



Dear Colleagues,  
 There is an increasing trend toward partnerships between nonprofit organizations. Partnerships provide a means to expand capacity and deliver comprehensive services to the community.

Here at the Community Action Agency of New Haven (CAANH), we develop these partnerships as part of how we will do business in the future.

Collaboration reflects our point of view. As we work with our partners, formal or informal, we bring different perspectives to solve problems. Our focus on integrated services is important because individuals and families have multiple needs that change over time, and no one agency

is capable of addressing each of those needs. Agencies must work together to ensure that clients can access the types of services they require when they need them.

As a community, our endeavor to collect resources will create a greater voice for improving the community. As we move toward a culture of collaboration, let us remember the importance of empowerment through participation and involvement at all levels.

Amos L. Smith, MSW, LCSW  
 CAANH President and CEO



# The CAANH Advance

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## Partners Making a Difference by Roberta Saunders-Gray, *Director of Planning and Development*

The Asset Building program is the most recent collaborative initiative between CAANH, New Opportunities, Inc. of Waterbury and TEAM, Inc., of Derby, Connecticut. The program was funded by the Department of Social Services and will include 80 participants from the community.

It is designed to review how individualized support services can influence asset building savings for the participants. The target

population includes multi-racial, multi-ethnic, working individuals and families who are eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

The program uses different approaches to encourage participants to take advantage of Individual Development Accounts (IDAs). The IDAs are matched savings accounts in which eligible individuals and families accumulate funds that can be used towards a car repair,

**“this program ties directly to our mission, and the data will tell an important story.”**

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## A Message from our Board by Georgina Lucas



“Organizations such CAANH, whose mission is reducing poverty and stimulating positive social change in our community, cannot carry out this mission without the assistance of other dedicated organizational partners.”

Georgina Lucas is currently the Deputy Director of the Robert Wood Johnson (RWJ) Clinical Scholars Program at Yale Medical School. The RWJ Clinical Scholars Program is one of several health related fellowships the national RWJ Foundation funds, to develop health leaders and influence the quality of health care in this country.

Ms. Lucas also serves on our Board of Directors as chair of the Strategic Planning Committee. As part of the strategic plan, CAANH envisions collaborative approaches to poverty reduction in the New Haven area as central to bringing about sustained change in the lives of low-income residents.

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

## The Greek Olive - Seniors' Choice by Sharon Willard, Vice President of Senior Services

In May of 2007, the agency began the process to implement a Restaurant Program as a component of the Elderly Nutrition Program. The opportunity to "dine-out" was conceived as a solution, offering a vibrant, interactive and stimulating environment that is not provided by senior centers or dining at home. When approached, the owners of The Greek Olive, Tony and Anna Anatonakis, jumped at the chance to give back to their community. Tony says, "After more than 30 years in the restaurant business this has been a great opportunity to help our seniors."

As part of the agency's commitment to champion collaboration in our community, CAANH offers "Senior Choice Dining" which is comprised of diverse, healthy and appealing meals for senior residents. In conjunction with The Greek Olive, a local restaurant in New Haven, this program was designed to give seniors an alternative to their current dining options. With the help of our nutritionist, their menu was adapted to meet the dietary needs of this population.

Since its inception, this program has become more and more popular with the number of attendees growing each week.



Guests Enjoying lunch at The Greek Olive

Starting with only 29 seniors at the first luncheon, the program now averages about 106 participants weekly. This success comes in part from the social benefits associated with participation and also because of the partnership with The Greek Olive. This successful program will soon be transitioned back to the Agency On Aging Of South Central CT, Inc and our hope is that it will continue to be a dynamic program and partnership with The Greek Olive restaurant.

## CT Works by Staff

For the past two years, CAANH has had the pleasure of being involved with CTWorks Jobs First Employment Services (JFES) by serving as a Worksite Sponsor and providing on-the-job training for these participants. JFES is a Work Experience program that provides 16 weeks of employment at no charge to the sponsoring organization. Worksite sponsors such as CAANH have the opportunity to play a vital role in the professional development of community members.

**"The partnership between CT Works and CAANH is really a win-win situation all around."**

Charlesetta "Charlie" Holland helped us by providing general clerical

assistance for our Energy department during the 2007-2008 season. She was scheduling appointments, filing, faxing, and serving as a back-up for our receptionist when necessary. Charlie has recently been hired as a permanent, full-time Caseworker. She says "the experience with CTWorks has given me the chance to work at CAANH and help many people."

According to Caren Lang, Executive Assistant, "the partnership between CT Works and CAANH

is really a win-win situation all around. Participants gain a variety of work experience and we appreciate their help."



Charlesetta Holland and Catherine John

This season, Catherine John has been supporting our front office staff answering phones and scheduling appointments, as well as assisting our Director of Human Resources with various projects as needed. Her involvement with our Case Management services also led to her referral to Workforce Alliance/CTWorks. Catherine is currently one of four temporary staff gaining valuable work experience here at CAANH.

### The CAANH Advance Staff

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a down payment on an apartment, and college or trade school credits, among other things.

All program members will receive 12 months of financial education. Some will also receive additional services to help them develop personal plans and strategies for accessing services such as childcare, energy assistance, employment skills and other family supports. We will then evaluate the success of the group to see which approach has the greatest potential for positively changing the lives of many in the community. According to Roberta Saunders-Gray, Director of Planning and Development at CAANH, "this program ties directly to our mission, and the data will tell an important story. That story will create a model for our 'passport to prosperity' and demonstrate how we can help people move out of poverty and gain a sense of empowerment from their growing financial awareness."

## Mobile Outreach Teams in Your Neighborhood *by Staff*

The CAANH mobile outreach team is taking their laptops, paperwork and other important information to sites in our community. This is a service provided to those unable to make it to the main office or one of our satellite sites. Our team is doing this to help people sign up for energy assistance with their heating bills.

The team recently visited ALSO-Cornerstone, Inc. This non-profit organization provides prevention, treatment, supportive housing, and recovery services to individuals and families who are affected by mental illness and/or substance abuse. Our team consisted of two caseworkers from the Energy department who helped process applications and certified clients. Approximately 20 people benefited from this opportunity.

When asked about the importance of reaching out to the community, Monalisa Bentley responded, "**it's heartwarming to see the clients get their needs met, in their neighborhood.**" Monalisa is one of our newest hires who does outreach to the seniors who are homebound. This is just one example of the many ways CAANH is reaching out to provide Energy services to those in our community.



Monalisa Bentley and Ruth Quiles

## Coats for Kids *by Staff*

CAANH teamed up with WYBC on Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup> for the annual Coats for Kids party, which took place at the Hillhouse Fieldhouse, in New Haven. CAANH helped to provide information about energy assistance and set up the required appointments for applications to be processed.

Our IDA program was on hand to provide information about Individual Development Accounts and Financial Education opportunities. In addition to coats, various sponsors also provided a video game arcade, toys, and healthy snacks for the children. As an added treat, Santa Claus made a special appearance!!



Fireman Anthony Reese poses for a portrait with CAANH Staff

## Our Thanks



To the ***Interfaith Volunteer Care Givers*** who delivered Thanksgiving Dinner to our Meals on Wheels clients. We appreciate your support and generosity.

To the ***U.S. Marine Corps Reserve of New Haven*** who assisted with the agency's annual ***Toys for Tots*** drive. Toys were delivered to over 300 children.

