

## Spring/Summer 2010

Volume III, Issue 2

### Board of Directors

Kathleen Hougham, President

Carl Baumann, Vice President

Mark Pierce, Secretary

Steven Bradley, Treasurer

Rosana Aydt

Kathleen Black

Dennis Chapman

April Defalco

Verna Fenhoff

Ella Frye

Barbra Haun

Brittany Hinton

Greta Hoffman

George Kent

Kris Knochelmann

Cindy Millay

Penny Smith

Linda Viox

Wayne Whalen

Paul Wirtz

Aaron Wolfe-Bertling

## A NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

On Thursday, March 4, 2010 families from each of our six Head Start centers participated in the 3rd annual “Night at the Museum.” This year’s event may not have been as zany as the movie of the same name; but we had our highest attendance yet, with nearly 500 participants!

What did they do? The evening began with dinner prepared and served by the Newport Head Start kitchen staff. Head Start bus drivers then opened their doors to all who needed transportation and taxied them to the Duke Energy Children’s Museum at the Cincinnati Museum Center for more family fun. Teachers and family advocates greeted them all at the museum.

As families left the Museum at the end of the evening, all children received a gift bag, compliments of PNC Bank. In the bags were 2 science experiments for the children to enjoy at home, and an insect magnifying container for more exploration.

Parking and admission to the museum were paid for by a **PNC Grow Up Great with Science** grant through the Cincinnati Museum Center. This excellent partnership seeks to educate teachers, parents, and the children about science—in a meaningful way.

Everyone had a wonderful time. The event could not have happened without teamwork from all Head Start components, the Cincinnati Museum Center, and PNC Bank. NKCAC Head Start looks forward to another Night at the Museum next spring.



A big pile of sand, a few funnels, and lots of imagination make for big fun for Head Start students at the CMC Children’s Museum.

## NKCAC Tackles Tough Job Market With a Fresh Approach

Wouldn't you love to have a whole team of people helping you find your next job? Well, now you can.

Finding a job is not the simple task it used to be. Both the technology used to apply for a job and the types of skills employers are looking for have changed drastically in recent years. Adding the fact that so many people are looking for work these days, we find ourselves in one of the toughest employment scenarios in recent history.

That is why this was the perfect time for NKCAC to launch its newest initiative, ReKindle Staffing, an alternative staffing program. It's the team of people, working on behalf of our clients, that is the key to finding that great job.

NKCAC has been helping low-income and entry-level individuals find employment for many years—through training programs such as Senior Community Services Employment

and YouthBuild. But, the current environment requires a more concerted effort targeted at developing the “right” employer-partners who agree to work with and around the special challenges that some of our clients face.

In collaboration with The Life Learning Center of Covington, ReKindle Staffing provides clients with pre-employment training and helps them find direct-placement, temporary placement, and temp-to-hire jobs that can lead to long-term careers. ReKindle also offers life skills coaching and other forms of barrier-straddling assistance, such as specific job-skills training, transportation and childcare assistance, and case-management support.

ReKindle Staffing received a JOLI (Job Opportunity for Low-Income Individuals) grant from the United States Department of Health & Human Services at the end of 2009, which, coupled with additional funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act [ARRA] and the Community Services Block Grant, enabled NKCAC to begin providing assistance to Program participants in March 2010.

ReKindle Staffing is looking for progressive employers and prospective workers who, with that little “extra” support, can achieve success in their next job. Contact Program Manager, Dana Skulan at 859-655-2946 for more information.



ReKindle Staffing introduces itself to the Northern Kentucky business community at the NKY Chamber of Commerce Business Expo in April. Dana Skulan, Chris Courtney and Donna Gosney made contact with over 800 people in attendance.



*Community in Action* is published quarterly by Northern Kentucky Community Action Commission.  
Florence Tandy, Executive Director  
[www.nkcac.org](http://www.nkcac.org) (859) 581-6607  
[facebook.com/nkcac](https://facebook.com/nkcac)

## County News Briefs

### Boone County

The Boone County Neighborhood Center was the recipient of approximately 5,700 pounds of food for distribution from the Postal Carriers Food Drive in May. The National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) “Stamp Out Hunger” food drive began 18 years ago, and has resulted in the collection of more than 1 billion pounds of food to date. Volunteers from the Mental Health Court and Boone County High School were on-hand to assist with the food pickup and organizing.

### Campbell County

The Campbell County Neighborhood Center has been hosting the US Census Bureau over the last few months. Many families have taken advantage of Census job testing held in our Center; and hope to hear back on jobs very soon. In addition to testing, the Census Bureau has placed an employee with us for 15 hours a week to answer families’ questions about Census form completion. We are glad to assist with the Census; and expect our County to benefit from great reporting.

### Carroll County

Carroll County Neighborhood Center’s second Garden Project took place on May 12, 2010. The program was supported by a donation from The Gap Employees, and a matching grant from The Gap Foundation. These funds were used to buy hearty vegetable plants and seeds from Interstate Greenhouse and Nursery at a discount. In just the first two years of the Garden Project, we have provided nearly 300 families with vegetable seeds and seedlings. Wonderful volunteers help out with the organizing and distribution, including KTOP recipients serving community service hours.

### Gallatin County

The Gallatin County Neighborhood Center was contacted by St. Joseph Church, which conducted a food drive for the Center’s Emergency Food Pantry during the month of May. We received donations of more than 250 bags of groceries, which will be available to help customers of the Gallatin County Center. Also, in May, the Gallatin County Center coordinated a mobile food pantry with the Freestore Food Bank, serving more than 100 households.

## Poverty Simulation

Northern Kentucky Community Action Commission staff hosted a Community Action Poverty Simulation and training session for Community Action Kentucky on April 26 and 27 in Frankfort. The event drew 76 volunteers, Community Action Professionals, and other leaders who came together for an interactive simulation experience.

The Simulation, originally developed by Missouri Association for Community Action, puts participants in the roles of low income families, very similar to the families we see at Northern Kentucky Community Action Commission every day. A middle class family sliding into crisis with a layoff...grandparents with limited incomes trying to raise grandchildren with health and behavior problems...single parents working at minimum wage...families caring for elderly parents...a young couple living in a shelter after an eviction. These are 'roles' in the Simulation, but real situations for many families.

By spending a simulated "month" in poverty over the course of an hour, participants try to keep up with rent and utility payments and pay for other expenses and debts, all while going to work, keeping children in school, and applying for assistance.

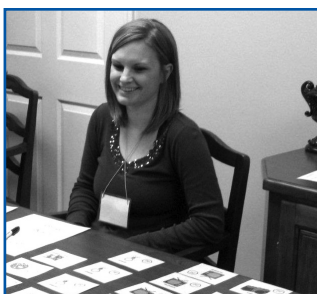
"People understand what poverty is, but the Simulation gives them an opportunity to experience what it feels like, first hand," said Jennifer Belisle, NKCAC Deputy Director. "Everyone is always surprised at how frustrating it is for families, how many opportunities to get taken advantage of there are, and how difficult it is to make choices that involve fraud or crime in order to keep their family fed and sheltered. We hope the experience translates into empathy and a call to action among participants."

Through a debriefing discussion after the Simulation, participants also hear from volunteers who have either experienced poverty themselves or have worked on the front lines with clients.

The training portion of the two-day event involved over a dozen Community Action staff from around the State, with the goal of increasing resources to host the Community Action Poverty Simulation in communities across Kentucky.

For those interested in attending a Poverty Simulation or hosting one for a particular audience, contact Jennifer Belisle at 859 655-2933 or [jbelisle@nkcac.org](mailto:jbelisle@nkcac.org).

*NKCAC Stronger Together program assistant, Shannon Carney, plays her role at the most recent NKCAC Poverty Simulation held on April 26, 2010 in Frankfort.*



## From the Desk of the Executive Director

As spring unfolds into summer, our thoughts naturally turn toward endings and beginnings. Endings, because the long winter is behind us and because this is graduation season. Beginnings, because graduation means new opportunities; spring means new growth; and of course summer is wedding season with all its promise and joy.

For these reasons and more, spring and summer at Northern Kentucky Community Action Commission are busy times.

Our rural Neighborhood Centers are providing garden seeds and plants to encourage and assist families in their efforts to eat more fresh foods through home gardening.

Our Newport Center will be providing child care services to help working parents who need a place for their children (ages 3-11) during the day, where they know they will be stimulated, nurtured, and safe. You wouldn't believe all the fun activities they have planned!

Our healthy relationship education program, Stronger Together, is gearing up for new education programming for couples, single parents, and teens to help them recognize and practice the skills that lead to healthy, happy, and safe home lives for our region's children and families, including a weekend retreat in June.

This year, as every year, many of our Head Start children will graduate from their Head Start experience into a new beginning in kindergarten. We have worked hard to prepare our 192 graduates for success as they leave us; and we wish them well on their new journey.

NKCAC participated for the first time this year in the Remke Student Achievers program, providing two scholarships for deserving high school seniors looking toward success in college, and beyond. We joined with some 16 other businesses and organizations to make sure these young people begin their next phase in life well prepared and with the knowledge that Northern Kentucky cares about them!

And finally, summer usually means that school's out for awhile, but not for a group of 24 young adults, aged 16-24 who have signed on to turn their lives around through YouthBuild, our successful construction training, GED, and character education program. This new beginning for them starts as we add the Northern Kentucky Workforce Investment Board to our list of partners and funders.

For information on these or any of NKCAC's programs and services call or visit any of our 16 locations, spread throughout the eight county region; check our website, [www.nkcac.org](http://www.nkcac.org); or call our administrative offices at (859) 581-6607. Have a great summer!

*Florence Tandy*

## County News Briefs

### Grant County

NKCAC's Stronger Together program recently partnered with the Grant County Youth Service Center at Grant County High School to provide healthy relationship workshops for students who are also teen parents. Eight teens received instruction in skills for having healthy relationships—such as communication and boundary setting. They also learned the warning signs of an abusive relationship as well as how and where to get help if they find themselves in such a challenging situation.

### Kenton County

As a part of its continuing Community Service Commitment, YouthBuild Hired Hands cooperated with City of Covington Codes Enforcement in graffiti removal. Most recently, the Hired Hands spent a Friday removing and painting over graffiti that was marring the walls of the Madison Avenue Kroger store. YouthBuild Hired Hands perform Community Service on a nearly weekly basis; and in the last 18 months have completed more than 50 such projects throughout the region.

### Owen County

NKCAC recently helped coordinate the Free Store Foodbank Mobile Pantry visit to Owen County. About 2½ tons of food were distributed to 110 families (more than 140 individuals). Volunteers from Hesler Assembly of God assisted in the event; as did the local Family Resource Center. The Free Store plans to bring the Mobile Pantry back during the County's Back to School Bash in August; and our goal, at that time, is to collect 5 tons of food.

### Pendleton County

JoEllen Dawson, Pendleton County Neighborhood Center Manager, led our tax preparation efforts this year, completing tax returns for 105 families and individuals. They shared a collective \$167,398 in income tax returns, including \$137,808 in Make Work Pay, Earned Income Tax Credits, Education Credits, Child Tax Credits and other credits. E-filing and direct deposits helped many receive refunds more quickly than through mailed returns. Tax credits for low income and working families are an enormous boost for household income.



Measure twice/cut once: Elijah Varner (left) and John Burton, YouthBuild Hired Hands from the third generation of trainees, get the measurements just right. YouthBuild of Northern Kentucky helps at-risk youth transform their lives by earning their G.E.D. and Pre-Apprentice Carpentry certifications, as they learn job and life skills, and serve their communities.



Jerry Hudson receives pepper and tomato plants along with some seeds at the Carroll County Garden Project plant distribution on May 12, 2010. The Carroll County Neighborhood Center began the home gardening initiative to help families save money on food, while getting exercise in the garden, and eating more fresh vegetables.

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.

**Northern Kentucky  
Community Action  
Commission**  
717 Madison Avenue  
Covington, KY 41011  
(859) 581-6607  
www.nkcac.org

NON PROFIT ORG  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
COVINGTON, KY  
PERMIT #173