were just awarded the program for another five years. Our funding was increased and we will be able to help 30 families with transportation this year.

Since the programs inception 3 years ago, SCEOC has provided 100 cars to families in need.



Women, Infants & Children (WIC) Program

The Saratoga County EOC WIC program is a supplemental food program serving over 1900 participants throughout Saratoga County.

WIC is committed to promoting healthy food, healthy families, and healthy futures for area families. The WIC program provides eligible families with supplemental foods such as milk, cheese, eggs, cereal, juice, peanut butter (or dried beans), fruits and vegetables; and also formula if the mother chooses not to breastfeed, or chooses to supplement while breastfeeding. WIC participants receive checks (vouchers) for these specific foods that they use at a WIC authorized store.

Our WIC program recently started a "Healthy Lifestyle" promotion, in which eligible WIC children and eligible WIC moms will be given a "Fit WIC" bag, along with a "Fit WIC" challenge. The challenge is to increase physical activity, increase intake of vegetables and fruits, and decrease TV watching. The goal of the program is to promote healthier lifestyles by increasing activity and encouraging healthier eating habits.

Participants must be both income and categorically eligible. Categorical eligibility includes pregnant women, children under the age of 5, postpartum (non-breastfeeding) women up to 6 months after giving birth, and postpartum breastfeeding women until the baby's 1st birthday. Enrollment in the WIC Program is quick and easy. If it sounds like a potential client may be eligible for WIC, an appointment will be scheduled. At this appointment proof of identity, income and residence must be provided.

If you would like more information please call (518)587-8848. WIC has plenty of room to grow, so if you know of someone who may be eligible, please give them our number!! We are also available to come and speak with your group about the WIC program.

COMMUNITY ACTION AT WORK IN SARATOGA COUNTY

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

WWW.SARATOGAEOC.ORG