

Sowing the Seeds of Change...

EHCAC's 42nd Annual Luncheon Meeting was held October 31, 2008 at the Nia Conference Center at Kalahari Resort in Sandusky. The Keynote Speaker was **Phil Cole**, Executive Director of the Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies (photo at right). Several notable officials were able to attend including **Representative Chris Redfern** (also shown in top photo, seated on the left). Many EHCAC Board members were in attendance including Pastor Kent (top photo, seated on the right); and Chris Raftery and Emma Moore (second photo at right). Doris Martinez received the "Promise of Community Action" award from our Executive Director Janice Warner (third photo). Other staff members captured by camera included Kristina Rodrigues, Alexandra Roblero and Cristina Curtis (left to right), who are members of the Head Start staff (fourth photo).



Sowing the Seeds of Change is our national and local Community Action theme this year, and EHCAC is proud to be a member of America's Poverty Fighting Network! Mr. Cole spoke about OACAA's new publication, "**The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Ohio 2008**". He and other members of Community Action are advocating to replace the current Federal Poverty Level (FPL) guidelines which are outdated and unrealistic with the new Self Sufficiency Standards, and he urged the legislators in attendance to consider the change. In Erie County, 2 adults with 2 children must earn **\$44,467** to be self-sufficient! In Huron County, 2 adults with 2 children must earn **\$42,182** to be self-sufficient!



Thanks to everyone who attended!

Head Start Teacher Carla Dennis sang a song at the Annual Dinner Meeting, "For Such A Time As This" which was very inspirational and well received. The Lyrics by Crystal Lewis, follow:



*I built my house here ~ Long side this mountain
 This rugged mountain that stands so tall
 I've had a good life ~ Above the lowlands
 It's more than I asked for, but less than I dreamed
 I've often heard a voice call down to me
 If you'd climb higher you'd find wondrous things to see
 But the way is steep ~ And a storm may come...*

*For such a time as this ~ Isn't it much too great a risk
 I've never flown from the edge of a cliff
 Never walked on the water*

*I've been content to not ask those questions
 That stir the waters and move the waves
 The windless waters are so much more peaceful
 They calm my spirit in silent song*

*I've often wondered what's eluding me
 The yearning's meant to free me from complacency
 But the way is steep ~ And a storm may come...*

*For such a time as this ~ Isn't it much too great a risk
 I've never flown from the edge of a cliff
 Never walked on the water ~ But if I turned away
 How would I know what I have missed
 Have I waited all of my life ~ For such a time as this*

*But if I turned away
 How would I know what I have missed
 Have I waited all of my life
 For such a time as this* ✪



Message from the Executive Director:

Happy New Year! The holiday season is behind us, and so is the election for a new president which was the longest “political marathon race” I have ever experienced. President Obama ran on the platform of “Change, Change, and Change” and there are many proposed changes that affect the community action network.

The economic storm has been relentless; but, community action agencies weather the storm by being resilient in providing quality service to our customers. Unemployment is at an all time high. One of the statistics I read for the month of December stated that Huron County had the highest unemployment rate for the state of Ohio. In addition to losing jobs, the number of homes in foreclosure is on the rise. These are troubling statistics, but the reality is this is the current economic climate.

As the leading agency battling poverty in both Erie and Huron counties, we are ready to face the many proposed changes from D.C. and Columbus. We applaud Governor Strickland for establishing the Ohio Anti-Poverty Task Force so that it would develop recommendations aimed at assisting the 3.4 million Ohioans living at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

Erie-Huron Counties Community Action Commission, Inc. is proud to host one of 22 regional “Conversations on Poverty”. The purpose of the conversations is to provide practical and pragmatic shorter and longer term strategic recommendations on reducing poverty in Ohio. This meeting will be comprised of allies of our communities, people who are poor and those who are not, identifying our top two recommendations. Once the Task Force receives all the recommendations, a longer term, multi-year recommendation will be delivered to the Governor by the end of April, 2009.

We will keep you apprised of the recommendations and identify the changes needed by EHCAC to take advantage of the updates on programs and new opportunities that are the results of this report. ☞

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EHCAC Adopts Core Values

While EHCAC has long had a mission statement: “*To promote self-sufficiency and improve the quality of life of those in need.*”, core values were missing. The following core values were identified and defined by the senior staff at recent retreat, and reviewed and slightly modified by EHCAC staff at our All Staff Meeting. The Core Values were then formally approved and adopted by the Board of Trustees.

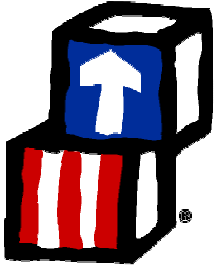
Accountability - Ensures that what is done is best for the organization; staff ensures they are doing what is expected and required; they meet standards.

Integrity - Trustworthy; truthful; doing what is right when no one is looking.

Listening - The person receiving the message holds judgment and focuses on understanding what is being communicated.

Loyalty - EHCAC comes first; staff does what it takes to get the job done including going the extra mile; there is a unified front.

Team Work - Focus is on “we” and “our”; there is no “I” in team; team members respect and can count on each other. ☞




HEAD START HAPPENINGS!

EHCAC Head Start Wins State Award for Excellence in Early Care & Education

In recognition of its excellent child care program and its ongoing commitment to children, three of our six Head Start Centers ~ the **Sandusky Head Start Center, League Street Head Start in Norwalk and Willard Head Start** ~ each received a **One-Star Step Up To Quality Award** from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services - Bureau of Child Care and Development, the state agency responsible for licensing and promoting high standards among Ohio's child care programs.



“EHCAC Sandusky Head Start provides a higher standard of care that exceeds Ohio’s licensing standards. This translates to more teachers, a greater commitment to in-service training and a more nurturing environment for children to grow and develop,” said Terrie Hare, Chief, Ohio Bureau of Child Care and Development. “This outstanding commitment to children and early learning is why EHCAC Sandusky Head Start has earned our One-Star award.”

Step Up To Quality is a voluntary rating system for early care and education programs and it gives parents a useful tool for selecting quality early childhood programs. “EHCAC is proud to have our Head Start Centers be awarded the One-Star program. We know that learning begins the moment babies open their eyes. Because of that, we are committed to high-quality care and education. Thank you Ohio for this recognition and thanks to our staff for their outstanding work with children,” said Donna L. Drummer, Head Start Director. Achieving these benchmarks is crucial for the future of Ohio’s children. Children enrolled in high quality early learning programs, particularly low income children, are more likely to stay in school, attend college, earn more money and be employed in high-skilled jobs than their peers. 

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