



# **LORAIN COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY**

**PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE BUILD  
AMAZING LIVES  
2017 ANNUAL REPORT**

The background of the lower half of the page is a black and white photograph. It shows a group of people, likely a family or a community group, holding hands in a circle. In the foreground, a young child is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The image is slightly out of focus, emphasizing the text overlay.

# WORKING TOGETHER MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE

It has been an amazing year for Community Action in Lorain County. After decades in the same locations, we had two major moves. We moved administrative and HEAP offices from 502 and 401 Broadway to 936 Broadway in Lorain.

In another mammoth effort, we moved into our new Elyria Head Start Center and said a bittersweet goodbye to our Hamilton School on Middle Avenue. For a third consecutive year, we added more full-day classes in our Five-Star Head Start program.

This fulfills increasing parent requests for full-day services and is consistent with our commitment to optimizing instruction time for children. We also added more food pantry partners. We now have 32 partners throughout the county. Plus, our youth programming continues to grow.

This year's annual report touches on those major accomplishments and many more. What I find most rewarding about this year's achievements is how each one has made a difference to a resident struggling with poverty in some way. There is a pervasive lack of understanding of the barriers low-income people face and little appreciation of how difficult it is to achieve self-sufficiency.

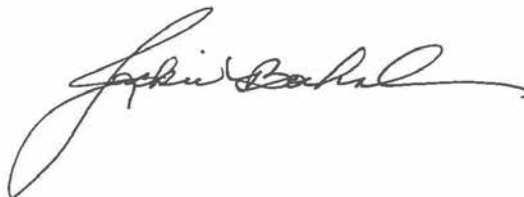
For instance, a large number of work-age residents working year-round still live barely above the federal poverty line. This is shocking! In Lorain County we have 17,770 desperately poor adults that hold year-round jobs. The federal poverty measure only accounts for hunger. It does not factor in housing, medical care, transportation, utilities or any other cost of living. In Community Action, we know the stories of many of those 17,770 workers. We know all the things they are doing right. We see their ongoing struggles. We are here to help.

Included in this report is our Head Start Annual Information for the 2016-17 school year. The information gives a better understanding of whom Head Start serves and the wide-range of supports provided.

As you read about Head Start and other agency services, please think about all the accomplished people that come through the doors of the Lorain County Community Action Agency. They face things on a daily basis that would bring most people to their knees. Yet, with an inexplicable hope, their love for their children and families pushes them to work toward better circumstances.

We make improvements, grow services and deeply collaborate to keep meeting needs. I consider it our job and our privilege to help every resident in need experience better days and build amazing lives.

Yours in service,




President and CEO  
Jackie Boehnlein

**WE KNOW ALL THE THINGS  
THOSE IN POVERTY ARE  
DOING RIGHT. WE SEE  
THEIR ONGOING STRUGGLES.  
WE ARE HERE TO HELP.**





# LGCAA MISSION

## TO SERVE AND EMPOWER LORAIN COUNTY RESIDENTS IN NEED

Our mission serves as our primary purpose. It informs and directs our decision making every day.

# AGENCY VALUES

## COMPASSION, WISDOM AND MOMENTUM

We hire and retain employees who live our values through their work.

# STRATEGIC GOALS

## SERVICE QUALITY, SUSTAINABLE FUNDING, AND DEVELOPING A LEARNING CULTURE

Our board-approved strategic goals work to meet mission, challenge us to constantly improve, and are measured through data. As of 2017, we have three strategic goals.





# 2017 STAFF MILESTONES

The following staff members were recognized at the Agency's back-to-school celebration in August 2017. Collectively, these employees have 120 years of experience with LCCAA. The Agency recognizes 5-year service anniversaries to express appreciation for the service of our talented faculty and staff.

Lillian Barretto, 30 years  
Alfred Jackson, 15 years  
Jane Godby, 10 years

Navajo Frye, 20 years  
Sarah Nestor, 15 years

Brooke Beattie, 15 years  
Alica Wilson, 15 years

The Agency promotes professional development, including tuition assistance. We celebrate degree attainment for the opportunity it creates for our staff and the quality higher education brings to our programs. In 2017, we celebrate:

Shannon Smith, bachelor's degree in early childhood education, Ashford University, summa cum laude  
Bernetta Folmar, associate's degree in early childhood education, Lorain County Community College





## LETTER FROM BOARD CHAIR PATTERSON

2017 has turned out to be another year of transition for LCCAA. First, due to an incredible opportunity for the Elyria public schools, we moved our Hamilton Head Start Program from its existing location.

Moving the five-star program to a five-star facility will help us continue to provide outstanding services to the children and families we serve through Head Start in Elyria!

If that wasn't enough, LCCAA also moved its administrative and HEAP offices several blocks south on Broadway. Consequently, on November 9, 2017, after months of renovation, a ribbon cutting ceremony was held to open the 14,000-square-foot former Molas furniture building at 936 Broadway, our new home.

In addition to helping to revive downtown Lorain, we are better able to serve our consumers

as we provide resources and programs to help improve the quality of life for low-income Lorain County residents. If you happen to be in the area, please stop by.

As is always the case, everything we have accomplished has come with help. On behalf of the board, I am pleased to say that we have some of the most talented and dedicated staff who really believe in our mission. Without them, there is no LCCAA.

Second, our strong community partnerships have continued to enrich the lives of the children and families we serve. Finally, the countless elected officials, non-profits and volunteers who have played a role in helping us have yet another outstanding year. We hope that 2018 will bring even bigger and better things!

**Henry Patterson**



## FIFTH ANNUAL WINE TASTING & SILENT AUCTION SPONSORS

Com Doc

Walter Haverfield Attorneys at Law

Horizon Education Centers

Century Link

Northwest Bank

Lorain County Community College

Oswald & Company

Ryan St. Marie Insurance

United Property Management Co.

Ohio Association of Community  
Action Agencies

Cork's Wine Bar & Bistro



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

As a recipient of the Community Services Block Grant, Lorain County Community Action Agency's Board must be composed of equal numbers of representatives from each of three sectors: Public, Private and Low-Income. This ensures that decisions are made with thought toward all impacted.

### Officers

Chairman Henry Patterson  
Vice Chair Nancy Sabath  
Treasurer Vassie Scott  
Secretary Scott Broadwell

### Members

Paul Biber  
Rev. Calvin Currie  
Reginald Cremeans  
Tiffany Dennis  
Joseph Falbo  
Anthony Giardini  
Rhoda Lee  
Gerald Pippens  
Vasyl Rabosyuk  
Hans Schneider  
Mike Szekely



## SPONSORS AND AUCTION DONATIONS SET NEW RECORD

Thanks to community support, Lorain County Community Action Agency's fifth annual Wine Tasting and Silent Auction grew by almost 50 percent this year.

The fund-raiser netted approximately \$7,300 thanks to donors and sponsors, that's 49% more than in 2016.

"The huge growth is phenomenal," said event chair Mike Szekely. "It's a testament to the generosity of our community and our continued commitment to changing lives."

**SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL WHO ATTENDED. GOOD WINE, GOOD FOOD  
AND GOOD FRIENDS MADE FOR AN EXCELLENT EVENING.**

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**LOCAL NEED IS REAL**

**54,859**

**RESIDENTS IN LORAIN COUNTY  
LIVE BELOW 125 PERCENT OF FEDERAL POVERTY**

**19,406**

**OF THOSE RESIDENTS ARE  
CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 18**

**FOR THOSE OF  
WORKING AGE (16-64)**

**17,770**

**WORK ALL  
YEAR**



# CRISIS SERVICES

## HEAP

LCCAA helped more than 2,853 residents stay warm last winter.

Winter crisis operates from November to March and helps reconnect and pay for heat for residents. It can also postpone a shutoff if an appointment has been made. Residents must be living at or below 175% of the Federal Poverty Line.

A summer crisis program operates in July and August to help residents with health issues and senior citizens keep their homes cool. In 2016, LCCAA distributed 195 air conditioners and helped 161 with their bills.

## PIPP PLUS

Eligible customers can enroll in PIPP Plus to lower their utility bills.

The Percentage of Income Payment Plan costs homeowners either 10 percent or 12 percent of their income, depending on whether they heat with electricity or gas. Participants can also earn credits to pay off outstanding balances.

LCCAA enrolls and re-verifies thousands of customers for PIPP Plus annually. PIPP helps keep bills at manageable levels allowing residents to become and remain self-sufficient.

## PROJECT WARM

Partnering with the Lorain Metropolitan Housing Authority, LCCAA has distributed more than 4,000 winter coats in the last five years. Residents of LMHA buildings ages 0 to 17 are eligible for a new coat distributed at events in late October and early November.

Coats are purchased with LCCAA's funding from the Community Services Block Grant. CSBG is designed to be flexible enough to meet unique local needs while providing strict accountability for agencies like LCCAA.

## FOOD PANTRIES

LCCAA continues to expand its grants to area food pantries for the fifth year, meeting the top need identified in the 2017 Community Needs Assessment.

In 2017, 32 pantries in all parts of Lorain County received grants of \$950 to help with increased demand in November and December. Funding must be used for food and grocery items that the pantries distribute to eligible residents.

Grantees must serve people living at or below 125% of the Federal Poverty Line.

## ENERGY AUDITS

LCCAA works with Ohio Edison's Community Connections program to conduct energy audits that can help lower utility bills.

The audits address inefficient appliances and lighting. Participants may receive free, efficient refrigerators and light bulbs. Equipment must measure inefficient in order to be replaced.

Residents must be living at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Line, own the affected appliances and have electric service in their name.

## HOMELESSNESS

LCCAA works to assist the homeless and decrease the homeless population by actively collaborating with agencies who directly provide services for them.

The agency participated in the Homeless Stand-down in October providing a Community Resources Directory and information on its programs which may help prevent homelessness.

Programs such as HEAP help alleviate the household utility burden while By Car and Tech Connect help with employment barriers. LCCAA is also on the Lorain County Task Force for the Homeless.



## EMPOWERMENT SERVICES

Community Action's goal is to help low-income families and individuals become and remain self-sufficient. That looks different for every family.

Education is a cornerstone of empowerment and our Head Start and Early Head Start provide comprehensive child development services to hundreds of families every year. (See pages 14-19 for details.)

Other empowerment programs offer transportation, financial literacy, career exploration and more.





## YOUTH SERVICES



LCCAA has dedicated permanent space and staff to offer programming for youths in downtown Lorain.

The intentionally small group is deeply engaged and highly impacted.

Youths explore careers, build resumes, visit employers and public agencies and perform hundreds of hours of community service.

More is coming, turn the page to see how we are expanding Youth Services in 2018.

## COMPUTER CLASSES

LCCAA holds multiple Tech Connect sessions every year to help residents improve their computer skills.

The 8-week course erases career barriers by teaching Microsoft Office products, email and how to apply for jobs online. Classes are free to residents living at or below 125% of the Federal Poverty Line.

Those who complete the course receive a free, refurbished computer. Classes are held in connection with Ohio Means Jobs of Lorain County or on demand at LCCAA facilities.



## BY CAR

Lack of transportation is often a big issue for low-income residents.

By Car allows participants to save earned income and provides a matching grant so they can purchase a used car. Financial literacy courses are required.

Participants must live at or below 125% of the Federal Poverty Line and no one in their household can own a vehicle. Savings are matched 2 to 1, up to \$3,999 with funding from CSBG.

## BRIDGES OUT OF POVERTY

As part of the Lorain County Bridges Out of Poverty Coalition, LCCAA has provided training for about 100 service workers and facilitators.

Two poverty simulations were held in partnership with the Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies and were attended by a total of 64 people.

Beginning in 2018, LCCAA will offer "Getting Ahead in a Just Getting By World." This unique program is designed to help participants examine and eliminate their individual barriers to self-sufficiency.

# YOUTH SERVICES EXPANDING IN 2018: BUILDING CONFIDENCE, SKILLS AND DREAMS



**100  
PERCENT  
AWESOME**







Every student - 100% - who participated in the 2017 Summer Youth Program found it useful and "awesome."

Young people in our community need projects and mentorship in order find the path right for their life. LCCAA now proudly provides year-round programming and that is just the beginning.

In 2018, providing skills and opportunities for our youths will be a major focus as we continue to assist with workforce development and mentoring. This is done in partnership with Ohio Means Jobs Lorain County.

Youth program participants will continue to work on their resumes, tour colleges and perform hundreds of hours of community service on projects which also allow them to build skills.

They are the future. Building their dreams builds the community of our future.

## COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

2,660

VOLUNTEER HOURS  
COMPLETED BY YOUTH IN THE  
PROGRAM THIS YEAR



# HEAD START ANNUAL INFORMATION UPDATE

LCCAA Head Start has successfully converted its directly operated classrooms to predominantly full-day offerings. This increases overall teaching time while meeting family needs. We continue to offer some part-time slots and work with our collaborative centers on both schedule options.

LCCAA Head Start also has a strong home-based program which allows children to experience the same proven curriculum they would have in our centers. Highly trained home visitors meet with students in their homes for an hour and a half once each week and provide materials so parents can continue working with their children between visits.

A grant from the Black River Foundation has also allowed us to expand nutrition services and create Try Days to expose children to new foods.

## CENTERS

Elyria Early Childhood Village  
42101 Griswold Road, Elyria

Horizon Educational Centers  
2500 Colorado Avenue, Lorain  
4911 Grove Avenue, Lorain  
10347 Dewhurst Road, Lorain  
104 Loudon Court, Elyria

LCCAA Head Start @ Cascade  
233 Bond Street, Elyria

LCCAA Head Start @ CDC  
150 Erie Court, Amherst

LCCAA Head Start @ Hamilton  
1215 Middle Avenue, Elyria

LCCAA Head Start @ Hopkins-Locke  
1050 Reid Avenue, Lorain

LCCAA Head Start @ Wellington  
305 Union Street, Wellington

Little Lighthouse Learning Center  
1715 Meister Avenue, Lorain

Lorain City Schools  
Five locations in Lorain

LCCAA Head Start includes 891 slots which in 2016-17 served a total of 1055 students. Early Head Start includes 40 slots which served 70 young children and/or pregnant mothers. Full enrollment is maintained using a waiting list.

To be eligible, families must live at or below 130% of the Federal Poverty Line. Families receiving TANF or SSI are automatically eligible as are homeless children, children in foster care and children with disabilities.







## Early Childhood Education

Head Start's highly credentialed teachers use the national Head Start framework to focus their efforts to prepare students for Kindergarten. All tools are grounded in years of research on what children should know and be able to do.

Measurable outcomes include: managing feelings, making friends, throwing a ball, holding a crayon, holding a two-way conversation, remembering experiences, recognizing basic print concepts as well as shapes and patterns.

## Family Development

Head Start works to empower parents by connecting them with other needed services. They also provide support by building relationships and making sure each unique need is met.

Parents are encouraged to volunteer in the classroom and participate on the Parent Policy Council to help make decisions about the program.

Many parents report that Head Start has provided empowerment through education to their entire family.

## Health and Wellness

Head Start provides students with healthy and delicious snacks and lunches throughout the school year. Nutrition staff also share tips and recipes regularly.

Students also receive health screenings including vision tests and blood tests for lead exposure. Connections with doctors, dentists and services for children with disabilities are made as needed.



# HEAD START PARENTS ACHIEVE GREAT THINGS

Our work with families is based on mutual respect and trust and develops with every interaction between staff and families.

Using intentional tools and strategies to support families, LCCAA's Head Start and Early Head Start family service staff focus on the following objectives to strengthen families and parenting in our community:

- Family Well-Being
- Positive Parent-Child Relationships
- Families as Lifelong Educators
- Families as Learners
- Family Engagement in Transitions
- Family Connections to Peers and Community
- Families as Advocates and Leaders

PARENT/CHILD  
LITERACY:  
READING MINUTES

**315,300**

PARENT  
VOLUNTEER HOURS

**20,179**





## PARENT POLICY COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

Head Start actively engages parents in many ways including serving on the Parent Policy Council.

Serving on the Council or a committee for the program or center allows parents to develop leadership skills, learn how to advocate, meet other parents and be a voice for the children and parents in the program.

We proudly thank the following members of the 2016-17 Parent Policy Council:

Candice Regal, President  
Loren Worthy, Vice President  
Monique West, Secretary  
Reginald Cremeans  
Rachel Fisk  
John Payne  
Talisa Wiggins  
Edward Worthy



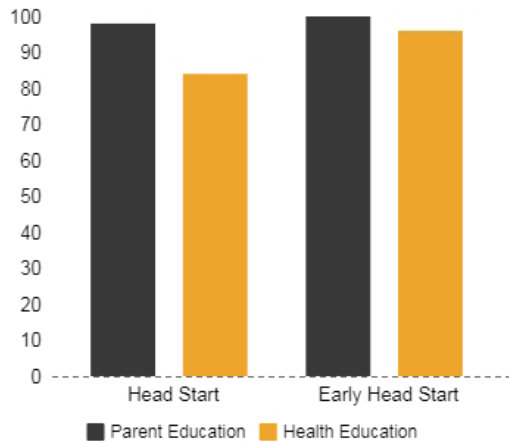
**85 STUDENTS**

**ATTENDED HEAD START NIGHT  
AT THE LAKE ERIE CRUSHERS**



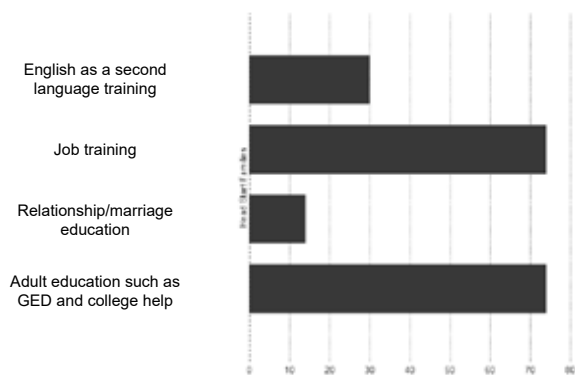
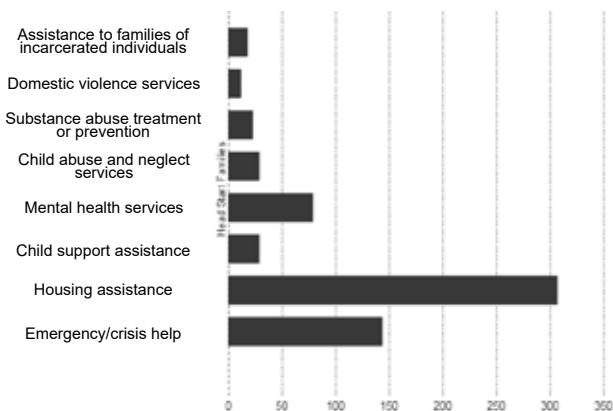
# COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES

## High Levels of Parent and Health Education

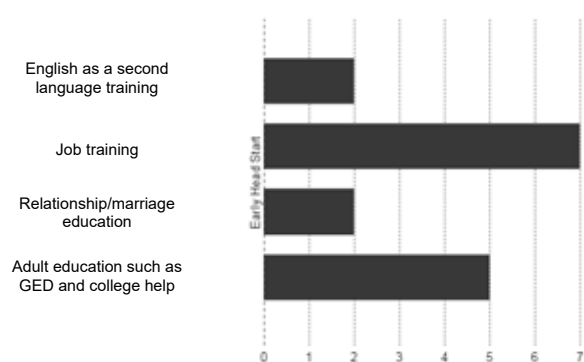
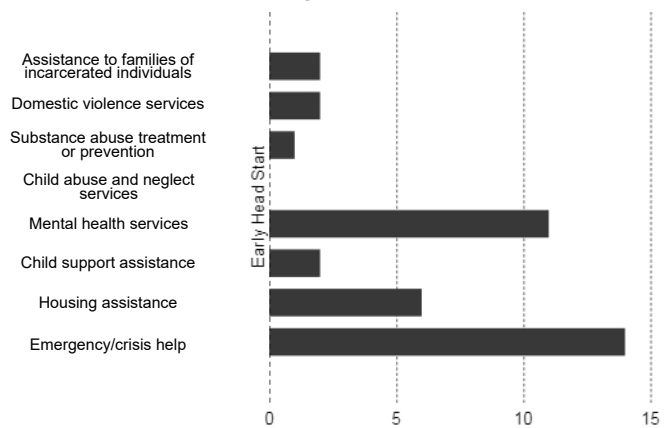


## FAMILY SERVICES IN 2016-17

### Head Start



### Early Head Start

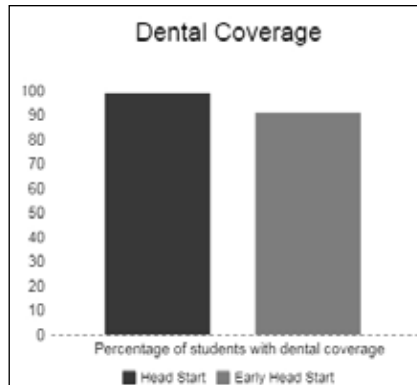
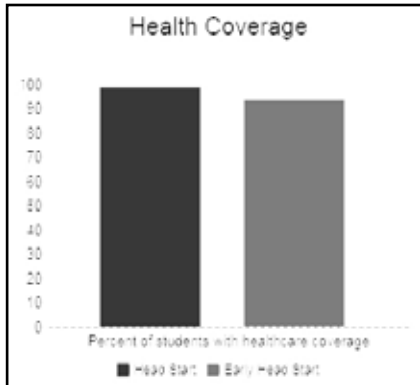






# CHILD AND FAMILY WELLNESS

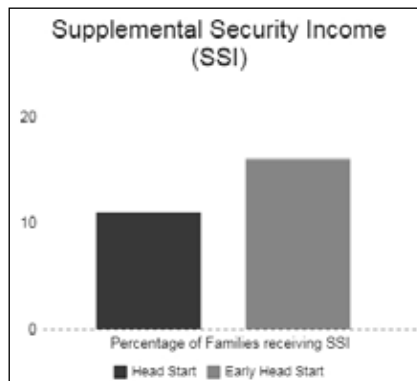
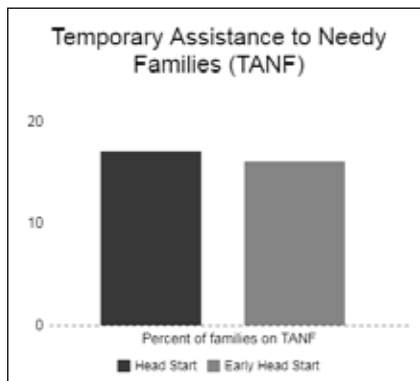
## Health Services and Annual Screenings



In compliance with licensing and performance standards, LCCAA screened students for:

- ♦ developmental delays
- ♦ physical disabilities
- ♦ dental health
- ♦ general health
- ♦ vision health
- ♦ lead exposure

## Federal and Other Assistance

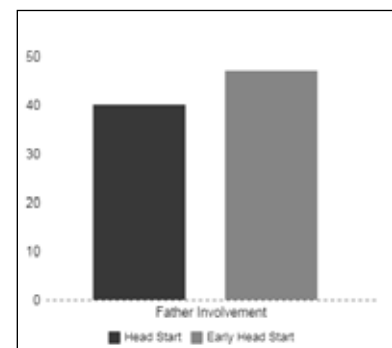


## Family Information & Father Involvement

Among Head Start Families, 70% define themselves as single-parent households while 30% have two parents in the home.

The numbers are only slightly different for Early Head Start, where 76% are single-parent households and 24% have two parents.

Father Involvement for both groups is higher than those numbers would indicate however, with 40% for Head Start and 47% for Early Head Start.



## SERVICE TO HOMELESS FAMILIES

In 2016-17, 45 Head Start families reported homelessness. Twenty were able to find stable housing during the year.

Among Early Head Start families, six reported homelessness and four found stable housing.

LCCAA continues to collaborate with the Lorain County Task Force for the Homeless in its work to serve and decrease the homeless population.

# MESSAGE FROM THE TREASURER

Managing mission-driven budgets is one more way LCCAA shows our commitment to alleviating poverty. LCCAA consistently – and proudly – spends more than 92% of funding on services to the people of Lorain County. Our model works because our financial managers take the mission to heart: we serve and empower Lorain County residents in need with every single cent.

We work diligently to partner and collaborate to meet local need. Once again, this year, we report tremendous local financial support. The community turned out and nearly doubled our revenue from the 5th Annual Wine Tasting and Silent Auction. We could not be more grateful for this show of generosity and confidence. In-kind, also known as matching funds, are donated goods and services directly related to program objectives. Through local collaborations we recorded an amazing \$1.84 million of in-kind contributions last fiscal year.

Every Head Start student, every child wearing a new winter coat, every adult with improved computer skills, every senior visiting a food pantry is our neighbor. Our future relies on continuing to harness our ability to work together and make a difference. Thank you for your support.



**Vassie Scott**

# REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES

## Revenues

	Unaudited 2016-2017	Audited 2015-2016
Community Service Block Grant (CSBG)	446,084	413,877
Head Start	7,196,517	6,857,601
USDA	401,816	415,075
Early Childhood Expansion Grant	355,683	120,747
Step Up To Quality	44,200	31,425
Elyria Memorial Hospital Foundation	1,786	--
Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)	813,703	864,841
PIPP	8,646	--
Home Weatherization Assistance Program (HWAP)	--	538,213
In-Kind	1,847,712	1,819,891
Ohio Partners for Affordable Energy (OPAE)	246,108	58,327
OACAA TANF	2,995	6,225
WE-3 LCCC Fiscal	3,930	280
LC Bridges Out of Poverty	317	--
Lorain National Bank Foundation	--	840
Dollar Bank Foundation	271	1,281
Fifth Third Credit	197	--
PNC	2,679	3,092
Day Care Services	20,920	79,832
Corporate	908	3,433
Henderson Shuttle	36,229	30,132
LCCAA Fund-Raising	7,790	11,665
<b>Total Revenue by Funding Source</b>	<b>11,438,490</b>	<b>11,256,777</b>
Grant Revenue	9,253,265	9,215,361
Program Income	133,303	151,022
Donations	6,903	12,175
Other Income	197,308	58,327
In-Kind	1,847,712	1,819,892
<b>Total Revenue by Income Type</b>	<b>11,438,490</b>	<b>11,256,777</b>

## Expenditures

	Unaudited 2016-2017	Audited 2015-2016
Community Services Block Grant	446,084	413,877
Energy Services	1,021,594	933,295
Emergency Services	--	538,213
Head Start (Including USDA, SUTQ, ECE)	9,845,889	9,244,705
Elyria Memorial Foundation	1,786	--
Lorain National Bank Foundation	--	840
PNC Foundation	2,679	3,092
Dollar Bank Foundation	271	1,281
Fifth Third Credit	197	--
Day Care Services	16,502	57,031
OACAA TANF/WE-3 LCCC Fiscal/Bridges	7,242	6,505
Corporate	3,872	49,725
Henderson Shuttle	27,669	21,988
LCCAA Fund-Raising	2,888	9,263
<b>Total Expenditures by Source</b>	<b>11,376,674</b>	<b>11,279,815</b>
Personnel	3,519,803	3,501,033
Fringe Benefits	1,615,413	1,950,052
Consultants/Contracts	942,825	1,079,329
Travel/Transportation	91,339	86,927
Space Costs	567,924	436,977
Supplies/Food	477,462	482,730
Equipment Lease/Purchase/Depreciation	449,257	184,196
Energy Assistance Payments	528,057	460,042
Insurance	35,731	39,546
Other	442,044	389,722
General Administrative Expense	859,108	849,369
In-Kind Expense	1,847,712	1,819,892
<b>Total Expenses by Category</b>	<b>11,376,674</b>	<b>11,279,815</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>61,816</b>	<b>(23,038)</b>



# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	Unaudited 2017	Audited 2016
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	336,486	412,414
Grants Receivable	958,778	459,804
Accounts Receivable (net of allowance for uncollectable account of \$1,796)	4,247	204
Prepaid Expenses	7,309	3,387
Other Current Assets	--	304
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>1,306,820</b>	<b>876,113</b>
<b>PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT</b>		
Land	47,474	47,474
Building and Improvements	1,142,939	1,142,939
	<b>1,190,413</b>	<b>1,190,413</b>
Less Accumulated Depreciation	(887,844)	(832,409)
Total Property and Equipment	<b>302,569</b>	<b>358,004</b>
<b>Long Term Assets</b>		
Security Deposit	1,500	1,500
	<b>\$1,610,889</b>	<b>\$1,235,617</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>		
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Accounts Payable	610,524	173,965
Accrued Expenses		
Payroll and Related Expenses and Withholdings	159,567	268,333
Vacation	35,667	40,741
Refundable Advances	126,813	114,648
Current Portion of Long-Term Debt	22,399	21,415
Other Current Liabilities		1,575
	<b>954,970</b>	<b>620,653</b>
<b>LONG TERM DEBT, LESS CURRENT PORTION</b>	<b>156,704</b>	<b>179,103</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
Unrestricted	499,215	435,861
Temporarily Restricted	--	--
Permanently Restricted	--	--
	<b>499,215</b>	<b>435,861</b>
	<b>\$1,610,889</b>	<b>\$1,235,617</b>

# COMPASSION CONNECTS US

## WE CELEBRATE ALL ACCOMPLISHMENTS, BIG AND SMALL

IT'S A BIG WEIGHT OFF MY  
SHOULDERS NOW THAT I  
HAVE THAT FREEDOM.

## HEAD START GRADS GO FAR



Head Start compels the young men and women of Lorain County to ongoing academic success. Two alumni from Hopkins-Locke earned degrees this summer and have their eyes on even higher goals as a result.

Gamaliel Navarez started law school at Ohio State University this fall after completing a double major in philosophy and political science there in May. Marlayna

Colon earned her high school diploma and an associate's degree at the same time in May and moved on to nursing school on a full scholarship this fall, also at OSU.

Both credit Head Start with their love of learning, early success, strong study habits, and active community involvement. Both also graduated from the Lorain County Early College High School.

Gamaliel's family moved to Lorain from Puerto Rico when he was 18-months old. His mother enrolled him in LCCAA Head Start almost immediately and also took a job with the agency. At OSU, Gamaliel was on the Dean's List every semester and interned with the Lorain County Justice Center.

Marlayna held two jobs while attending the Lorain County Early College High School and was inducted into the National Honor Society while also playing softball and volleyball, singing in the choir and volunteering at her church. She hopes to work in a pediatric or neonatal unit as a nurse.

"I've always loved school," she said. "I think Head Start is why I love school."







## DRIVEN TO SUCCEED

Just in time for another Ohio winter, Laura Butkowsky has a safe, new-to-her vehicle to drive to work and run errands with her two children.

LCCAA's By Car program matched Laura's savings so she could purchase a 2002 Ford Taurus in late October. She had heard about similar programs in other parts of Ohio from a friend of a friend and started working with LCCAA in May.

"Luckily, I don't live very far from work," said the Wendy's employee. However, she had to rely on her mother and brother for help getting groceries and other errands. Or, she bundled up 8-year-old Katie and 2-year-old Noah and made her way on foot.

By Car requires participants to complete a financial literacy class and also equips them with a thorough checklist for examining a vehicle before purchase.

"The class definitely helped me out," Laura said. "It always makes you feel good to know you're not alone."

Laura began saving about a week before the class began. Once she had details, her assistant manager gave her more hours so she could save even faster. Her goal was to have a car before winter to protect her kids' health.

"It's a big weight off my shoulders now that I have that freedom," she said. "It's nice knowing that I own it. I don't have any payments!"

With her new found freedom, Laura is looking at other job options but still planning to work in a customer service capacity. Meanwhile, she enjoys taking her daughter to school and not needing to call for help for medical appointments.

"I've told people I work with about the program," she said. "Without a car, you really don't have as many options as other people."

## COMPUTER CLASS NETS JOB OFFER



Sonja has a new-to-her computer and a new job thanks to a 2017 LCCAA Tech Connect class. Tech Connect is an eight-session course designed to improve job skills and help clients get better jobs to ensure their self-sufficiency.

As they learn Microsoft Office and email skills, they also create a resume and start applying for jobs online. During her class held at OhioMeansJobs Lorain County, Sonja completed those exercises with fast results.

After uploading her resume to Indeed.com, Sonja was called for an interview at Western Enterprises. Before the class was over, she had the job working with metal parts for high pressure nozzles.

Sonja had plenty of metalworking experience, but as a temp. She is thrilled to have been directly hired to a full-time job with great benefits and potential for advancement.

After working retail for a number of years, starting at Fazio's as a teen, Sonja moved into manufacturing for more regular hours.

"I've been trying to get a job in a factory doing inspections," she said, "to do that you need Word, Excel and PowerPoint."

Enter Tech Connect, which Sonja learned about while getting help updating her resume at OhioMeansJobs after moving into Lorain County earlier this year.

"It was fun and I learned a lot," she said. "The instructor was great. He's so upbeat and informative. It's definitely worth it."



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