

Community Action

STRAIGHT TALK

A quarterly update to close friends of
Community Action Partnership of Ramsey & Washington Counties



Community Action
Helping People. Changing Lives.

Community Action
Partnership of Ramsey
& Washington Counties
450 Syndicate Street N
Saint Paul, MN 55104



Dear Friends,

In early November, Americans took part in one of our most time honored traditions and a hallmark of this democracy - our quadrennial presidential election. As is generally the case, some Americans are elated while others feel dejected. Others are wondering the impact the election will have on Community Action and other programs for low-income people.

Since 1964, Community Action Partnership of Ramsey & Washington Counties has dedicated itself to reducing poverty and its impact on people. Our mission and none of the issues that we are summoned to tackle have changed. There are still far too many among us that desperately seek food, shelter, jobs, education, clothing, and medical care. Therefore, by relying on the wisdom, strength, and resilience that we have exercised over more than half a century, Community Action will stay the course in our quest to ensure that human rights always take precedence over politics.

Community Action is a partner in a nonpartisan movement. As such, we adhere to a Code of Ethics that calls us to "accept as a personal duty the responsibility to keep up to date on emerging issues and to conduct ourselves with professional competence, fairness, impartiality, efficiency, and effectiveness." Community Action remains dedicated to this code as we work to improve the lives of those in need. For more information about what we are doing, please contact me at 651-603-5951 or chightower@caprw.org.

With good wishes,

Clarence Hightower, Ph.D.
Executive Director



Community Action



AGENCY NEWS

Energy Conservation Mechanical Training Room

Community Action's Energy Conservation Mechanical Training Room is now open. Located at our St. Paul headquarters, this state-of-the-art facility will be the first of its kind in Minnesota since funding cuts forced the state to close its previous training site in the mid-1990s. The purpose of the training room is to further enhance the technical competencies of Minnesota's energy conservation service providers, mechanical contractors, and other weatherization specialists on a number of mechanical systems, particularly in regard to new and evolving federal regulations.

The well-being of those served by our Energy Conservation program has, and always will be the primary objective of Community Action. As advances in technology and related standards and practices emerge, the training room will soundly position all of Minnesota's service providers to perform proper testing and installation, increase our collective ecological and economic impact, and ensure the health and safety of the households we serve.

Head Start Food Pantry

On September 9, Community Action took part in a Reverse Food Truck event that secured approximately 200 pounds of food and nearly \$200 in cash donations in support of our Head Start Food Pantry. The concept of the Reverse Food Truck, a partnership between Finnegan's Brewing and Thrivent Financial, is to collect nonperishable food items and other donations in a joint effort "to end hunger in Minnesota."

The positive impact of this event was demonstrated almost immediately when a young mother of two small children visited Community Action to learn about Head Start. During the conversation, staff became aware that the family was currently without food. With donations derived from the Reverse Food Truck event, Community Action was able to provide the family with an adequate supply of food for the coming week.

New Park for Midway neighborhood!

The City now owns three vacant parcels along Griggs Street near Community Action. These lots will be converting into a five-acre park. Union Park District Council is working with the Trust for Public Land to engage the community on visioning for the park, and with the City on its development. They want to hear from people who live, work, and play near the future park. Because of our service and leadership, Community Action was honored to be asked to share our vision for this space. At our annual Employee Gathering staff members shared their ideas, hopes, and dreams with a Council representative. To read more about the future park go to <http://unionparkdc.org>.



COMMUNITY ACTION STAFF NEWS

Cassidy Titcomb is our new Senior Director of Strategic Initiatives. She has 20+ years of experience in outreach and fundraising in the nonprofit sector. Other posts include leading fundraising and communication teams in higher education and human services settings.

Passionate about working to remove barriers so that ALL people may achieve their potential regardless of life circumstance, Ms. Titcomb has served on several nonprofit boards. She earned her M.A. in counseling from the University of Iowa and her B.A. in philosophy from Colgate University.

Karri Kerns is the new Director of Head Start, bringing 25 years of experience in early childhood education, wellness, and advocacy. Previously, she served as Quality and Accreditation Services Manager with The Minnesota Association for the Education of Young Children.

Ms. Kerns has held Head Start, child development, and faculty positions at Drake University, Iowa State University, and Tulane University. She has an M.S. in Child Development from Iowa State University and B.A. in psychology from Creighton University.