Home Energy Aide Month Celebrity Waiter Fundraiser

**July 11, 2019** - Little Dixie Executive Director, board members and distinguished members of the community partnered with the Public Service Company of Oklahoma (PSO) and Buffalo Grill to raise funds and awareness for Home Energy Aide Month. This year’s fundraiser was an interesting and creative idea led by Harolynn Wofford, PSO External Affairs Manager. Volunteers spent an afternoon waiting on customers, busing tables and educating residents on the positive impact of such funds. Approximately $1,500 was raised from the Celebrity Waiter Fundraiser.

Home Energy Aide Month allows organizations to raise awareness and support for area residents who need emergency financial assistance. This program is very beneficial to residents in our area. On average, Little Dixie is able to assist approximately 100 individuals, per year, with emergency assistance funds. Of course, this could not be possible without the support of our community, partners, and dedicated staff members. PSO has been working along side Little Dixie for a number of years to raise these critical funds for our community. Thank you PSO, Buffalo Grill, the community and staff for your hard work and dedication to helping low-income individuals take one more step in the direction of self-sufficiency.

$ 500 - PSO Donation
$200 - Buffalo Grill Donation
$800 - Tips Raised
$1,500 - Total Monies Raised

**Thank you PSO & Buffalo Grill!**

In this issue...

4. AmeriCorps  
5. CASA  
6. ECCS  
7. HS/EHS/EHSCC  
9. Healthy Start  
10. Housing  
11. Region II Self-Help Housing  
13. RSVP  
14. SPHH  
16. YouthFirst
The LDCAA Employee of the Month for July 2019 was Taryn Creasman (center). Taryn is the Procurement Clerk for Head Start, Early Head Start and Early Head Start - Child Care. Also pictured: Board Chairman Brent Franks (left) and Executive Director Rebecca Reynolds.

The LDCAA Employee of the Month for August 2019 was Tammie Fewell (center). Tammie is the Antlers Head Start Teacher. Also pictured: Board Chairman Brent Franks (left) and Executive Director Rebecca Reynolds.

The LDCAA Employee of the Month for September 2019 was Burgundy Holt (center). Burgundy is a Care Coordinator for the Healthy Start Program. Also pictured: Board Chairman Will Smith (left) and Executive Director Rebecca Reynolds.

"What a pleasure and honor to serve as Chair of Little Dixie CAA’s Board of Directors! In this role, I get to be part of a group of volunteers committed to making our communities safer, healthier, more stable, and prosperous. Our tripartite Board of Public, Private and Low-Income representation serves to ensure that every sector of our communities has a voice and a seat at the table. As a Board Member, we play a critical role in the decision-making arm of this agency and this Board Portal will serve as a valuable resource to you in those regards and more. Please feel free to reach out to myself, fellow Board members or the leadership within the agency for any assistance or questions."
Oklahoma Association of Community Action Agencies (OKACAA) recently held their annual Fall Conference and Award Ceremony. Staff members attending had the opportunity to learn about topics including Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA), Weatherization Topics, Organizational Standards, HOME Rental Compliance, State of Oklahoma Continuum of Care and many other exciting workshops. To conclude the conference, an awards banquet was held to honor staff member’s hard work and dedication to their agencies. Staff receiving awards are listed below.

- Jordan Mack
- Amanda Terrebonne
- Hope Scott
- April Joiner
- Teresa Phelps
- Adina Burrell
- Carla Deupree
- Carla Herd
- Doris Long
- Angela Dickey
- Marsha Zulkey
- Karen Burton
- Rhonda Teague
- Rebecca Reynolds
- Herman Adams
- Jerry Burton
- Sheila Price
- Kelly Thomas
- Terri Harless

Service Awards:
- 10 years: Jordan Mack, Amanda Terrebonne, Hope Scott, April Joiner, Teresa Phelps, Adina Burrell, Carla Deupree, Carla Herd, Doris Long, Angela Dickey, Marsha Zulkey, Karen Burton, Rhonda Teague, Rebecca Reynolds, Herman Adams, Jerry Burton, Sheila Price, Kelly Thomas, Terri Harless
- 20 years: Jordan Mack, Amanda Terrebonne, Hope Scott, April Joiner, Teresa Phelps, Adina Burrell, Carla Deupree, Carla Herd, Doris Long, Angela Dickey, Marsha Zulkey, Karen Burton, Rhonda Teague, Rebecca Reynolds, Herman Adams, Jerry Burton, Sheila Price, Kelly Thomas, Terri Harless
- 30 years: Jordan Mack, Amanda Terrebonne, Hope Scott, April Joiner, Teresa Phelps, Adina Burrell, Carla Deupree, Carla Herd, Doris Long, Angela Dickey, Marsha Zulkey, Karen Burton, Rhonda Teague, Rebecca Reynolds, Herman Adams, Jerry Burton, Sheila Price, Kelly Thomas, Terri Harless
- 40 years: Jordan Mack, Amanda Terrebonne, Hope Scott, April Joiner, Teresa Phelps, Adina Burrell, Carla Deupree, Carla Herd, Doris Long, Angela Dickey, Marsha Zulkey, Karen Burton, Rhonda Teague, Rebecca Reynolds, Herman Adams, Jerry Burton, Sheila Price, Kelly Thomas, Terri Harless
Little Dixie School Readiness AmeriCorps Program is a school readiness grant that Head Start/Early Head Start was awarded in 2007. Since then hundreds of children have received one on one tutoring to help prepare them for Kindergarten. The children are having greater success rates when it comes to entering Kindergarten prepared. This, in turn, gives the children a much better chance at being successful throughout their public school years.

The members serve a total of 900 hours throughout the school year and earn a living allowance. Upon completion they receive an educational voucher valued at $2,822.00 to use for higher education purposes. The education award can be used at any Title IV college or Vo-Tech, or it can be used to pay qualified student loans.

Members who are 55 and older can transfer their education award to a child or grandchild if they do not plan to use it for themselves. The Members receive trainings that enhance their skills in the classroom, and they are receiving experience that sometimes helps determine the career path they choose for themselves.

If you are interested in AmeriCorps please contact Cathrine Oliva, AmeriCorps Specialist, to find out more information! 580-326-5165
Court Appointed Special Advocates

Court Appointed Special Advocates are volunteers that serve as appointed members of the court in an overburdened social welfare system. Abused and neglected children often slip through the cracks among hundreds of current cases. CASA volunteer advocates in McCurtain, Choctaw and Pushmataha Counties change that. Each volunteer is appointed by a judge. A CASA volunteer typically handles just one case at a time and is committed to staying on that case until the child is placed in a safe, permanent home.

Little Dixie CASA partnered with Antlers Masonic Lodge #39 and Tuskahomma Masonic Lodge #491 for the annual Cutest Kids in Camo Contest at the Deer Festival.

Court Appointed Special Advocates recently welcomed Cindy Batchelor to the team. Cindy is a CASA volunteer serving Choctaw, McCurtain and Pushmataha Counties.

Cindy Batchelor to the team.

Volunteers and CASA Staff pictured above and below at various training opportunities. Training and continued education is a critical part of being an effective CASA Volunteer!

CASA volunteers (left) judging the Cutest Kids in Camo Contest held at the Deer Festival in Antlers, OK. Pictured above are the winners of the Cutest Kids in Camo Contest.

CASA Staff held a recruitment event at Sacred Grounds Coffee Shop in Antlers, OK.

This project is supported by VOCA Subgrant No. 2018-VOCA-Little Dixie CAA-141 awarded by the U.S. Department of Justice through the Oklahoma District Attorneys Council.
BACK TO SCHOOL PARTY
In August, ECCS participated in the Back to School Party in Choctaw County, and the Back to School Bash in Pushmataha County. Each of these events are held to help parents prepare their children to return to school. We provided parents/caregivers access to developmental screenings for children ages 0-4 years of age and encouraged parents to share these results with their child’s teacher and pediatrician. Approximately 80 screenings were completed between the two events.

COMMUNITY TEAM MEETING
ECCS met in August for the quarterly team meeting to discuss Help Me Grow implementation, early literacy corner locations, revamping our Early Childhood and Family Resource Bundles, and other possible child care centers to partner with to implement ASQ developmental screenings. The team devised fresh, innovative ideas and our ECCS Team is excited to put these ideas in motion.

COIN LEARNING SESSION
In September, ECCS staff and Community Team Member, Amanda Terrebonne, and Family Partner, Candice Steele, traveled to Atlanta, Georgia to attend our annual ECCS CoIN Learning Session. We met with other ECCS states and learned about the successes and challenges they are facing while advancing early childhood developmental health within their community and state.

NEW PARTNERSHIP & LITERACY CORNER
ECCS fostered a new partnership with WeeCare Pregnancy Resources, Inc. to offer parents the opportunity to participate in the Screening Program. At each monthly post-partum visit they will be able to complete a developmental screening on their child and will then receive an incentive focused on early childhood developmental health. We were also able to incorporate an early literacy corner in their location.
Head Start, Early Head Start, Early Head Start - Child Care and Early Learning Centers

PRE-SERVICE

Head Start, Early Head Start and Early Head Start - Child Care staff participated in a pre-service event July 22nd to 26th. A variety of training topics were covered. Southeastern Fire and Safety, WF Grammar, Kyle Montgomery provided training regarding workplace safety, fire safety, blood borne pathogens and food handler's safety. Head Start and Early Head Start staff attended breakout sessions specific to their position with the Nutrition Specialist. Family Advocates reminded staff to encourage parents to be actively involved in their child’s classroom and educational goals. Staff also received training from Zen Gee Counseling Center relating to working with children who display challenging behaviors. Dr. Willima Dameo P.H.D., author of “When Nothing Else Works,” presented an informative and upbeat training on responding to young children exposed to adverse childhood experiences. Classroom staff created Professional Development Plans to outline their professional goals for the year. Smokey the Bear was also in attendance to surprise our staff, and give all the information for him to be able to come to each of our centers.

We pride ourselves in making our training informative as well as fun! We want our staff to feel surrounded by positive, helpful and dedicated leadership staff to encourage questions and further developing the learning process.

ANALYZING OUTCOMES

Data from Teaching Strategies GOLD is collected to provide a comparison on the overall growth of children in the Early Head Start and Early Head Start - Child Care Program. Progress is indicated in all areas for the students enrolled in Little Dixie Early Head Start and Early Head Start - Child Care Program. Information from this data is used to help teachers and administrative staff target areas of growth and concerns. It is also used in planning for teacher training during the year. Charts detailing the percentage of children who meet or exceeded goal in Spring of 2019 and Summer 2019 are provided at right.

The projects described were supported by Grant Numbers 06CH7099, 06CH010743, and 06HP0007 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. Contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Administration for Children and Families or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
RECRUITMENT

Little Dixie Early Head Start Child-Care Program is currently recruiting for the 2019-2020 school year. All of the Early Head Start Child-Care staff have been diligently posting signs and flyers over the tri-county area. The family advocates have also been hanging up flyers and passing out applications and information on what the Little Dixie Early Head Start - Child Care Program has to offer families. Throughout the spring many of the Early Head Start Child-Care staff will be attending festivals and parades in the various area communities to recruit as many children as possible for all the Little Dixie Programs.

For more information, please call Sara Moore, Enrollment Specialist, at (580) 326-7581. To complete an application, please go to https://littledixie.org/head-start-application/

CENTER HIGHLIGHTS

Ms. Julie (pictured at right), Choctaw Nation Reading in Motion Mobile Library Employee, reading to children at Battiest Head Start.
Healthy Start is excited to announce a new component - Healthy Start Fatherhood Program. The Healthy Start Fatherhood Program will incorporate a curriculum designed to coach, mentor and teach fathers.

Jim Westbrook (right), is the newest addition to the Healthy Start team! Jim is the new Fatherhood Coordinator and will be housed in the Hugo Healthy Start office, but will be serving Choctaw, McCurtain, Pushmataha and Atoka counties. Jim will be coaching, mentoring and teaching fathers using the 24/7 DAD Curriculum from the National Fatherhood Initiative.

Jim retired after 31 years of employment with the Oklahoma Department of Corrections as the Industrial Coordinator for the eastern half of the state. After that, he went on to work for and retire from a private firm as a Call Center Manager within a correctional facility utilizing inmates as call center agents. Jim is married and lives in Caney, Oklahoma with his wife. He has 10 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. Jim spends most of his free time outdoors bass fishing or hunting.

Welcome to the team, Jim!

GOAL 1: Reduce differences in access to and use of health services

GOAL 2: Improve the quality of the local health care system

GOAL 3: Empower women and their families

GOAL 4: Increase consumer and community participation in health care decisions
This past March, Little Dixie Community Action Agency received a grant for approximately $67,000 to continue to participate in the “Safe and Sound” Initiative. This program, funded by Wells Fargo Foundation in partnership with NeighborWorks America provides grant funding to organizations working to strengthen rural communities and improve lives by rehabilitating or replacing sub-standard owner-occupied homes. This particular award provided enough funding to complete moderate rehab on five homes in LDCAA’s service area.

One of the families who participated in the initiative is Earl and Linda Skipper. The Skippers reside in Spencerville Oklahoma, a small, rural community in Choctaw County. Earl suffered a stroke in 2017 which affected his speech and ability to walk independently. In addition to the physical and financial challenges faced following Earl’s health crisis, they soon realized other areas of their lives were impacted as well. While they focused on Earl’s recovery, the needs of the home had to be placed “on hold.” Of the two, Earl had been the “handy man”, the one with the skills and ability to keep the home maintained. Now, faced with physical challenges that he never anticipated, he and Linda weren’t sure what to do. With Earl needing help and unable to return to work, Linda took on the role of fulltime homemaker and caregiver. To address some of the home’s needs, the Skippers applied to Little Dixie’s Weatherization program. As if fate stepped in, the announcement of the Safe and Sound award came soon afterwards and the Skippers home was a perfect fit. Among the repairs were a new roof, windows, doors, exterior wall, ceiling repairs and new fencing. In addition, a wheelchair ramp was installed and the home got a fresh coat of paint as a finishing touch. The family pitched in as well on more than one occasion to clean up around the property. Rehabbing and weatherizing a home has secondary impacts as well. The Skippers will enjoy lowered utility costs, increased property value, better mobility, improved health and an immeasurable sense of comfort, security and pride. Terry Wren, Weatherization Auditor met and visited with the Skippers on several occasions as the work was being performed. During one of his conversations with Linda, she stated: “We feel more secure that the ramp is safe to get the wheelchair down and the roof is sound and not leaking on our floors inside.” Earl can’t speak much but he did smile and say “Good!”

LDCAA would like to extend their gratitude to NeighborWorks® America and the Wells Fargo Foundation which made these activities possible.
Hannibal, MO. - A Hannibal homeowner gained various home repair skills as she invested 79 hours working with NECAC crew members to renovate her home through the agency’s Self-Help Program. Laura Spencer purchased her home on Sierra St. in 2016 and immediately began working on exterior renovations. But several areas of the home needed attention - a drafty rear screen door and windows increased her utility bills, and the floor in the rear room drooped about three inches near her washing machine and dryer, causing her to twist her ankle on several occasions. She worked alongside NECAC Construction Supervisor, Mark Blackwell, Thursday to perform renovations to her home thanks to a partnership between NECAC; Little Dixie, who provided technical and management assistance; and the USDA, who funded the project.

Spencer has a rare genetic condition that limits her mobility and will continue to progress. But that didn't stop her dedication to the work. The program called her to help for 20 hours, but she said she “tried to be as hands on as I could.” Blackwell showed her how to install a walkway constructed with pavers between her house and her garage, operate several different types of saws, install ceramic flooring and set up new rails leading to her front door. She plans to continue using her new skills to install a metal rail next to the pavers and begin restoring her garage.

“I can use my own saw,” Spencer said. “It's been a great learning process - tiring, but a great learning process.” Blackwell enjoyed the chance to share his knowledge while he helped Spencer increase her home's accessibility, safety and efficiency. “She's been a wonderful lady to work with,” Blackwell said. “She's based in her faith pretty good, and I'm blessed to have a job where I have the opportunity to teach somebody something and motivate them in the right direction.”

In the basement, Blackwell stood close by, offering guidance as Spencer used a nail gun to install trim on a window. The house was constructed in 1907, and the original, set-in single-pane windows were replaced with sealed, double-pane windows. Spencer is looking forward to lower utility bills as a results of the weatherization efforts. She also worked with Blackwell on the drooping floor in her back room - it is now level and covered with new ceramic tiles.

**Interest Rate Decrease for Single Family Housing Direct Programs**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Programs</th>
<th>Current Interest Rate</th>
<th>Interest Rate Effective 11/1/19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Section 502 Direct - Program Loans</td>
<td>3.125%</td>
<td>3.000%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 502 Direct - Non-Program Loans</td>
<td>3.625%</td>
<td>3.500%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 524 Housing Site Development Loans - Non-Self-Help</td>
<td>3.125%</td>
<td>3.000%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Self-help housing program a blessing for local homeowners

Keeping up maintenance on a house can be exhausting and expensive. For some area homeowners the necessary upkeep can get away from them and they find themselves overwhelmed. "I didn't want anyone to come to the house," said Tina Mitchell of Center. "When you get depressed you go into a tunnel. You feel like there's no way out. You don't have any energy."

Tina and her husband, Robert, recently saw light at the end of the tunnel. With help from NECAC's Self-Help Housing partnerships, the Mitchells were able to make repairs and renovations to their home in Center. Technicians and supervisors spent several days helping the Mitchells with the repairs.

The partnership with Safe and Sound, Wells Fargo and Ameren provided doors and windows, an AC unit and heaters, and weatherization. Mark Blackwell, Self-Help Supervisor oversaw the insulation of the floors and pipes with help from Senior Weatherization installer Shannon Utley.

Major renovation was done to the family room and entrance from the garage. A wall was put up, new steps into the kitchen were constructed, and the carpet was replaced with a new floor. "It's our everything room," said Mitchell. They've also replaced carpet with flooring in the living room. "One more room to go."

The structure of the house was good," said Blackwell. But the house had been empty for five years before the Mitchells bought it at auction three years ago. When the repairs began to overwhelm them, Tina contacted NECAC about the weatherization program. There was a 2 1/2 year waiting list but then grants came in the Safe and Sound program which provided flooring and paint for the garage and the exterior of the house.

The Mitchells did some of the work themselves under the supervision of Blackwell. Work began July 1 and continued when weather permitted until mid-August. "This was good for me," said Tina. "It changed my whole outlook on life." Christi Childers, Self-Help Administrative Assistant, talked about NECAC's programs "teaching skills to home owners, all about being neighbors, building community through service." That was evident in the comradery between Blackwell and the Mitchells and the smiles and willing hands from all the workers. "This got us going again," smiled Tina.

Save the date 2020 national self-help housing conference

Save the date for the 2020 National Self-Help Housing Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico February 4-6, 2020. This will be a great opportunity for self-help housing grantees to learn best practices and network with other grantees and USDA Rural Development personnel.

There will be no registration fee for this event! Keep an eye out for the registration brochure coming to your inbox soon!
CANNED GOODS FOR A CAUSE

This year in honor of September 11th (9/11), National Day of Service, students from Central Elementary contributed non-perishable food items for local food banks in McCurtain County. The children discussed and learned about “Doing Something Good” no matter how small the deed, no matter their age. The classes competed with each other to bring the most food items. Mrs. Royal’s class brought the most items and won a prize. Almost 900 non-perishable food items were brought by the students. These donated items to assist Hand to Hand Food Bank and Gracefully Yours will help over 300 families in McCurtain County.

Every year, CNCS works with 9/11Day.org, our grantees, and faith-based, local, and national organizations to expand volunteering that honors the sacrifice of the families affected by September 11, 2001.

Every community has needs, large and small. September 11th and the surrounding days are opportunities to demonstrate your patriotism and make a commitment to address them by volunteering in honor of 9/11 and throughout the year.

Pictured above are RSVP Volunteers and Food Bank Representatives L to R: Lois Kupke (Hand to Hand Food Bank), Andrea Henkel (Gracefully Yours), Ann Miller Gaulding (Hand to Hand Food Bank) and Roy Harper (Hand to Hand Food Bank)
Safe Place Healing Hearts

DOMESTIC & SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND STALKING PARTNERSHIP CONFERENCE

Safe Place Healing Hearts Staff Members, Jodie Allen and Tonya Finley and other community partners recently attended the 2019 Domestic & Sexual Violence and Stalking Partnership in Norman, Oklahoma. The conference addressed topics regarding rape myths, human trafficking, legal aspects of medical marijuana in Oklahoma, QPR Suicide, Partnering for Prevention, Interviewing Older Victims of Abuse and many other workshops.

District Attorney’s Award of Excellence

Dee Dee Atwood, Victims Services Coordinator, recently received the State of Oklahoma District Attorney’s Council Award of Excellence in Action Against Domestic Violence. Dee Dee was nominated by her co-worker Jodie Allen. This award highlights Dee Dee’s hard-work, determination, tenacity and compassion to advocating against domestic violence. We are so proud of Dee Dee for this wonderful accomplishment. She is a huge asset to our team.

Congratulations Dee Dee!

Pickin’ On The Porch

Little Dixie Victim & Youth Services Program holds partnerships with the Antlers Masonic Lodge #39 and Tuskahomma Masonic Lodge #491. As a result of these partnerships, “Pickin’ On The Porch” event started in the Spring of 2010 to promote local musicians and add an entertainment element to the community. It has become a great activity for the whole family. Performers are also welcome to drop by and participate. Bring your most comfortable folding chair, sit back and have fun. Victims & Youth Services Staff Members assist the Masons with this event.

This project was supported by Grant No. 2017-WR-AX-0046 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.

This project is supported by VOCA Subgrant No. 2018-VOCA-Little Dixie CAA-142 awarded by the U.S. Department of Justice through the Oklahoma District Attorneys Council.
Self-Help Housing

ASSISTING RESIDENTS WITH ATTAINING THE DREAM OF HOME OWNERSHIP

Little Dixie’s Self-Help Housing Program serves income eligible individuals and families in Atoka, Bryan, Carter, Choctaw, Love, Marshall, McCurtain and Pushmataha Counties. Home ownership is achieved through the involvement with construction of their homes and other participant’s homes, resulting in reduced costs. Contact our Self-Help Program today for more information!

Matthews Home

Lance Matthews is building a LD2FB floor plan Self-Help home in Love County. Lance was approved for an OHFA grant of $11,500 to help with the amount borrowed from Rural Development to build his home.

Carter County Home

This Carter County Resident is building a LDH2 floor plan Self-Help home. She is also utilizing CDIB benefits to help with housing expenses.

Pratt Home

Terri Pratt is building a LDH1 floor plan Self-Help home in Bryan County.

Housing Counselor, Christen Caldwell (left) and Group Worker, Sommer McMurtry (right) are pictured with their booth at the Choctaw Casino Employee Health Fair.
Youth First utilizes the "Strengthening Families Program," and provides intervention and case management services to at-risk youth ages 10 to 17 who reside in Choctaw, McCurtain and Pushmataha Counties. Project activities and SFP training work to strengthen the family system, encourage protective factors and pro-social skills and parent-child communication.

Youth First participants enjoying a picnic meal after Pickin' On The Porch with the Masons, in Antlers, OK.

Youth First participants enjoying a trip to the movie theater in Antlers, OK.

Youth First participants enjoying the day playing at the splash pad in Antlers, OK.

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This project is financed in whole or in part by funds from the U.S. Department of Justice as administered by the Oklahoma Office of Juvenile Affairs.