CAI Receives Cummings Foundation $100K for 100 Grant

Community Action, Inc. is one of 100 local nonprofits to receive grants of $100,000 each through Cummings Foundation’s “$100K for 100” program. The Haverhill-based organization was chosen from a total of 574 applicants during a competitive review process.

Community Action, Inc. is the largest anti-poverty agency in the Lower Merrimack Valley, providing assistance to low income individuals and families in the Greater Haverhill and Newburyport Seacoast areas. With Cummings Grant funds, CAI will implement workforce development programming, with wrap-around social services, that will be a true game-changer for families.

Representing Community Action’s Head Start program, Tiffany Ghrist and Chris Espinola, joined approximately 300 other guests at a reception at TradeCenter 128 in Woburn on June 6th to celebrate the $10 million infusion into Greater Boston’s nonprofit sector. With the conclusion of this grant cycle, Cummings Foundation has now awarded more than $260 million to Greater Boston nonprofits alone.

Community Action President John Cuneo said, “we’re so grateful to Cummings Foundation and the Cummings family, and

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Deputy Director of Early Learning Services, Deborah Linett, Retires

Deborah Linett, the deputy director of Early Learning Services at Community Action, Inc. (CAI), has decided to retire from CAI after 33 years of service. “I’m turning 70 soon and I feel it’s time for a change”, said Ms. Linett.

She started her career at CAI in 1986 serving as the agency’s Family Day Care director for six years.

Under Ms. Linett’s leadership, the CAI Family Day Care program was one of the first agencies to receive a state voucher contract in Haverhill. In addition, the program expanded its mission to focus on teenage pregnancy prevention and services. “In the early 90’s we started the Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Coalition that was made up of many area agencies and organizations, said Ms. Linett.

CAI Family Day Care also expanded services for teen mothers including the Teen Parent Program that provided child care for young mothers so they could complete their education with their peers and receive their high school diplomas. “We are one of three or four places left in Massachusetts that still has that program today”, said Ms. Linett. Ms. Linett was named Head Start director in 1992. She took over a program that was in deep trouble and not in compliance

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**Head Start STEAM Events Exhibit Work of Preschoolers**

CAI early childhood programs including Head Start, Early Head Start and Family Day Care, recently held STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) events at the CAI Fox Center in Haverhill and the CAI Seacoast Center in Newburyport. The annual STEAM events showcase classroom projects that children work on throughout the school year. This year, children studied various topics including: insects and camping, the ocean, rainbow colors, seasons, plants, water and many more. The evening events, held close to the end of the school year, give children the opportunity to share their work with their parents and families.

CAI Head Start Seacoast Center Director, Catherine Johnston, said, “Our annual STEAM event was a big success. Children enjoyed showing their parents their work and participating in hands-on activities such as creating a vehicle to use a zip line and sailing their boats in the ‘ocean’ in front of our Head Start Family Lighthouse.” CAI thanks our early childhood staff, providers, parents and volunteers who make the annual STEAM events possible each year!


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**WIC is Working Hard for Local Families!**

*Thank you to all who participated in our first Annual WIC Day Celebration on May 2.*

**Northern Essex WIC** of Community Action, Inc. (CAI) invited local community partners and participants to visit our Haverhill downtown location at 3 Washington Square, to taste test recipes made with WIC approved foods and to learn about the many resources offered at CAI. Our friends from Head Start, Family Day Care, Family & Community Connection, Healthy Families, and MassHealth were available to discuss their programs and services to the over 70 families that attended.

Guests tasted healthy treats like, zucchini and carrot muffins, cheesy egg puffs, zesty bean and corn salad with whole wheat tortilla chips, sweet rice krispies treats, peanut butter and honey cheerio bars, fresh fruit cups with vanilla yogurt dip, and chocolate banana pudding made with silken tofu.

“All of these delicious recipes are made from foods provided to families enrolled in the WIC program. This was a fun way to highlight WIC and CAI services and to increase awareness of how our community programs work to improve the health and well-being of young families,” said Hope Davenport, CAI Northern Essex WIC director.

Every year Northern Essex WIC provides over 4,000 individual women, infants and children with personalized health assessments, nutrition and breastfeeding counseling, referrals to other health and human resources, over $1 million in healthy WIC approved foods and over $5 thousand in coupons for fresh fruits and vegetables from our local summer Farmers Markets.

“We are pleased to report that the Northern Essex WIC Program has achieved a compliance score of 99%, which reflects meeting 141 standards out of 143 reviewed,” said Ms. Davenport. Highlights of the Local Program Evaluation conducted by the Mass. Department of Public Health include:

- Program staff display good customer service skills and offer linguistically appropriate services.
- Clinic environment is conveniently located, welcoming and organized.
- Nutrition staff provides information to parents on the importance of immunizations.
- Nutrition staff provides excellent nutrition counseling, while also documenting thorough, thoughtful nutrition care plans for participants.

**WIC World Breastfeeding Celebration**

Join the CAI Family & Community Connection (FCC) this summer for weekly playgroups including Babies & Babble (for children 0–3 years old) every Tuesday, 9:30–10:30 a.m. and the Busy Bee Program, (for children 3–6 years old), every Wednesday, 9:30–10:30 a.m. at 346 Broadway in Haverhill. There is no cost to participate.

FCC will also be at local parks and farms this summer offering story walks, picnic play, story times and more! All programs are held 10:30–11:30 a.m. on Thursdays & Fridays. Join FCC at the Groveland Pines on July 11 & August 22; Merrimack Park on July 18 & August 23; Cider Hill Farm in Amesbury on July 25 & August 1; Swasey Park in Haverhill on August 8; Pawtucket Park in Georgetown on August 15 & 30 and Cashman Park in Amesbury on August 29.

Register, call (978) 914-7893

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ESOL and High School Equivalency Preparation Classes

The CAI Adult Learning Center will hold registration for High School Equivalency Preparation (HiSET/GED) classes on Tuesday, August 13 at 10 a.m. and waitlist registration for ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes on Wednesday, August 14 at 10 a.m.

Registration sessions are held at 3 Washington Square, 3rd floor in Haverhill. Please arrive on time and plan to stay until noon. If you have questions please contact Alisa Povenmire, career and education advisor, apovenmire@communityactioninc.org, 978-373-1971 ext. 216 or Ana Quiroz, career and education advisor, apovenmire@communityactioninc.org, 978-373-1971 ext. 244.

Early Learning Services Director Retires - Continued from Page 1

with many federal regulations. “We had to start from scratch and build a new program. We hired new staff; we attended trainings and learned performance standards and participated in study groups. It was back to basics”.

In addition, Head Start had many issues with its Haverhill site located at the Don Orione property in Bradford and with its Seacoast locations. The Don Orione buildings were former summer camps that had very little insulation and were not designed for classrooms, staff and winter use. “We had to keep the heat on high at night, leave the water running at night and on weekends and run a garden hose between buildings to prevent freeze ups. We were also dealing with squirrels, birds and other critters living in the walls.”

Despite the challenges Ms. Linett said the program was back on track and they had a lot of fun. “Most of our preschoolers were coming from the inner city so it was quite a culture change for them to go to a place where there were no fences, acres of open land, grass and trees where they could run free”, said Ms. Linett.

Over time, CAI secured safe, long-term renovated center space for Head Start at the former Fox School in Haverhill, the Seacoast Center in Newburyport and the Goldman Center (Early Head Start) in Haverhill.

The Head Start program added another important piece in 2009 when it launched an early Head Start program that served infants and toddlers up to age three. CAI Head Start currently has one infant classroom and one toddler classroom at the Goldman Center and one toddler classroom at the Fox Center.

The Early Head Start program continued to grow by expanding into private care facilities and private child care homes. “We formed the Early Head Start Childcare Partnership. Home based and private facility educators were provided with comprehensive educational training, nutritional training, mentoring and coaching to raise their level of expertise to meet Head Start requirements.” Locally Froggies and International Child Care have partnerships with the CAI early Head Start program today.

Adding Early Head Start was one of Ms. Linett’s proudest accomplishments. “It has not only benefited Head Start qualified children but all of the children who participate. This program has changed infant/toddler care in the city” said Ms. Linett.

On her experiences at CAI Ms. Linett said “I’ve had a really good time. I’ve learned a lot. I respect the work that CAI does and I’m very passionate about child care. I was a single mother on welfare with a young child so I know the choices young mothers are forced to make between paying for child care or putting food on the table. My compassion for families is very personal because I’ve been there.”

Even though she is resigning her position at CAI Ms. Linett won’t be idle. She is a certified leadership coach and she currently operates a small practice entitled Sentient Leadership. Her clients include working with women who are incarcerated in Salisbury.

CAI President and CEO John Cuneo said “Deborah’s passion and commitment to provide the best education, care and comprehensive services for area infants, toddlers, preschoolers and their families is unmatched. She was never satisfied with the status quo, always looking for new and exciting opportunities to build on and improve her programs. Over the past 33 years, she has helped thousands of children and families improve their lives because she cared deeply about her work and the mission of CAI. She will be greatly missed.”
Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive Stocks Pantry Shelves at CAI Amesbury Center

CAI staff thank the Amesbury Post Office letter carriers and the Amesbury community for the generous donation of close to 100 bins of food to the CAI Amesbury Center food pantry during the 27th Annual Letter Carriers Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive on May 11. Each year, the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) conducts the country’s largest single-day food drive, providing residents with an easy way to donate food to those in need.

Julie DeMarco LaPorta, Amesbury center coordinator, thanks the Amesbury letter carriers and Bob Harville, supervisor of customer services for the non-stop deliveries of food. “The donations fully stocked the pantry shelves for the summer and beyond. The amount of food collected this year is a credit to the generosity of the community of Amesbury”, said Ms. DeMarco LaPorta.

The CAI Amesbury Center, located at 44 Friend Street in Amesbury, works with area residents to solve problems and access resources to help the client and the client’s family become self-sufficient. Clients receive information and assistance to access public benefits and resources that will help them become more financially secure. The center provides a food pantry, clothing bank, emergency support for household bills and other services. For more information please call (978) 388-2570.

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CAI Staff and Community Connection

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Main: (978) 373-1971

CAI Fox Center
Family Day Care, Head Start, Early Head Start
75 Elm Street
Haverhill, MA 01830
FDC: (978) 373-1971
Head Start: (978) 372-5052

CAI Goldman Family Ctr.
Early Head Start
230 Hilldale Avenue
Haverhill, MA 01832
(978) 241-4261

CAI Seacoast Center
Head Start/Early Head Start
447 Merrimac Street
Newburyport, MA 01950
(978) 499-8357

CAI Drop-in Center
Drop-in day shelter, breakfast/bagged lunch, referrals and resources
16 Ashland Street
Haverhill, MA 01830
(978) 914-7423

CAI Amesbury Center
Food pantry, clothing bank, referrals & resources, Northern Essex WIC, Energy Programs
44 Friend Street
Amesbury, MA 01913
Main: (978) 388-2570
WIC: (978) 388-2575

A Message for our Volunteers and Supporters: Thank you for your ongoing and much needed support. Your assistance allows us to continue to provide crucial services to our local communities.

Community Action, Inc. (CAI) provides resources and opportunities for individuals, families and communities to overcome poverty. Vision: CAI envisions strong, thriving communities free of poverty. Values: We build hope and offer assistance with respect and understanding.

Our Programs serve the following Massachusetts cities and towns: Amesbury, Boxford, Georgetown, Groveland, Haverhill, Merrimac, Newbury, Newburyport, Rowley, Salisbury, and West Newbury. Some CAI programs also serve: Beverly, Essex, Gloucester, Hamilton, Ipswich, Lawrence, Manchester, Rockport, Topsfield and Wenham.

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