



Dear colleagues and fellow advocates,

It is a special privilege to present the first issue of our new publication, *The CAANH Advance*. The title identifies the NEW Community Action Agency of New Haven as evident in the definition of the word "advance." This word means to progress, evolve, and improve.

The idea behind this electronic newsletter is to present a clear picture of what CAANH does. It will focus on our staff and the groups and businesses that work with us to make a real difference in our community.

The vision of *The CAANH Advance* is to educate, inspire, and help us renew our commitment to service each day. The purpose is to highlight client stories, donors, and community events that are making a

difference. We will enlist the help of community leaders, researchers and other social service professionals dedicated to offering pathways to prosperity. Please, consider working with us to improve the Greater New Haven community. We invite you to share this information with your colleagues.

Sincerely,

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



The CAANH Advance

November 17, 2008 Volume 1 Number 1

A New Day at CAA by Amos L. Smith, *President and CEO*

A lot has happened here at the Community Action Agency of New Haven (CAANH) over the last couple years. We have come a long way; improving our processes and program procedures.

Our plan for the future is to offer those living in poverty in this community a variety of services, designed to put them on a pathway to prosperity. The information that follows, profiles some significant achievements which are in tune with the spirit of positive change at CAANH.

It was a glorious day when BlumShapiro, an independent auditor, issued an unqualified or "clean" audit opinion on our 2007 fiscal statements. Our Board of Directors and Audit Committee insisted on proper documentation and processes which helped clean up debt issues that existed long before this administration arrived. This establishes a firm financial foundation for our future work.

Our "Manage Your Future" summer youth program kicked off on June 30th. Senator Toni Harp, Representative William

Dyson, and Stanley Welch from Congresswoman DeLauro's office were speakers at the event. Representative Pat Dillon was also in attendance. Over 20 teens were offered meaningful employment and work experience.

It was a glorious day when BlumShapiro issued an unqualified audit opinion...

The agency's popular "Senior Choice Dining" program recently reached an all time high when 168 seniors gathered for lunch at The Greek Olive Restaurant in New Haven. The program is designed to provide those age 60 or older with an alternative dining option as well as an opportunity to socialize.

Finally, on Saturday, September 20th, we hosted our 16th Annual ChiliFest at East Shore Park. The crowd was estimated at 2,000 people, making it our biggest and most successful fundraiser ever. We are proud to be a part of this event and to offer the Greater New Haven community our programs and services.

These are just a few of the highlights and activities that make this a new day at CAA and show us moving forward with positive change.

A Message from our Board by Jeff Klaus, *Vice Chair, Board of Directors*



"I envision an organization that is fiscally sound and a leader of best practices. Our partners are strong and willing to commit to our mission and goals. We need to empower our staff and clients with knowledge and focus on quality education."

Jeff Klaus is the Regional President of Webster Bank in New Haven. He has 25 years of experience in the Connecticut banking industry. Mr. Klaus is a graduate of Rutgers College and holds an M.B.A. from the University of Connecticut. In addition to his commercial banking background, Klaus has been a long-time community leader and has served on numerous business and not-for-profit agency boards with a particular focus on improving urban public education. He is a resident of East Haven, where he lives with his family.

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

Warming Hearts and Homes in Our Community

by Sharon Willard, Vice President of Senior Services



I have been working at CAANH for 29 years. In the 80's, I managed the Food Commodities program, better known as the "cheese & butter" program. About the same time, I took over the Greater New Haven Community Fuel Bank for those people not eligible for state or federal energy programs.

It is most rewarding to know that we are helping people in our own community. This year I received a note from a young man who recently became unemployed and was instructed by the office of his State Representative, Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro, the Mayor's office and the United Illuminating Company to contact CAANH for help.

Although he had to wait to be seen, he said he was treated with dignity and compassion and felt "empowered" by our caseworker. He not only received energy assistance but also

... treated with dignity and compassion ... "empowered" by our caseworker.

received help through the Fuel Bank's Clean Slate program that helped to prevent shut-off of his service.

After 29 years, it still amazes me that the number of people who need help continues to grow. I am not surprised by the number of people who have difficulty asking for help.

What warms my heart and reaffirms my position at CAANH, is how appreciative most people are for the services we offer.



Did you know...

...Last year, CAANH processed more than 1,000 Fuel Bank applications, which provided approximately \$475,000 worth of oil or utility payments for those in need.

Change Is In the Air by Cassandra Floyd, Associate Director of Energy and HSI



Many changes have taken place at the Community Action Agency of New Haven (CAANH) this year, especially with regard to the Energy Assistance Program. Energy staff began making calls to seniors and individuals with disabilities to schedule appointments as early as July 18th. The State of Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS) provided CAANH with additional funds to

start the program early. This allowed CAANH to focus our efforts on the most at risk populations, including our homebound clients, in the five towns that we serve.¹

...reaching and serving clients in a more timely manner.

We are reaching more clients and serving them in a more timely manner than we have

in past years. Through the implementation of the Human Services Infrastructure (HSI), we have the ability to address the sum of our clients' needs, providing them with a multitude of services for which they may be eligible. To date we have processed more than 4,000 applications, of which, over 1,500 were determined to have multiple needs and were therefore referred to other support services. This speaks to the heart of HSI; working with clients to determine their needs so that the appropriate resources can be identified, and linking those clients to these resources. Before the Energy season is over, we expect to serve approximately 14,000 families.

We currently have intake sites spread throughout the five towns we serve, including our newest site, Everlasting Word Ministries. We are pleased to have many community organizations partnering with us to assist CAANH in offering services to those in need.²

After 19 years I can honestly say that I am still proud to be a part of this Agency. Through all of the ups and downs, we are all part of something that not only services but improves the conditions of so many lives, and that is what I find most fulfilling.

¹ The CAANH Energy Assistance Programs provide services to those living in New Haven, Hamden, West Haven, East Haven and North Haven.

² For information about specific sites call 203-387-770 x 301.

Did you know...

...During the 2007-2008 Energy Season, CAANH assisted over 12,000 families with their household heating.

The CAANH Advance Staff

Publisher.....Amos L. Smith
Editor..... Terrence McIntosh
Associate Editor..... Kelli Bryant
Content Editor..... Caren Lang
Graphics Editor..... Al Grimm