United Way and Essex County Community Foundation Support Financial Coach Training

CAI staff recently attended a four-day financial coach training hosted by the United Way of Massachusetts Bay and sponsored by the Essex County Community Foundation. Community Action staff thank the United Way and ECCF for this important training opportunity that will benefit CAI programs and clients. Financial literacy is an integral part of CAI’s programming, strategic plan and mission. Pictured above, left to right: Amy Morello, Head Start family engagement coordinator; Abigail Perez, MWA project coordinator and Christine Soundara Bourchers, MWA Initiative Director.

Leeward Charitable Foundation Donates $20,000 to Support Community Action Energy Programs

Community Action, Inc. (CAI) recently received a $20,000 donation from the Leeward Charitable Foundation, a long-time supporter of CAI, to help low income clients who need assistance paying their energy and heating bills. The Leeward Charitable Foundation is a 501 (c) (3) corporation operating charitable thrift stores in several New England communities.

Rob Werner, president of The Leeward Charitable Foundation said, “I distinctly remember a conversation I had with a young lady named Karen in 2011. She was confined to a wheel chair and battling the devastating effects of MS. Meeting her most basic needs while remaining independent is an incredible struggle for Karen every day. I had asked her if she had reached out to some of the charitable organizations we supported at the
CAI Head Start Dad Facilitates Workshop at Regional Conference

CAI Head Start dad, Sean McLean, facilitated a workshop at the New England Head Start Regional Conference in Burlington, Vermont this past April. The workshop, *The Nurturing Father’s Program: A Head Start Father’s Journey*, includes Mr. McLean presenting on the role and impact that Head Start has had in his life. This is the second time that Mr. McLean has presented regionally. Mr. McLean plans to continue his training and become a certified facilitator for The Nurturing Father’s Program.

CAI Family Day Care Staff and Educators Receive Professional Development Training

CAI Family Day Care staff and educators participated in a regional family childcare professional development training on April 26. There were over 700 educators from across the EEC Region 3 that participated in a diverse selection of workshops. Topics included The Outdoor Classroom and DAP Connections and Standards. The CAI Family Day Care program provides comprehensive family childcare services for children 8 weeks to 12 years old in licensed and monitored homes in greater Haverhill and Seacoast communities.

CAI-FDC is committed to supporting educators in a partnership with parents to provide high quality professional early care and education services that meet the social and emotional needs of all children.

Align Credit Union Holds Diaper Drive for CAI Amesbury Center

The Align Credit Union in Amesbury generously donated diapers for young families who use services at CAI’s Amesbury Center, 44 Friend Street. Amesbury Center Coordinator, Julie DeMarco LaPorta said “diapers are an expensive item for many families to purchase. This donation helps free up precious dollars that our families can then spend on food items or transportation costs.”

“Align Credit Union Assistant Branch Manager Hannah Reed and Member Service Representative Elizabeth Jordan reached out to Community Action in Amesbury to ask what they could do to assist our families and organized the collection of diapers that were donated by credit union members and staff”, said Ms Demarco LaPorta. Community Action thanks the Align Credit Union staff located at 19 Haverhill Rd in Amesbury, and their members for this generous donation.

Playgroups & Early Learning Activities for Children 0–8 Yrs.

The CAI Family & Community Connection offers playgroups and early learning activities for families with children 0-8 years old. Most activities are held at FCC, 346 Broadway in Haverhill (unless otherwise indicated) and there is no cost to participate.

- **Babies & Babble (0–3 yrs):** Tuesdays, 9:30–10:30 a.m.
- **Busy Bee Program (3–6 yrs):** Wednesdays, 9:30–10:30 am.
- **Kindergarten Ready:** Tuesdays at FCC, 10–11:30 a.m.; Thursdays at FCC, 10–11:30 a.m.; Fridays at Moody School in Haverhill, 10:30–11:30 a.m.
- **Mother’s Day Themed Story Time & Craft:** Monday, May 13, 10–11 a.m. **Story Time and Craft:** Monday, June 24, 10–11 a.m.
- **STEAM Activity:** Monday, May 20 and June 10, 10–11 a.m.

Library Programs

- **Amesbury Public Library:** Story Time - Fri. May 17 & June 21, 10:30–11:30am; Music Creations - Wed. May 22 & June 26 10:30–11:30am.
- **Georgetown Peabody Library:** Story Time - Fri. May 31 & June 28, 10:30–11:30am **Groveland Langley-Adams Public Library:** Story Time - Fri. May 10 & June 14, 10:30–11:30am; **Music Creations - Wed. June 05, 1–2pm Haverhill Public Library:** Story Time - Mon. May 6 & June 3, 10–11am ; **Music Creations - Wed. May 8 and June 19, 10–11am Merrimac Public Library:** Story Time - Fri. May 24, 10:30–11:30 a.m. **West Newbury G.A.R Memorial Library:** Story Time - Fri. May 03 & June 07, 10:30–11:30am; Music Creations - Wed. May 15, May 29 & June 12 , 10:30–11:30am.

Register, call (978) 914-7893
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, June 18 at 10 a.m. and waitlist registration for ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes on Wednesday, June 19 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 Kim ext. 244.

Don’t give up on yourself!

Randy Soto came to Massachusetts 2 years ago from New York City. In NYC, he had done well through middle school but then started to get into trouble. He was distracted from schoolwork by hanging out with people who were making bad choices. He started getting into fights and becoming discouraged with his life. He had given up on himself.

His brother invited him to move to Haverhill for a fresh start. After Randy arrived, he worked for the Boys and Girls Club and found that he enjoyed working with kids and working outdoors. He realized that he felt free in Haverhill because he “didn’t have to look over his shoulder and worry about trouble.” His brother’s girlfriend recommended that Randy come to Community Action to study for the HiSET exams. When Randy started the program he was serious about his work, anxious to get ahead. He got discouraged easily when he made mistakes because he wanted “things to be perfect.” He also struggled with his own tendency to push back against teacher expectations. But Randy knew he wanted to get his diploma and go to college. He had seen too many other people, friends and family, who have gone down difficult life paths and gotten stuck. He wanted his life to be different.

Randy would focus intensely on his studies for a few months and then would drop out of classes for a while, only to return more determined to succeed. He said working on his studies at his own pace really helped him and he realized his success was really “on him.” He also appreciated that other students in CAI’s HiSET program were going through the same process he was and that they had similar life experiences.

What ultimately led Randy to take the tests was his realization that he was afraid to fail. But once he took the first test- and passed!- he was not afraid anymore and he looked forward to each test with nervous excitement. After he passed the exams, he realized that he had been caught up in his feelings and worries that he would never pass the test. So he has some advice for those still studying for the tests: If you can, put your feelings aside. Do the work, follow the directions of the teacher- even if you don’t feel like it.

He also urges, “Whatever position you are at, even at HiSET 1 [the beginning level], don’t get discouraged. Just go through the process. I was one of those people that gave up- but then came back- and stuck to it. Everybody goes through what they go through [with past negative experiences] and so they resist doing the work. But after you do it, you see the work is easy. It’s the feelings that are hard.”

Randy doesn’t want to waste any time. He has taken the Accuplacer placement exam at Northern Essex Community College and he will begin courses in the Fall. He plans to study computers and technology and he is looking forward to the experience.

Secure Jobs - Ready…Willing…Able

The Secure Jobs program serves families living in shelter or who receive HomeBase or RAFT (Rental Assistance for Families in Transition). Secure Jobs offers a four-track approach by assessing individuals and placing them in the track that best aligns with their needs and experience. The four tracks include:

- Job Readiness Track
- Job Skills Training Track
- Job Search Track
- Job Retention Track

Who can Apply? If you are living in a shelter or have a HomeBase subsidy or receive RAFT, and you need a job or want to advance in your current job, and you can speak some English (or are willing to enroll in ESOL classes), then you are eligible for Secure Jobs.

How to Apply: Contact the Community Teamwork Financial Education Center, 165 Merrimack St., Lowell, (978) 654-5673 for more information. http://www.commteam.org/how-we-help/finance-business/secure-jobs/
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.

Leeward Foundation Supports Energy Programs - Continued from page 1

time. She told me that she had reached out but only one came through for her. She could not say enough about how responsive and generous CAI had been to her. I sent our very first check to CAI the next day and we have been proud supporters of their incredible work ever since.”

The mission of Leeward is to recycle, reuse and renew for charity. Through the generous donations of the community, The Leeward Charitable Foundation turns unwanted/surplus clothing, furniture and household items into funds for worthy local charities.

“Community Action is thrilled to partner with Leeward to support CAI’s low income clients who struggle to pay the high cost of heating their homes,” said John Cuneo, president of Community Action. “The generous donation from Leeward will allow CAI to serve a greater number of clients. We are truly grateful.”

To learn more about Leeward Light Charitable Foundation, visit: www.leewardfoundation.org.

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CAI Consumer Services
Consumer Protection and North Essex Mediators (NEM)
Newburyport District Court, 188 State Street
Newburyport, MA 01950
(978) 872-1560

CAI Family and Community Connection
Activities and resources for families w/children 0-8 yrs.
Presbyterian Church
346 Broadway
Haverhill, MA 01832
(978) 914-7893

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 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

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

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.

Supported by

Could you continue with the letter to update our donors about the recent partnership with Leeward Charitable Foundation? Thank you.