

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

NORTHEAST OKLAHOMA COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY

Helping People, Changing Lives

Executive Director's Report



The Year of Expansion

The agency is extremely proud to report that several new initiatives were initiated during this year. Several of these projects were years in the making and significantly expand the agency's ability to assist any number of individuals and families that we were unable to help before. The range of supports for these, and other, families is also dramatically increased. These new and expanded services are also important because they rely on partnerships with a wide range of organizations and individuals. This helps expand the awareness of Community Action to a much wider community and dramatically increases the impact of our efforts to assist low-income individuals and families.

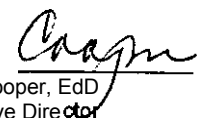
Eat* Head Stan. The agency assumed responsibility for the Early Head Start program located in Jay on September 1, 2014. The program has been fully enrolled with a combination of 24 infants, toddlers and pregnant mothers since the agency started services on November 3, 2014. The program has an active Policy Council to assist the management and Board of Directors. The program operates year-round and also provides child care before and after the Early Head Start day.

Early Head Stan - Child Care Partnership. The agency received funding to partner with five child care operators to serve a total of 72 infants and toddlers. The partners are located throughout the agency's service area. There are 5 partners and they are located in Commerce, Miami, Jay, Grove and Tahlequah. The programs are operated by a variety of programs including a faith-based program, a family child care home, a tribal child care center, the agency's own Education Station, and a private child care center. These programs are expected to become operational over the next few months.

Distance Learning. The agency has worked for several years to become a part of Northeast Oklahoma A&M College's distance learning network. The equipment has now been installed and staff will be working with the college to begin offering classes locally. The equipment will also be used to record and distribute training that the agency is developing.

Produce and Posies. The agency has garden beds that are now producing vegetables for the general public and vegetables to be available at a discount to agency clients. The garden also has produced flowers for sale to the general public to increase the support to the garden

These expansions have translated to additional funds being spent in the area. This year's spending increased by 13.5 over the previous year, with spending at \$3,053,482 compared to last year's spending of \$2,690,714. The number of employees increased by 46% from 24 to 35 employees. These numbers will both increase over the next year as these new programs become fully implemented. One of the agency's goals has been to expand its net worth each year by \$50,000. This year was an exceptionally successful year for the net worth of the agency. The total net assets of the agency increased by 8697,045 from \$3,643,4478 to \$4,340,493. The represented an increase in net worth of 19%. The agency produced a number of rental units during the past year and now operates a total of 24 units. An additional 18 units have been funded and will be constructed in the next two years, creating a total of 42 rental units throughout the five counties.

CAC 
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BOARD MEMBERSHIP

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- Brian Sitsler
- Laura Garner
- Amity Sparks
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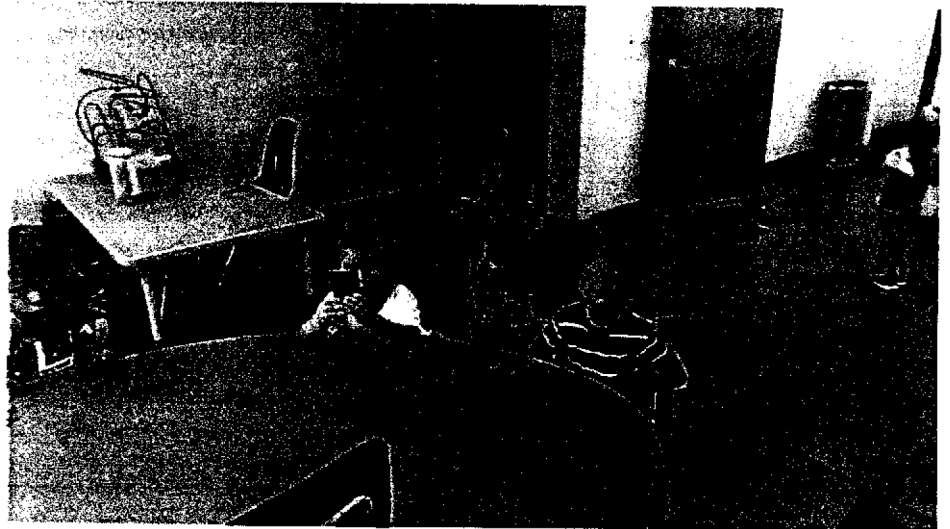
Early Head Start, Education Station, and Child Care Partnerships

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE CHILDREN

This year has been a great year full of new adventures and lots of forward progress at NEOCAA for the Early Childhood area. NEOCAA is proud to report that the Education Station name is something known in our community. Children are growing and as they age out we have successfully been able to move new children right in through maintaining a waitlist. Early Head Start became a program once again to the services offered through the agency. NEOCAA has also become a part of the Early Head Start Child Care Partnership grant and is working with 5 other centers to enhance each child care center in all areas through higher standards and extra money to better serve the children and families.



Toddlers learn to walk, play, and eat in a safe and educational environment.



Our own Education Station is proud to be a part of the next steps forward in infant and toddler care by participating in this Early Head Start Child Care Grant. We look forward to all the new changes and cannot wait to see where another year takes us.

We proudly work with children from 6 weeks to age 3 and provide programs for pregnant moms as well



Produce and Posies

PRODUCTION REPORTS FOR START UP OF THE GARDENS

APRIL - SEPTEMBER

OVER A THOUSAND POUNDS OF FOOD WAS PLANTED AND HARVESTED

FOOD PROGRAM/GARDENS – The garden program has completed a successful first year. Construction of raised beds is complete thanks to a grant from the Donna Nigh Foundation. This grant paid the salary of a client from Delaware County Friendship Homes to build the beds. Mrs. Nigh and her husband, the former Governor George Nigh, recently toured the gardens to view the completed project. They were delighted to see the flourishing beds and to sample some of the delicious produce. To those who have not yet visited the gardens, the invitation is open at the Triple Cross Ranch located between Jay and Grove just off Highway 59. Thanks also go to Amy and Dewey Stanford for their generosity in providing space for the gardens at their place.

Winter planting is nearing completion and lots of vegetables are almost ready to harvest and ready to sell.

IT'S ALL ABOUT HEALTHY EATING, PLANTING, AND GROWING

The agency started visiting farms, and green houses, economical ways to grow food, building beds for planting weed less food items. Knowing when to grow, what to grow and how to grow in what soil. We all knew that there were 3 essentials to growing—water, productive soil and seeds or plants which were planted appropriately. Most important, what to sell and at what price so that the food was not only beautiful but delicious, affordable and profitable.

The second most important work is understanding, teaching and finding people who are willing and able to keep the price down and subsidize hard working people who could learn how to make the beds, plant the seeds, tend the vegetables and flowers, and sell plants. Don't forget that the weather is hot and the timing is very important. These women did it all and even found out how to use food stamps to ease the costs to people who can't afford to pay high prices for healthy foods.

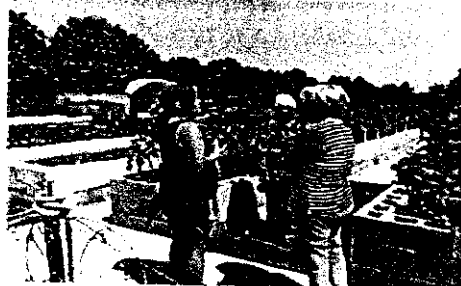
The project was ramrodded by Team Rhonda, (Rhonda Sloan and Rhonda Cunningham). Individuals from Cherokee Nation helped with planting, picking, and selling in Delaware County In Colcord, Jay, and Triple Cross Ranch.

What an undertaking!

The largest donors to the start up funds were Donna Nigh Foundation. They donated \$10,000 to help with the start up and only asked that individuals with developmental disabilities be involved in learning to build planting beds for sale and how to deliver and set up beds for local purchasers. The Nighs were amazed at the progress made in the few months the Agency had to start this project.

The agency donated 193 lbs of produce to Senior Citizens and Feed my Sheep. Keep in mind that the Fall Garden is up and going. We have vining okra that is producing right now.

This has been fun to watch. We have okra, squash, crowder peas, green beans, lettuce, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, sweet potatoes, kale and turnips growing at this time.



GREEN HOUSE UPDATE:

MUMS ARE GETTING REALLY BIG AND PRETTY.



THEY WILL BE READY FOR SALE BY OCTOBER FOR \$15.00 EACH

PANSIES ARE STARTING TO BLOOM

ZINNIAS ARE IN FULL BLOOM AS WELL AS ARE SNAPDRAGONS.

WEATHERIZATION, PARTIAL REHAB OF CLIENT HOMES, CONSTRUCTION OF NEW DUPLEXES

WEATHERIZATION The

agency's two man crew was able to Weatherize 34 homes the past fiscal year (22 homes from the DHS grant, and 12 home's from the DOE grant). R10 homes, but extra money came available for 12 more homes and we gladly accepted these additional funds.

Counties that were Weatherized were: 6 in Adair, 4 in Cherokee, 1 in Craig, 14 in Delaware, and 9 in Ottawa for a total of 34.

In between the weatherization grants, the crew changes gear and does the rehabilitation work for the AHP rehabilitation grant. This grant lets us rehab 36 homes within a 3 1/2 year period. We were asked by the Oklahoma Department of Commerce to help our neighboring Muskogee County to complete their DHS grant. Again , we gladly accepted their request. They will have a total of ten homes

for 2015-2016. As part of this request, we were asked if we would like to add Muskogee County Weatherization to our area. This additional county will add approximately three months of guaranteed work for our Agency.

HOUSING

The Housing and Weatherization personnel are noticeably reduced by funding levels. None the less, our WX/Housing staff have been on the top of classes for the last 2 years. Weatherization training has been updated and the subject matter is much more difficult. Both Ernie and Victoria have completed all levels of required levels of required training and they are considered knowledgeable in their field. Victoria is now training others in Weatherization skills. We are proud that our staff are willing and competent to meet the goals of the program in exceptional ways. Our monitors are always complimentary of the work ethics and skills they display.

The Agency keeps an unduplicated count of Services to our Clients and Families served throughout the year:

Services	Families Served
Emergency Services for Families at risk of Homelessness	239
TANF Literacy	13
Free Tax Preparation	736
Rehabilitation	24
Weatherization (DOE and DSH)	34
Financial Literacy Assistance	4
Jobs/Training & Assistance RX for Oklahoma	203
Rentals	57
New Construction	26
Continuum of Care	8
Navigation/Affordable Care Act	17
	12
Total	1373

TRADITIONAL PROGRAMS FOR ADULT LEARNING

Special Projects

BRIDGES OUT OF POVERTY— NEOCAA partners with the organization in Delaware County which sponsors the Bridges out of Poverty program for that area. This is a program which assists people living in poverty to take the needed steps and make the necessary changes in their lives to move from living in poverty to the middle class. Janet Stamper, Case Manager for NEOCAA, and Julia Teska, Coordinator for Special Projects) serve on the Bridges Board of Directors, and Julie facilitates the weekly meeting with clients who are working to make the change. Julie also trains the Mentors, volunteers from the community, who will work with graduates from the program following completion of the classes. The current group will graduate this fall and commence working with their mentors. They will be tracked by the organization to ensure they stay on track.

JOBS— Though the number of jobs in the area has risen, clients continue to need assistance in finding and keeping employment. This primarily is because of educational and legal barriers or lack of affordable transportation. The Special Projects Coordinator provides one-on-one job counseling, Life Skills training, and information available job-specific training and funding assistance for the training. Life Skills classes are provided weekly at the Ark in Ottawa County. Topics most requested are "Managing Personal Anger", "Parenting", "Budgeting/Financial Literacy", "Stress Management", and "Indianpreneurship". The last-cited class is designed to assist clients wishing to start small businesses. Two Ark clients have started small businesses, and these seasonal businesses have survived year one.

FINANCIAL LITERACY - A lack of budgeting skills continues to be an issue for many NEOCAA clients, particularly for those seeking emergency assistance. These clients are referred to the Special Projects coordinator and counseling and/or training is scheduled. Most training/counseling is conducted on a one-to-one basis since requests come in sporadically.

NEOCAA has been invited to partner with several state agencies who are planning how to provide Financial Literacy training to both their clients and staff. This is an extensive undertaking and planning is still underway. No specific request has been made of NEOCAA.

VITA — NEOCAA will again provide free income tax return preparation assistance in all five counties in 2016. Cindy Templeman will manage this program. Recruitment of volunteer preparers, greeters, and site coordinators will begin early this year in order to provide this vital service in all areas.

NAVIGATOR — NEOCAA received notification in mid-September that the grant for the Navigator program has been awarded for the upcoming Open Enrollment beginning November 1, 2015 and ending January 31, 2016. NEOCAA Navigators are Tamara Lockhart, Victoria Stewart, Cindy Templeman, and Julia Teska. Though Open Enrollment ends in January, assistance is available throughout the year for eligible clients.

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TANF REPORT, RX for OKLAHOMA, EMERGENCY SERVICES

TANF PROGRAM

We had fifteen students during the 2014-2015 FY. We had three students from the previous year and enrolled twelve new students. Two had been in the literacy class before while ten were new to the program. Five of our students gained employment, one went to CNA school and is now working with home health. One transferred to the Allied Jobs Program, one moved out of the area, another one dropped out because of a high risk pregnancy, and the other one was dropped because of non-compliance. We were very proud of our students who got jobs. Four of them are still working at the same job, and one who was hired on a temporary basis may be coming back to the class, Five of our students received glasses through DHS, and some have gotten help with their vehicles. DNS has been so helpful in meeting the needs of our students.

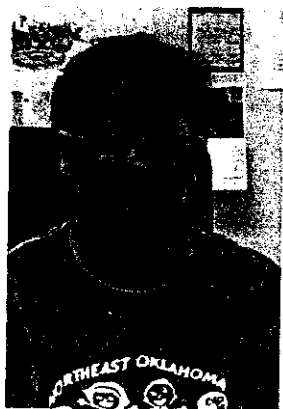
We ended the 2014-2015 FY with five students. The students that we reassessed during the year have all shown an increase in their academics, especially in reading. We do not do a formal assessment on the students' personal, social, and life skills, but we do see a difference in how they conduct themselves in social settings and group interactions. It also shows in their academic skills. By building their self-esteem and giving them self confidence in themselves, they are able to grow intellectually. They show pride in their accomplishments and learn how to feel good about themselves.

From time to time, some of our former students stop by and let us know how they are doing. They always have positive things to say about how the things that they learned in the literacy class has helped them cope with some of the problems they have had to encounter on their jobs or in their everyday life. The class like to hear success stories and we are always glad to see the former students and see them looking happy. This is a good testimony to the class as it is hearing from someone who has been there.

COMMUNITY ACTION PROJECTS

RX Annual Report

Rx for Oklahoma added a new Customer Service Representative in February 2015. Cindy Templeman, who was already apart of NEOCAA, took over the Rx position. She has jumped right in and has done a great job. Cindy is working with clients to apply for assistance for their prescriptions and assisting them with applying for insurance with Navigator as



Cindy Templeman Vita and Rx

well. Rx for Oklahoma region 3 Community Action Agency assisted 411 new clients; new claims totaled 4,291 with a total savings of \$1,561,505.00 for the year.

It just goes to show you what a great need there is for RX for Oklahoma services. There are a lot of things you can do without or can get by without using; but medication is not one of them. The clients we serve would lose the level of life they have while on the program if it was no longer available to them. Thanks for giving us the opportunity to assist the clients in our State to maintain a higher level of life.

EMERGENCY SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2015

Whether it is a job loss, or a sudden illness, an unexpected life event can affect anyone regardless of social or financial status. It is often those that are considered the average "working person" that needs assistance when these unexpected events happen. The various grants utilized all have eligibility requirements, and income guidelines that must be followed, but often these grants follow different income guidelines allowing more people to be served. This past year 133 households were assisted with 239 services, a service is a financial payment of rent and or utility bill.

Those 133 individuals assisted were made up of individuals that were homeless, at risk of homelessness, on limited income, and the "average working person." A total of \$41,663.83 of various grant money was used for rent, and \$23,099.64 used for utilities. The case managers in the emergency service department not only do intake for financial assistance, but also provide resources, and referrals, to individuals that may not qualify for assistance thru our agency, but are in need of assistance.

Last year the agency saw the need for an additional case manager, and in October 2014 Janet Stamper came to work for NEOCAA. Janet has a bachelor's degree in Psychology from San Francisco State University and has over 15 years in nonprofit social services. For the past year, Janet has provided emergency financial assistance to residents of Ottawa and Craig counties. Janet was originally working out of the Ottawa County DHS office two days a week until this July, when she moved to the Harbor, in Miami, OK. The Harbor is one of the shelters NEOCAA partners with in the Continuum of Care. Since July, the potential eligible clientele has doubled, with the focus on Rapid Rehousing with the Emergency Solutions Grant. Janet serves clients in Craig County, at the Community Crisis Center satellite office, in Vinita every Wednesday morning.

Terri Cole, Case Manager for Delaware, Cherokee, and Adair County provides assistance to Delaware County residents Monday thru Thursday from our Jay office. Adair County residents are seen on Friday mornings, and Cherokee County residents are seen on Friday afternoons at the county's DHS office.



Janet Stamper, Social Services

RENTAL HOUSING FOR ALL FIVE COUNTIES: ADAIR, CHEROKEE, CRAIG, DELAWARE, AND OTTAWA

Northeast Community Action Agency began an extensive housing building program in 2004. The first houses were built to be sold to low income people. The two, three bedroom homes were built in Bluejacket Oklahoma. One of the homes was sold after an extensive sales campaign. The second home was placed on a one year rent to own agreement. Near the end of the year the young woman had to move and the agency applied for and was approved to convert the house to a rental property. He agency purchased acquisition rehabilitation homes to be sold to low income clients in Delaware County. These homes were sold to individuals with developmental disabilities .As the housing market began to drop, the acquisition rehabilitation homes were converted to rentals and the agency began to contract with local builders to develop duplexes and single family units each year as funds became available. The 34 rental housing units have proven to be very successful and we now have rental houses which are rarely empty and maintained in excellent shape. The agency has also developed Continuum of Care houses in Tahlequah, Miami, Grove, and Quapaw and serves as HMIS Lead agency for COC shelter programs for the Harbor (Homeless), The Ark (FFATC) Individuals with Substance Abuse, Community Crisis Center (Domestic Violence and Abuse), Homeless families in Home of Hope in Cherokee County and Shelters for both men and women with Homeless issues, mental health issues from Grand Lake Mental Health and Creoks Mental Health In Cherokee County. The Agency also partnered on a Tax Credit development of 24 single family units in Miami, Oklahoma.



6000 Oak St. N. Miami COC Built 2007



1008 S. Cherokee St, Grove, OK COL (Milt 2007



215 & 217 Monroe St. ay Built 2012



920 & 922 2nd St Jay, OK Built 2012



201 & 103 Monroe St. lay, OK Built 2013



322 A & Cokord Ave. Cokord, OK Bunt 2014 113 A & 8 Spencer St, Cokord, OK Built 2014



649 & 651 13 St. Jaw OK Built 2014



RENTAL HOUSING IN CRAIG, OTTAWA, CHEROKEE, DELAWARE, and ADAIR COUNTIES



Ark Miami, OK Built 2012



Neosho Rdge Miami. OK Built 2011



913 NE 2" St lay, OK Built 2013



350 NE 1" St. Bluejacket, OK Bulk 2004



325A St Miami, Ok Built 2009



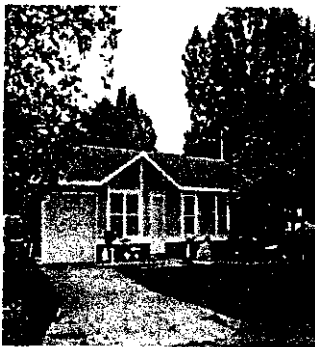
203 Rose St. Miami, OK Built 2009



657 13^k St. lay,OK Built 2015



638 14" St. lay, OK Built 2015



930 6" Sr. Jay, OK Purchased 2011



409 Price St. lay, OK Purchased 2011



913 2" st. lay, OK Purchased 2011



1434 Main St. lay, OK Purchased 2011



519 & 521 SE 4th St Miami. OK COC Built 2007



1479 & 1433 Bliss St. Tahletma h. OK COC Guilt 2007

