

# NEK-CAP News Summer Edition ~ June 2015

*Serving Atchison, Brown, Doniphan, Jackson, Jefferson, Jewell, Leavenworth, Marshall, Mitchell, Nemaha, Osborne, Pottawatomie, Republic, Riley, Smith, and Washington Counties.*



## 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.

## From the Executive Director's Desk

*Submitted by Jeanette Collier, Executive Director*

I hope everyone has a great summer filled with family, friend and community celebrations!

On May 5<sup>th</sup>, NEK-CAP, Inc. staff marked Community Action Month with a day of fun, diverse work activities, including a kick-off wellness event, sharing of success stories, a speed "dating" strategic planning exercise, and a Community Action educational scavenger hunt. It was a wonderful learning and team building occasion, which demonstrated the unique contributions of each staff member to the agency's mission.

Jeanette "Jet" Spersflage has been promoted to the position of Associate Director Program Operations. She is responsible for the administration of the Head Start/Early Head Start programs and Family and Community Resources services provided through the Community Services Block Grant.

Head Start/Early Head Start recruitment is in full swing! If you are or know of a low-income family or have a child with a disability, please contact Karen Linck at 785-742-2222 extension 116 to learn more about the enrollment process. Both programs

provide comprehensive child development and early childhood education opportunities and promote family engagement, advocacy and empowerment.

NEK-CAP, Inc. is being recognized by the Kansas Department of Commerce during Business Appreciation Month with a Regional Business Excellence Award in the Hospital/Non-Profit sector for the organization's contributions to growing the local economy, job creation and community commitment. We want to thank the Hiawatha Foundation for Economic Development (HFED) for the recommendation.

Local economy aside, the greatest role of NEK-CAP, Inc., is discussed in the Success Stories shared throughout this newsletter. To bring change and hope to those striving for a better life and economic security through the building of human, social and financial capitals are the organization's primary contribution.

I want to express my sincere gratitude to Misters Martin, Monroe and McKelvey for their vision and dedication to the formation of NEK-CAP, Inc. Fifty years later we are still living your legacy!



## From One of Our Founders: 50 Years Later

Submitted by Ralph Martin, Organizing Chairman & Past Board President

It is now fifty years since myself and Dolan McKelvey and Lucius Monroe, all from Atchison, began setting up and incorporating nine NE Kansas counties to form NEK-CAP.

We traveled around once or twice a week in the fall of 1965 to hold evening meetings in each county. We got people and county officials to come out to meetings and we organized each county separately into an individual county CAP and then put them together into a multi-county NEK CAP. We did all this without any compensation for our time and travel expenses and we were never reimbursed later on when it was funded since we donated all this to get NEK-CAP organized.

I went to the Kansas City regional OEO (Office of Economic Opportunity) in the summer of 1965 and talked to Jim Tice who helped me develop the application for NEK-CAP to be approved and funded (I found and acquired in-kind donations for the local ten or twenty percent required) like the office on the third floor of the Atchison County Courthouse and office furniture donations. Later on Head start classroom space in churches.

I was elected President of NEK-CAP by the Board of Directors. I spent the Thanksgiving weekend in November 1965 writing and finalizing the funding application for NEK-CAP and incorporation papers with the State of Kansas. I got this approved early in 1966 and the funding became and approved to start and hire an Executive Director Bill Watkins in March 1966 and some other staff.

Because of the effort we few and many others made we were able to bring NEK-CAP into existence fifty years ago. What a blessing it has been to low-income families and children in now sixteen counties in Northeast Kansas.

When I visited the NEK-CAP staff and your headquarters in Hiawatha and attended your annual meeting in 2007 as a key note speaker, I gave a summary of how it all began to your staff. You have the original papers on display in your office in Hiawatha. God bless all of you as you celebrate your Fiftieth Anniversary this year.

OEO and Community Action and the War on Poverty, along with the very successful Head Start Program has been under attack from many sources. It has survived and it has succeeded and will continue to do so. It is a credit to the NEK-CAP staff and your good management and to your Board of Directors leadership which includes good representation from the families you serve that has enabled NEK-CAP to succeed and to help thousands of low-income people and especially children to improve their lives to the benefit of everyone who lives in Northeast Kansas.

Congratulations to all of you on a job well done the last fifty years in accomplishing the goals we had in mind when we organized NEK-CAP way back in 1965. We are proud to have been a part of that effort and we are proud of all of you today. Keep up the good work. *Submitted by Ralph Martin, Brenham Texas, Organizing Chairman and First President of NEK-CAP 1965-1966.*

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Serving the counties of:  
Atchison, Brown,  
Doniphan, Jackson,  
Jefferson, Jewell,  
Leavenworth, Marshall,  
Mitchell, Nemaha,  
Osborne, Pottawatomie,  
Republic, Riley, Smith  
and Washington

*\*services vary per county\**



Photos from our Community Action Month Agency Meeting, May 5, 2015 - visit our agency facebook page to see more.

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

## Achievements ~ Accomplishments ~ Successes

*Submitted by staff members & parents*

### *Some moments in the NEK-CAP history timeline:*

1994 ~ NEK-CAP purchased and renovated nine older homes for affordable rental property for income eligible tenants

1997 ~ Construction began for Jefferson Village Apartments located in Winchester, Kansas

1997 ~ Received Early Head Start federal and state funding

2000 ~ Riley County was added to our service area

2000 ~ The Annie L. Johnson Child and Development Center opened in August, in Holton, Kansas

2001 ~ Construction began for Sabetha Hillcrest Apartments located in Sabetha, Kansas

2001 ~ Mr. Larry Pickman was hired at the fifth Executive Director on August 24, 2001

### **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.*



Deputy Potts, Car Seat Technician

I have sent two of my girls so far and I plan on sending my third child to Head Start because of how well prepared they are for kindergarten once they get done with Head Start. My oldest Sophia loved Head Start and her teachers as well. It taught her how to follow teacher's directions and I gave her so many new socialization skills that she had no issues transitioning to kindergarten. You could say that she had a "head start" on how life would be like at school. She learned her letters and her numbers and how to write her name before she even made it to elementary school. We don't know very many people with children the same age as ours so Head Start helped her to learn to make friends and how to treat those friends after they were made. My middle child Marley has attended two years at Head Start and she's just that much further ahead. I am proud of my children and I am greatly appreciated of Head Start and the teachers and the rest of the staff forgiving my girls the skills that they need to succeed in school and out of school. Also, for giving them the drive to learn more, to ask questions, to build and create things, and a love of reading. My youngest child, Rosie, will be attending next year and we both can't wait. *Submitted by Tiffany Copeland, Head Start Parent*

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My daughter, who is five now, has been in the Head Start program since before she was even born. It originally started out as a mandatory program but very quickly turned into a necessity. I was in early Head Start while pregnant and had the same worker until my daughter was about six months old, then we moved and I had to switch to Sek-Cap who was also great. But after my daughter was three I moved back and was with NEK-CAP until just the end of April. My daughter has absolutely loved being in Head Start and I have loved being a part of it. I only wish I could've been more involved in activities. *Submitted by a Head Start Parent*

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Talking with a mom at our final family visit for the year and they thanked the teacher for how well prepared her daughter was for Kindergarten. Her older sister had not been a Head Start student and did not have as many skills going into Kindergarten as our current student, and Mom stated that she was happy to see how far her child had come the last couple of years in learning.

During a conversation with a father, I was told that he has recently started a new job. He had applied for a job that required mechanical skills and was able to pass the test and start. He stated that the job has been interesting and is looking forward to getting caught up on bills. Finding work has been difficult over the last few months for this family and I am excited that this opportunity has come!!! *Submitted by Belinda Estes, Doniphan County Family Development Advocate*

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We had a family who needed car seats for the children in order to utilize KanCare's medical transportation to and from medical appointments. Deputy Potts is a Car Seat Technician in Atchison County, who worked with Tim McCool, Traffic Safety Specialist out of Topeka, to locate four child safety restraints for this family, as well as our NEK-CAP, Inc. Head Start Transportation Coordinator and fellow co-workers teaming up to locate available resources.

Deputy Potts brought them to the home and spent nearly two hours with this mom and NEK-CAP, Inc. staff educating us all about everything you could possibly think of about car seats, installation, important information located on the safety seats, what they are made of and why, examples of how the safety seats work upon impact, how gravitational force comes into play and different scenarios to help understand how it works, how to install them both with the seat belt land the LATCH system (but never both at the same time), and a ton of other very important information and tips like to never use bleach when cleaning the car seat belt material. He was a wealth of knowledge and we were fortunate to be able to participate in his education with this mom and her children, as the children were present and listening to the presentation of information as well!

There was a significant amount of planning (and paperwork) that went into obtaining these car seats, and when he arrived at the home with the seats he made sure each child was appropriate physically for them, since all he had initially to guide him were their ages/heights/weights. We also learned the importance of labeling safety restraints with the child's name and emergency contact information in case of an emergency, and how they identify vehicles in accidents that have children in them.

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# Achievements ~ Accomplishments ~ Successes

Submitted by staff members & parents

This was a great learning process as we now know more about how to obtain safety seats if needed, and are planning on teaming up with the Car Seat Technicians in the future for Parent Engagement Activities and performing car seat checks for the families we work with! This is very exciting! We enjoyed working with the Sheriff's Department and Deputy Potts, and thank them for all of their hard work! Submitted by Kara Soph, Family Development Advocate, Atchison County

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I have a family who has struggled over the years with so many different things on so many different levels - Post Partum Depression (that's what brought them to me 3 ½ half years ago as a referral from Pawnee Mental Health), Hunger, Health + Dental, Mental Health, Employment, Insurance, Housing, Education, Marital, Parenting, and ABC (participated and completed the program).

Well, they recently moved to Marysville and continue to struggle, but survive in their own way. Through some supportive discussions mom came to a realization two weeks ago that she needed to help provide for her family in a financial way since they were always facing these problems and was thinking about getting a part time job, though she has a ninth grade education and is barely literate when communicating through writing. It was an amazing thing that happened. At that home visit we were continuing to address the education desires and after sharing with her that she is now close enough to the GED/WIA (Workforce Investment Act) classroom, she could possibly begin working on her GED if she wants. Suddenly mom said she felt it was a good time and thought the need to get her GED was more important than just getting a part time job, because sooner or later she would find she could not do any better because eventually employers would probably begin to expect at least a high school diploma or GED. I supported this and asked a few more prompting questions. She said, because they would possibly help with babysitting costs with the stipend (after explaining this) she thought this was better for her and would be a good example to set for her children! What!??? I was so proud of her, but the story does not end there...two weeks later she is helping her husband be accountable for the children while she has been away taking her TABE testing so she could begin GED classes as soon as possible. Now a few details to

continue, she has a 3 ½ years old, a 1 ½ year old and is pregnant and due in August. She has been depressed and sick quite a bit this pregnancy and through Early Head Start, she receives the support and education (acquired Health ins and was referred to dentist for two infections early on). However the two big things came in the last 24 hours:

As she was getting the results of her TABE testing yesterday (I was asked to participate in the discussion and help develop a plan with the WIA Coordinator and mom), we were talking about a lot of things. This mom gets confused often, so I have certain strategies I use with her and feel I have tried to help her develop some of these skills. (calendars, carrying things to write on etc.) Well, I reminded her about remembering to ask at any time if she didn't understand any part of the process as she began and worked towards her goals. She stood up as she was preparing to leave and said she felt like one of the reasons she didn't do so well in school is because she didn't feel good about herself and was afraid to ask when she didn't understand things or know what or who to ask. She said she isn't afraid anymore. She said "That's what I do now. Early Head Start and Head Start have taught me to ask if I don't know or call and ask if I am not sure. I am not afraid to ask questions anymore wherever I go. If I don't know or understand, I just ask." I said I was so happy to be a part of that. She then said, she had so much to thank me for over the years.

This morning when I walked in, there she was waiting for the GED instructor to open the door. WOW, I was so moved. Now that's a success story. Self-Advocacy is a lifelong skill. Submitted by Michele Beaman, Marshall County Child and Family Development Advocate

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-  Be Inspired
-  Be Proud
-  Be Determined
-  Be Innovative
-  Be Enthused
-  Be Motivated
-  Be Community Action

#CommunityAction

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



We'd love to hear from YOU!!

If your life has been impacted by NEK-CAP in any way and you'd like to share your story with us, we'd love to hear from you!

Feel free to use your names or submit your story anonymously. We would love to share your stories in our upcoming newsletters and/or on our facebook page, to help celebrate fifty (50) years of Community Action!!

Please email your stories to Linda Grier at lgrier@nekcaph.org.