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PEORIA CITIZENS COMMITTEE FOR ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY, INC.

people helping people

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State Budget Impasse

Community Action Agencies throughout Illinois have begun to close, forcing agencies to turn away thousands of Illinois' most vulnerable residents. These families will not receive the vital services and support they need because the state budget impasse has no resolution in sight.

Locally, PCCEO has already had to lay off 12 staff members. Most of our programs are not able to assist clients at this time, as we wait for a budget that may not come until Labor Day or into September. There are a total of 1,297 PIPP customers cut off the program and is not eligible to re-apply until open enrollment in December. A total of 3,208 Ameren customers have been disconnected in Peoria County.

Many Illinois CAAs are engaged in community and economic development activities that range from affordable housing, housing rehabilitation, supporting local businesses, and employing small contractors to work in programs such as the Illinois Home Weatherization Assistance Program. These agencies use a

combination of federal and state funding to address local poverty issues.

"Many of our agencies do not have non-grant resources to keep doors open and continue to provide services during the budget impasse," said Dalitso Sulamoyo, Ph.D., President and CEO of the Illinois Association of Community Action Agencies. "The federally funded programs have no bearing on the state budget. We do not understand why agencies cannot receive federal funds during the budget impasse. We are deeply concerned that our working families who are struggling will fall deeper into poverty because they will not be able to get the necessary help from our agencies."

Community Action Agencies have already laid off over 1,000 staff and have begun to shut down facilities and services to seniors, children, and persons with disabilities due to the budget impasse. The absence of a state budget means that these agencies are now not able to help *thousands* of families with services.

"We are hopeful that the budget issues will be resolved before it is too late for many of our vulnerable families. We realize that tough decisions have to be made to balance our budget. However, federally funded programs that do not require a state match need to be authorized immediately. Without the federal programs our most vulnerable citizens will be on the verge of catastrophe. We are imploring that our legislators and Governor must consider authorizing federal spending so that critical services can continue to be provided. It is simply not fair that federal funds are being tied to our broken budget" said Sulamoyo.

UPDATE: *As of Tuesday 8/4/2015 SB 2042 was passed unanimously, 57 yeas to 0 nays the Senate; the bill was to go to the House 8/5 at noon however Speaker Madigan has delayed the vote to make sure that the bill includes ALL federal funds that are currently in the State of Illinois 2016 budget. IACAA representatives have been told that if the House and Senate approve the modified bill, the Governor will sign it!!*

UWI Graduates Eight

Graduates: Bradley Hause, Money Alexander, Tebray Pittman, Raymond Morris, Danial Barnes. Not Pictured: Terry Brown, Keith Burns, Shamon Thompson

On July 10, 2015, PCCEO conducted the last Urban Weatherization Initiative (UWI) graduation for students who studied to become BPI Certified Weatherization Specialists. DCEO awarded our organization with funding for this program in 2011. Since that time, we conducted 15 classes and graduated 102 students. The PCCEO UWI program worked diligently to inform students of job oppor-

tunities throughout Central Illinois. Through the hard work of our students, and the job information provided, 46% of our students received gainful employment in the occupations of Weatherization, Construction, Manufacturing, and other career opportunities.

One resounding sentiment most students testified about during the last graduation is that they feel they have finally com-

pleted and achieved something in life.

The UWI class not only provided job training and certification, it became a platform for building hope and courage to survive and thrive in this economy.

Yet on the same day of our last graduation, the UWI program's grant funding was suspended due to the budget crisis in Illinois. Due to the suspension, PCCEO will be unable to finish two scheduled classes for this year. That prevents 24 potential students and their families from the opportunity to reach self-sufficiency and to become viable contributors to this great community. If you desire to see job-training programs such as the Urban Weatherization Initiative program, please contact your State Representative and Governor to show your support.

Foster Grandparents Day at the Museum

On Wednesday July 29th the PCCEO Foster Grandparent Program attended the Free Senior Day at the Peoria Riverfront Museum called Senior Mornings. The group was given a light breakfast and a video overview of the things to look for in the Dinosaurs In Motion exhibit. This particular Senior Day was the largest group that the Museum had seen since they began having Seniors Mornings over 10 years ago when they were Lakeview Museum.

While attending this event the seniors were allowed to have access to all areas of the museum. If any senior has a desire to visit the museum the next Senior Morning will be on September 9th, 2015.

Free for seniors - these educational events take place every other month on Wednesday morning and cover topics from Museum exhibits to educational movies.

Held in Lakeview Auditorium (Riverfront Museum Water Street level). Free parking in the

covered park deck off of Water Street.

10:00 am Coffee and danishes, muffins, and other light breakfast treats

10:30 am Program

11:00 am Gallery visit

This program is free of charge. This program has been made possible by a grant from The Louise Flora Howard Memorial Fund and the John H. "Ted" and Betty Charitable Fund of the Community Foundation of Central Illinois.

Community Core Initiative Cleans Up Southside



"I feel accomplished when I am able to help a neighbor, or elderly, or veteran experience joy from my service." Jackson Elwell, a volunteer from the Dream Center Mission Week, worked all week at a resident's home within the Community Core boundary on Butler Street. Elwell was one of two hundred high school and college students who dedicated a week during their summer vacation to do service projects in and around Peoria.

PCCEO's Community Core Initiative invited Dream Center Peoria to partner with them in doing beautification projects throughout the core's boundary. A team of twenty youth

were assigned to the Community Core area where they did projects ranging from removing weeds, mowing lawns of abandon homes, and painting porches.

These young people in addition to volunteers from the Peoria Police Department's Explorers program, the City of Peoria work-release program, Southside Mission's Hope Builders, Southside Community United for Change and Community Core residents donated over 1000 hours of volunteer service in the month of July dedicated to improving the quality of life for residents on the Southside of Peoria.

Even in the midst of challenges, the residents of the Southside are committed to investing in their community. "We are not going anywhere. This is our neighborhood and we love our neighbors," said Yolanda Gaylor. Ms. Gaylor grew up on Kettelle St. and recently relocated back to the neighborhood when her mother became ill.

Ms. Gaylor represents one of many who believe there are great many assets and resources on the Southside. She said, "It requires us to engage with one another and learn from each other, in order to rebuild the strong connection we all had in our youth."

The Community Core Initiative is busy planning more activities and partnering with organizations, churches, and services in the area. CCI has partnered with the neighborhood associations Smith and Martin-Warren, the Proctor Center, and Sovereign Grace to organize Night Out Against Crime. Mark Carter, a resident within the Community Core and a member of the resident planning committee, said, "Everything we need to be great, we already possess. Now is the time to let our lights shine."



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www.facebook.com/peoriacommunityaction

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Administration

Central Illinois Catering
Emergency Services
Energy Assistance
Human Resources
Media Services
Weatherization

(309) 671-3900

Foster Grandparents

(309) 671-3950

Peoria Area Food Bank

(309) 671-3906

OKPARA Leasing (Affordable Housing)

(309) 673-1508

Early Head Start

Administration

(309) 495-5254

Pierson Hills

(309) 839-2106

Valeska Hinton

(309) 282-0222

Harrison

(309) 672-6522 ext. 6851

HEAD START CENTERS

Webster

(309) 671-3960

Trewyn

(309) 671-3958

Manual

(309) 672-6600

Sterling

(309) 672-6557

Urban League

(309) 673-7474

Lots Going on at the Peoria Area Food Bank

The Peoria Area Food Bank has been extremely busy this summer. We have received many wonderful "summer" donations from the local farmers from their gardens. Ackerman Farms donated nearly 3,000 pounds of fresh sweet corn to us the past week. Mr. Ackerman gathers volunteers from his church and they all assemble in his sweet corn fields and "pick" the sweet corn off the stalks. This corn is being distributed to all of our pantries throughout our service area.

We have had dozens of cases of fresh eggs donated also, delivered by Jessica, from Little Farm on the Prairie, located in Saunemin, Illinois. These eggs are fresh from the farm and have been enjoyed by all the pantries we serve. We also have many individual farmers that have brought fresh tomatoes, squash, zucchini,

including beautiful beets, lettuce, cabbage, kale and collard greens from the Fresh Food Hub (GITM Foundation). We are so very grateful for all of these individuals who donate these wonderful products to help us feed hungry families.

We have experienced many changes the past two months at the food bank. As of July 1, 2015 we are working with a wonderful, well established food bank, Eastern Illinois Food Bank, located in Urbana, Illinois. With that new partnership came some realignment of our service area. We will be serving 5 counties; Fulton, Peoria, Mason, Woodford and Tazewell. Eastern Illinois Food Bank will now serve Livingston, McLean and DeWitt counties in addition to their previously established service area. The team at Eastern Illinois Food-

bank is excited about this opportunity to partner with the Peoria Area Food Bank. We all look forward to working together towards our common goal of alleviating hunger and nourishing stronger communities. These changes will greatly improve selection of food and service we give you.

We also have a great new website at peoriafoodbank.org. Please log on and see all the information that's available to you. Should you have any questions please don't hesitate to phone us at 671-3906.



**Peoria Citizens Committee for
Economic Opportunity, Inc.**

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THE PROMISE OF COMMUNITY ACTION

***Community Action changes people's
lives, embodies the spirit of hope,
improves communities, and makes
America a better place to live.***

***We care about the entire community,
and we are dedicated to helping
people help themselves and each
other.***