

# Community Action News

“Providing Hope Through Self-Sufficiency”

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### Inside this issue:

<i>From the Director</i>	2
<i>DPA Housing Event</i>	2
<i>Families in Transition</i>	2
<i>2015 Donors and Volunteers</i>	3
<i>Calendar of Events</i>	3
<i>VITA &amp; Volunteers</i>	4

## 2016 Point in Time

The Point-in-Time (PIT) count is a count of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons on a single night in January. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that Continuums of Care conduct an annual count of homeless persons who are sheltered in emergency shelter, transitional housing, and Safe

Havens on a single night. Continuums of Care also must conduct a count of unsheltered homeless persons every other year (odd numbered years).

Each count is planned, coordinated, and carried out locally. On January 27, 2016 the Will County Continuum, led by WCCCC’s Homeless Services Director Merridith Montgomery, conducted the PIT for Will, Kendall and Grundy Counties, and for the first time sent teams of volunteers out into specific geographic areas to conduct a street count in addition to the counts conducted at local shelters. People who identified as homeless were asked to complete a survey to gather as much information as possible. Those who chose not to complete the survey were documented by observation.

In conjunction to the street count, entities that provide emergency shelter or transitional housing provide a count of the number of available beds and the occupancy rate on the night of the count.



M Montgomery conducts PIT training for volunteers prior to count

Conducting a Point-in-Time Count is important for all communities. The count provides a snapshot of who is homeless on a given night. This information can be used to plan local homeless assistance systems, to tailor programs to meet existing needs, and to raise public awareness of homelessness.

### The Night of the Count:

- \* Average family size is 3.5 people
- \* 160 persons were in emergency shelter
- \* 82 people were in transitional housing
- \* 48 people were on the streets (unsheltered)
- \* 66 children were identified—22.8% of total
- \* 16 youth were identified—5.5% of total
- \* 23 veterans were identified; 6 in shelter, 3 unsheltered, and 14 in transitional housing
- \* 17 individuals were chronically homeless; 82% of them were unsheltered
- \* 33 people identified as having a mental illness—11.3% of the total; 27.3% were unsheltered
- \* 27 people identified as having substance abuse problems—9.3% of the total; 7% were unsheltered

## From the Director

I'm very proud to be the director of an agency that strives to make a real change in the lives of those we serve. In order to effect change we need to listen carefully to what our customers tell us are the obstacles they face in their struggles to regain self-sufficiency.

We are aware that while unemployment is a reality for many people who come to us, it is also true that a good number of our customers are employed. One obstacle that these families face is the inability to access our services during regular hours.

Over the past several months we have been surveying our customers to see how many of them would take advantage of extended hours.

Beginning in September, WCCCC will extend our office hours on Wednesdays to 7:30 p.m. to serve those who can't get here during the day. We will monitor the number of clients who elect to come in the evening, and then assess the effectiveness of the evening hours. We believe this simple adjustment will effect real change!

*Kris*

## Housing Event Promotes Down Payment Assistance Program



On Saturday, April 30 WCCCC and the City of Joliet hosted a housing expo to showcase the Down Payment Assistance Program. Local realtors, banks, and lenders were available to field questions from potential homebuyers interested in learning more about how they might engage in the program.

The Down Payment Assistance Program is funded through HUD and is being administered by the City of Joliet in cooperation with Will County and WCCCC.

More than 100 families interested in homeownership visited the event, held at the Joliet Township High School West Campus. They were able to have many of their questions answered regarding the benefits of purchasing a home, financing options, mortgage products, and amenities available to Joliet residents. The City of Joliet also arranged to have visitors transported to view homes for sale through the DPA program.

The program is open to those whose income does not exceed 80% of the area median income. Homebuyers must contribute a minimum of \$2,500 toward the purchase, and assistance is based on a maximum of 17% of the purchase price.

WCCCC staff will provide intake and eligibility verification to people interested in taking advantage of this opportunity. For additional information please contact Patricia Venziano at (815) 722-0722 extension 217.



G Blustein, Illinois Realtors;  
A Melesio, City of Joliet;  
M Youngblood & K White, WCCCC

**The 2016 Spring Families In Transition** event was also held at the West Campus of Joliet High School District 204. More than 109 families (including 201 children) who are living in unstable housing conditions were invited to attend the event, hosted in partnership with the Will County Regional Office of Education, to learn how to move toward a more stable living environment for their families.

A wide variety of social service agencies and service providers were available to offer guidance and help to these families. Other vendors were on hand to do vision, dental and health screenings, and to provide hair cuts to the families. No fees were charged for any of these services. Other agencies offered free

books to children or engaged them in activities and games while parents spoke to representatives from WCCCC and other agencies.

To meet the families nutritional needs, WCCCC hosted the Northern Illinois Food Bank, bringing fresh meats, produce and dry goods to those in need. Boxes of food were packed up and delivered to the families' cars by our staff. Breakfast for the attendees was provided through the generous ongoing support of Presence St. Joseph Medical Center.



## Thank you to all our 2015 Donors and Volunteers!

### 2015 Donors

Abri Credit Union  
 Aileen S. Andrews Foundation  
 Laurie & Ron Alberico  
 Michelle & Brad Allen  
 Alliant Credit Union  
 Patricia Altman  
 Anonymous  
 Autobahn Country Club, LLC  
 Jackie & Von Ray Barnes  
 State Rep Mark Batinick  
 Bella Fiori Flower Shop  
 Berlinsky Scrap Corporation  
 Block, Klukas, Manzella & Shell  
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 Exelon/Dresden Station  
 Patricia & Mark Ferry  
 First Midwest Bank  
 Fleckenstein's Bakery  
 Laurie & Frank Fleischer  
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 Bonnie & Glenn Ginder  
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 Harrah's Joliet  
 State Senator Napoleon Harris  
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 Children of the American  
 Revolution  
 Jim Hogan  
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 Sheryl & Ed Jaquays  
 Joliet Junior Woman's Club  
 Joliet Tent Company  
 JP Morgan  
 Judson Memorial Baptist  
 Church  
 Robin Kelly  
 Jane Kiernan  
 Kinzler Janitorial Services  
 Knights of Columbus/  
 Joliet Council #382  
 Kim & Scott Libersher  
 LincolnWay Community Bank  
 Lockport Township  
 Louis Joliet Daughters of the  
 American Revolution  
 M & M Bank  
 Marilyn & Harry McSteen  
 Mary & Jim Maragos  
 Michael's Pizza  
 Milano Bakery  
 Monee Township  
 Gary S. Mueller & Associates  
 Mary Ann & Ken Murphy  
 Karen Nebe  
 Nicor  
 Northern Illinois Steel  
 NuMark Credit Union  
 Old Fashioned Pancake House  
 Old Plank Trail  
 Community Bank  
 Peotone Township  
 Veronica Podlasek  
 Plasti-Pak Packaging  
 Linda & Walter Pote  
 Presence St. Joseph  
 Medical Center  
 Priority Staffing, LTD  
 Ann & Steve Randich  
 Rathbun, Cservenyak & Kozol  
 St. Margaret Mary Church  
 Karen Sorbero  
 The Home Depot Foundation

Three Rivers Association  
 Of Realtors  
 Toney DeRosa Foundation  
 Town Center Bank  
 Trizzino Concrete  
 United Way of Will County  
 Village of Homer Glen  
 Village of Mokena  
 Irene & Larry Walsh  
 Shawn Walsh  
 Wermer, Rogers, Doran  
 & Ruzon  
 Kris & Les White  
 Will Township  
 Howard Wright/  
 State Farm Insurance  
 Rita & Jim Zelko

### Holiday Basket Volunteers

Allison Acevedo  
 Terry Anzalone  
 Kiley Duensing  
 Elizabeth Franklin  
 Zeveyon Furcrom  
 Nadia Grodar  
 Madisyn Groth  
 Victoria Holder  
 Tyler Johnson  
 Rhiannon Keith  
 Tyler Keith  
 Cole Laurie  
 Quinn Laurie  
 Marissa Levandowski  
 Chris Lukanich  
 Madison Murphy  
 Mary Ann Murphy  
 Mary Papandria  
 Tom Parrazzo  
 Linda Pote  
 Melle Slager  
 Sophia Taylor  
 Les White



June 25:  
*Pre-purchase / Homebuyer  
 Education Class  
 WCCCC Office*

July 4:  
*Closed in observance of  
 Independence Day*

August 3:  
*Senior Resource Fair  
 Richland Grade School*

August 4:  
*Catholic Charities Back to  
 School Fair  
 St. Clare Campus*

August 12:  
*Tools for School  
 DuPage Township Levy Center*

September 5:  
*Closed in observance of  
 Labor Day*

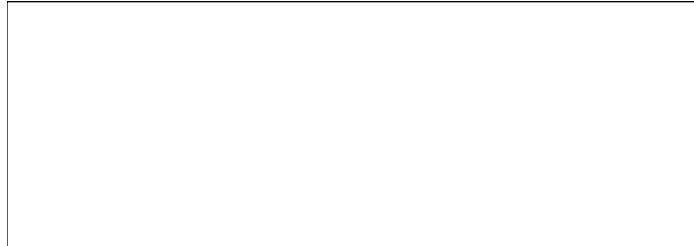


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The Promise of Community Action

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 are dedicated to helping people help themselves...and each other.



Will County Center for Community Concerns once again provided free tax preparation services to low and moderate income households. WCCCC is a member of Will County LITAC (Low Income Tax Assistance Coalition).

All services are offered free of charge, and taxes are filed online to ensure speedy returns. This year WCCCC filed 313 federal returns with an average refund of \$1,000.23. Those returns included \$105,879 in Child Care Credits, Child Tax Credits, Earned Income Credits, and Education Credits. The average income of the individuals and families served this year was \$18,816. The VITA Program provides a much needed service to ensure that Will County households receive the maximum allowable tax refund without having to pay to have their returns accurately prepared and filed.

WCCCC wishes to thank those individuals who worked so diligently to provide this much-needed service to our community, including WCCCC's Patricia Venziano, Ana Dominguez, Emily Invergo and Vicki McDonald. A very special thanks to dedicated volunteer Hannah Evans, who contributed more than 60 hours of her time preparing and filing returns for our customers!

We can't overlook this opportunity to thank two very special people who have taken our Clothes 4 Work closet to a whole new level. Joan Bloch and Sue Bloch learned that WCCCC would be the new home for the closet, which provides gently used professional clothing at no cost to those entering or returning to the work force, and came in asking if they could be of help by organizing the items that are donated.

They have done an incredible job of turning two adjoining rooms into attractive displays of clothing and accessories for both men and women, giving generously of their time and talents on a regular basis. Joan and Sue, thank you so much for your commitment and dedication to this project!

