

Northeast Oklahoma Community Action Agency

Helping People, Changing Lives in Adair, Cherokee, Craig, Delaware and Ottawa Counties

We aim to help individuals and communities overcome life obstacles. What's Your Situation? We Offer Solutions.

Call (918) 253-4683

www.neocaa.org

January News 2015

Insider Buzz...

Release of CSBG Information Memorandum 138, Organizational Standards from the Office of Community Services. The Standards are organized in 3 thematic groups (Maximum feasible participation, Vision and Direction, and Operations and Accountability) with 9 categories for a total of 58 Standards. The agency is conducting a self- assessment. Stay tuned. You can find a copy of the memo here: <http://bit.ly/IM138OCS>. Assessment tools are online at the Community Action Partnership web site or here, <http://bit.ly/IM138Tools>.

Speaking of standards, Agency staff attended CAPTAIN training on the new platform for the agency's client data. This is an online data collection tool that helps with Results Oriented Management and Accountability for the Community Services Block Grant. Conversion in process!

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)

By now, you should have received your W-2, 1099 and/or other various tax statements for your tax filing! Don't leave money on the table! Visit your local VITA site for FREE tax preparation help <http://irs.treasury.gov/freetaxprep/> if you meet income requirements or

Click Here
to file your
taxes for FREE

NEOCAA is still recruiting volunteer tax preparers. Contact Cindy Templeman, Tax Program Manager, at ctemplment@neocaa.org or call the number above.

New Initiatives

A 2015 initiative we are launching is to improve healthy food choices and reduce the impact of food deserts in our service area. Our goal is build 52 raised beds filled with a special planting medium that is rich in minerals and vitamins which shortens the growing cycle. Food will be distributed to low- income households.

We need your HELP! We are looking for donors and/or sponsors of beds at \$500 for frame, \$500 for plant medium, or \$1,000 for both! Contributors will be recognized by permanently placing logo and identifying information on the garden bed and listed as a sponsor of the initiative.

Delaware County Friendship Homes will build the raised beds at a new location, Triple Cross Ranch, north of Jay. Thank you Rev. Dewey and Amy Stanford for the site!

Interested? Would you like to volunteer or donate, contact Jean Cooper at (918) 253-4683.

Indianpreneurship Training...

Ark clients completed training preparing them to open and operate their own business. One is currently repaying a loan received from the agency's subsidiary organization, *Supportive Financial Services*.

Collaborating, Training, Speaking

Are you seeking a community partner? Are you in need of a speaker or training? We may be able to help. Contact Jean Cooper at jcooper@neocaa.org.



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Emergency Assistance...

Thirteen- families in December avoided homelessness because they were able to receive rent and utility assistance; 10 received rent assistance and 3 obtained utility assistance.

This fund helps people with past due utility bill, rent or house payment to prevent eviction, disaster relief, and, more. Contact Terry Cole, Case Manager, at tcole@neocaa.org or call (918) 253-4683.

Early Head Start...

We all enjoyed extra days off with family over the holidays. Staff and parents raised approximately \$600 to purchase Christmas gifts for children in Early Head Start.

We are back and excited about kicking off 2015. Head Start staff and teachers have completed their screenings and various training sessions. Early Head Start Center awarded *Three Star certification* by Oklahoma Dept. of Human Services. Highest designation offered by the State!

Two policy council meetings were held in December to elect a representative and alternate for NEOCAA Board of Directors and approve the Early Head Start Continuation grant. The grant was submitted in January.

Education Station Child Care...

Teaching is all about winter, the wonderful things it brings, and kindness. We created a Kindness tree. When a child was spotted being kind, it was written on an ornament and placed on the tree. Children were so excited, they pointed out kindness from peers.

Rental Housing Development...

Single Family house for Rent at 1434 S. Main St., Jay, OK.

Contact Leslie Rutherford, Rental Manager, at lrutherford@neocaa.org or call (918) 253-4683.



2015 rental housing under development=8 new construction units (duplex design)! Construction underway in Jay, Tahlequah, and Westville.

Housing Repair (AHP Grant)...

Sixteen homes repaired, only 20 more to go! We are pleased that so many residents are able to enjoy living in a better safer home.

Weatherization Assistance...

Did you know that we were able to only weatherize 13 homes in our service area? Fortunately, funding from the Dept. of Human Services pays for 10 more homes!

Training and education. What can we say? Never can get enough. Staff headed to city for two-day mandatory training on the energy audit system.

RX for Northeast...

Welcome back Leslie! She's back at work diligently updating all service recipients on the caseload. Sadly we say goodbye, to Linda Ely. We will miss her.

