

Fall 2008

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## STRONGER TOGETHER

### Provides Healthy Relationship Education

Did you know that children from healthy marriages tend to be more successful in school, have fewer behavioral problems and are more likely to go to college? Did you know that women in healthy marriages have better relationships with their children? Did you also know that men, who are married, are healthier and live four years longer than men who are not married? NKCAC is proud to have been selected by the Head Start Bureau as one of 24 pilot programs in the nation providing healthy relationship education to our clients and their families.

Stronger Together provides low-income families with children (under 6 years of age) the skills and knowledge they need to develop and maintain strong, healthy and committed relationships. In partnership with Catholic Charities and Women's Crisis Center, the Stronger Together program offers **free** 8-hour classes in which participants learn and practice skills in communication, conflict resolution and parenting. Currently, the Stronger Together Program provides relationship classes in Campbell, Kenton, Pendleton and Grant counties with expansion to Boone, Carroll,

Gallatin, and Owen counties over the next six months.

The program also matches couples with volunteer marriage mentors. Through this mentoring relationship, couples receive support, guidance and encouragement from dedicated community volunteers who help them through their relationship issues.

"Families that attend our relationship classes are integrating what they have learned into their everyday lives so that they will live longer, wealthier and happier lives." said Christina Singleton, Stronger Together Director.

The NKCAC Stronger Together Program is currently looking for mature, married couples who would like to volunteer their time as marriage mentors and assist others in their community. If you are interested, please contact Christina Singleton at (859) 581-6607 or email [csingleton@nkcac.org](mailto:csingleton@nkcac.org) and tell her you want to be a marriage mentor.



Centers/Vasquez family enjoys their time together at the Family Wellness Retreat at the Drawbridge Inn

## Energy Assistance/Energy Conservation Helps Families Stay Warm

The average household will spend an estimated \$1,137 this winter just to heat their home, which is a 15% increase from last winter. All types of heating fuels are expected to be more expensive this winter. For low-income families, the cost of heating the home is a bigger portion of their annual budget than most households, and adds to their problem of being "housing cost burdened." Simply stated, housing cost burdened means paying more than an affordable amount (about 30% of monthly income) for rent or mortgage payments and utilities.

Northern Kentucky Community Action Commission has assistance available to help low-income households with their heating costs. Through a combination of financial assistance, energy efficiency education and energy conservation measures, we can take some of the worry out of keeping homes warm.

**The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a federally-funded program that provides financial assistance to families for their heating costs. The LIHEAP assistance is supplemented by private donations and funding from Greater Cincinnati Foundation, Duke Energy and several county governments in the region. Families may apply at any of our eight County Neighborhood Centers.**

The best solution to conserving energy and lowering heating costs is to ensure that the home is as weather-tight as possible. NKCAC also provides Weatherization services to eligible households. In addition, the house must meet certain standards of need. We test the home and then add insulation, caulk, make minor repairs and take other measures that lower heating costs.

Having a safe, decent and warm home is a need we all share. It gives the families we serve a home for their children, a place to plan and dream and work on their goals, and it's a need we're happy to assist with at Northern Kentucky Community Action Commission.



# Torch AWARD

## 2008 HONOREE

Northern Kentucky  
Community Action Commission is  
2008 Torch Award Honoree

Northern Kentucky Community Action Commission was recently selected as an honoree in the Better Business Bureau's 2008 Torch Awards for Marketplace Ethics. The BBB, has as its mission to ensure that all share in a fair and equitable marketplace.

In the application process, organizations engage in an intense self-assessment of their business practices and provide evidence of ethical business practices in their policies and procedures, staff and volunteer training, decision making, marketing and solicitations, supplemental services and collaborations. In addition, organizations must show examples of specific business decisions and the ethical considerations for each.

NKCAC was recognized as an honoree in the 'large nonprofit category' in an awards ceremony held in October at the spectacular Cincinnati Music Hall. "The Torch Award encompasses the spirit and tradition of the BBB unlike anything else," BBB President Jocile Ehrlich said. "It recognizes and honors businesses and organizations who fully commit themselves to ethical practices in all aspects of their business dealings."

The Cincinnati BBB was founded in 1926 when the economy was roaring. Consumers needed to be able to rely and trust the companies they dealt with on a daily basis. The Torch Awards are a continuation of the BBB's 82-year tradition and commitment to furthering its mission of promoting ethical conduct in the marketplace.

## County News Briefs

### Boone County

The Boone County Neighborhood Center is partnering with 12 churches and community groups this holiday season to provide food baskets, toys, gifts and support for 200 low income families whose Christmas would otherwise be rather sparse. The Boone center has one of the region's oldest and largest holiday gift programs for low income families. For more information call (859) 586-9250.

### Campbell County

Children at the Newport Head Start center are enjoying the new look of their playground after a group of volunteers from Toyota Motor Manufacturing and Duke Energy joined together to paint and improve the playground. The volunteers also collected toys, books and activities from their colleagues for use in the classrooms. About 200 three and four year old children are served in the Newport Center each year. For information on Head Start call (859) 431-4177.

### Carroll County

Neighborhood Center Manager, Vicki Kemper, and NKCAC's Weatherization program worked with volunteers from Project Comfort to fix up homes of several elderly residents on a Saturday in late October. The volunteers provide the labor and several local businesses provide the materials to help make residents' homes more comfortable and energy efficient in this annual event.

### Gallatin County

St. Timothy Catholic Church in Union is providing volunteers and support to the Gallatin County Neighborhood Center again this fall, continuing a 10 year-old tradition. The church provides funds for emergency assistance to families who are facing a financial crisis. St. Timothy volunteers help stock the food pantry year round and provide food baskets, toys and gifts for 35 Gallatin County families each holiday season.

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## From the Desk of the Executive Director

The national news has been grim lately: lower home values; higher unemployment; stock market plummeting; foreclosure rates exploding. We are all feeling the pain.

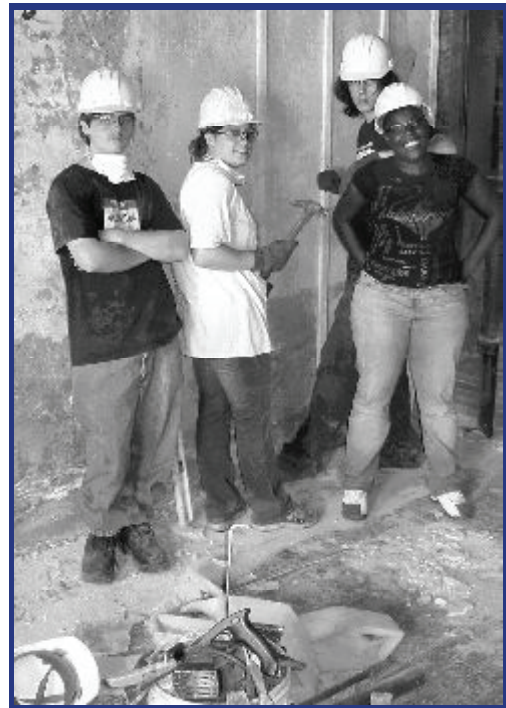
That pain is magnified for low income families who were already struggling even before the recent economic woes. While I watch the news about our country's current economic disaster, I can't help but think about a different kind of disaster we witness every day at Northern Kentucky Community Action Commission. I call it the *creeping disaster of poverty*, because it doesn't come on like a hurricane or a tornado, or even a stock market plunge. It is more subtle, but more pervasive. And in this creeping disaster of poverty, you can be sure that no one is calling for a giant government bail out.

The creeping disaster is one where wages are not high enough for a family to afford typical household expenses. Forget mortgage foreclosures. Most of the families we work with cannot even aspire to home ownership. The creeping disaster of poverty means that families must often face the difficult decision of whether to buy food or medicine; pay the utility bill or the rent.

It is at times like these when our communities need Community Action. It has never been more important to make sure low income children are ready for success in school. It has never been more important to provide training and employment opportunities for those seeking work. We have a responsibility – and know how important it is – to help families learn money management, decision making and parenting skills to better manage their home lives and preserve their scarce resources.

Just as it has never been more important for Community Action to be at work helping low-income families realize a better future, it has also never been more important for the community to step forward and lend a hand in that effort. Together we can respond to the creeping disaster of poverty and turn it into the blossoming promise of hope.

*Florence Tandy*



YouthBuild provides participants a wage while at-risk young people learn job skills, achieve their GED's and develop leadership skills that will help them secure employment. The program is funded in part by the US Department of Labor and receives additional support from the Social Needs Fund of St. Walburg Monastery, Butler Foundation, and US Bank. YouthBuild of Northern Kentucky collaborates with Newport Adult Education, HONK, Homebuilders Association of Northern Kentucky, Life Learning Center and others.



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## County News Briefs

### Grant County

NKCAC, in cooperation with Grant County Community Partnership for Protecting Children, has just completed a successful education series, using the "Love's Cradle" curriculum that helps families develop success as couples and as a family. The program involved 20 families who participated in a 12 week series that included communication, problem solving and family decision making.

### Kenton County

NKCAC's literacy program, Literacy in Northern Kentucky (LINK), is conducting a Literacy drive to increase their tutor-learner matches in Kenton County. LINK provides one-on-one literacy instruction for adults using volunteer tutors. LINK's staff and volunteers provide training, support and materials to help make the experience productive for both the tutor and learner. Call (859) 655-2943 for information on LINK.

### Owen County

The Owen County Senior Center participants hosted a booth at Sweet Owen Days in late September. They provided information about the center to passers by and sold crafts and baked goods. Proceeds are used to provide recreational outings for center participants. The center is open weekdays from 9:00am to 3:00 pm. Contact the Center at (502) 484-3139 for more information.

### Pendleton County

Artist T.J. Murphy has finished painting a mural on the wall of the activity room in the Falmouth Head Start Center. T.J. is an employee at Toyota and participated in this summer's Paint the Playground project in Newport. Seeing the need, he wanted to do more to enrich the experience of the children, and chose a gift of art for the Falmouth center.

## Elected Officials Visit Head Start



The children at the Covington Head Start were eager to learn about voting and enjoyed a visit from Kentucky State Representative Alecia Webb-Edgington and Covington Mayor Butch Callery. The children cast their ballots for their favorite fruit (Grapes won!).

Head Start provides a free, quality pre-school experience for low income 3 and 4 year olds from Boone, Campbell, Kenton and Pendleton Counties.

The mission of Northern Kentucky Community Action Commission is to help low income individuals and families develop the knowledge, opportunities and resources they need to achieve self reliance.

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