

CANI

Fighting Poverty. Building Hope.

Chronicles

Week of the Young Child Unites Community



Fire Chief Peter Kelly educates a class at CANI Head Start Grace St. John's about the proper fire safety gear.

Research constantly underlines the importance of the preschool years in child development. Throughout the year, CANI Head Start plans and hosts events that promote awareness about early childhood education. Among them is the annual Week of the Young Child.

The Week of the Young Child is a celebration sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the world's largest early childhood education association, with nearly 100,000 members and a network of over 300 local, state, and regional Affiliates. The purpose of the Week of the Young Child is to focus public attention on the needs of young children and their families and to recognize the early childhood programs and services that meet those needs.

NAEYC first established the Week of the Young Child in 1971, recognizing that the early childhood years (birth through age 8) lay the foundation for children's success in school and later life. The Week of the Young Child is a time to plan how we "as citizens of a community, of a state, and of a nation" will better meet the needs of all young children and their families.

Locally, all CANI Head Start sites in Allen,

Noble and Whitley counties participated with various events. Joy Kitter, center supervisor of the Salvation Army site, sees the value in the week-long activities because they "bring the community together to recognize children and what teachers do for them," she said.

Teachers at the respective sites were responsible for planning the events. In general, Joy said the activities were chosen because they call for parent involvement. The itinerary included activities like creative dance, pajama day, music activities, field trips story time, a tea party and a visit from the fire department.

The week also celebrates an important part of the Head Start program: teachers. Teachers were invited to a teacher appreciation dinner.

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For more information call (260) 399-4109.

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CANI Mission

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

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CANI Offices

Allen

227 E Washington Blvd

Fort Wayne, IN 46802

423-3546 or

800-589-2264

DeKalb

209 N Jackson St.

Auburn, IN 46706

927-0162

LaGrange

109 E Central Ave, Ste 4

LaGrange, IN 46761

463-5276

Ligonier

200 S Cavin St.

Ligonier, IN 46767

894-3048

Noble

119 W Mitchell St.

Kendallville, IN 46755

349-0713

Steuben

1208 S Wayne St.

Angola, IN 46703

665-1160

Whitley

Lehmberg Medical Bldg

333 N Oak St, Ste K

Columbia City, IN 46725

248-2848

The following offices only provide childcare assistance...

Elkhart

421 S 2nd St, Ste 420

Elkhart, IN 46516

574-293-3460

Kosciusko

1515 Provident Drive

Warsaw, IN 46580

574-267-2817

CANI Hours of Operation

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

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

CANI WILL BE CLOSED ON JULY 5 IN OBSERVANCE OF THE 4TH OF JULY.



WEATHERIZATION WORKS



Chris is pleased with the Weatherization work done by CANI.

Older homes have a lot of character but at the same time can be “energy hogs” when compared to newer ones. That was the case for Chris Melcher’s home just

east of downtown. Chris came to CANI in a dire situation. Laid off from factory work, he faced absurdly high gas bills in the winter. In fact, one month the bill was more than \$800. Chris and his wife Kandie found a quick fix with energy assistance, but a long-term solution was needed. He was referred to CANI’s Weatherization program and in February a crew came out to perform the needed work.

The work scope included putting a new return air system on his furnace, drilling and blowing the walls with cellulose, installing insulation, sealing cracks in ducts and a few other minor

improvements.

“The crew was professional and CANI gave me results,” he said about his experience.

Prior to the work the air in the basement was about 55 degrees. Now he said the temperature has risen to between 65 and 70 degrees. There was an “immense difference” in the air temperature as the soon as the ducts were sealed.

“I don’t have to wear a hat in the basement anymore,” he said.

As for the return on investment, Chris says he anticipates his bill



Weatherization Inspector Ted Ramp uses an infrared camera to show Chris the areas of greatest energy loss in the house.

to be significantly reduced.

Chris advises anyone in need to inquire about Weatherization. “If you need it, get it,” he said.

POVERTY SIMULATION PROVIDES “REAL WORLD” EXPERIENCE

Exhausting... confusing ...hard work ... stressful ..and nerve-wracking.

These words and phrases describe the experiences of living in poverty, in the words of participants in the Community Action Poverty Simulation (CAPS) hosted by CANI May 20 at the Freemasons Hall in Fort Wayne. The event was held in conjunction with Community Action Month, a national effort of the Community Action Partnership to promote the work of the 1,000 Community Action Agencies across the country.

More than 60 individuals from the community underwent the simulation, with the hopes of gaining a better understanding of poverty issues. Participants ran the gamut in profession, i.e. business executives, news media, students, pastors, lawyers and staff from social service agencies.

Using a simulation kit designed by the Missouri Association for Community Action, participants role-played the lives of low-income families. At the time of registration, participants were randomly assigned an identity. Unbeknownst to most, this step would determine their fate for the rest of the afternoon.

Jillian Miller from the Indiana Nonprofit Resource Network facilitated the simulation. As Jillian explained in the orientation, families would be at all levels of the poverty spectrum. Some would be the working poor, making just enough to make ends meet, while others would be left with a significant deficit at the end of the month.

What united the families was the common task of providing for basic necessities and shelter on a limited budget during the course of four 20-minute “weeks.” Volunteers from CANI and Blue Jacket Inc. staffed the table stations, which represented human service agencies, grocers, pawnbrokers, bill collectors, job interviewers, police officers and others.

The environment was chaotic at times, as people rushed to pay bills by the end of the month. It didn’t take long for participants to take their new identity rather seriously. And with the role playing came emotions like anger, frustration, and despair.

For example, what happens if your family tries to file for food stamps and you are denied? Do you have to choose paying your electric bill over feeding your family? These are real-life scenarios that thousands of Americans face daily.

The purpose of the simulation was to raise awareness about poverty issues and call people to action. The hope is that the more people who are educated about poverty, the more they will want to work to eliminate it.

“This program helps people understand the complexities and frustrations of living in poverty day to day,” said Steve Hoffman, CANI Executive Director. “With a greater awareness of its impact, we can more effectively address the poverty issues in our community.”

Prior to the simulation participants

completed a pre-assessment about their attitudes towards poverty. Following the simulation they were asked to complete the same form to determine if and how their opinions changed. The planning committee is reviewing the results to determine if and how much the simulation impacted participants’ perceptions.



As a participant in the poverty simulation, CANI Board member Karl Kostoff learned about the obstacles low-income families face everyday.

CANI is considering offering the simulation on a regular basis. In the meantime, thanks to the planning committee, the Indiana Nonprofit Resource Network, Blue Jacket Inc., the Freemasons Hall, and all those who participated for helping us pull off this event.

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RECAP CELEBRATES SUCCESSES

Every now and then there are “aha” moments that remind us why we do what we do at CANI. Among them is CANI RECAP.

Every year, CANI invites community supporters, partners, donors and other individuals to learn about the agency’s accomplishments in the past year and plans for the future. But this event is more than just facts and figures. It’s about people making a difference in our communities.

The event took place May 4 at Ceruti’s. One-hundred and thirty people were in attendance, an increase from last year. The theme, “Today’s Change, Tomorrow’s Future,” had a two-fold message. The agency challenges clients to affect change in their lives. And on a donor level, CANI relies on monetary change to carry out its mission.

The event is an occasion for awards, specifically the William G. Williams, Hope Builder, Volunteer and Partnership awards.

Outgoing United Way of Allen County Executive Director Jerry Peterson was the recipient of the William G. Williams award, which recognizes individuals who have made significant strides in eliminating the causes and conditions of poverty.

The agency honored two former clients for their success in overcoming poverty. Angie Frieberger (featured in the March CANI Chronicles issue) received one Hope Builder award. The other award went to Nicole Easley.

Nicole is an example of what it means to turn your life around. A series of poor choices led her into poverty, she told the attendees at CANI RECAP. As a single mother with two small children, Nicole was first introduced to CANI in the Healthy Families program. She

was dependant on welfare, and on all types of public assistance. At CANI she was introduced to several programs such as energy and child care assistance. She now has a bachelor’s degree and works for CANI in the Quality and Planning Department.

Every year CANI Head Start depends on volunteers, many of them parents of Head Start students. This year, Head Start mother Kristen Itt was recognized with the Volunteer award for her extraordinary commitment of time to the CANI Head Start site at the Salvation Army.

D Rogers Weatherization was presented with the Partnership Award for going above and beyond the contractor relationship. Owner Doug Rogers always puts the clients’ needs first and has made many generous financial contributions to CANI over the years.

Two retiring board members, Amy Lazoff and Rob Myers, were honored as well for their dedication over the years.

Special thanks go to the RECAP committee for their time and effort in planning the event: Kim Myers, Lauren Caggiano, Sarah Steeg, Deb Brase and Julie Kelley.



Photo By Sanjay Nallaballi, CANI Computer Software and Support Specialist

CANI Director of Community Services Pam Brookshire poses with Doug Rogers, winner of the Partnership Award.

CANI EXPANDS REACH WITH NEW OFFICE

Families in Ligonier can now access services at a second office in Noble County, thanks to the generosity of a local man.

Businessman Brian Steffen purchased and renovated the building at 200 S. Cavin St. in Ligonier as part of a downtown revitalization project. The building, known as the Community Initiatives building, houses several social service agencies, including CANI, Life & Family Services, BABE Pregnancy and Parenting Resource Center and the Caring Closet. This one-stop-shop approach will make it easier for families to access services.

The project stems from “Community Table” meetings in Albion. This group of concerned citizens, non-profit agencies and churches came together to form a unique collaboration – the Community Table – in an effort to help people in a broad and enterprising way. It was through these meetings the partners noticed a recurring theme: a need for clothing and household items.

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The Community Initiatives building is now an easy way to provide these resources to those who need it the most.

This is the second CANI office in Noble County. (The other one is located at 119 W. Mitchell St. in Kendallville.) Families can access the same services available at the Kendallville office, which includes energy assistance, child care assistance, weatherization and case management.

The CANI office in Ligonier will be open Wednesdays and Thursdays from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.



Photo By Kim Myers, Development Coordinator

Ligonier is one of the fastest growing towns in Noble County. The new office will provide services to many needy families.

CANI, KELLER PARTNER ON HOUSING PROJECT

Housing issues are a part of the plight of many low-income people. CANI addresses this problem already, through its various programs and services, but a new initiative will directly target it.

CANI and Keller Development have teamed up to develop a 35-home lease-to purchase community called Hopewell Pointe to be located in the 1900 block of Reservation Drive in Waynedale. The total cost is \$5.7 million and will generate approximately 200 jobs through the construction period and will employ two individuals as property manager and maintenance personnel.

The community will be the first of its kind in Fort Wayne based on all of the homes being within one subdivision offering a lease-to purchase option. Plans call for a community building, pavilion, gazebo, walking paths and other amenities.

Homes will be offered to individuals and families with a purchase option after 15 years. In addition to other criteria, applicants must income-qualify. The program is designed to provide an incentive for residents to stay long-term.

According to Keller's Business Development Specialist Dawn Gallaway, when the company thought of developing the lease-to-purchase housing community they knew it would take a strong local community service provider to make it successful. CANI was first on the list to call:

"When we considered what would make this project successful, we thought of CANI because of the services they already provide in the community," she said.

The project is indeed a true partnership. Keller Development has expertise in project management and CANI has the resources to help people. Representatives from the two organizations first discussed the project about a year ago. It was agreed that the project fits in line with CANI's mission of helping people overcome the causes and conditions of poverty. Additionally, both developers see the project as an investment in the community.

"We are part of the community," said Keller Development's owner Gene Keller.

CANI's role will be one of an owner and service provider as it expands its housing services. Residents will have access to educational opportunities, including classes on budgeting and home maintenance. Ultimately, CANI hopes that families will build a strong foundation that leads to successful home ownership.

CANI recently applied to the Indiana Housing & Community Development Authority (IHCDA) tax credits in a highly competitive funding round. Although unsuccessful, CANI is still committed to this initiative and intends to re-apply in November 2010. If successful, Keller and CANI plan to break ground on the project in the fall of 2011. The homes will likely be available for rent in early 2012.



Illustration Submitted

CANI views Hopewell Pointe as a significant investment in the Waynedale neighborhood.

This project is part of CANI's larger commitment to the Waynedale community. CANI is currently working with the Indiana Association for Economic Development (IACED) to facilitate a comprehensive Community Economic Development Project, "Quality of Life Plan," in Waynedale. CANI will serve as the convening agency bringing together Waynedale residents, and area social and civic organizations to create a Quality of Life Plan that can be implemented from the grassroots level. Look for an update in a future issue of CANI Chronicles.

For more information about both projects, see www.canihelp.org.

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HEAD START GRADUATE HAS IT ALL

If there was a “poster child” for Head Start, Mark Butler would be a contender.

At age 18, he is smart, confident, respectful and motivated. You couldn't ask for much more in a young man. Although these qualities are likely the product of a good upbringing, the impact of Head Start should not be downplayed.



Head Start teaches children social skills that are helpful later in life.

Mark's mother enrolled him at the East Wayne Street Head Start at age three. Mark said he has pleasant memories of his time there. Miss Robin was his teacher and helped him develop some useful cognitive skills. The young man shared that he used to “forget stuff” and some of the mnemonic exercises used in the classroom helped him with retention.

“It really did give you a head start,” he said about the program.

Outside the classroom Mark has vivid memories of field trips to the zoo, museums, etc.

Mark went on to attend kindergarten, albeit with mixed emotions (He cried because he didn't want to leave his friends at Head Start.) Mark has been successful throughout his academic years. He recently graduated from Wayne High School and is busy preparing for the next chapter in his life.

Mark is one of those kids who seems to have it all. He is both a talented student and athlete. He played basketball, football, track and field throughout high school. His unique mix of strong academics and talent has earned him a track and field scholarship to Vincennes University.

Mark has high hopes for the future: earning a degree in massage therapy. And he is bound and determined to make the dean's list. More than anything he said he wants to remain academically focused throughout his college career.

His community involvement is equally impressive. For the past few summers Mark has volunteered at the YMCA day camps as a counselor.

“If you don't have a strong community, you don't have anything,” he said.

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PAYING IT FORWARD

Carla Montgomery is paying it forward. A former client, she now helps expectant, low-income mothers access health insurance as one of CANI's Covering Kids and Families' outreach assistants.

Carla's own experiences as a single mother helps her to better relate to the families CANI serves. Specifically, she received energy assistance as a Head Start parent.

Carla said it was reassuring to know that an organization like CANI existed to help people like herself.

“I knew I could get help and I did,” she said about her experience with the agency.

Now, years later, Carla is in a position to give back and she does so on a daily basis. Her position relies heavily on outreach and that means interacting with people in need. CANI is a member of Covering Kids & Families of Indiana, Inc. (CKF-IN), a statewide organization committed to ensuring that all children and families eligible for Medicaid and the State's Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) are enrolled.

To that end, she works mostly at local Northeast OB/GYN offices reaching out to pregnant, uninsured women and their children. Carla said she has always wanted to work with children and this job opened the door to this opportunity.

“I knew I could help people,” she said about her vocation.

Carla is easy to talk to, and that's important in her line of work. Women can confide in her about their fears, and at the same time feel a sense of trust. On the other side of the relationship, she said there is a great sense of accomplishment and fulfillment in her work. Speaking with young women from all walks of life and providing words of encouragement are among the high points of her job, she said.

Perhaps one quote sums up her attitude: “I love what I do.”

When she's not at work Carla is busy studying or involved in projects at her church. She is scheduled to complete an online bachelor's degree in November. Ultimately further down the road she hopes to earn a master's degree in social work.

Family is also a big part of her life. She has four children, twins, ages 20 and two others, ages 18 and 9.



Photo Submitted

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!

May 2010

Visionary (\$1,000-\$9,999)

Mr. Doug Rogers
WANE-TV

Ambassador (\$500-\$999)

The Zeglis Family Charitable
Foundation

Guardian (\$250-\$499)

Mr. Terry Clancy
Ms. Joanne K. Crane
Ms. Wendy Davis
Mr. Kevin Dreibelbis
Mr. Matt Kelley
Ms. Joie Means
Ms. Dawn Oetting
Mr. Jeff Starn
Mr. John H. Wilson

Advocate (\$100-\$249)

Mr. Frank M. Bromely
Mr. Ron Diel
Mr. Randy Holler
Mr. Karl Kostoff
Mr. Darryl C. Madison
Rep. Win Moses
Mr. Ted Rondeau

Friend (\$1-\$99)

Ms. Amy Lazoff
Mr. Bob Lee
Mr. Ty Minnick
Mr. Eric Record

CANI HEAD START NOW ENROLLING

Do you know someone who has a child
between ages 3-5?

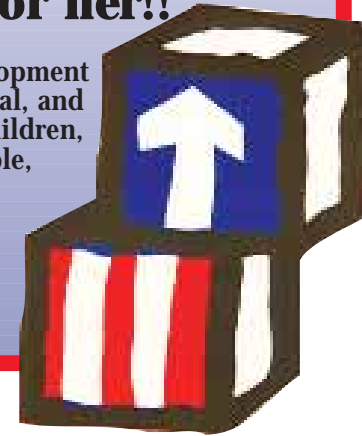
We may have a **FREE PRESCHOOL
PROGRAM** for him or her!!

CANI Head Start is a free, comprehensive development program. It meets educational, health, nutritional, and social service needs of low-income preschool children, ages 3 to 5, and their families in Allen, Noble, and Whitley counties.

For more information, contact

CANI Head Start

227 E. Washington Blvd., Fort Wayne, IN 46802
(260) 420-2833



The next time you visit CANI's main office you might notice hand-made wooden "Hope" donation boxes in the lobby. These are the work of Travis Wilson, a student at Anthis Career Center in the woodworking/cabinetry program.



The Northside High School senior generously built the boxes in his free time. He said the project was a natural extension of his hobby because he has always been interested in the craft. Thanks again, Travis!

Above: Travis Wilson poses here next to a bookshelf he built.

Left: Travis used his woodworking talents to help CANI. The "Hope" boxes will make it easy for people to donate.

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Executive Director Steve Hoffman was among those awarded the Greater Fort Wayne Business Weekly's "40 Under 40 Award" for his professional achievements and volunteer service. Steve accepted the award at a dinner at YOLO Event Center in Fort Wayne April 29.

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Yes, I would like to give to CANI so I can help fight poverty and build hope!

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Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Email address _____

Please write amount of your donation on the appropriate line. I want to be a:

_____ Hero (\$10,000 +) _____ Guardian (\$250 - \$499) _____ Visionary (\$1,000 - \$9,999)
 _____ Advocate (\$100 - \$249) _____ Ambassador (\$500 - \$999) _____ Friend (\$1 - \$99)

Your name will be published in CANI's annual report and newsletters.

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Please mail this completed form to:
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PO Box 10570
Fort Wayne, IN 46853-0570

Or you may donate online at www.canihelp.org.

And remember, your gift is tax-deductible.