

NEK-CAP News Fall Edition ~ October 2014

Serving Atchison, Brown, Doniphan, Jackson, Jefferson, Jewell, Leavenworth, Marshall, Mitchell, Nemaha, Osborne, Pottawatomie, Republic, Riley, Smith, and Washington Counties.



From the Executive Director's Desk

Submitted by Jeanette Collier, Executive Director

The 2014 election is just around the corner. Voting is one of the most important rights that we can exercise to ensure that the voices and concerns of those we serve are heard. The fact that the number of low-income voters, who participate in the voting process, is quite small makes it even more critical for this constituency to be represented through the voting practices by those of us who serve such populations. There are several areas of concern related to ensuring that the basic needs of low-income populations, including, children, the elderly and families are met. Some of the more critical issues to consider

are: funding for quality early childhood education; K-12 education; SNAP and TANF benefits; Medicaid expansion; LIEAP; preservation of the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Care Tax Credit; Kansas tax policy implications on public libraries, health departments, education, and corrections; affordable housing; dedicated, streamlined services for those experiencing mental illness, substance abuse, and/ or homelessness; approval of Dental Practitioners; and economic opportunity beyond minimum wage employment. Take a stand; be the voice!!

NEK-CAP's Mission

We provide comprehensive education and social services to low-income community members through collaborative partnerships focused on promoting family development, empowerment, and economic security.

The Promise of Community Action

Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.



Achievements ~ Accomplishments ~ Successes

Submitted by staff members

As I am writing this success story, I am also recalling the life of a CFA and the beginning journey as the EHS Manager. There are so many success stories- big or small, long term or short lived- as NEK-CAP staff we get to experience these successes first hand. So, I wanted to share one of my own...

On Friday, August 1st, I had the opportunity to meet with one of my families on my caseload. Mom and baby came to EHS and enrolled in November 2013. This family was, at the time, homeless, jobless, no education, little knowledge of local resources, and, to be honest, confused of where to turn next. Mom's main goal was, of course, to find safe, stable housing for her children. Yet, in the end, she has achieved much, much more than that. In May she received her CNA certificate. In June, mom secured a full time job as a CNA. I was also present with mom when she opened her first paycheck... what an AMAZING experience! In the meantime, we found resources for transportation, childcare, phone service, food, etc. This fall she plans to graduate with her GED. I had not seen this family for a few weeks and was worried that she no longer lived in the area. (I could not just go knock at a door, because she really did not have a stable enough room to live in.) However, on Thursday, I received a call from mom on our office phone. Mom was calling off her new cell phone, with a new number, and out of a new apartment. Yes!! She secured an apartment of her own. So, I agreed to meet with her on Friday. We were able to access the food pantry, thrift store, and track down donated items such as pots/pans, dishes, bed frame, blankets, towels, dresser, book shelf, etc- as she did not have any of these basic items. This family has achieved so much and NEK-CAP was a huge part of this- not to forget how determined and driven this mom was to create a good life for her children. (I have asked her what EHS meant to her and have not heard back... but I do plan to follow up, as she was very excited that I was going to write a success story about her.) I plan to pass this family on to another

CFA, whom I am sure will provide support, resources, and encouragement and she will continue to achieve great things. This family was an inspiration to me and I hope as you are reading this, you too will find inspiration in knowing how important EHS is and how much WE really can do for so many very deserving families- just like this one. *Submitted by: Kimberly Lackey, Early Head Start Manager*

The NEKCAP Outreach office in Holton has had a very busy summer. In the months of June, July & August we assisted sixteen families in avoiding utility disconnects. Two individuals received assistance with prescriptions. In July, nine families were referred to the Catholic Charities mobile bus for assistance. Family Development Advocates have also helped six families with their DCF applications and enrolled 48 families in our Head Start Center. It's been a wonderful summer and we look forward to another great school year! *Submitted by: Kori Anderson & Donna Wilhelm, JA County Family Development Advocates*

I have my first "graduating" 3 year old. I started with this family as mom first found out she was pregnant, just a few weeks along- so we went through the entire program. Now, 3 years later, he will be going to HS this month. I had the chance to meet with this family this week and I truly felt the appreciation from this family. EHS has been the ear for listening, the hands for helping, and definitely the shoulders to bounce different family, life situations off of. I have seen this child grow, making huge strides and have seen, first hand, how different environments in this child's life has played a significant role in his development. EHS is and has been a major part of his life and, I believe, always will be. *Submitted by: Kimberly Lackey, Early Head Start Manager*

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Serving the counties of:
Atchison, Brown,
Doniphan, Jackson,
Jefferson, Jewell,
Leavenworth, Marshall,
Mitchell, Nemaha,
Osborne, Pottawatomie,
Republic, Riley, Smith
and Washington

services vary per county

NEK-CAP, Inc.'s Vision:

One by one
all families and communities
become self-reliant.

*NEK-CAP, Inc. is an equal
opportunity provider
and employer.*

Comments/Questions: please contact Linda Grier, Integrated Services Office Manager, lgrier@nekcap.org

Achievements ~ Accomplishments ~ Successes

Submitted by staff members

*"In our opinion,
the cycle
of poverty is broken
by communities
and relationships,
not by
policies and guidelines.
Yes, we have to
have those. However
significant change occurs
only after a significant
relationship is built.
This includes relationships
within NEK-CAP
and with our partners."*

*Kim Lackey,
Early Head Start Manager*

I want to tell you about a client that I have been working with since June 2014. She is a grandmother, a mother, and now a guardian. She lost her only daughter in Oct. 2013 to a terrible car accident and now she is taking care of her two very young grandchildren. She is petitioning the courts to get custody of grandchildren. On Oct. 21st, the courts will be granting the grandmother full residential custody and then she will move forward to pursue adoption.

The very first time I went to her apartment for a home visit I didn't know what to expect, I was nervous and excited all at the same time since she was my very first client. When I arrived at her residence, I immediately felt comfortable because she was so friendly and inviting. After about thirty minutes of being there she told me her story. She said her daughter was in a terrible accident and died. She said that her daughter and grandchildren lived upstairs in the same apartment building as her, and that her oldest grandchild asks her if mommy is upstairs. She says that it makes her so sad to know that she isn't there anymore and has to tell her grandchild she's not there and has gone to heaven. The grandmother also shared that she is disabled and she has a terrible time going up and down the stairs of her second floor apartment building carrying one of her grandchildren. After that visit I knew what I needed to help her with.

On the second home visit, I asked the grandmother what she thought about finding another place to live, and this is what she said. She was so happy to hear me ask that question she said, "Can you help me with that?" "I have wanted to move for so long, but I just don't know where to start." I told her that I have a list of rental properties that are low-income, some that will take her Section 8, and a brochure about Habitat for Humanity. I told her to start calling some of the people on the list and when I come back next week to let me know if she likes what she hears from them. A few days before her third visit she called me to tell me she might have found her a ground floor apartment and could I come with her to look at it. Since I did not have a full case load yet, I told her sure. When we arrived at the apartment complex the apartment manager said that he didn't have a ground floor apartment until the following month. He did let us see an apartment that was on the second floor that had the same floor plan. It was very nice. When we returned to her home she told me that she wasn't sure that it was right for her and her grandchildren. I told her okay we

can keep looking. After a few more visits we still hadn't found anything and I asked her if she had given any thought to the Habitat for Humanity homes. I read the brochure to her and she decided right then and there to call them. Within three days they sent her an application with all the information that was required from her. On the next visit she showed me everything and asked if I would mind helping her fill out the application and helping her get everything that goes with it. I told her I would be happy to help. So that visit her and I filled out the application and got everything else they wanted together. I have to say that she is very organized, she has an accordion file with social's, birth certificates, and etc. all the information that was needed. The very next day instead of mailing the information she called Habitat for Humanity and asked for an appointment. She was able to see them that following week.

The next home visit I went to she had exciting news for me. She told me that when she arrived at the appointment/interview, the lady that was helping her was very nice and said that she is the first person ever to come to her with all of her paperwork and she didn't have to send her back home with the application being unfinished. Habitat for Humanity told her that they would contact her within seven days to let her know if her application would be approved. Sure enough that next week they told her that her application has been approved and that they would let her know what comes next. After a few weeks of waiting the phone call came in that she can go and look at the houses that have been built for Habitat for Humanity clients. The first week in October 2014 they called her to let her know that at the end of October the first of November she can move into her brand new three bedroom, two bath home. Guess what all on one level and no stairs! This is the very first house the grandmother has owned or lived in, she has only lived in apartments.

The grandmother says that she could not do it without me. I told her I didn't do anything but give her some phone numbers she was the one that made all this happen. I tell her every home visit how proud I am of her and don't ever say can't because you can!

I will miss this grandmother because unfortunately the house is in Wyandotte County and I am in Leavenworth County. I will make sure that I give her all the resources she needs to continue the Early Head Start and Head Start Program in Kansas City. *Submitted by Renee Hall, AT County Child and Family Advocate*



Comments/Questions: please contact Linda Grier, Integrated Services Office Manager, lgrier@nekcap.org