

CANI

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Chronicles

CANI Welcomes New Leader

CANI's board of directors has chosen Steve Hoffman as the agency's new Executive Director following a national search.

Steve has been with CANI more than ten years in various roles, so he's no stranger to the organization. Over the years Steve has been promoted and taken on new positions at CANI with increased responsibility, most recently as the Director of Administration and Development.

Prior to the announcement Steve had many projects in the works and he said he plans to maintain that momentum.

"I am honored and excited to lead this great organization. We have accomplished so much in our history, and it's an exciting time to be taking over because of the great work we already do, and the many new initiatives we have underway" Steve said about his tenure. In particular, he said he places a great value on the organization's strategic plan to guide it in the right direction.

While Steve is certainly looking to the future, he also mentioned that he has "big shoes to fill." Joe Conrad served as Executive Director for 30 years.

Steve said Joe has mentored him along his career path and feels confident about assuming the position. And it's clear the two share a mutual respect:

"Working with Steve for almost a decade has demonstrated to me that he has the leadership skills, sound judgment, and ethical values needed to do this job," Joe said. "I can now step away from this job in confidence that the important work here will continue and that the needy will be well served."

Steve assumed his new role on April 5. CANI staff and community members gathered April 1 for a farewell reception for Joe Conrad at Hall's Guesthouse.



*Photo By Jennie Renner,
Development Supervisor*

Steve Hoffman started at CANI as a Family Development Case Manager and has worked his way to the top.

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April - 2010

Published monthly except for combined issues in Jan/Feb & June/July by

CANI (Community Action of Northeast Indiana, Inc.)
P.O. Box 10570, Fort Wayne, IN 46853-0570

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Vol. 5, No. 1
All articles and photographs by CANI Development Coordinator, Lauren Caggiano, unless otherwise noted. Subscriptions are free. For more information call (260) 399-4109.

CANI Mission

CANI helps communities, families, and individuals remove the causes and conditions of poverty.

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CANI Hours of Operation

7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Monday - Thursday

7:30 a.m. - 11:30 p.m. Friday

CANI OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED FRIDAY APRIL 2 IN OBSERVANCE OF GOOD FRIDAY



HEAD START MOTHER BECOMES DEDICATED EMPLOYEE

A knock at the door changed Annie Henderson's life.

More than 30 years ago Head Start staff was recruiting in her neighborhood and her house was among the stops.

"They saw I had a (pre-school aged) child and I filled out an application," she said.

Little did she know at the time, but her child's enrollment in Head Start would set the ball in motion towards a career spanning three decades.

First, Annie volunteered her time in the classroom. Then when a food service position became available she seized the opportunity. Annie moved up the ladder as a teacher's assistant, teacher, site leader, site supervisor and center supervisor. Ultimately, her dedication to Head Start has resulted in her current position as the center supervisor at the CANI Head Start site at Hanna-Creighton.

Over the years Annie has worked at seven different sites, but one thing has remained the same: her enthusiasm for working with the Head Start parents. Specifically she enjoys helping them "get prepared for life" and teaching them how a positive home environment can influence a child.

Perhaps most rewarding is seeing former Head Start students coming back as adults and knowing that their child is not eligible for the Head Start program due to being over income guidelines.

Currently, as the Center Supervisor Annie is in charge of the day-to-day operations of the facility. This includes making sure classrooms are conducive to child development. More than anything, she wants children "to be ready for the world." In her words, "95 percent of my focus is making sure Hanna-Creighton is the cream of the crop pre-school."



Photo Contributed

Annie Henderson loves her job and especially the relationships she has formed over the years through Head Start.

Last year, Hanna-Creighton received accreditation from the NAEYC (National Association for the Education of the Young Child). NAEYC Accreditation represents the mark of quality in early childhood education. Annie said she did her best to ensure staff was prepared for the accreditation process so the CANI Head Start site at Hanna-Creighton could receive this mark of distinction and better serve families.

Some 30 years later, Annie has learned a lot about her job and life. Her advice: "Be yourself...if you believe in something strong, don't let anyone hold you back.."

PRESS CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS FURNACE REPLACEMENT PROGRAM

A great deal of the work of Community Action is done behind the scenes, out of the public eye. While this keeps us humble, it also has a downside because people aren't always aware of what we do. Press conferences and other media coverage are so important for our cause because it exposes our work to the community.



Photo By Lauren Caggiano, Development Coordinator

Weatherization Supervisor, Mike Esslinger was interviewed by WANE-TV about the NIPSCO furnace replacement program.

On Feb. 16, CANI and NIPSCO held a press conference at the home of Scott Adams, to raise awareness about the furnace replacement program and Weatherization. NIPSCO spokesperson Larry Graham, CANI Weatherization Supervisor Mike Esslinger, Bill Berning from "Doc" Dancer and Doug Rogers of Doug Rogers Weatherization were in attendance to answer questions about the processes.

NIPSCO has provided funds for the installation of 50 high-efficiency furnaces to replace inefficient devices (less than 50 percent efficiency). To date, 25 furnaces have been replaced through NIPSCO funds. To qualify, individuals must meet income requirements, have a low-efficiency furnace, and use NIPSCO as their utility provider. The joint program's goal is to make homes more energy efficient and reduce natural gas bills to make energy costs more manageable for lower income homeowners.

Homeowner Scott Adams is among the 25 clients who has benefited from the program thus far. Scott is a prime example of how a new furnace can work wonders. One winter he faced a \$500 gas bill. Naturally he tried to save money through reduced consumption, but his plan backfired. He would set the temperature to 69 degrees, but the furnace would "superheat" and rose to 74 degrees. It was an uphill battle.

Scott turned to CANI and after receiving energy assistance inquired about the

Weatherization program. Then in January CANI Weatherization Inspector

Aaron Travaglini came to perform the first step: the audit.

Through the audit it was determined that Scott's home needed insulation, duct sealing and furnace work, among other things. Luckily Scott qualified for a new furnace through NIPSCO and CANI got the ball rolling.

A new furnace purchased from "Doc" Dancer is touted as being 95 percent efficient. That means for every \$1.00 put in, the consumer gets 95 cents worth of energy as the output. The device and installation totaled almost \$6,000—a significant investment in the client's home.

D. Rogers Weatherization was contracted to do the weatherization work. The press conference was an opportune time for the media to see the work in action. WANE-TV and The Journal Gazette came to shoot some footage of workers blowing in insulation from the basement.

Upstairs CANI's Mike Esslinger talked to the media about the furnace replacement program. Mike said that clients can see about a 20 percent savings on energy bills with a 90-percent efficient furnace.

Mike explained further that the Indiana Community Action Association (INCAA) tracks consumption data from a year prior to the work and a year after to determine an annual percentage savings. This provides a more accurate look at how weatherization helps people save energy and ultimately money.

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CAP AND INCAA EXPLAINED

Have you ever noticed partner logos on page 2 of the newsletter and wondered what they mean?

The heart with arms embracing is the logo for the Community Action Partnership. The Community Action Partnership (CAP) is the nonprofit, national membership organization representing the interests of the 1,000 Community Action Agencies (CAAs), like CANI, across the country that annually help 15 million low-income Americans achieve economic security.

According to CAP's Director of Communications Lisa Holland, the organization exists to provide training and technical assistance opportunities to member agencies and advocate on behalf of low-income Americans. Additionally, CAP sponsors an Annual Convention and a Management and Leadership Training Conference, publishes a quarterly magazine, and a weekly electronic newsletter.

The Partnership also sponsors a national certification program for individual CAAs known as "Pathways to Excellence." CANI is currently involved in this certification process. CAP also offers "a rigorous training program" for individual Community Action leaders - the Certified Community Action Professional, CCAP.

In addition to training and certification, the Partnership also serves as a resource for event planning and branding. Every year, CAP makes available the National Community Action Month Planning Guide to help

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CAAs promote their events for this celebration in May.

INCAA (Indiana Community Action Association) functions similarly to CAP. Initially, INCAA was solely a resource for Weatherization training. Weatherization inspectors from around the state come to INCAA for classes on various topics relevant to their jobs.

In 1997, INCAA expanded from its original niche of Weatherization training. According to its Web site, "INCAA recognized the need to expand training in order to enable each Community Action Agency (CAA) in Indiana to enhance their staff professionally, educate their communities about the issues of poverty, and secure resources to provide needed services to their target populations."

As a result, since 1997, INCAA has partnered with the State Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) administrator to develop a series of training opportunities for CAA staff and board members. Through its training arm, the Indiana Training Institute (ITI),

INCAA has been the sole administrator of non-Weatherization training to CAAs.

Currently, INCAA coordinates plans and delivers trainings like regional meetings, quarterly meetings with CAA Executive Directors, partnership meetings, and an annual statewide CAA conference.

In addition to training, INCAA has its hand in advocacy. In fact, one program is dedicated to pushing for legislation to benefit the working poor: The Indiana Institute for Working Families (Institute).

According to its Web site, the Institute is "the only statewide program in Indiana that combines research and policy analysis on federal and state legislation, public

policies and programs impacting low-income working families with organized advocacy." The goal of the Institute is to work to help Hoosier families achieve and maintain economic self-sufficiency.

The Institute works behind the scenes to affect change. It does so through conducting innovative research on the following areas: public policy research and analysis; advocacy, education, and information; and national, statewide, and community partnerships.

Both organizations serve a purpose in that they help CANI better carry out its mission. Specifically, they challenge us to look at the bigger picture, i.e. state and national levels, when approaching poverty issues.

"The work that we do in the local communities is important, but it's more important to maintain a network to address issues of poverty," CANI Executive Director Joe Conrad said. "That's why we associate with INCAA and CAP."

For more information about the Community Action Partnership, visit www.communityactionpartnership.com. Visit www.incap.org to learn about INCAA.

EVENT ENCOURAGES MALE INVOLVEMENT

CANI Head Start's Male Involvement Leading Children's program (MILC) provided an afternoon of fun at the skating rink while, drawing attention to the important issue of male involvement in children's lives.

Parents and their children were invited to a skating party Feb. 20 at Bell's Skating Rink in New Haven. MILC Coordinator Fey Fey Moussou worked with a committee to plan the first skating party in 2005. According to Fey Fey, the committee wanted an interactive and low-cost activity and skating seemed like the perfect option.

Now in the sixth year, the skating parties are a big hit with families. About 90 adults and 180 children participated. The event was not limited to just fathers or role models; it was truly a family affair. Seasoned and first-time skaters alike enjoyed the quality time spent with their children.

Fathers were especially encouraged to attend because the program stresses the power of male interaction with a child. Fey Fey said children benefit from routine interaction with a father or father figure.

Fey Fey has several events planned this spring, including a breakfast/lunch with Dad and some year-end programs at the Head Start sites.



Photo By Fey Fey Moussou, MILC Coordinator

Skaters showed off their flexibility with a limbo activity.

CANI Thanks Our Donors

We'd like to thank the individuals, businesses, foundations, and organizations that have recently supported CANI. Your financial gifts and in-kind contributions help us fight poverty and build hope - thank you for all you do!

March 2010

Visionary (+ \$1,000)

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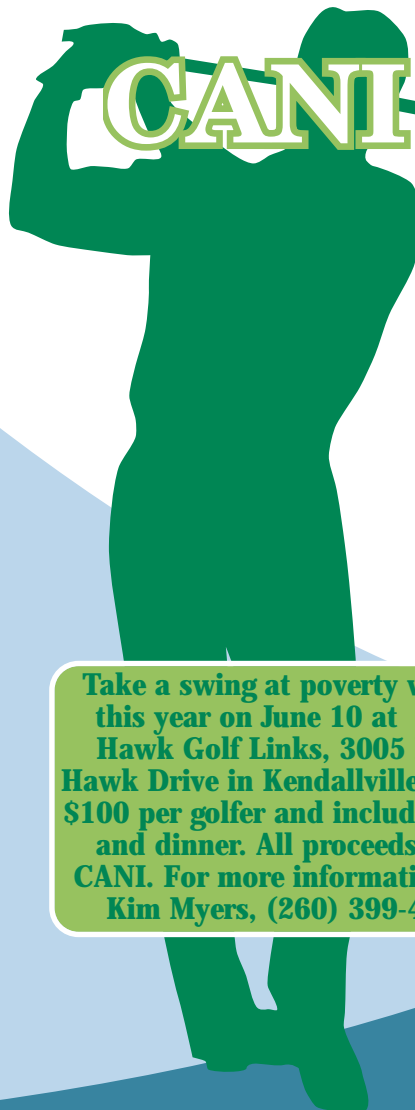
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CANI Golf 2010



Take a swing at poverty with us this year on June 10 at Noble Hawk Golf Links, 3005 Noble Hawk Drive in Kendallville. Cost is \$100 per golfer and includes lunch and dinner. All proceeds go to CANI. For more information, call Kim Myers, (260) 399-4106.

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WEATHERIZATION STIMULATES LOCAL ECONOMY

The benefits of Weatherization extend beyond the client's end result of reduced utility bills.

Perhaps an understated fact is how CANI's Weatherization program puts people to work. In addition to employing a staff of inspectors, the agency works with several local contractors, including Doug Rogers Weatherization and "Doc" Dancer to provide services to clients.

Weatherization Supervisor Mike Esslinger explained how this process works. First, the inspectors write up a work scope that includes cost estimates. Each year, CANI invites local contractors to bid on projects through a request for proposal (RFP). Following a bid selection process, a contractor is then selected and provided with a work scope. Next, a CANI Weatherization inspector will meet with the contractor at the client's home to further clarify the project's scope.

"This (visit) defines the work that is going to be done in the home," Mike said.

The inspector and contractor remain in touch during the process to ensure the work is done correctly. Furthermore, the contractor can modify the work scope if needed. Once the job is complete, a second visit is scheduled to do a quality control inspection. The contractors do not get paid until the work is done right. Luckily, that is most of the time, Mike noted.

"If we have quality contractors doing quality work then there's less chance for error," he explained.

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Doug Rogers is among those quality contractors on CANI's short list. Doug Rogers has been officially in the contracting business since 1984. He currently employs five people who perform shell work like air sealing and blowing insulation for example.



Stock Photo

A new high efficiency furnace can reduce energy bills by as much as 30 percent.

Doug said he values the relationship with CANI. It's a win-win situation for both his businesses and the client. Doug appreciates the work and the client benefits from lower heating costs.

"And you're really helping people," he added.

Speaking of help, Doug said the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA) has helped him grow his business. CANI received \$2.2 million in federal dollars for use in Weatherization projects in Allen and Whitley counties. This extra work has enabled him to hire two new technicians. In 2009 his crew weatherized 150 homes and this year he hopes to double that number.

In addition to structural improvements, some houses call for furnace repair or replacement. Heating and Air Conditioning Specialist "Doc" Dancer Heating & Cooling has worked with CANI off and on since 1996. Locally owned and operated since 1946, "Doc" Dancer employs 14 staff, including six certified technicians.

When an old furnace goes bad or needs to be replaced (and funding allows for it), CANI turns to "Doc" Dancer for the purchase and installation of a new, more efficient one.

"It's a nice relationship...we get to help people who in ordinary situations couldn't get the work done," co-owner Bill Berning, Jr. said.

Berning added that his employees derive satisfaction from doing something good.

What's more, the new furnace is always a significant improvement because it's more efficient, thereby reducing energy bills. Some homeowners or tenants normally spend hundreds of dollars a month on energy bills. He said this program is effective in that it helps individuals get out of poverty because it frees up money for other necessities.

And like Doug Roger's, Bill said Weatherization work has helped sustain his business. While other companies are reducing their work force, he has kept staffing at the normal level.

"We're grateful for the relationship, he said. "It's been a blessing for us."

To learn more about "Doc" Dancer, visit www.docdancer.com.

CASE COORDINATION SYSTEM BENEFITS CLIENTS, ORGANIZATION

CANI has many systems in place that work to ensure efficiency. Among them is the Case Coordination System (CCS).

Currently, CANI, Lutheran Social Services (LSS), Salvation Army and the Fort Wayne Urban League, and the United Way of Allen County are a part of CCS. In simple terms, CCS is a way for partner

agencies to share clients' intake information so that they might better serve them in the long run.

The system provides a snapshot of the client's situation at the time. For example, a person might come to LSS for case management. In working with the person, the case worker might learn that he or she needs help with an electric bill. Through use of the Hoosier Management Information System (HMIS), the case worker can help the person apply for energy assistance (EAP) without sending them to CANI, thus eliminating the need for excess paperwork and travel. It's a one-stop shop mentality.

"When we have a client come in we can see where they've been, the services received or needed, etc.," CANI Family Support Services Manager Marianne Stanley said.

Lutheran Social Services' (Insert title) John Hermann has seen CCS grow from infancy to its current state. From day one John



Stock Photo

CCS helps families obtain services more directly through the "no wrong door" approach.

said he welcomed the idea of the system, calling it "an effective way to serve families."

Through CCS, he said he has formed "good relationships" which he really values in his day-to-day

duties. He said he especially appreciates the efficiency of completing EAP applications.

At one time he would receive 200 calls a week requesting help. Now the central intake process has cut down on the calls because people can get help at one place instead of having to call around.

And although the system depends a great deal on the technology it is founded upon, John said he's convinced the partnership is more than the sum of its parts:

"It's less about the system...the technology," he said. "It's about the relationships...CCS has brought some good people from good agencies to the table."

CCS is funded through a grant from the United Way of Allen County.

MADE IN THE SHADE

Experts tell us that sun exposure at a young age can be particularly dangerous. That's why CANI Head Start has been awarded an \$8,000-grant from the American Academy of Dermatology for the construction of four shade structures and sun safety curriculum.

In March 2009, CANI applied for a grant to fund the materials and construction for four shade structures on playgrounds at Head Start sites at Hanna Creighton, Salvation Army, Grace St. John's and Achduth Vesholom Temple. In August 2009 the agency was notified of the award and was ready to make the vision a reality.

First, they needed to find a partner for the labor. It was good timing because students from Anthis Career Center were looking for a project and this one was a good fit. The students designed the structures based on specifications from Head Start staff. The final products are a combination of Plexiglas and wood which are designed to last for years.

These structures are an important addition to the playgrounds for several reasons. Most importantly, they are designed to reduce sun exposure for 450 children. Moreover, NAEYC (National Association for the Education of the Young Child) accreditation

calls for an ample amount of shade on playgrounds. This means that the remaining sites are one step closer to obtaining accreditation.

Students will also benefit from the sun safety curriculum, which includes topics like the importance of sun-screen and how to reduce exposure. Parents will also be provided

with educational materials.

Anthis Career Center students will return to the Head Start classrooms at a later date to read a book about construction to the children. Anthis Career Center is also purchasing a work bench and tools for each Head Start site involved.

Local dermatologist Thomas McGovern sponsored the grant and he will speak on the importance of sun safety at a dedication ceremony on April 16 at the Hanna-Creighton center.

CANI Head Start is among several non-profits nationally who received grants for this purpose. To learn more about the American Academy of Dermatology, visit www.aad.org.



Photos By Jay Kitter, Center Supervisor

Photo 1: The shade structure at the CANI Head Start site at Salvation Army is among four funded through the grant.

Photo 2: Head Start students learned about the construction process through this project.

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Photo By Kim Myers, Development Coordinator

Musicians from the Fort Wayne Philharmonic performed at the Head Start site at the Marshall Community Center in Columbia City as part of the "PHIL Kids" preschool program, which promotes music as therapy.

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