LDCAA Celebrates 50 Years of Service

Little Dixie Community Action Agency celebrated 50 Years of Service on May 18, 2018. The historic event coincided with the annual National Community Action Month celebration. Therefore, clients, employees, families and local businesses spent the day celebrating both the accomplishments of LDCAA as well as the impact Community Action has across the nation.

Representatives from all LDCAA programs were in attendance in order to distribute information on their programs and get acquainted with potential clients. Upon arrival, each person received a 50th Anniversary themed “Swag Bag” which included folders with program brochures, stadium cups and a scavenger hunt puzzle. The puzzle was used to educate the community on LDCAA history and services.

The day was celebrated with hot dogs, yard games, face painting and an exciting giveaway. Upon completion of the 50th Anniversary puzzle, each participant was entered to win one of four gift basket prizes. Each prize was themed around a Little Dixie CAA program including Early Childhood Development/Education, Weatherization/Energy Improvement, Nutritional Health and Personal Hygiene. Each basket went to a deserving and thankful family.

Executive Director Rebecca Reynolds addresses employees at a joint event for Head Start in-service and LDCAA’s 50th Anniversary.
Little Dixie Community Action Agency celebrated Community Action Month during May 2018. Every year during the month of May, Community Action Agencies are dedicated to recognizing the success of the Community Action Network. America’s Community Action Agencies connect millions of children and families to greater opportunity, transform lives and make communities stronger. LDCAA took the time to engage in programs and events that showcase the innovative work in Choctaw, McCurtain and Pushmataha counties.

“Community Action Month is a wonderful time to honor and celebrate the impact Community Action has in the lives of families and communities across the country,” stated Rebecca Reynolds – LDCAA Executive Director. “The Community Action Partnership Network offers insight to leaders looking to understand what is working on the ground to help families thrive – creating smarter solutions that can be put to work within communities across the country.”

Reynolds continued, “This past year, our agency has served 2,072 families and empowered them to attain self-sufficiency. 503 children were served through Head Start; the Transit Program provided 15,330 passenger trips; 387 individuals obtained housing and financial skills and the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program donated 70,805 hours of community service. Our work changes lives and strengthens our entire community.”

Little Dixie Community Action Agency, Inc. has been engaged in the “War on Poverty” initiative since 1968 and continues to create opportunities for the most vulnerable populations in Choctaw, McCurtain and Pushmataha counties. Pictured are staff, community and Board Members participating in the annual Community Action Month event in Hugo, OK.
Each June, Little Dixie Community Action Agency Inc. participates in National NeighborWorks Week. As a NeighborWorks® America chartered member since 1997, LDCAA chooses to complete a community project within the tri-county service area. This project not only improves and strengthens the community; it celebrates the collective impact of the NeighborWorks network.

Little Dixie CAA participates in National NeighborWorks week every year. This year, LDCAA chose to revitalize and renovate the Broken Bow Early Learning Center in Broken Bow, Oklahoma. Twenty-seven volunteers representing various agency programs traveled to Broken Bow on June 5th and spent the day laying mulch, planting flowers and shrubbery, pulling weeds, raking leaves, cleaning playground equipment, laying gravel, hanging cabinets and organizing classrooms.

Additionally, LDCAA was fortunate to have the expertise of various community partners including Heady Trucking and Kiamichi Landscaping and Irrigation. Despite the Oklahoma heat, the volunteers banded together in order to improve conditions at the Broken Bow ELC for the staff, children and families that are positively impacted by the center.

Pictured above are the volunteers from various Little Dixie CAA programs who volunteered their time to participate in National NeighborWorks Week. The day was spent at the Broken Bow Early Learning Center in order to complete both indoor and outdoor renovations.
Child Abuse Awareness Month - April

LITTLE DIXIE COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY, INC

WE OWE OUR CHILDREN, THE MOST VULNERABLE CITIZENS IN OUR SOCIETY, A LIFE FREE OF VIOLENCE AND FEAR.

Nelson Mandela
Week of the Young Child 2018

Week of the Young Child is a fun-filled week celebrating young children and their families with hands on, collaborative activities. The week also encourages movement and healthy lifestyles through music, food and art. Little Dixie Head Start/Early Head Start/Early Head Start - Child Care participates in this event every year. The children had so much fun participating in the various activities. Additionally, several businesses and familiar characters came out to surprise the children including Clifford the Big Red Dog, PSO and Louie the Lightening Bug and Smokey the Bear.

Clockwise left to right: Antlers 1 & 2 Head Start participate in balloon release; Forest Grove Head Start is visited by Clifford the Big Red Dog; Clayton Superintendent reads to Clayton Head Start children.
May In-Service

Little Dixie Head Start/Early Head Start/Early Head Start Child Care staff and partnership attended an end of year in-service on May 15th held at the Kiamichi Technology Center. This in-service is held every year to wrap up another busy and successful school year for Head Start. EHS and EHS-CC continue to provide year round services serving children age birth through 36 months. This year Ron Mohl with Lakeshore Learning presented a high energy training to help new and veteran staff connect their day to day activities back to the CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) model. Head Start welcomes new, exciting, and creative ways to implement CLASS training for staff to ensure their comfort and familiarity with the tool. Ron was able to provide a hands on interactive training for a large number of staff in attendance that was enjoyed by everyone.

To wrap up the end of the day and celebrate Teacher Appreciation Week, ice cream sundaes and ice cream floats were enjoyed by everyone. Trainings during in-service typically take up much of the day leaving very little time for staff from other centers to interact with one another or the management team. During this time, staff had a chance to connect with staff from other centers as well as with members of the management team. Head Start appreciates the hard work and dedication that is put forth by each staff member and always welcome the opportunity to show their appreciation.
Head Start Celebrates Exceptional Employees

Full time Head Start contract employees receive an incentive to maintain high attendance rates at the centers. The employees pictured on the left each received this incentive for having two absences or less of the entire contracted school year. Employees who had perfect attendance included: Jennifer Adams - Hugo 4 Teacher, Jennifer Brake - Valliant 1 Teacher, Cynthia Hamilton - Battiest Teacher Assistant and Monique Knight - Forest Grove 2 Teacher. Employees having one to two absences included: Amanda Brewer - Broken Bow 3 Cook, Tammie Fewell - Antlers 1 Teacher, Tine Foster - Boswell 2 Teacher and Virginia Newsom - Rattan 1 Cook.

Renovations Completed at Broken Bow Early Learning Center!

Thank you to the many volunteers who participated in this project for the annual NeighborWorks Week project. We couldn’t have done it without you.
Southwestern Regional Housing and CDC (SWRHCDC) in Deming, New Mexico, celebrated 2018 Homeownership Month by presenting Ashleigh Strong with the keys to her new home. Ms. Strong, who participated in the Self-Help Housing Program, completed 65% of the labor during the construction of her home and was also the team leader for the self-help group whose responsibilities included keeping all members of the group informed and moving forward with the construction of all the homes in the group.

The Self-Help Program is funded through USDA Rural Development and administered by SWRHCDC. The majority of the construction labor of the homes is made by the homeowner and other participants in the program. SWRHCDC provides supervision and construction oversight to the low- and very low-income individuals and families who qualify for the program. The financing for the home loans is made available through the direct mortgage program administered by USDA Rural Development. Some borrowers may qualify for the subsidy mortgage interest rates as low as one percent.

Since 1949, USDA Rural Development has helped nearly 4 million rural residents buy a home. SWRHCDC and the Self-Help Housing Program helps to address the shortage of affordable housing in Deming for low- and very low-income families.
Northwest Regional Housing Authority Self-help program gets applicants into homes

GASSVILLE - Nancy Neaves cannot wait to become Gassville’s newest resident. Neaves, 58, is participating in the federal government’s Mutual Self-Help Housing Program and will eventually own a two-bedroom house on Walnut Street in Gassville. The program is funded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Rural Development division, and is managed locally by the Northwest Regional Housing Authority.

Officials with both Rural Development and the Northwest Regional Housing Authority - along with representatives of state, county and local government - gathered Friday afternoon on Walnut Street for a ceremonial groundbreaking ceremony on Neaves’ house in honor of National Homeowners Month.

The Self-Help Program required applicants to put in about 600 hours of labor into their future homes. That labor is dependent on what the applicant can do, said Vickey Stratton, the program’s director for the Northwest Regional Housing Authority. “Work can be anything from mowing to painting to just general upkeep on their home as we go through the construction phases,” she said. “If people have disabilities, we work within their individual bases to find out what works for them.”

Neaves’ house, which is expected to be completed this winter, will be fully handicap accessible with wider doors, a walk-in shower and no steps between the garage to the house. “It’s going to be totally ADA-accessible for me, which is beautiful,” said Neaves, who presently lives in a senior apartment complex in Cotter. The Northwest Regional Housing Authority is located in Harrison, and its Self-Help Program is available in 12 counties across northern Arkansas. It presently has eight houses under construction, Stratton said. The program offers clients a 33-year home loan with a present interest rate of 3.75 percent, Stratton said. No down payment is required for the program, and the housing authority has an in-house credit counselor that can help potential homeowners work through any credit problems they might have. The program does have income guidelines, which vary by county. “It’s best to contact our office to find out what those income guidelines are,” Stratton said. “We’re there to help you.” Neaves’ future home marks the eighth self-help home built recently in the Gassville community.
“This program started about 5 years ago, and it’s been really good,” Mayor Jeff Braim said. “It’s good quality housing. We’re happy to see people live their dreams out with new houses.”

Neaves said she first heard of the program from a neighbor at the apartment complex. “He knew neither of us were apartment people,” she said. Neaves said the housing authority checked her assets and credit score as part of the application process. Once the paperwork was completed, she attended several interviews before being approved for the program. “You meet some really nice people in the interviews,” she said. Neaves described the program as “a blessing,” and encouraged others to consider applying. “Absolutely, take the blessing. It’s a gift,” she said. “It’s independence, it’s responsibility. It’s accessibility if they’re disabled. It’s a sense of pride and self-worth.”

**Mutual Self-Help Program** - Northwest Regional Housing Authority
317 Industrial Park Road, Harrison (870) 743 - 6779
Nwregionalhousing.org

**Refunded Grantees**

T&MA Contractor Congratulates USDA Rural Development Re-Funded Housing Programs

Northwest Region Housing Authority of Harrison, Arkansas received their second repair/rehab grant with a goal of accomplishing 58 units of rehab.

Zuni Housing Authority in Zuni, New Mexico was funded to complete twelve homes. This is their second grant.

Inter-Lakes Community Action Partnership of Madison, South Dakota received their eighth grant to complete 14 new construction homes.
Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems IMPACT
LITTLE DIXIE COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY, INC

Autism Training

ECCS Impact had the pleasure of hosting a second training over autism on April 24th. Dr. Bonnie McBride, Center for Disease Control Ambassador for Oklahoma and the Early Access Team provided training to Little Dixie Head Start and Little Dixie Healthy Start over the different types of screenings that should be performed if a child possesses the early signs of autism.

ECCS Impact also participated in many community events throughout the quarter. These include the opening of the Farmer’s Market in Hugo, Little Dixie’s 50th Anniversary and Community Action Month Event in Hugo, the Choctaw Coalition 5K in Hugo, the Owachito Festival in Broken Bow and the Juneteenth festival in Hugo. Participating in community events provide ECCS the opportunity to disseminate Early Childhood and Family Resource Bundles to the community. The resource bundles include information covering early childhood development, community resources, healthcare information and child development activities.

Pictured right: ECCS Data Analyst Sarah Gross represents the ECCS Impact Program at Little Dixie CAA’s 50th Anniversary Event in Hugo on May 18th. Gross, along with Program Director Ashley Switzer and Coordinator Ashlyn Finch were able to educate the community on their program and the importance of early childhood literacy.
Southeast Oklahoma’s Newest Homeowners

May 3rd - Megan Covey
Pictured with Covey: Program Secretary Brandy Stachowski, Construction Supervisor Grady Ford, Group Worker Sommer McMurtry, Self Help Housing Director Terri Harless and Rural Development Specialist Zack Williams

June 29th - Mindy Simmons
Pictured with Simmons: Construction Supervisor Grady Ford, Group Worker Sommer McMurtry, Rural Development Specialist Zack Williams and Self Help Housing Director Terri Harless

April 26th - Terri Perry
Pictured with Perry: State Engineer, Construction Supervisor Grady Ford, Group Worker Sommer McMurtry, Program Secretary Brandy Stachowski and Rural Development Specialist Zack Williams
Little Dixie Celebrates New Homeowner

Little Dixie CAA’s Self Help Housing Program was pleased to be able to celebrate National Homeownership Month by presenting Ms. Lillian Loving with the keys to her new home. Ms. Loving is a second-time participant in the program. She sold her original Self Help home after retiring in order to move closer to family. Ms. Loving was able to complete 65% of the labor necessary to build her home with the assistance of her sister, Diana and nephew Josh, who were with her every step of the way. The construction process was overseen by Little Dixie CAA employees.

National Homeownership Month hopes to raise awareness and continue to educate the public on the importance of homeownership to individual communities and the nation. Homeowners pay taxes and are more involved in their communities. Additionally, homeownership provides stability for families.

The Self Help Housing Program is funded through USDA Rural Development and helps low and very low income individuals and families save on construction costs and build their own homes in rural areas.

Above: An outside view of the home recently completed by Ms. Lillian Loving of Antlers, OK

Right: Ms. Loving (center right) celebrated receiving the keys to her new home with representatives from Little Dixie CAA and USDA Rural Development
Jon Bailey “JB” Tucker of Norman paid homage to his native Southeast Oklahoma through a donation to Little Dixie Community Action Agency recently. Tucker was named Employee of the Quarter by his employers at Prairie Oil and Gas; upon receipt of this honor, he was also given the opportunity to choose a charitable organization to which a $500 award would be granted. Tucker’s choice for this award was Little Dixie Community Action Agency, given that he is the grandson of Fred Tucker, the organization’s first Executive Director. Fred Tucker served as Executive Director from 1968 until his death in 1993, leading the way for Community Action to thrive in the tri-county area. Tucker decided to donate the $500 award directly to Little Dixie CAA’s Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). “After seeing the positive impact the volunteers had on the community, I wanted to contribute to that in any way I could,” he said. Regarding his hopes for what his donation would accomplish, Tucker commented that his wish would be to continue his grandfather’s legacy of giving to those less fortunate and amplify the work of Little Dixie Community Action Agency.

**RSVP News**

On May 14th, the Pushmataha County Hospital Auxiliary members met to celebrate their accomplishments with a luncheon and awards ceremony. RSVP Director, Karla Luginbill had the privilege of being the guest speaker at the event as well as distributing the awards to the members. Congratulations on the accomplishments and many service hours of this RSVP station in Pushmataha County.
Safe Place Healing Hearts Partners with Law Enforcement

Little Dixie Community Action Agency has partnered with local law enforcement through the new Safe Place Healing Hearts Program. The new program serves and assists victims of domestic and sexual assault in Choctaw, Pushmataha and McCurtain counties. Choctaw County Sheriff Terry Parks and Officer Brian Earnest were pleased to receive a new laptop installed by LDCAA Computer Technician Kenneth Wallace. In addition, Pushmataha County Sheriff BJ Hedgecock received office supplies on behalf of the Sheriff’s Department as a new partner with SPHH.

Pictured below are Sherriff Terry Parks, Officer Brian Earnest, Marissa Jordan, Dee Dee Atwood, Jodie Allen, Tonya Finley and Kenneth Wallace. Pictured below are AJ Henslee and Sherriff BJ Hedgecock.
Denim Day

The Denim Day movement is a sexual violence prevention and education campaign. Communities across the country are taking part in an effort to bring national attention to the issues of harassment, abuse, assault and rape as well as to support rape survivors. Participants in the movement wear jeans with a purpose, as a way to protest the misconceptions that surround sexual assault. For more information, visit www.denimdayinfo.org

Walk a Mile in Her Shoes is an international event and opportunity for men to raise awareness in their community about the serious causes, effects and remediation's to men’s sexualized violent against women.

Mentoring, CASA, Victim Services, Youth First and Safe Place Healing Hearts staff participate in Denim Day and Walk a Mile in Her Shoes on April 24th at Wheelock Academy.
Voices for Children

On May 4th and 5th, CASA staff and volunteers attended the “Voices for Children” conference held by the Oklahoma State CASA Association. Many topics about child and sexual abuse were presented as well as session on the application of hope. This research focuses on how non-profit organizations impact client hope and how hope is associated with positive goal attainment and well-being among those experiencing adversity and stress. Little Dixie CASA participates in this research with surveys to help measure hope in CASA kids and volunteers.

Volunteers that attended the training were Annette Williams, Jody Allen, Tonya Finely, Cindy Brown and Eloise and Dudley McCarty. Also pictures are Doris Long and Marissa Jordan.

Mentoring

On June 13th kids, families, volunteers, staff and mentors in the Youth First and Passport to the Future Program learned how to make jelly with DeeDee Atwood. The plums were picked, prepared, cooked, canned and served. After a Strengthening Families training, they played at the Splash Pad. Two days later on June 15th, participants attended the “Pickin’ on the Porch” where they shared the jelly the community and Antlers Masons. Not only did the kids have fun; they learned a valuable culinary skill!
Little Dixie Staff Attend CLEET Training

A free training was provided in McCurtain County on June 7th. Those that attended the training, given by Tamera Hudgins, Coordinated Community Response Specialist, earned four credit CLEET hours for the Coordinated Community Response Team (CCRT). Little Dixie Victim and Youth Services Program Director Doris Long was in attendance along with the CASA and Safe Place Healing Hearts Coordinators. Additionally, they helped serve lunch to law enforcement, OKDHS and KIDS Cottage. Little Dixie’s CCRT assists in putting a stop to violent crimes with sexual assault and domestic violence. The topic of the training discussed best practices for domestic violence and lethality assessment. This training was very informative for the law enforcement, advocates, prosecutors, mental health professionals, medical professionals, probation officers and forensic interviewers in attendance.

Youth First - Strengthening Families

Youth First Coordinator, A.J. Henslee continues to do a great job facilitating youth activities with LDCAA. During the month of June, eight McCurtain County youth enrolled in the Youth First Program. Additionally, they were all able to complete the Strengthening Families training on June 21st in order to receive a $25 Walmart gift card.

A.J. Henslee and Rita Plummer presented several “Strengthening Families” programs for enrollees and their families in Antlers and Idabel during April and May. The groups completed the trainings, had a meal and did activities such as board games, art projects and science projects.
Employee of the Month

May
Virginia Newsome
Head Start Cook, Rattan 1
(photo not available)

April - Jordan Mack
Head Start Assistant Director

June - Macy Self
Program Planner

Service Awards

April - 10 Years
Tonja Tomlinson, Caregiver 2 - Broken Bow Early Learning Center
Randall Pruitt, Park Assistant - Hugo Lake State Park

June - 30 Years
Anita Bruce, Driver - LDCAA Transit

Pictured at left Anita Bruce (middle) with LDCAA Board Chair Brent Franks and Executive Director Rebecca Reynolds. Picture at right is Tonja Tomlinson (right) receiving her certificate from Early Learning Center Director Kelly Thomas.
LDCAA Board Members

McCurtain County
Tina Foshee-Thomas
Trilla Frazier
Jim Freeny
Walt Frey
David Hawkins
Andrea Henkel
Sharon Jernigan
Sandra Meeks
Vicky Wade

Pushmataha County
Brad Burgett
David Colbert
Amber Duncan
Brent Franks
Amy Gay
Vickie Leathers
Dwight Satterfield
David Smith

Choctaw County
Jimmy Brandon
Kevin Cory
Clinton Crawley
Melissa Cress
Leah Savage
Wade Scott
William Smith
Harolyn Wofford

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