NeighborWorks Week Event 2020

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.

On June 11th and June 12th, Little Dixie Community Action Agency, Inc. staff, board members volunteered to improve various locations throughout Hugo as part of a weeklong celebration of neighborhood improvement activities nationally recognized as NeighborWorks Week.

During NeighborWorks Week (June 6 – 13), Little Dixie and other NeighborWorks Organizations across the country focused on neighborhood change and awareness and hosted a number of events that educate, train and inform. The events demonstrate the value of neighbors helping neighbors. Little Dixie participated in neighborhood beautification activities throughout Hugo city limits.
COMMUNITY ACTION MONTH CELEBRATION

2020 marked the 56th year since the Community Action Network was established to help American families and communities overcome obstacles to escape poverty. Over 1,000 agencies across the country are working every day to create opportunities and transform the lives of their neighbors making communities stronger and helping families across the United States thrive. Community Action Agencies serve 99% of all American counties with life changing services to help families achieve financial stability. The need for Community Action has never been greater; Neither has our resolve. We’re challenged to create solutions that help people build lives of stability, dignity, and whenever possible, prosperity. We will rise to that challenge. “We are proud of our communities’ participation in the development and oversight of our programs,” said Executive Director, Reynolds. “Their engagement helps us to be more effective in our approach by determining what Choctaw, McCurtain and Pushmataha counties need.”

Due to COVID-19, Little Dixie established a creative spin on celebrating the continued success of Community Action while raising awareness throughout the tri-county area. Little Dixie Community Action Agency hosted a month long social media campaign highlighting the importance of community action, services offered, community partners and all the other vital components of our agency! Some of the various social media graphics shared are show at right.

This event served as an opportunity for Little Dixie to share our voice safely with the public during the pandemic!

WELCOME BACK THE DRUG FREE COMMUNITIES PROGRAM!

Little Dixie welcomes back Drug Free Communities Program (DFC): DFC is established through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and is supported by the Choctaw County Coalition's effort to strengthen community collaborations and reduce substance abuse amongst (6th - 12th graders in Choctaw County).

Janitra Bostic, Program Director and Kinsey Cox, Program Coordinator are eager to become a part of Little Dixie and begin working in the community. The DFC Program will be working toward virtual opportunities for youth involvement in tobacco prevention.
NEW FACES IN ADMINISTRATION

Little Dixie welcomes two new staff members to the Planning Department in the Administration Building. Andi Wright will be responsible for Data Entry/Public Relations and Corey Kreager will be writing grants for the agency.

Welcome to Admin!

CENSUS 2020 AND OUR COMMUNITY

The U.S. Census is conducted every 10 years by the U.S. government. The Census is a survey comprised of ten questions and takes less than 10 minutes to complete! Your Census data is IMPORTANT and SAFE! Our state’s population is determined by this count and sticks with us FOR THE NEXT TEN YEARS!

Undercounted Means Underfunded. Underfunded means fewer social services available, fewer dollars allocated to area schools and government and fewer seats representing Oklahoma in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Your data is protected by law and kept confidential for 72 YEARS! The U.S. Census Bureau is prohibited from sharing respondents’ personal details with other government agencies. Census Bureau employees swear a lifetime oath to protect your information.

Still not convinced? Do you have additional questions? CONTACT US TODAY! We are passionate about providing you with the resources you need to complete your 2020 Census!

NATIONAL HOMEOWNERSHIP MONTH

In honor of Homeownership Month, LDCAA Board Chairman, William Smith signed a proclamation signifying Little Dixie’s participation in Homeownership Month. During the month of June, LDCAA strives to highlight the benefits that homeownership brings households across the tri-county area as well as educate potential clients on the immense value of homeownership.

#HomeOwnerHero
#FindYourPlace

YOUR COMMUNITY IS COUNTING ON YOU!
Around the Agency

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH Awardees

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, Little Dixie has been utilizing the ZOOM platform to hold monthly board meetings. The Employee of the Month Awardees and Service Award Recipients are listed below.

APRIL

The LDCAA Employee of the Month for April 2020 was Johnny Driggers and Billy Bates. They are both Weatherization Carpenters with the Housing Programs.

Congratulations Johnny Driggers & Billy Bates!

MAY

The LDCAA Employee of the Month for May 2020 was Sheree Ensley. She is the Accounting Supervisor at the Administration office.

Congratulations Sheree Ensley!

JUNE

The LDCAA Employee of the Month award for June 2020 went to the Little Dixie Transit Department. Little Dixie Transit Department worked tirelessly during the COVID-19 Pandemic to serve the needs of our communities.

Congratulations Andrew, Anita, Brandon, Brent, Brian, Cathy, Clarence, Cody, Connie, Cynthia, Dan, Darline, Doug, Edward, Elfunzo, Francis, Herman, Jeannie, Judi, Kenesha, Michael, Nora, Randall, Regina, Robert, Sandy, Shirley, Sylvia and William!

SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

15 YEARS

BRENT MARTIN - TRANSIT DRIVER
KYLE WHITE - T&MA PROGRAM DIRECTOR
TERRY WREN - WEATHERIZATION ENERGY AUDITOR

20 YEARS

GARY TEAGUE - HOUSING MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN
GAYLA VAUGHAN - SELF-HELP HOUSING GROUP WORKER

Congratulations!
The 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 training that enhance their skills in the classroom and they are receiving experience that sometimes helps determine the career path they choose for themselves.
April is Child Abuse Prevention (CAP) Month, a time to act collectively to raise awareness and empower people across the nation to play a role in making great childhoods happen. Throughout CAP Month, we’re reinforcing the message that “Everyone can make great childhoods happen—especially you, especially now!” You don’t have to be a movie star or a professional athlete...all you need is a desire to make a difference. Equally important is recognizing that the time to act is now! COVID-19 has made life difficult for everyone—especially children and families. Here are a few ways you (yes, you!) can too raise awareness and impact positive change during CAP Month:

- Get involved—Plant a pinwheel in our virtual garden, visit the virtual “Deep Blue See” exhibition, which benefits family friendly programs, or participate in our nationwide social media singalong, on April 30, among many other events.

- Be vocal—Let your leaders know you support family friendly policies, such as paid sick and family leave, that help reduce stress on our parents and caregivers. Learn about our year round Public Policy work and mark your calendar for our nationwide Digital Advocacy Day, on Tuesday, April 28.

- Be generous—Make a donation and learn how our work helps ensure that children and families continue to receive the resources and support they need today and throughout the year. Spread the word—Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, and share our posts widely—and encourage your friends and family to do the same. Use the hashtags #GreatChildhoods and #CAPMonth to let us know you’re committed to helping children, families, and entire communities to thrive. Also, download and install our custom Zoom Meeting background to show that you support the safe, stable, and nurturing relationships and environments that help children thrive. Together, we can prevent child abuse, America...because childhood lasts a lifetime.

2020 FOSTER CARE AWARENESS MONTH

Foster Care Awareness Month was created in 1988 as a time to acknowledge foster parents, family members, volunteers, mentors, policy makers, child welfare professionals and other members of the communities who help children and youth in foster care find permanent homes and connections.
Little Dixie ECCS recently partnered with Sooner SUCCESS to provide a virtual “On The Road” Family Perspective Conference for our tri-county area. Sooner SUCCESS works intimately with both the public and private sectors. The overarching goal is to promote a comprehensive, coordinated system of health, social and educational services for Oklahoma children and youth with special healthcare needs in their local community. On June 2, 2020 the virtual Family Perspective Conference was held. The focus of the conference was on both local and statewide resources/information across the lifespan. Two different time slots were available: the first was at 10:00 and focused on services for 0-16 years of age, 33 people attended. The second conference was at 2:00 and focused on resources for 17 years of age through the lifespan, 19 people attended. 22 programs (community and state) presented during the conference. This allowed families to learn about available services and how to access them during COVID-19.
RECRUITMENT HAS BEGUN

Little Dixie Head Start, Early Head Start, and Early Head Start Child Care are currently recruiting for the 2020-2021 school year. All of our staff have been out posting signs and flyers throughout the area. Little Dixie family advocates have been out at local businesses hanging up flyers and passing out applications and information on the community programs offered. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the Head Start, Early Head Start and Early Head Start-Child Care Partner staff have been utilizing various social media platforms to recruit as many children as possible and to reassure families that our programs operate with safety in mind first and foremost.

To complete an application online, please visit https://littledixie.org/head-start-application

EARLY HEAD START SAFETY

Early Head Start, serving children birth to age three, has followed recommendations to give children, over the age of two years old, the option of wearing face masks while participating in school. The Head Start team decided to acquire the services of a local seamstress to make the children cloth face masks with child friendly designs. The child friendly designs were employed in hopes of gaining the children's approval to participate in the safety measure. The Early Head Start centers continue to operate with safety in mind!

HEAD START ADMINISTRATION OFFICES HAVE MOVED

The Head Start management team has been super excited to make a move from 104 N E Street to 1005 S 5th Street - Hugo, Oklahoma! This allows the ever-expanding team to be in a larger and more efficient setting. The new building will allow training to be conducted on site and room for storage of necessary supplies in an orderly manner. This move means great things for the Head Start family!

For all rental inquiries please contact Darla Galyon at 580-326-7581 or dgalyon@ldcaahs.org
Healthy Start

OPERATION STORY TIME

Due to the recent COVID-19 Pandemic, Healthy Start had to think outside the box to continue to promote early literacy. Healthy Start now has Operation Storytime twice a week on their Facebook page. Care Coordinators and community members record themselves reading children’s books. Once posted, the video is available for the public to view and share. The first Operation Storytime reading by Care Coordinator Mary Vannoy reached over 1,500 people.

Between birth to age 5 a child’s brain goes through the greatest amount of growth. Reading to a baby should begin during pregnancy. Literacy development starts at birth. Early literacy is much more than just learning to read. Early literacy is the foundation for learning to talk, listen, read, and write. Each are connected throughout all growth and development. Their skills build on one another, playing an important role in all types of communication.

LOOK BEFORE YOU LOCK

Heatstroke is one of the leading causes of non-crash-related fatalities among children. Vehicle heatstroke occurs when a child is left in a hot vehicle, allowing for the child’s temperature to rise in a quick and deadly manner. A core body temperature of about 104 degrees and the thermoregulatory system is overwhelmed. A core body temperature of about 107 degrees is lethal. Unfortunately, even great parents can forget a child in the back seat. Other risk factors include caregivers who aren’t used to driving kids, or whose routine suddenly changes. Whether you’re a parent, caregiver, or bystander of a child left in a car, it’s vitally important to understand children are more vulnerable to heatstroke than adults.

1,038 children (14 and younger) died in traffic crashes in 2018, a more than 10% decrease

855 children have died due to vehicular heatstroke since 1998

6 children have died from heatstroke in 2020
Housing Services

GAMMON - FIRST TIME HOME BUYER

Little Dixie’s Housing Department would like to congratulate Cody Gammon, a first time buyer, on purchasing his first home in McCurtain County. He successfully completed pre-purchase counseling and homebuyer education through Little Dixie’s Pre-Purchase Homeownership Program. He closed on his Rural Development 502 Direct Loan in May. This is a great success for Cody! He worked hard and was diligent in completing all the steps involved with the process.

WEATHERIZATION CREW WELCOMES NEW FACES

In this quarter, Little Dixie’s Weatherization Crew welcomed two new faces to the team! Gary Teague Jr., WX Crew Leader, and James Caldwell, WX Retrofit Installer, will be providing weatherization services to reduce energy costs for low-income households by increasing the energy efficiency of their homes. Reducing energy cost is achieved through methods such as additional insulation, weather-stripping, caulking and more. Using the ‘whole-house’ approach, carpenters analyze all of the building systems. This includes the building envelop, heating and cooling, appliances, etc. Weatherizing homes result in cost savings and improved living conditions. Weatherization is a free service for eligible homeowners who meet income and other guidelines. Additionally, Terry Wren received his Energy Auditor Certification through the Building Performance Institute, Inc. This certification will add to Terry’s list of credentials and is a huge asset to this agency! Congratulations Terry!

STEVENSON JOINS HOUSING TEAM

Little Dixie Housing Department recently welcomed Jamie Stevenson, Loan Officer, to the team! Jamie has 8 years of banking experience and is eager to begin servicing loans with Little Dixie. In addition to learning the agency, he is also studying to obtain his Nationwide Mortgage Licensing System & Registry, NMLS Mortgage Loan Coordinator. Jamie is a huge asset to Little Dixie and we are proud to welcome him to our team!

Welcome Jamie!

SPOTLIGHT

Housing Outreach Coordinator, Paula Billshaw, recently received her HUD Housing Counseling Certification! Paula has worked diligently to add this certification to her list of credentials.

Congratulations Paula!
Region II Self-Help Housing

CONGRATULATIONS MCGUIRE FAMILY

Courtney McGuire is ready to move in!! Pictured left to right: Terri Harless - Self-Help Housing Director, Grady Ford - Construction Supervisor, Courtney McGuire and son - homeowner, Larry Cochran - Self-Help Housing Director, Renee Thompson - RD Specialist.

#FINDYOURPLACE

SELF-HELP HOUSING GRANTEES AND FAMILIES PERSEVERE

During these unprecedented times, self-help housing grantees and families collaborated to develop strategies to overcome obstacles they were faced with as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic such as establishing a work plan to allow for social distancing, utilizing a rotating work schedule, family members work on their home only, not working in the same room with other families, sub-contractors only allowed to work on the exterior, utilization of face-time or other technology to allow the grantee to conduct meetings with the families and provided and utilizing safety supplies while on the worksite.

As a result of the collaboration between grantees and families, successful approaches were established for families to continue in the construction of their homes while maintaining compliance with the guidelines put in place by the CDC and state.

Restrictions due to COVID-19 has been a great obstacle, yet it is a huge accomplishment for grantees and families in the self-help housing program to have effectively strategized to continue in their construction efforts. Grantees have persevered in their efforts to assist families on their journey to homeownership.

FY2020 INCOME LIMITS FOR SINGLE FAMILY HOUSING DIRECT LOAN & GRANT PROGRAMS

To view the Fiscal Year 2020 income limits for USDA Rural Development Single Family Direct Loan and Grant Programs which were published on May 4, 2020, please click the following link - FY2020 Income Limits.

CONGRATULATIONS UNIVERSAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION!

Universal Housing Development Corporation in Russellville, Arkansas was recently refunded in the amount of $597,310 to complete 25 homes!
USDA Rural Development has extended foreclosure and eviction moratorium for all Single-Family Housing Direct Home Loans through Aug. 31, 2020. The moratorium applies to:

- Initiation of foreclosures or completion of foreclosures in process, excluding vacant and abandoned properties.
- Evictions of borrowers from properties bought with a USDA direct home loan.

For more information on USDA Rural Development's actions to support customers directly impacted by COVID-19 visit [https://www.rd.usda.gov/coronavirus](https://www.rd.usda.gov/coronavirus).

**COMPUTING INCOME & MAX LOAN AMOUNT CALCULATOR - UPDATED**

The Worksheet for Computing Income and Maximum Loan Calculator, revised on June 1, 2020, can be found on the [Single Family Housing](https://www.rd.usda.gov/singlefamilyhousing) page under the "To Apply" tab - Training, Webinar and Handouts section.

The 504 Automated Worksheet was updated May 4, 2020 and can be found on the [Single Family Housing Repair Loans & Grants](https://www.rd.usda.gov/singlefamilyhousingrepairloansandgrants) page under the "To Apply" tab - Borrower Resources Section.

These worksheets may be updated periodically so it is important to use the latest version that is posted to the USDA Rural Developments website.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRAMS</th>
<th>CURRENT INTEREST RATE</th>
<th>INTEREST RATE EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RURAL HOUSING (RH) 502 VERY-LOW OR LOW</td>
<td>2.750%</td>
<td>2.500%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interest rate for Rural Development 502 Direct low and very low applicants was reduced to 2.5% effective July 1, 2020. Please visit RD’s website regularly to check for changes.

**COVID-19 FEDERAL RURAL RESOURCE GUIDE**

USDA Rural Development has partnered with its Federal partners to develop a resource matrix which organizes funding opportunities to assist rural communities affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. For more information on the immediate actions USDA is taking to respond to COVID-19 and to access the matrix, visit [usda.gov/coronavirus](https://www.usda.gov/coronavirus).

The Spotlight website: [https://www.selfhelphousingspotlight.org/](https://www.selfhelphousingspotlight.org/) was created and is maintained by the T8MA Contractors to highlight the success of the Self-Help Housing Program. This is a great tool for you to help promote your program.

Send us a success story and photos and we'll include it on the website. Submit your stories to [pprice@ldcaa.org](mailto:pprice@ldcaa.org).

Direct Loan questions should be directed to USDA’s Customer Service Center at 1-800-414-1226 (7:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time Monday - Friday) or [https://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/loan-servicing](https://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/loan-servicing). Call volume and wait times are high at this time.
Retired Senior Volunteer Program

WE BRING OUT THE BEST OF AMERICA

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is a federal agency dedicated to improving communities across the county. As our nation faces the challenges posed by COVID-19, AmeriCorps and Senior Corps are here to help. Our strength is in our ability to work with nonprofits, faith-based organizations and state and local governments to mobilize volunteers.

HELPING THE NATION TODAY, READY TO HELP TOMORROW

Despite the obstacles presented by social distancing, AmeriCorps and Senior Corps programs across the country have acted quickly and creatively to continue their critical work in new ways, or to pivot to meet emerging needs.

SENIOR CORPS BRING AMERICANS TOGETHER IN SERVICE

In Neighborhoods Nationwide

With a network of 2,000 partner organizations and nearly 300,000 AmeriCorps and Senior Corps volunteers serving in more than 45,000 locations, national service is positioned to help almost everywhere.

Benefiting Those Who Serve:
Participants benefit from valuable, life-changing experiences.

In Neighborhoods Nationwide

Our members and volunteers are assisting with COVID-19 emergency response efforts nationwide, just as they have assisted with response and recovery efforts after every major disaster.

Sewing and distributing masks and using 3D printers to make face shields for medical personnel, essential workers and vulnerable community members.

DISASTER RESPONSE

FOOD SECURITY

AmeriCorps and Senior Corps programs across the country are ramping up efforts to help communities address growing nutritional needs.

- Helping food banks and pantries to meet higher demand by organizing volunteers, packing meal kits, staffing distribution events and delivering food to homes.
- Delivering meals and groceries to vulnerable seniors through programs such as Meals on Wheels.
- Supporting students by staffing school food distribution sites and food delivery.
- Caring for community gardens that provide fresh, healthy produce to food banks.
DENIM DAY 2020

Denim Day is a campaign developed in honor of Sexual Assault Awareness Month. In 1992, an 18 year old girl was raped by her driving instructor. The driving instructor was convicted, but later appealed his conviction. The Italian Supreme Court overturned his conviction due to the victim wearing tight jeans. The court found that her jeans were so tight, she must have helped the assailant remove them. Therefore, resulting in consensual intercourse. This became known as the “Jeans Alibi” Each Wednesday in April, Little Dixie Staff were encouraged to wear denim to show support.

#DENIMDAY

ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS MONTH

World Elder Abuse Awareness Month (WEAAD) is held in June. The purpose of WEAAD is to provide an opportunity for communities around the world to promote a better understanding of abuse and neglect of older persons by raising awareness of the cultural, social, economic and demographic processes affecting elder abuse and neglect. Each year, an estimated 5 million older adults are abused, neglected, or exploited. Older Americans lose an estimated 2.6 billion or more annually due to elder financial abuse and exploitation, funds that could be used to pay for basic needs such as housing, food, and medical care. Unfortunately, it occurs in every demographic and can happen to anyone—a family member, a neighbor, even you.

NATIONAL FAMILY REUNIFICATION MONTH

National Reunification Month is celebrated in June of each year to recognize the people and efforts around the country that help families stay together. It is also a time to celebrate the families who have overcome obstacles to providing a safe and loving home for their children, and are able to reunify after their child was placed in the child welfare system.

#REUNIFICATIONMONTH
ASSISTING RESIDENTS WITH 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 of construction of their homes and other participant’s homes, resulting in reduced costs. Contact our Self-Help Program today for more information!

FAREWELL... BUT NOT GOODBYE

May 28, 2020 we said farewell, but not goodbye, to two of Little Dixie’s longest standing employees. Collectively Terri and Jerry have dedicated more than 70 years of hard work to our agency. They just don’t make them like these two anymore. We are all so blessed to have known these individuals and our lives will be forever impacted. If you looked up the definition of community action in the dictionary you’d surely see a photo of these two. Over the years, Terri and Jerry have endured hard times and celebrated glorious times. They’ve left big shoes to fill and we are eager to see the program continue to flourish. Terri and Jerry we wish you all the best in your retirement and we will miss you terribly!

Congratulations on your retirement! We will miss you!
Youth First

EMPOWERING YOUTH & FAMILIES

Utilizing the ‘Strengthening Families Program’, Youth First provides intervention and case management services to at risk youth, ages 10 to 17, who reside within Choctaw, McCurtain, or Pushmataha Counties. Youth participants receive support to become productive, law abiding citizens. Project activities and SFP training work to strengthen the family system, protective factors, pro social skills and parent child communication. The program serves 30 at risk children and their families each year.

Youth First Participated in Pickin’ On The Porch

With the Masonic Lodge #39
In Antlers, OK

Easter Activity
In Partnership With Christian Life Outreach

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.

Youth First Is Ending.... But Little Dixie is Welcoming the Mentoring Program

Little Dixie's Mentoring Program is funded through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention through a sub grant with MANY (Mid Atlantic Network of Youth and Family Services). MANY is a national network designed to strengthen outcomes for youth and young adults at risk for delinquency or victimization. Through the program, youth are paired with caring adult mentors who serve as role models, providing emotional and academic support.