

NEK-CAP News

Spring Edition ~ March 2014

Serving Atchison, Brown, Doniphan, Jackson, Jefferson, Leavenworth, Marshall, Nemaha, Pottawatomie & Riley Counties



From the Executive Director's Desk

Submitted by Jeanette Collier, Executive Director

A primary goal of NEK-CAP, Inc. in 2014 has been to actively participate in the Kansas Association of Community Action Programs (KACAP) legislative advocacy pursuits. Four legislative and/or policy areas, which have a direct impact on the lives of low-income Kansans, were identified by the KACAP Board for support and action as follows:

Healthcare Access and Quality – Medicaid expansion and the authorization for Registered Dental Practitioners.

Education and Work Opportunities - Adequate funding for Kansas K-12 education programs and increased post-secondary educational opportunities via technical schools and/or universities.

Economic Security – Policies and laws that protect and promote economic security for ALL Kansans, including fair and reasonable tax policies,

restrictions on predatory lending practices, and maintenance of appropriate safety net programs.

Quality of Life – Policies and laws that protect victims and reduce the incidences of domestic violence and human trafficking; promote progressive immigration; and preserve affordable housing options.

One of NEK-CAP, Inc.'s key advocacy strategies is to develop a constituency base which can testify on the positive impacts of programs designed to assist low-income Kansans in their pursuit of self-reliance, as well as, to share concerns about laws or programmatic policies which have had a negative effect on their goals and/or well-being. Therefore, I invite and encourage all of you, as Kansas stakeholders, to join NEK-CAP, Inc. in writing and sharing with our legislators and policy makers the real story of poverty in Northeast Kansas.

NEK-CAP's Mission

We provide comprehensive education and social services to low-income community members through collaborative partnerships focused on promoting family development, empowerment, and economic security.

The Promise of Community Action

Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.



Kansas Head Start Association Scholarships & Award Winners

Submitted By: Rose Sigmund, Head Start Director

Each year, the Kansas Head Start Association recognizes outstanding members of the Head Start community for their efforts and accomplishments. Erick Vaughn, Kansas Head Start Association Executive Director, announced that three of the eight awards presented were from our program. Award winners were honored at the Kansas Head Start Association meeting in Salina, Kansas on January 9, 2014. Our award winners included: Head Start Alumni: Marcus Platt (Horton, KS); Head Start Parent, Post-Secondary Education: Dallas Coots (Horton, KS); and Head Start Staff, Higher Education: Jenifer Metcalf (Holton, KS). These winners were also nominated for Region VII award which were announced in May 2014. Congratulations award winners!!!



Marcus Platt attended NEK-CAP, Inc. South Brown County Head Start 1998/1999 and 1999/2000. Marcus and his mother Karen Kimmi are from Horton, KS. He is currently attending Pittsburg State University, majoring in English and minoring in Mathematics. Marcus aspires to write books for young readers. We congratulate him on this outstanding personal achievement.



Dallas Coots is a single mother of Miss Nataleigh Akins. Dallas was recently recognized for her academic achievements and received the parent post-secondary educational award. Dallas is pursuing her educational goals in the field of nursing. We congratulate her on her hard work and determination and wish her continued success in her educational endeavors.



Jenifer Metcalf has worked at NEK-CAP, Inc. for the past 6 years. She's the lead teacher in the P.M. Half Day Classroom in Jackson County. Currently Jennifer has her Associates Degrees for Early Childhood Education as well as Commercial Photography. She's currently working on her Bachelor's in Education focusing on Special Education. She loves being able to work with families and children in our community through teaching and enjoys being able to watch the children grow through the year. She would like to thank everyone who has supported her.

NEK-CAP, Inc.

1260 220th Street

PO Box 380

Hiawatha, KS 66434

Phone:

(785) 742-2222

Fax:

(785) 742-2164

E-Mail:

nekcaph@nekcaph.org

Web Site:

www.nekcaph.org

Counties Served:

*Atchison, Brown, Doniphan,
Jackson, Jefferson,
Leavenworth, Marshall,
Nemaha, Pottawatomie
and Riley*

NEK-CAP, Inc.'s Vision:

One by one
all families and communities
become self-reliant.

*NEK-CAP, Inc. is an equal
opportunity provider
and employer.*



Comments/Questions: please contact Linda Grier, Integrated Services Office Manager, lgrier@nekcaph.org

Achievements ~ Accomplishments ~ Successes

Submitted by staff members

I worked with a lady who had been living in her car and was able to assist with ESG. It took her a little bit to find a place she thought would be good for her. Once she found a place she was able to get her stuff out of her car and begin living again. She said the simplest thing, like taking a bath, people take for granted, and she was so excited to be able to do that. She attended all of her appointments with me, we also worked on budgeting. She felt stronger now by having someone encourage her and help her get things figured out. She said she was always run down by the folks around her. She was having trouble at work and I encouraged her to speak out about what she felt was right, she did this and it got worse. I asked her if she ever thought about talking to one of the Sisters since she works with them, she finally decided to do just that and she was very surprised that they listened and helped her out. She even was moved into another position and got more hours on top of everything else. She has finished the ESG program and is considered a success. From where she was when we met till now, I can tell you she is a go getter and lets nothing stand in her way. I am so very proud of her. *Submitted by: Soni Moranz, Atchison County Family Development Advocate*

I recently started working with a single mother of a young baby. She is currently homeless, jobless, and needs lots of support. When we first started working on goals and what/where we needed start and which direction we were headed, her first goal was to get into GED classes. We started working on that and called our local GED program. She is now enrolled and completed her first set of testing. She has passed all science courses and is on her last math level, in less than two months. She was very excited and showed me the awards she received for doing this. It is truly amazing what getting an education can do for a person... empower, support, build confidence, etc. In addition to the education goal, we have established transportation to and from GED courses and enrolled her child in childcare while she is at GED class. What an awesome feeling, she is determined and will do well with our support. We are also working on a few other goals, but this is a major

accomplishment and one, that I would have to say, may not have happened without the support of NEK-CAP. *Submitted by: Kim Lackey, Atchison County Child & Family Advocate*

Anna Caudle received her RN in the spring, found a house to rent for her son and her this fall, and is now making child care decisions for Trace. She has been able to access childcare thru NEK-CAP, so finding affordable child care has been the next step. We went to visit two child care centers here in Atchison. Anna and Trace's dad, Matt, has decided on one and will be filling out paper work together this weekend so that he will be ready to start when gets closer to three years old in May. *Submitted by: Pam Wilburn, Atchison County Child & Family Advocate*

In May of 2013, a mother of three came to the office in need of assistance. She was recently separated from the father of her children and had no other means of supporting herself. Living in a remote part of the county, transportation and childcare made it difficult for her to find employment. With the cooperation of her landlord at the time, we were able to accept her into the ESG program. The ESG program gave her the chance to move to town where both childcare and employment opportunities are more readily available. She was able to find a good job and quality childcare within a couple of months. She also got her children enrolled into our Early Head Start and Head Start Programs. With her strong commitment to improving her life and the assistance provided, she has made great improvements in all areas of her life and is on the road to being self-sufficient. *Submitted by Kori Anderson, Jackson County Family Development Advocate*

In September of 2013, a mother came to the office in need of emergency housing.

Her children and her had been living in a motel and could no longer afford it. She was employed at the time, but had not been working long enough to save money for a place of their own. With the help of the YWCA we were able to get her and her children into a temporary shelter and accept her into the ESG program. They were able to find suitable housing just in time to celebrate Christmas in their own house. With housing secured, she was immediately able to find new employment and keep her children enrolled in their school and Early Head Start. The housing also allowed her to return to the community where she had family and friends to access for support. *Submitted by Kori Anderson, Jackson County Family Development Advocate*



Head Start is currently accepting applications for Fall enrollment!! Please contact your local county office or visit www.nekcap.org for more information.

Achievements ~ Accomplishments ~ Successes (cont.)

Submitted by staff members



When I first met Michelle in 2012, she was a stay-at-home mother taking care of the kids while her husband worked. We were enrolling her youngest child into our Head Start Program. At that time, the family's goal was to work towards paying off their past debts and getting back on track to being more financially stable. That spring, Michelle attended the Financial Literacy class which was offered through NEK-CAP, with the help of local bankers. By the end of the school year, Michelle and Jeremy had purchased the home they had been renting. They have since been working towards paying off past debts. When we re-enrolled for this school year, Michelle felt they were definitely on the right track financially and wanted to set the goal of getting her family more involved in the community. In September, she volunteered to be a Policy Council Representative for our center and was voted into that position. Her family also attends Parent Engagement Activities when possible and she has volunteered as a Girl Scout leader for the local troop. This year, they were able to use their tax refund to pay off the last of their debt, refinance their home, and

hopefully work on some home improvements. At our most recent visit she said "I feel like we are in the best place we have been in years!" *Submitted by Kori Anderson, Jackson County Family Development Advocate*

Kristina and Dennis were among many families who suffered after the economic crisis. As a result of a layoff and their financial circumstances, they chose to move in with family so they could work towards getting back on their feet. They were able to enroll their son into NEK-CAP's Toddler classroom, which allowed Kristina to go to school for her cosmetology license while Dennis worked. After completing her schooling, Kristina was able to start doing business at the local hair salon. The family was able to find an affordable house to rent and was able to start saving for those extras. When asked, Kristina credited their family's success to the very strong support they had from their family as well as the help they received from NEK-CAP. *Submitted by Kori Anderson, Jackson County Family Development Advocate*

Miss Cindy from the Doniphan Library came and read books to the kids. Our theme for the night was Heart Health and Dental Health since February is the National Awareness Month for each of those subjects. Cindy does a great job of reading and engaging the kids, and then playing with them and even getting the parents in on the fun as well. She also talked with the parents about the importance of reading at home. It was fun times. (And yes, that is Miss Juliene getting in on the fun as well with the pom poms!!) *Submitted by: Belinda White, Doniphan County Family Development Advocate*



Comments/Questions: please contact Linda Grier, Integrated Services Office Manager, lgrier@nekc.org