



**Dear Colleagues,**

As we unveil this issue of *The Advance*, we take up the matter of knowledge generation as one of four core elements to secure our mission. Our strategy to renew our organization is anchored on a foundation marked by a result driven culture. Over the past 1½ years, our

staff and Board members have taken time to think strategically about the importance of steering this organization in a new direction. To this end, we have generated the Poverty Data Report, a Strategic Overlay of our five year plan, and have built a Balanced Scorecard that helps to communicate all of the key parts of our strategy.

In order to effectively carry out our new mission, it is imperative that we develop the ability to collect, analyze, and transform data into usable and actionable information and knowledge. The renewal and emergence of CAANH as a leader and a learning organization has led us to embrace a results oriented culture. The goal of knowledge generation is to create a central, cohesive source of support and stability that leads to better outcomes for customers, sponsors, and funders. We are transforming our organization by instilling a sense of the importance of cultural relevance throughout all positions.

Building a human services delivery system that is client centered, comprehensive, and culturally competent is crucial to our work today. Our clients rely on us to assist them with creating improved lives. We do this by embedding in our human services infrastructure (HSI) a “better off” measure that helps us understand the return on value for our customers.

In order to achieve our mission, to inspire and generate prosperity with customers and partners, it is essential that we design a results oriented and accountable culture. Understanding the importance of setting key indicators of success and establishing key performance measures are critical to addressing the real needs of the people we serve.

We ask that you join the staff and Board as we move forward building a community-wide culture that tracks, monitors, and reports value based on our ability to move data to action.

Amos L. Smith, MSW, LCSW  
President and CEO  
Community Action Agency  
of New Haven



# The CAANH Advance

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## ROMA Comes Alive for CAANH Staff

Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) has taken on new meaning for our staff. Over the summer we invested time and resources to enable two of our senior staff to become certified ROMA trainers. After participating in a week of peer-to-peer training by the national master trainers, Roberta Saunders-Gray (Planning) and Al Grimm (IT) began utilizing their skills with our staff.

In August, 24 staff received two half-days of ROMA training. As new staff joins our team, they too are learning about the mission, planning, service, data collection and reporting procedures common to all Community Action Agencies. There have been several great “ah ha!” moments as we get together and focus on the mission established at the inception of the community action model of social change. According to Rosemarie Porto, Lead Caseworker, [Continued Page 2]

**“ . . . everything we do in Energy is based on the ROMA guidelines for customer service. This means that we are offering our clients a way to help themselves out of poverty.”**

## A Message from our Board by Wilson Luna, Ed.D.



In our fast paced environment where information is constantly changing, it is important to share knowledge in order to stay current and to be able to respond to the ever changing needs of the clients we serve. The transfer of knowledge must be done in an orderly fashion to ensure that individuals who come into the organization and current employees are provided with the information which makes them efficient and productive members of the team. This can be accomplished through employee orientations, peer mentoring, handbooks, professional development, and research.

The sharing of knowledge is a process in which all units of the organization are impacted. It binds all units and/or departments in implementing the mission of the organization. It is also very much a part of the strategic planning. Knowledge comes in many different forms, therefore, it is crucial for the organization to develop a culture which nurtures, promotes, and utilizes knowledge to support the organization’s effort to be the very best.

*CAANH offers pathways to prosperity to those in poverty in the Greater New Haven area.*

## CAANH Focuses on Reducing Poverty

In May of 2008, CAANH adopted a new five year Strategic Plan, outlining the Agency's direction with regard to addressing poverty in Greater New Haven. CAANH's mission, vision, and goals were reprioritized and expanded to be more consistent with the Six National ROMA goals and encompass Connecticut's antipoverty commitment; specifically, the 2005 Child Poverty Council's goal of reducing child poverty in Connecticut by 50% by 2014.

The process of creating a new anti-poverty vision and strategy started with a community needs assessment and culminated with the Poverty Data Report, a 50-page comparison of national, statewide, and Agency data on the causes and effects of poverty. Statistics on employment, health, education, housing, and crime are presented in detail in this report.

Based on need, the majority of our service activity is concentrated in five of the 16 towns we serve. This core area receives overlapping CAANH services and consists of New Haven, West Haven, East Haven, North Haven and Hamden. Of these five towns, New

Haven is ranked fifth with respect to the prosperity of its residents, as New Haven's poverty rate is over 20%. In fact, approximately half of New Haven residents cannot meet their basic needs on a consistent basis. New Haven seniors are another group with a high poverty rate as 19% of our residents over 65 live below 100% of the poverty level.

CAANH recognizes the depth and breadth of poverty in its service area and the negative impact it has on adults and children whose basic needs are not being met. This enables CAANH to provide leadership to the community in reducing family poverty. The Agency will help the community understand the extent of poverty in the region, the implications of not addressing poverty and will call others to action in reducing poverty.

### Did you know...

that 28% of children in New Haven live below the federal poverty threshold? This is a level far short of the resources needed to feed, house, and care for children.

## ChiliFest a Hot Success!

Our 17<sup>th</sup> Annual ChiliFest on September 19<sup>th</sup> was a huge success held on a beautiful Fall day with the help of many energetic volunteers. We raised just about \$18,000 from this one-day event which will be used to supplement our Emergency Food Pantry and Youth programs.

35 cooks came from as far as Hawaii to compete in our event and win a bid to cook in the World's Cookoff in Charleston, West Virginia. Marc Frechette from Ellington, CT took first place in red chili winning a \$500 prize plus trophy. Kurt Leitner of Avenel, NJ took first place in green chili winning a \$300 prize plus trophy. Kurt donated \$100 of his prize money back to the agency. The "Paesanos" won People's Choice and Best Book/Showmanship for a total winning of \$300; all of which they donated back to CAANH.

Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro and Senator Christopher Dodd attended the event and spent quite a bit of time tasting chili and viewing over 45 Classic Cars that were proudly displayed by their owners.

The Marine Cadets of America once again provided a huge display in the kids section along with camouflage face painting; the New Haven Fire Dept. was present with their "Smoke House" that was open to the crowd; pony rides were available as well as a group of crafters selling homemade relishes, carved wood pieces and Swarovsky crystal sun catchers.

Entertainment was provided by Vince Buonomo a roving magician, and local bands: Dunbar Café and Cross-Eyed Cat.

### Major Sponsors:

Webster Bank	\$2,000
New Haven Register	\$1,600
Car Center	\$1,500
HUB International	\$1,500

## ROMA Comes Alive [continued]

"after going to ROMA training this year, I finally understand how everything we do in the Energy department is strongly based on the ROMA guidelines for customer service. This means that we are offering our clients a way to help themselves out of poverty."

Understanding ROMA gives our staff new insight into the value of using data to generate knowledge and manage our programs more efficiently and effectively. The expansion of our programs through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) stimulus

funding and its requirement for frequent reporting provide us with another level of accountability and services for our community. ROMA is where it's at and CAANH is in the game!

### The CAANH Advance Staff

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