



# NORTHEAST OKLAHOMA

# COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY, INC.

# 2014 ANNUAL REPORT

## Executive Director's Report — The Changing Direction of Community Action

### Successes and Coming Attractions

#### Successes

Each year the agency conducts a community assessment to review changes in key indicators of life in the agency's five counties. The community assessment also surveys a wide range of individuals in the community to learn what individuals believe are the greatest needs. Year after year medical care in one or more forms is in the top ten needs identified. The identified needs are for medical care, dental care, prescription assistance, and rent/utility assistance due to having to pay for medicine or medical care. The agency has worked for many years to find a way to address this fundamental issue and this year significant success was achieved. The agency has been working with community partners in trying to secure a federally qualified health clinic (FQHC) in Afton. The agency provided staff assistance in writing the grant and establishing a new

entity that would operate the clinic. Four years in the making, the clinic is now a reality and opened its doors in Afton on March 10, 2014. The clinic now has a Chief Executive Officer, physician, nurse practitioner, nurse, and patient services representative. It expects to begin providing dental services soon and will ultimately have a dental clinic at the site in Afton. The clinic provides primary care to all individuals, including those with insurance, Medicare, Sooner Care, and those with limited income on a sliding fee basis. The agency also began services as a "navigator" for enrollment in the Affordable Health Care program and assisted individuals to become enrolled in our five counties as well as the five counties to the west.

#### Coming Attractions

**Job Training.** The agency has been working for over a year to establish a partnership with Northeast Oklahoma A&M College to

*Continued pg. 2*

### Board of Directors for 2014

#### OFFICERS

- ◆ John Ann Thompson, Chairperson  
At-large
- ◆ Rebecca Jim, Vice Chairperson  
Craig County
- ◆ Gary Buchanan, Secretary  
Delaware County
- ◆ Jeanie Reed, Treasurer  
Delaware County

#### BOD MEMBERSHIP

- ◆ Anna Knight
- ◆ Dave Deffenbaugh
- ◆ Robin Kemp, Alternate
- ◆ Kelly Hampton
- ◆ Kate Randall
- ◆ Donna Wofford
- ◆ Rep. Will Fourkiller

#### BOD MEMBERSHIP

- ◆ Dr. Ron Cambiano
- ◆ Kim Roblyer
- ◆ Brian Sitsler
- ◆ Laura Garner
- ◆ Scott Van Hoose
- ◆ Sherri Sherwood
- ◆ David Fensler

FIFTY YEAR  
ANNIVERSARY OF  
COMMUNITY ACTION  
1964—2014

Serving Adair, Cherokee, Craig, Delaware, & Ottawa Counties

P.O. BOX 603 (856 E. Melton, Suite C) JAY, OK

www.neocaa.org \* 918-253-4683



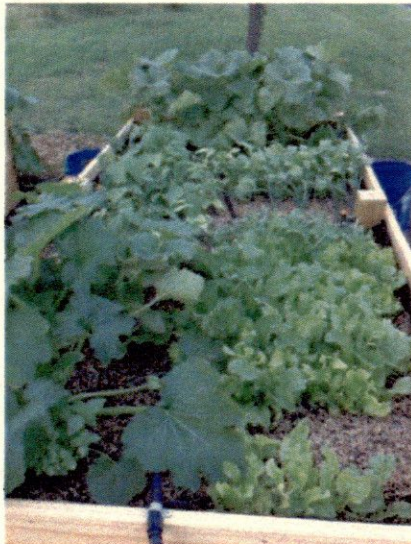
### *Coming Attractions*

become a distance learning site for the area. The agency has received funding to set up a distance learning classroom in the agency's conference room. When this is complete, the agency plans to provide adult education courses in its learning center to promote opportunities for adults to pursue higher education. The agency plans to work with child care providers in the area to provide both formal and informal learning opportunities to assist the child care workers to become certified and to network with other professionals in the area. This program will also be coordinated with Northeastern State University so that individuals completing the training in child care at NEO A&M can continue with their education and receive a bachelor's degree. The agency will also provide its own training programs in financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and other areas through this medium. Other job training programs will also be added to the mix of available programs. The agency has long known that education is the surest way for a person to overcome poverty for long-term success and prosperity and is proud to offer this opportunity.

**Food and Jobs.** For several years the agency has been researching how to grow food in commercial quantities and find ways to distribute that food, in part, to low-income families at a reduced rate. The agency has employed two part-time gardening experts who have identified a system to grow food in significant quantities for distribution. The Oklahoma Department of Commerce has funded a project for the past year that will continue into the current year to develop the gardens and establish a distribution system for the food. Final plans for the gardens are underway – stay tuned.

**Early Childhood Education.** The agency has been funded to provide Early Head Start services in Jay. The program will be housed in the agency offices as soon as remodeling can be completed. The

program will serve up to 24 children. Up to four pregnant mothers can also be served in the program. The agency has also applied to partner with child care operators in the Commerce, Miami, Jay, Tahlequah and White Oak to enhance the quality of child care to meet Early Head Start standards. The agency has just completed its first year of operation of the Education Station, serving children from 18 months through four years of



age. The agency is looking forward to having these children in our building and to assisting those parents who need additional services.

## SPECIAL PROJECTS

A variety of services have been added to increase self sufficiency and provide support to clients throughout the year.

**NAVIGATOR** – The Agency has completed the first year of service as Navigator providers to assist individual in enrolling for health insurance through the Affordable Care Act. The Agency has been approved to continue this service for the coming year. The Affordable Care Act Brochures have been distributed to some 192 businesses, doctors' offices, clinics, agencies, etc. This outreach effort will continue as NEOCAA Navigators complete recertification training online in order to assist clients when open enrollment begins again on November 15. Some 107 clients have been assisted since the first open enrollment period closed.

**SUPPORTIVE FINANCIAL SERVICES** – Three clients received loans through this program. Two clients have paid off their loans and one new loan recipient has just begun repaying her loan. Other applicants are awaiting action from the Loan Committee. One staff member completed certification requirements for use of Customer Finance Protection Bureau's new Financial Literacy curriculum. This program is designed to help individuals to qualify for small loans through the agency.

### TRAINING INITIATIVES

**BRIDGES OUT OF POVERTY** – A NEOCAA staff member is facilitating a Bridges out of Poverty class one night a week in Grove. The participants in the class are working to move out of poverty and become fully self-supporting. The class lasts 16 weeks.

**ARK AND LANDING TRAINING** – Training at both The Ark and The Landing is on-going for clients served by these facilities. NEOCAA is reimbursed for this service. Topics include Parenting, Financial Literacy, Anger Management, Job Skills, and others as requested.

### OTHER INITIATIVES

**ASSISTANCE WITH DISABILITY APPLICATIONS** – One client began receiving SSI benefits in July and reports satisfaction with the program. She says that she can now pay all of her monthly bills.

**ROMA** – NEOCAA staff have provided Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) training for most Community Action agencies – training which is a requirement for all CAP agencies. The NEOCAA Jobs Specialist received certification for providing this training during the past year.



**SPEC. PROJECTS (cont.)**

**JOB PLACEMENT** - More jobs are available in the area, though many of the clients served by NEOCAA Jobs Specialist continue to be hard to place because of legal issues and low educational achievement.

**VITA** - Recruitment of volunteers for this vital program will begin soon. Notification of whether NEOCAA will receive another year's funding has yet to be received. This program served 918 clients during the year.

**FOOD SERVICE** - NEOCAA staff met with community partners early in July to enlist their participation in the gardening portion of the project. Representatives were enthusiastic in their support. These partners included Delaware County Friendship Homes new Executive Director Roger Ely; Harley Buzzard, area Cherokee Nation tribal representative and staff; Jay Chamber rep Johnnie Earp; as well as others

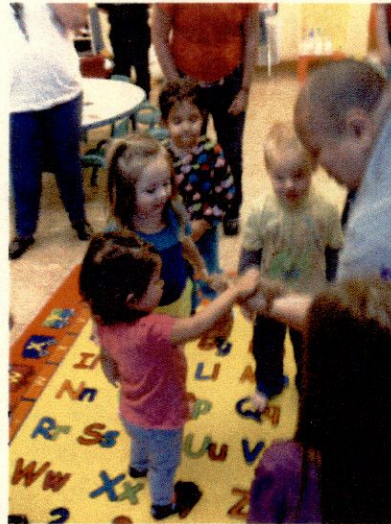
The gardening staff include both Rhonda Sloan and Rhonda Cunningham. These two ladies have started fall planting in four raised beds built by clients at Friendship Homes vocational program. Be sure to stop and look at these - especially the pumpkin plants! To extend the season, the program is adding a Greenhouse during the coming year and is planning an expansive garden. The middle school science teacher at Grove Schools has offered to assist in this project. Both the Board and staff recognize our area includes several food deserts - areas where fresh, affordable, healthy food is not readily available. ODOC provided seed money to start a pilot program. The results of this pilot are now being "consumed" by residents of Jay's senior housing and are attracting the interest of people driving past our building. As the Distance Learning Center is completed, more Training potential will be initiated.

**EDUCATION STATION CHILD CARE**

It's hard to believe that one year ago the doors opened at Education Station.

The center has had a multitude of children throughout this last year. The turnover in childcare is incredible! We have 2 full time slots open and 1 part time slot open. We currently have contracts with DHS, Cherokee Nation, Peoria and Shawnee tribes for families that qualify for subsidy.

Education Station is rated as a 2 Star facility by OKDHS and we recently had our first Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS-R) visit. This monitoring ensures that the facility reflects practices and standards required by OKDHS. The representative that came out and did the observation was very complimentary in the fact that most facilities open 1 year or less do not score as high as ours did. We are very pleased with the results and will continue to improve in areas that need strengthening.



**EDUCATION STATION SHOW AND TELL**



SERVICES	FAMILIES SERVED
Emergency Services for Families at risk of homelessness	229
TANF Literacy	15
Free Tax Preparation	918
Rehabilitation	10
Weatherization	55
Financial Literacy Assistance	38
Jobs/ Training & Assistance	277
RX for Oklahoma	89
Rentals	18
New Construction	4
Continuum of Care	31
Navigator/Affordable Care Act	107
Total	1791



## HOUSING SERVICES

### NEW CONSTRUCTION , REHAB PROGRAMS, RENTAL SERVICES AND CONTINUUM OF CARE UNITS

#### Housing Rehab

Our Housing Rehabilitation Program is designed to provide low-income individuals and families with a safe, sanitary and comfortable home environment. Low income individuals typically are able to pay their bills and mortgage obligations, but may not have the skills or disposable income to keep their homes in good repair. As time goes on, with unmet maintenance needs, homes become less comfortable, safe and liveable. Various sources of funds are available to eligible applicants to bring their homes up to an acceptable standard. Each rehab program is regulated by income eligibility requirements. An application must be received from each homeowner with proof of income and a copy of their deed. The home must be in the owner's name and in a county served by the grant. The agency writes grant applications for prioritized counties based on a rating scale and scheduled based on this priority and available funds. Funding varies and waiting lists are long. In the past year, the Housing program has been working on 6 grants.

Five of these grants were awarded thru the USDA rural development program. The Housing Preservation Grants (HPG) allows us to do partial rehab on the homes. We completed grants for the towns of Jay, Kansas, Stilwell, Commerce & Tahlequah to do 6 homes in each town. Projects consist of roof repair, roof replacement, windows, siding, doors, and flooring replacement, heat and air repairs and replacements, electrical and plumbing updates and porch repairs. The HPG grants serve very low income applicants. Twenty Seven of 30 homes were completed.

The sixth grant is an Affordable Housing Program (AHP) grant through Federal Home Loan Bank. This grant is to do 36 homes in our service area. This grant is for partial rehab on homes for low income families. These projects will consist of roof repair, roof replacement, windows, siding, doors, and flooring replacement, heat and air repairs and replacements, electrical and plumbing updates and porch repairs. The Agency already has a list of applicants and has already begun working on these homes.

#### Housing New

#### Construction

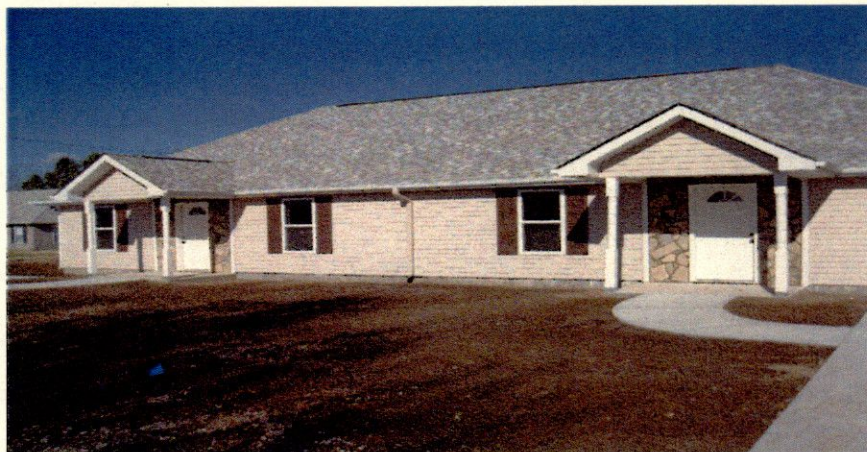
The Agency has completed 3 duplexes and 1 single family home this year. One 2 bedroom duplex and one 3 bedroom single family home here in Jay, Ok. And one 2 bedroom duplex and one 3 bedroom duplex in Colcord, Ok. These units form the basis of our rental project.

The purpose of the rental program is to have housing in our communities to support our low income clients to have a healthy, safe and affordable place to call home.

The Agency now has 8 single family rental homes, and 5 duplex rentals serving 18 low income families in our coverage area. We also have been awarded 4 grants from Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) to build 2 more duplexes in Jay, OK , 2 duplexes in Westville, OK, 2 Duplexes in Tahlequah, OK, and two more single family homes in Jay, OK. This will give the Agency a total of 19 rental units which will be a total of 32 families served.

#### CHDO STATUS

This certification enables the agency to develop properties for the continuum of care and to serve as a developer for projects to create affordable housing for low and moderate income families..





HOUSING AND WEATHERIZATION CHANGES

The Housing and Weatherization Services have suffered dramatic loss of funds and personnel since 2011 and yet they continue to make amazing and high quality progress by combining resources and cooperating with each other. Housing and Weatherization Grants are scheduled by the Managers of these two services so that available grant funds effectively support the crews and meet the goals of each program. The crews are highly skilled and are always ready to change directions to keep the two services on target. These services are to be commended .

**WEATHERIZATION - 2014**

Fiscal year 2014 ended with a total of 57 homes that were weatherized. Eleven from Adair County, 6 from Cherokee County, 3 from Craig County, 25 from Delaware County and 12 from Ottawa County. We have one crew of three guys doing Weatherization and Rehab grants.

The new state guidelines from Oklahoma Department of Commerce will go into effect April, 2015. These guidelines will address the implementation for Standard Work Specification (SWS) for Home Energy Upgrades by requiring all Oklahoma sub-grantees to install weatherization measures per the SWS tools. Each agency had to submit a detailed training plan to Department of Energy detailing the comprehensive, occupation specific training curriculum for each of the categories:

Retrofit Install I

Retrofit Installer II

Crew Leader

Energy Auditor

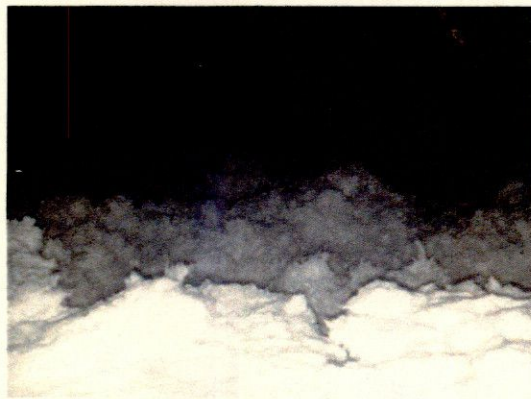
Quality Control Inspector

Each of these categories of training must be taken by all crew members and they must pass a written exam and field test before taking the next one. ODOC offered the Quality Control Inspector earlier this year to let everyone know how intense this course would be. So far from the state of Oklahoma we are the first agency to have passed this course. In fact, we have two crew members who have successfully received this achievement. We are very proud of Victoria Stewart and Ernie Flagg.

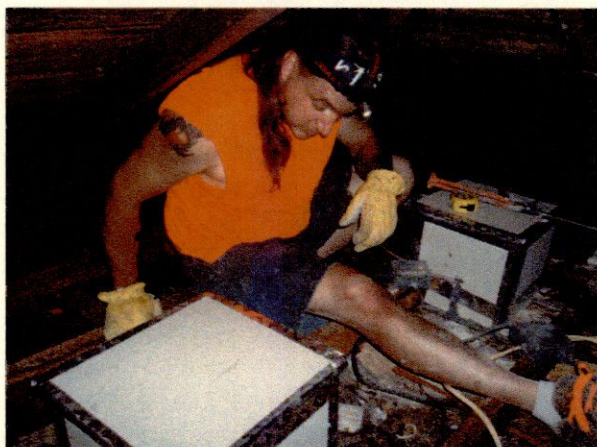
This training starts in September and will have classes every week thru the end of the year and into the first of next year.

All of our monitoring from Oklahoma Department of Commerce from all the grants was without any findings or concerns.

When the Weatherization crew completes each of the Weatherization grants, they will return to the rehab department until new grants are available.



Cellulose Insulation



Blocking Recessed Lighting





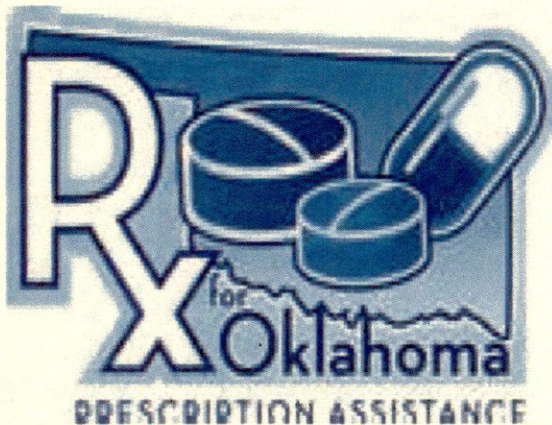
## Rx FOR OKLAHOMA

The RX for Oklahoma Program meets a major need of the population the agency serves. NEOCAA is the Region 3 Lead Agency. Leslie Rutherford provides guidance, fiscal, and training support to Region 3 employees. Examples of the type of service this department provides follows.

DC applied for assistance with his medications. He did have Medicaid but was taking 17+ meds that far exceeded the number allowed. RX staff was able to get enough of his meds approved through assistance programs that allowed him to use the number that Medicaid provided and still be able to take all the medications prescribed for him. DC was so happy with being able to get all of his medications that he has recommended many new clients to the RX program.

WM applied to RX for Oklahoma for assistance with his medications. He had been terminated from his job and his unemployment had ended. WM is a type 1 diabetic but was unable to afford the high cost of his insulin and other medications. He stopped taking them at all and his health was failing very quickly. RX for OK was able to provide assistance for all four of his medications and he is back taking them on a regular schedule. He stated many times that RX has saved his life.

Rx for Oklahoma has helped so many people just like D.C and W.M. Rx for Oklahoma Program assists individuals with ongoing prescription needs to access prescription assistance programs. NEOCAA is the lead agency over 17 counties. This year the agency assisted 89 new clients and had 1524 new claims with a total savings of \$485,350. Region 3 served a total of 878 new clients with a total savings of \$2,032,941.00 in new claims for the year.



## Emergency Services

Terri Cole the Agency Case Worker reported the following: It's often said that you don't miss something until you no longer have it. That is exactly how I felt after I resigned in December. I am so thankful to have been given the opportunity to come back to work and be a part of such a great agency. Jumping right back into where I left off the emergency assistance program continues to assist families over the five county service areas. A total of \$72013.76 has been well spent assisting household over the past year preventing disconnection of utilities, and evictions from homes. To me every application that is approved is considered a success. Often some applications just stand out more than others. Since coming back in April, and utilizing the Emergency Solutions Grant, the agency was able to assist T.T. a single female, undergoing chemo treatment and unable to work, to be able to stay in her home and not worry about an eviction or disconnection of her utility service, until she could return to work. B.K., another single female, is now living in an affordable apartment after she had been living in an abandoned home for over a month with no electricity or water. Probably the application that has been the most rewarding within the last four months was the one taken from Adair County. The Case manager was called by Adair County Child Welfare of alleged sexual abuse on a small child. The alleged abuser was a family member living in separate houses but on the same property. In order for this young child to remain in the home with his family the family had to relocate immediately. Working closely and quickly with child welfare, the agency was able to assist with the start up cost and moving expenses helping to keep this child safe and prevent removal from his home. Once again it's great to be back and I am ready to help many more families!

The emergency assistance program utilizes various funding sources to assist families, with unexpected emergencies; however, these grants do have eligibility requirements, and all applicants must meet the eligibility guidelines.





*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.



**LONGEVITY AWARDS**



Congratulations to three employees who have served the agency for 15 years.

Leslie Rutherford, Regional Manager

For RX for Oklahoma,

George Cochran, Weatherization/Housing Worker,

Mary Ann Overall, Services Director

AMERICA'S POVERTY  
FIGHTING NETWORK



## CONTACTS

## Northeast Oklahoma Community Action Managing Agency Staff

Phone: 918-253-4683

FAX -918-253-6059

1-877-794-6552 (800)

856 E. Melton,

P.O. Box 603 74346

Jean Cooper Executive Director	EXT 131	<a href="mailto:jcooper@neocaa.org">jcooper@neocaa.org</a>
Mary Ann Overall Services Director	EXT 130	<a href="mailto:moverall@neocaa.org">moverall@neocaa.org</a>
Natasha Tanner Business Manager	EXT 135	<a href="mailto:ntanner@neocaa.org">ntanner@neocaa.org</a>
Elesa Graham Fiscal Assistant	EXT 122	<a href="mailto:egramham@neocaa.org">egramham@neocaa.org</a>
Terry Schroeder Planner/Grants	EXT 127	<a href="mailto:tshroeder@neocaa.org">tshroeder@neocaa.org</a>
Debby Foreman WX Manager	EXT 121	<a href="mailto:dforeman@neocaa.org">dforeman@neocaa.org</a>
Cameron Dozier Housing Manager	EXT 140	<a href="mailto:cdozier@neocaa.org">cdozier@neocaa.org</a>
Kristi Helsel Human Resources Mgr.	EXT 117	<a href="mailto:khelsel@neocaa.org">khelsel@neocaa.org</a>
Cindy Templeman Tax Program Mgr.	EXT 163	<a href="mailto:ctempleman@neocaa.org">ctempleman@neocaa.org</a>
Becki Caudill Center/Director/Teacher	253-6399	<a href="mailto:bcaudill@neocaa.org">bcaudill@neocaa.org</a>
Julia Teska Job Development Spec.	EXT 157	<a href="mailto:jteska@neocaa.org">jteska@neocaa.org</a>
Leslie Rutherford RX for OK Director	EXT 129	<a href="mailto:lrutherford@neocaa.org">lrutherford@neocaa.org</a>
Terri Cole Case Manager	EXT 133	<a href="mailto:tcoble@neocaa.org">tcoble@neocaa.org</a>
Rhonda Sloan Garden Manager	EXT 157	<a href="mailto:rsloan@neocaa.org">rsloan@neocaa.org</a>
Rebecca	EXT 110	
Twila Kuder Adm. Assistant	EXT 128	<a href="mailto:tkuder@neocaa.org">tkuder@neocaa.org</a>