

# C.E.F.S. Economic Opportunity Corporation

## 2011 Award Recipient Booklet



# Family of Distinction Award Recipient

**The Tomaz and Deanna deSá Family**



# **Family of Distinction Award**

## **The Tomaz and Deanna deSá Family**

In May of 2008, Tomaz and Deanna deSá were experiencing extreme financial problems due to the high cost of rent, escalating utility bills, and overall not enough income to meet their basic needs. The deSás became homeless and were staying with family. Due to the unpaid utility bills on their previous rental house, the deSás could not obtain affordable housing on their own. As the family came into the C.E.F.S. Clay County Outreach Office, Tomaz and Deanna were screened and referred to the agency's Transitional Housing Program funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The deSás were ideal candidates for the Transitional Housing Program in that they were cooperative, attentive, and motivated to achieve the program goals. The deSás understood the program benefits if they participated fully and if progress was made towards achieving their goals. According to C.E.F.S. Clay County Coordinator, Sharon Byrd, "The deSá family was very goal oriented. They were easy to work with. Everything they needed to do, they did."

Tomaz and Deanna met and achieved all of their self-sufficiency goals. The family attended the South Central Illinois Continuum of Care homeless meeting in November 2009. Tomaz served on a panel of clients to explain to local service agencies the family situation and to answer questions on how the deSás were trying to overcome their personal housing issues. The deSás were able to successfully complete the two year Transitional Housing Program and were able to purchase their own home in June of 2010. The deSás have a really nice home for their family, are gainfully employed, and are successfully living the American dream. Tomaz deSá said that, "It is very important what this organization is doing; helping people one case at a time. You have helped us and our lives changed for the best." Tomaz deSá also stated, "We feel very blessed and truly grateful for this program."

Tomaz deSá has a Bachelor's degree in Sociology with an emphasis on criminal justice and spanish and is currently employed at the IGA grocery store in Flora, and his wife Deanna has completed three years of continuing education towards her degree in Early Childhood Education and is currently employed at Buckeroo Early Education Center in Flora. The deSá family has made significant strides in achieving and maintaining self-sufficiency and truly exemplifies the spirit of hope and success that C.E.F.S. Economic Opportunity Corporation offers to all families.

## **CSBG Transitional Housing Program**

Dena Weber, Outreach Director

Sharon Byrd, Clay County Outreach Coordinator

# Personal Achievement Award Recipients

- **Dale Shanks**
- **Candy Golladay**
- **Corita Glenn**
- **Aron Landsaw**
- **Imogene Gordon**
- **James Gerdes**
- **Tara Osborn**
- **Codey Moyes**
- **Brenda Tracy**
- **Jennifer Rolfingsmeier**
- **Cindy Einhorn**
- **Michelle Crawford**
- **Meredith Forson**
- **Katrina Hudson**
- **George Gipson**
- **Terri Cox**
- **Susan Richards**
- **Jamison Eagle**
- **Donald Risinger**
- **Crystal Williams**
- **Albert Wilson**
- **Crystal Leslie**

## **Dale Shanks**

Dale Shanks was laid off from Fair-Rite after he had worked there for over nine years. He was given the opportunity to return to school through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Program's Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program, but was apprehensive about starting training due to difficulty with math and reading in high school. Dale tried to look for work after his layoff, but soon discovered that he would need additional job skills to help find employment in today's economy. That was when Dale decided to sign up for the Industrial Maintenance Program at Olney Central College. During Dale's first semester in school, his advisor at the college notified him that the Industrial Maintenance Program had been discontinued due to cutbacks at the college. Determined to find a way to support his family and to find a new goal that could help him and his family reach self-sufficiency, Dale switched to the Welding and Cutting Certificate Program.

With the WIA Program, Dale was provided with TAA training, remedial training, mileage assistance, supportive services for required supplies and case management.

According to Denise Brinkley, Family and Community Development Specialist, "Dale worked persistently to achieve his goal when most others would have given up. He patiently did what was necessary for him to reach his goal of obtaining a more marketable skill." Because of his hard work, patience, persistence, and responsibility to his family, Dale finished his training in May 2011 and is confident his new welding certifications will help him find gainful employment. Dale resides with his wife and four children in Willow Hill.

## **Workforce Investment Act Program**

Kevin Bushur, Chief Operations Officer/Workforce Program Director

Denise Brinkley, Family and Community Development Specialist

## **Candy Golladay**

Candy Golladay came to the Robinson, Illinois workNet Satellite Center as an individual with multiple obstacles to employment that engulfed her family. Candy had been out of the workforce for over 12 years while caring for her special needs sons and her father suffering from complications of Agent Orange poisoning from serving in the Vietnam War. In addition, Candy's husband was also a long-term unemployed family member.

Candy's motivation to change her economic circumstances was strong. Candy enrolled in the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Program in April 2009 to train to become a Certified Nurse Assistant. She received tuition, books and fee assistance, along with transportation expense reimbursement, and other supportive services to assist her in earning her Basic Nurse Assistant Certificate at Lincoln Trail College and her Nurse Aide license for the State of Illinois.

Maureen Hays, Family and Community Development Specialist for the WIA Program, noted that, "Candy dealt with the circumstances her life had given her and was determined to improve her family's plight of poverty and hardship. I can think of no other individual who could stand out equal to the hardships Candy faced and kept her will intact, along with self-discipline and acceptance and willingness to change as strongly as she did."

Candy worked hard, studied well and graduated with a certificate in Basic Nurse Assisting in August 2009, and passed the state board exam in September 2009. In April 2010 Candy landed a full-time job in Casey as a CNA at Heartland Manor and cares compassionately for the residents. However, Candy did not stop there. She is currently putting in her "ride time" for Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) training and will soon take her state exam to become a paramedic. Candy resides in Hutsonville with her husband, three sons, and one daughter.

## **Workforce Investment Act Program**

Kevin Bushur, Chief Operations Officer/Workforce Program Director  
Maureen Hays, Family and Community Development Specialist

## **Corita Glenn**

Corita Glenn believes that everything happens for a reason and that her opportunities and successes come from God. Corita was laid off from a factory job where she had worked for seven years. Since she did not have much past college experience, the decision to start training again was very difficult for her, and it had to be made quickly.

Corita enrolled in the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Program's Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program and began her training in the spring of 2009 after deciding to pursue an Associate degree in Accounting and Computing at Olney Central College. While in the program Corita was provided assistance with training and mileage, supportive services for required supplies and case management.

Denise Brinkley, Family and Community Development Specialist, noted, "Because of Corita's faith that everything happens for a reason, she has the persistence and confidence that she needs to overcome obstacles. Corita does not let the fear of failure stop her from taking advantage of opportunities that have been given to her." Corita is very appreciative of everything that has been done to help her receive her training.

Corita and her husband reside in St. Francisville. She volunteers her time at the St. Francisville Christian Academy where she does their payroll and balances the checkbooks. Corita feels that an Accounting and Computing degree will not only help her to find better employment, but it will help her to better serve the Christian Academy after her graduation in May 2011.

## **Workforce Investment Act Program**

Kevin Bushur, Chief Operations Officer/Workforce Program Director

Denise Brinkley, Family and Community Development Specialist

## **Aron Landsaw**

Aron Landsaw quit high school to work a full time job to support his newborn son. Aron later earned his GED while working at various factory jobs that barely allowed him to provide for his family. Aron enrolled in the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Program's Dislocated Worker Program after being laid off from Vesuvius in Charleston. He started his training in fall of 2009 at Lake Land College, striving for an Associate degree in Horticulture Production and Landscape. After his first semester, Aron qualified for Trade and Globalization Adjustment Assistance Act (TGAAA) Program assistance. He received training assistance, supportive services, and mileage assistance from both programs.

Aron worked hard on overcoming his educational barrier and stood out because of his commitment to his education and his determination to reach his educational goal. He was on the Lake Land College President's List three times and Dean's List once. Aron was also proud to report he won an award for having the highest GPA of any Horticulture major in his graduating class. Aron was chosen to be President of the Horticulture Club at Lake Land College, won a horticulture contest at Spoon River College in Peoria, and was invited to attend a National Landscaping event in Springfield.

Sherry French, Family and Community Development Specialist, noted that, "Aron is an excellent role model for other dislocated workers who may be trying to decide what the next step is in their life after a job loss." Aron's job loss ended up having a positive outcome. His success in school has given him a positive attitude and he looks forward to working in the horticulture field after graduation in May 2011. Aron's goal is to own his own landscaping business.

Aron resides in Westfield with his wife Carrie and they have four children, Kenneth, Madison, Valorye, and Dalton.

## **Workforce Investment Act Program**

Kevin Bushur, Chief Operations Officer/Workforce Program Director

Sherry French, Family and Community Development Specialist

## **Imogene Gordon**

Imogene Gordon attended the Golden Circle Nutrition Program (GCNP) site in Clay City on September 3, 1981, the day the first meal was served at the Clay City Community Building. Imogene began faithfully attending the GCNP shortly after her husband passed away in March of 1983. She refuses to let feelings of loneliness and the aches and pains of growing old keep her from doing what she loves, which is dancing. She still travels to St. Marie's Opry so she can dance. Besides her dancing, the GCNP is her other main source of activities.

Imogene knows that participating in the congregate nutrition program for the past twenty-eight years has played a vital role in keeping her young at the age of 89! Imogene stated, "I don't know what I would do without the Golden Circle. I don't cook and I feel lost if I don't come here." Norine Mellow, Clay City Nutrition Site Supervisor, noted, "Imogene cherishes her friendships she has made at the Clay City Golden Circle Nutrition Program site. Imogene keeps a smile on her face in spite of health issues and still continues to volunteer everyday at the GCNP site. She is an important member of the Clay City GCNP and she is missed when she has to stay home because she is not feeling well."

Imogene is the perfect example of what a GCNP nutrition site is all about: promoting health through a well-balanced diet and keeping seniors active through volunteerism and most importantly, companionship! Imogene resides in Clay City and has four daughters and several grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

## **Golden Circle Nutrition Program**

Debbie Weber, Golden Circle Nutrition Program Director  
Norine Mellow, Clay City Nutrition Site Supervisor

## **James Gerdes**

James Gerdes had been a stay at home “Mr. Mom”, caring for his children. When his wife was threatened with possible lay off from her job, James knew he needed additional education to give himself more employment opportunities to help support his family.

During the time James was enrolled in the Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) training program at Lake Land College he qualified for assistance in the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Program. With the WIA Program James was provided WIA Core, Intensive, and Training Services, Individual Training Account (ITA), classroom training, transportation, child care stipends and supportive services.

James went through numerous upheavals and difficulties, but successfully completed his CNA training in July 2010. Linda Clinton, Family and Community Development Specialist, noted that, “James would share information with co-workers and encouraged them to come to our office. He tried to encourage them to make positive steps toward training.”

James is currently working as a CNA at Douglas Care and Rehab Center providing personal assistance, medical attention, emotional support, and loves caring for the elderly residents. James resides in Mattoon and has three children, Gilda, Corbin, and Hazel.

## **Workforce Investment Act Program**

Kevin Bushur, Chief Operations Officer/Workforce Program Director  
Linda Clinton, Family and Community Development Specialist

## **Tara Osborn**

Tara Osborn had supported and encouraged children and family members to complete their education, so when she found herself out of a job after working as a kitchen manager and a grill cook for ten years, she knew it was her turn to take the steps needed to improve her employment opportunities. Linda Clinton, Tara's Family and Community Development Specialist, noted that, "Tara came in prepared to go to college. She had already applied and had been accepted. She had done her homework and was determined."

Tara had always been fascinated with computers so she decided to pursue an Information Technology Programming Associate degree from Lake Land College. The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Dislocated Worker Program assisted Tara with WIA Core, Intensive and Training services, Individual Training Account (ITA) classroom training, transportation and support services. Tara finished her two year degree in a year and a half and maintained a 4.0 grade point average. She was on the President's list and earned the National Science Foundation BOOST Scholarship award for the Fall 2010 and Spring 2011 semesters and is also a member of Phi Theta Kappa. Tara was not only a model student, but was also a tutor for her classmates and a note taker/scribe for a disabled student. For Tara's internship project, she built and installed a network system for the Effingham Senior Center that allowed the office to track client information and transportation services. Tara has shown she is a success story already.

Tara resides in Mattoon. She is currently working on her portfolio and fine tuning her resume to increase her future job prospects.

## **Workforce Investment Act Program**

Kevin Bushur, Chief Operations Officer/Workforce Program Director  
Linda Clinton, Family and Community Development Specialist

## **Codey Moyes**

Codey Moyes dropped out of high school during his sophomore year. He had been diagnosed with a learning disability. Codey did not have a job and did not have much work experience.

Determined to become self-sufficient, Codey enrolled in the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Youth Program. He was provided assistance in getting his GED, leadership development, and paid work experience. Codey did not give up when faced with obstacles. Codey set his goal to pass his GED. At first he did not pass the GED test, but he continued to study and work with tutors, and retook the test until he passed it in December 2010. He worked hard at his worksite and when given an opportunity to apply for an open position he did so. Codey was not hired, but again, he did not give up. He continued to look for employment and found a job at Wal-Mart in Olney in night maintenance.

Family and Community Development Specialist, Judy Seitzinger, highlighted Codey's positive attitude. "He has faced many obstacles already in life, but he has learned to set goals and to work hard and achieve them. Along the way he has had disappointments but instead of letting them get him down, he has used them to motivate him to be successful."

Codey is 20 years old and lives at home with his family in Bridgeport.

## **Workforce Investment Act Program**

Kevin Bushur, Chief Operations Officer/Workforce Program Director  
Judy Seitzinger, Family and Community Development Specialist

## **Brenda Tracy**

“Brenda Tracy is an excellent example of taking life’s lemons and turning them into lemonade”, noted Family and Community Development Specialist, Rosemary Gordon-Young. “It is all because of her positive attitude about herself, her decisions and her opportunities.”

Brenda had been a shift supervisor at North American Lighting in Salem when her job was eliminated. Brenda stated, “I have come to the conclusion; it isn’t how many times you get knocked down in your lifetime that counts...it’s how many times you get back up! As it turns out, having my job eliminated was one of the best things that ever happened to me. You just never know when opportunity will come knocking.” Brenda never lost her positive attitude at any point during her enrollment. She was always certain that she would be able to meet the standards set for all of her classes.

Brenda received services through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Program’s Dislocated Worker and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Programs. Prior to starting school, Brenda received career planning services to consider different training programs. She received assistance for tuition, books, and fee payments, as well as travel assistance and supportive services for costs related to training for a degree at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale (SIU-C). While at SIU-C, Brenda was selected to receive two prominent scholarships, the TRM Academic Scholarship and the Delyte W. Morris Scholarship. She was also offered membership in the Golden Key International Honors Society. Brenda, at the age of 60, graduated with honors in May 2011 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Technical Resource Management.

Brenda is from Odin and comes from a large, close knit family. They help each other and the community with philanthropic gifts during the holidays.

## **Workforce Investment Act Program**

Kevin Bushur, Chief Operations Officer/Workforce Program Director

Rosemary Gordon-Young, Family and Community Development Specialist

## **Jennifer Rolfingsmeier**

Jennifer Rolfingsmeier was a walk in customer at the C.E.F.S. Fayette County Outreach office on August 31, 2010, referred by the Department of Human Services. Jennifer was in need of affordable rental housing for herself and her son. Jennifer was told about the Transitional Housing Program and advised on how she could work toward self-sufficiency by setting goals. Jennifer filled out the application immediately and was placed in a transitional housing apartment on October 1, 2010. As part of the program, Jennifer received case management, budget counseling, goal setting and job search assistance.

Jennifer was working at the Fayette County Hospital as a phlebotomist but was getting only 16 hours a month. When Jennifer was interviewed she was instructed the importance of job searching or volunteering forty hours a week. Within the first month after Jennifer had moved into the transitional housing apartment she was working 32 hours in the dietary department at the Fayette County Hospital, moving from part time to full time employment.

Janet Wise, Fayette County Outreach Coordinator, noted, "With Jennifer's dedication to build a better life for herself and for her son she has obtained one step towards self sufficiency by setting for herself small achievable goals. She took every opportunity available by applying for new jobs that came available at work, thus moving up the pay scale."

Jennifer has been able to set up a savings plan that will help with emergencies and save towards her education. Jennifer also continues to save through a budgeting program that will help enable her to move to suitable housing in the future. Jennifer would like to enroll in college to further her education. Jennifer and her son Kyle live in Vandalia and enjoy going to the park, swimming, and being outside.

## **CSBG Transitional Housing Program**

Dena Weber, Outreach Director

Janet Wise, Fayette County Outreach Coordinator

## **Cindy Einhorn**

Cindy Einhorn was a stay-at-home mother with two young children when her husband was laid off from his job. With the only source of steady income now gone, Cindy knew that she had to do something to help her family become self-sufficient again. She came to C.E.F.S. Workforce Investment Act (WIA) office looking for assistance with training to become a Registered Nurse. Cindy was accepted into the WIA Program as a displaced homemaker and received assistance with tuition, books, fees, transportation, child care reimbursement, uniforms, physical exam and immunization requirements, and state board fees.

Kristen Turner, Family and Community Development Specialist, noted, "Cindy took her education very seriously. Even though she had a husband and children to care for, she still found time to be the Nursing Club Vice President at Lake Land College during her last year." Cindy maintained a 3.5 grade point average and was awarded the Marilyn Fuqua Thompson Award and the Peer Award.

Cindy's dedication, devotion, and hard work paid off in May 2010 when she graduated with honors from Lake Land College with an Associate Degree in Nursing. She passed her state boards and has been working full-time at St. Anthony's Hospital since August 2010.

Cindy, husband Keith, and their two sons, Joey and Brandon, reside in Wheeler.

## **Workforce Investment Act Program**

Kevin Bushur, Chief Operations Officer/Workforce Program Director

Kristen Turner, Family and Community Development Specialist

## **Michelle Crawford**

At the time Michelle Crawford was drawing unemployment she did not know if the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Program was going to have funding for her to go in to training for dental assisting in August 2008. So when Cheryl Young, Family and Community Development Specialist, called to inform Michelle that the WIA Program was going to be able to put her in training, it was at the last minute, but Michelle was able to get all the documents together for her application and was enrolled in training services under the Dislocated Worker Program.

Cheryl Young noted that, "Michelle stands out from other clients because she was able to go in to training while raising her one year old son and still maintain an A/B average in her classes." Soon after Michelle graduated with her Dental Assisting Certificate from Kaskaskia College in 2009, she went to work at Centralia Dental as a Dental Assistant/Receptionist/Office Manager where she is still employed. Michelle is happy that she was able to obtain training for a job with longevity. From checking patients in for appointments, scheduling appointments and taking care of insurance; Michelle does it all and loves her job.

Michelle, husband Timothy, and son, Dylan, live in Salem.

## **Workforce Investment Act Program**

Kevin Bushur, Chief Operations Officer/Workforce Program Director  
Cheryl Young, Family and Community Development Specialist

## **Meredith Forson**

Meredith Forson enrolled in the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Program in November 2008. Past legal and personal issues were a barrier to finding a job so Meredith enrolled in the Network Administration Program at Kaskaskia College. She has overcome many difficult circumstances and is now completing her last semester of the Network Administration Program and has excellent grades.

Melody Lilly, Family and Community Development Specialist, felt that Meredith stood out because of the many obstacles she has had to overcome and the personal battles she has fought and won. "Her persistence has carried her far and there is no doubt in my mind she will succeed. I want her and others to know how well she has done. I am so proud of Meredith!"

Meredith is completing an internship for an employer in Vandalia. This employer has offered her employment after she completes her degree after summer semester 2011. Meredith resides in Vandalia and is a single mother with a daughter, Riley. Between her internship, part time work, and school, she has enormous responsibilities to meet and does so.

## **Workforce Investment Act Program**

Kevin Bushur, Chief Operations Officer/Workforce Program Director

Melody Lilly, Family and Community Development Specialist

## **Katrina Hudson**

Katrina Hudson was a high school graduate but thought her learning disability kept her from using her full capabilities, or so she thought, until she came to be enrolled in the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Program. Katrina began with the Summer Youth Work Experience Program and transitioned to the Adult Program to attend vocational training. After being tested in math and reading, even though Katrina's math level was low, her reading scores were very high, so Melody Lilly, Family and Community Development Specialist knew Katrina would be able to complete the Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) Program.

Before and after her training, Katrina volunteered many hours at Fayette County Hospital because she wanted so badly to work as a CNA. In the fall of 2009 Katrina became a Certified Nurse Assistant, and in the fall of 2010 she became employed full time at Fayette County Hospital where she had volunteered for so long.

Melody Lilly noted that, "Katrina stood out because of her determination to work in a hospital, helping in the long term care unit, even though she was not paid. It was strictly volunteering. Her perseverance and determination to work as a CNA paid off."

Katrina took another big step last fall when she learned to drive. She now has her driver's license and owns a car. Katrina is doing very well and resides at Vandalia with her family.

## **Workforce Investment Act Program**

Kevin Bushur, Chief Operations Officer/Workforce Program Director

Melody Lilly, Family and Community Development Specialist

## **George Gipson**

George Gipson started on the Home Delivered Golden Circle Nutrition Program (GCNP) meals in 2008 due to diabetic complications which resulted in the loss of his driving ability. Before this, he was fairly active for someone in his late seventies and enjoyed activities that were outside.

George's family lives all over the United States so he has adopted the volunteers as his family. He lost a child last year but still keeps his spirits up. Despite his health and his age, George said that he is still looking for a "good woman".

George knows that by receiving home delivered meals he is able to remain in his own home, which is his goal. Fay Powell, Litchfield Nutrition Site Supervisor, noted, "Receiving a hot nutritious meal and a daily check from one of the loving and caring volunteers plays a vital role in keeping George at home." George is the perfect example of what the Golden Circle Home Delivered Program is all about: keeping seniors in their own home as long as possible. George stated that, "with his children all over the United States if the nutrition program would go "belly up" he would be heading to the nursing home."

George worked at Laclede Steel in Alton for thirty-seven years. He resides in Litchfield. George had six children with five still living, and they are scattered all over the United States.

## **Golden Circle Nutrition Program**

Debbie Weber, Golden Circle Nutrition Program Director  
Fay Powell, Litchfield Nutrition Site Supervisor

## **Terri Cox**

When Terri Cox was laid off from her long-term employment as Managing Editor at a newspaper due to the business closing, she saw this as an opportunity. For many years Terri's desire was to work with athletes, but she lacked the education and training required to work as a Physical Therapy Assistant.

Terri enrolled in the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Dislocated Worker Program. Assistance provided was Dislocated Worker Core, Intensive Training Programs, career planning, self directed job search, classroom training, Individual Training Act (ITA) for tuition assistance, child care, transportation, and supportive services for fees, licenses, exams, and uniforms.

While in school, Terri was active in the Physical Therapy Association Club, serving as Vice President and representing Lake Land College at the Illinois Physical Therapy Association (PTA) meeting in Naperville her first year. She was President of the PTA Club her second year. Terri also worked part time as a sports writer for both the Journal Gazette/Times Courier and the Casey-Westfield News Sun papers, covering the local high school activities with stories and photographs.

Debra Schumacher, Family and Community Development Specialist Coordinator, noted that Terri stood out because she excelled in a very difficult program while working part time, raising a family, serving as an officer for her PTA Club, and being an example to her children. Terri accomplished everything with a positive and cooperative attitude.

Terri resides in Casey and has three children: Ali, TJ, and AJ. Daily duties at work include direct patient care and progression of their plan of care established by the physical therapist, direct interaction with referral sources and insurance companies, proper documentation of daily therapy sessions, scheduling, and general office duties.

## **Workforce Investment Act Program**

Kevin Bushur, Chief Operations Officer/Workforce Program Director

Debra Schumacher, Family and Community Development Specialist Coordinator

## **Susan Richards**

When Susan Richards came to C.E.F.S. Outreach office in Sullivan in the summer of 2008, she was seeking assistance because she had lost her job due to business closure. That was where she learned about the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Program to help her with school. Susan had one year of college previously, but not enough credits for a degree. Although she was married at the time of applying, Susan divorced a few months later, and completed the remainder of her time in the program as a single parent of one young son. As a result of the divorce, Susan also had to move out of her house and in to an apartment.

Susan started the Administrative Assistant/Medical Program at Lake Land College in August 2008 on her own using financial aid and WIA core services. She maintained contact during this time and in January 2009 she was enrolled in training services. Susan received assistance with Individual Training Account (ITA), child care, transportation, supportive services and career planning. Susan was able to complete her training in December 2009, a semester ahead of her planned completion date of May 2010. She earned her Associate degree in Administrative Assistant/Medical, as well as receiving Certificates in Office Technology/Medical and Office Technology/General. While in school, Susan was on the President's list and her cumulative GPA was 3.76.

Debra Schumacher, Family and Community Development Specialist Coordinator, highlighted Susan's persistence to overcome the obstacles she has had, including job loss, loss of income, divorce, single parenthood, and loss of her home. "All of this and she was able to maintain a positive attitude. I have no doubt that Susan will accomplish anything she sets out to do."

Susan and her son Matthew reside in Sullivan. She is currently working full time as the Activity Director/Supervisor at Mason Point in Sullivan, which has inspired her to continue her education. She is enrolled in Greenville College and plans to graduate in August 2012 with a Bachelors degree in Organizational Leadership.

## **Workforce Investment Act Program**

Kevin Bushur, Chief Operations Officer/Workforce Program Director

Debra Schumacher, Family and Community Development Specialist Coordinator

## **Jamison Eagle**

Jamison Eagle was laid off from the Effingham Kroger store as head meat cutter when they announced that they were closing their doors and leaving Effingham. He came to C.E.F.S. Economic Opportunity Corporation in July 2009 as a dislocated worker and enrolled in the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Program. His resume indicated his love and interest in food service, so with the support of his wife, Jamison decided to pursue training in the Culinary Arts Management Program at Rend Lake College.

Patricia Cooper, Family and Community Development Specialist, noted, "Although Jamison had a strong plan in place, it seemed that every step was uphill. However, he faced every problem head-on and was able to overcome all adversities. He took everything in stride, dealt with the situation, and did what had to be done." While attending school, Jamison dealt with sick children, the death of his mother and grandfather, and problems with his home, including a broken furnace and major water leak; however he did his best in his classes. Jason had patience and a good outlook and always seemed to be so grateful for what he did have, and did not dwell on what he did not have, regardless of what was going on in his life.

After his graduation in May 2011, Jamison's goal is to one day open his own business in food service. Because of his mother's illness with cancer, Jamison wants to gear at least some special attention in that direction with his desire to cater foods that those afflicted with the disease would find tasty, be able to digest and would enjoy. Jamison and his wife Charlotte, reside in Flora with their two daughters, Sasha and Temperance.

## **Workforce Investment Act Program**

Kevin Bushur, Chief Operations Officer/Workforce Program Director

Patricia Cooper, Family and Community Development Specialist

## **Donald Risinger**

Don Risinger's past felony conviction was keeping him from being hired in his previous occupation as a landscaper. Don had always enjoyed working on cars and knew that if he had the training, he could get a job even with his conviction. Don sought help from the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Program and enrolled for training in auto mechanics at Lake Land College. The WIA Program helped Don with Adult Core, Intensive, Training services, career planning, self directed job search, classroom training, Individual Training Account (ITA) for tuition assistance, transportation, and supportive services for uniforms, tools and fees. Don also received assistance with housing and food from the C.E.F.S. Outreach Office in Moultrie County.

Debra Schumacher, Family and Community Development Specialist Coordinator, noted, "Don lived with and cared for his mother while attending school full time. Don had to struggle at times to keep his grades up, but he never gave up and kept trying." During the fall semester of Don's last year at Lake Land College, Jackson Chevrolet in Sullivan gave him a chance to work there for his internship. Jackson Chevrolet allowed Don to work around his class schedule while he completed his education, then hired him full time as a mechanic when he got his Associates degree in Auto Mechanics.

Don resides in Gays and continues to help care for his mother.

## **Workforce Investment Act Program**

Kevin Bushur, Chief Operations Officer/Workforce Program Director

Debra Schumacher, Family and Community Development Specialist Coordinator

## **Crystal Williams**

Crystal Williams and her family came from Ohio to Illinois in 2009 to stay with a friend. When they could no longer stay at her friend's home, Crystal found a place to live for her and her family, but needed assistance with the deposit. The Department of Human Services (DHS) office referred Crystal to the C.E.F.S. Effingham County Outreach office in November 2010. With assistance from the Homeless Prevention Program, Crystal was able to get established here. Crystal received assistance with deposit help on her new place to live, help with utilities, budgeting, counseling, advocacy, case management and referrals.

Crystal was working through a temporary job service but is now employed full time at Country Inn and Suites at the front desk. Rita Cosner, housing counselor, felt that Crystal stood out noting, "Crystal has gotten herself and her children a stable place to live and a stable job." Crystal is making plans to go back to school to finish her hours to become a licensed cosmetologist here in Illinois.

Crystal and her twin sons Blake and Brandon, reside in Shumway. The boys attend Beecher City School and are involved in basketball. Crystal is very active with her children and is hard at work making sure that the needs of her children and household needs are being met.

## **CSBG Homeless Prevention Program**

Dena Weber, Outreach Director

Rita Cosner, Housing Counselor

## **Albert Wilson**

“A disability is a challenge you have to work around,” stated Albert Wilson. “My brother, sister and father told me I would never make it in college; but, I thought, I was going to prove them wrong.” Albert was placed in Special Education in the fifth grade and was passed from grade to grade through school. Albert went to work at the age of sixteen, but stayed in school to obtain his diploma. Several years ago, Albert was involved in a serious industrial accident while at work. After many days in the hospital and several reconstructive surgeries, Albert returned to the work but was terrified at his job. With help from a friend, Albert secured a different job and worked there until he was laid off. Albert decided that going to college was a wonderful option that he thought would never happen.

In the fall of 2009, Albert started school at Lake Land College through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Program’s Dislocated Worker Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program. Program services provided included TAA training; tuition, books, and fee assistance; transportation reimbursement; case management and other supportive services. Albert’s reading ability steadily progressed with assistance from Judy Bennett, Lake Land College Developmental Reading and Writing Coordinator.

Albert had a desire and commitment to learn and was dedicated to his studies. Albert’s goal is to become a welder and he would go to the welding shop two hours before class each day to practice. Kristin Smith, Family and Community Development Specialist, noted that, “No one showed a stronger desire to learn and to better himself. Albert’s personal accomplishments, as well as academic standing represent his willingness to always be the best person he can be, not only for himself, but for his family and to better his economic standing.”

Albert and his wife reside in Marshall and they have two sons. Family is very important to Albert. He is the first person in his family to go to college. Albert is a TRIO member and acts as a mentor to his peers by actively encouraging them. Albert is also a 32nd degree Mason and is involved with the Local Mason Lodge 133 in Marshall.

## **Workforce Investment Act Program**

Kevin Bushur, Chief Operations Officer/Workforce Program Director  
Kristin Smith, Family and Community Development Specialist

## **Crystal Leslie**

When Crystal Leslie first came in to see Rosemary Gordon-Young, Family and Community Development Specialist, for the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Program, she had a lot of things that needed to be addressed. Crystal was a single parent of a young daughter, lived in income based housing and relied on assistance from social service programs to help keep her household going. Crystal needed everything taken care of prior to her even thinking about returning to school, but she did it. She worked diligently to be able to start school and to get accepted into the Certified Respiratory Therapy Program at Kaskaskia College. With the WIA Program, Crystal was provided with career planning while making educational and employment decisions; tuition, book, and fee costs for her major; supportive services relating to her program; daycare and travel; and case management to keep her motivated towards her goal.

Rosemary Gordon-Young, Family and Community Development Specialist noted, “Over the years I’ve seen many people who would have been overwhelmed by even one of these snags, but not Crystal. Crystal’s view of these situations is as if they are another step she needs to complete. Crystal really knows how to keep things in perspective. The stress of work and school and family will not last forever and her education will pay off as a better job with better pay so that she and her daughter will be able to have a better life.”

Crystal received good grades during her training in the program and graduated in May 2011 with an Associate degree in Certified Respiratory Therapy. Besides being a full time mother and student, Crystal works as a residential aide at Kid’s Hope, a home for children with behavioral problems. Crystal and her daughter reside in Centralia.

## **Workforce Investment Act Program**

Kevin Bushur, Chief Operations Officer/Workforce Program Director

Rosemary Gordon-Young, Family and Community Development Specialist

# Outstanding Volunteer Award Recipients

- **Morgan Duff**
- **Ashley Fairbanks**
- **Randy Chatham**
- **Marjorie Murbarger and Joyce Benskin**
- **Lisa Duncan**
- **Clint Kirkwood**
- **Vicki Schultz**
- **Karen Beccue**
- **Lydia Hemrich**
- **Doris Yeske**
- **Ruth Woods**
- **Nancy Coble**
- **Stephanie Golden**
- **Stanley Kolakowski**
- **Clark Wright**
- **Mary Lou Kidwell**
- **LaTasha Cole**
- **Valerie Kruse**
- **Rita Hubbartt**
- **Margaret Allsop**
- **Ted Boyer**

## **Morgan Duff**

Morgan Duff is working toward her early childhood degree at Kaskaskia College and did her practicum work at the Vandalia Head Start Program. Morgan developed a good rapport with the children at the center. Morgan watched and learned the daily routines, and stepped up and helped out without being asked. Morgan also helped out on the bus and baby sat at parent meetings. Morgan understood and respected the need for confidentiality. In addition, Morgan was willing to change her schedule to be at the center days when she was needed, and was willing to do any task assigned.

Susie Augenstein, Vandalia Head Start teacher, reported that Morgan has gone beyond what is expected of her noting, "Morgan is working on her practicum and is only required to put in 15 hours a week. Morgan puts in 24 hours a week. She has been a major help during staff shortages and is willing to help out where ever needed."

Morgan resides in Ramsey and plans to attend Anderson University in August to work toward a Bachelor's degree in social work. Morgan also teaches Sunday school at Vera Baptist church.

## **Head Start Program**

Connie Jerden, Head Start 0-5 Program Director

Susie Augenstein, Teacher/Supervisor, Vandalia

## **Ashley Fairbanks**

Ashley Fairbanks is a volunteer for the Altamont Head Start Program. She is always willing to ride the bus as a bus monitor when needed and also volunteers monthly in the classroom. Ashley colors activities that are sent home to use in the classroom.

Ashley always has a positive attitude and helps out whenever she can. If she is unable to make it, she gives plenty of notice. Ashley is a very reliable and outstanding volunteer. Megan Kuenstler, Altamont Head Start teacher noted, "Ashley does not have transportation so she rides to school on the bus with her child so she can volunteer. Ashley is a positive person. She gives back to program on a monthly basis and we always know we can count on her."

Ashley lives in Altamont and has one child. She works at Subway.

## **Head Start Program**

Connie Jerden, Head Start 0-5 Program Director

Megan Kuenstler, Teacher/Supervisor, Altamont

## **Randy Chatham**

Randy Chatham has volunteered in the food pantry at Fayette County Outreach Office since October. He picks up the Feeding America food from Wal-Mart three times a week that is donated through the program. Randy also picks up food at other sites as needed. The food that Randy picks up is brought back to the food pantry and distributed in the food boxes daily for low-income individuals and families. Randy volunteers ten hours a week for a total of 240 hours in the last six months and has picked up over 26,168 lbs of food. Also, Randy will take the over flow of boxes of food to the low-income apartments where most of the individuals are elderly and/or home bound, not having transportation to come to the office on a regular basis.

Randy is dedicated in picking up food during the time that is allowed. He returns the boxes to Wal-Mart and picks up boxes at local stores as needed. Randy will make other arrangements if he is going to be out of town. Randy also helps unload the Central Illinois Foodbank truck when the monthly delivery is scheduled. He weighs the food, records the amounts, and makes sure that the Central Illinois Foodbank receives the scheduled paperwork. Janet Wise, Fayette County Outreach Coordinator, noted, "Without Randy's dedication in picking up food, the Fayette County Food Pantry would not be able to serve as many customers during the month. Randy has taken time from his daily activities to pick up the Feeding America food on a regular basis in all types of weather."

Randy is a native of Fayette County and resides in Vandalia. Randy has two daughters, and lives with two miniature dachshunds. Randy has been on the Brownstown City Council, President of the PTA, and a school bus driver with the Brownstown School District. Randy is now self-employed with several rental units that keeps him busy. He is also a local limousine driver. In his spare time Randy enjoys riding motorcycles.

## **Community Services Block Grant Program**

Dena Weber, Outreach Director

Janet Wise, Fayette County Outreach Coordinator

## **Marjorie Murbarger and Joyce Benskin**

Marjorie Murbarger has been a Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) volunteer for fifteen years and her sister, Joyce Benskin, has been a volunteer for two years. Marjorie and Joyce have a strong passion for sewing and wanted to use their talent to make a difference in their community. Marjorie and Joyce sew walker bags and adult bibs for nursing home residents in Clay County. A walker bag is hung from the front or side of the walker. Individuals may use the bag to store items that they often need such as Kleenex, a book, or medicine. The residents feel special, thought of, cared for, and loved when they receive the handmade gifts. Between July 1, 2010 and December 31, 2010, the sisters distributed over 50 walker bags and over 330 adult bibs to the Clay County nursing homes. While some of the supplies needed to make the walker bags and adult bibs are donated, the majority of the supplies are purchased at Marjorie and Joyce's expense. A shed was built to give them a large area to sew. Because the shed is not heated, the two sew only from early spring to late fall and complete a large quantity of bags and bibs in a short amount of time.

While being RSVP volunteers, Marjorie has submitted over 4,400 hours of volunteer work, and Joyce has submitted over 800 hours of volunteer work. Marjorie and Joyce are caring, loyal and devoted persons and have been dedicated to the RSVP program and to their community. They value the importance of volunteering and enjoy reaching out to nursing home residents who are often forgotten.

Marjorie lives in rural Clay City. She and her husband Carroll, now deceased, were married for thirty-six years. Marjorie has four children, five grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren. Marjorie enjoys sewing and dancing.

Joyce lives in rural Clay City. She has three children, one of whom is deceased. She has five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Joyce enjoys sewing, reading, playing cards, and visiting with family and friends.

## **Retired and Senior Volunteer Program**

Debbie Weber, Retired and Senior Volunteer Program Director

Jen Sporleder, GCNP/RSVP Program Specialist

## **Lisa Duncan**

Lisa Duncan often volunteers in the classroom, lunch room, field trips, and parent meeting activities for the Hillsboro Head Start Program. This is Lisa's second year as a Head Start parent. Lisa is always eager to help from home as well. Recently, Lisa helped by obtaining a \$25.00 gift certificate from a local restaurant as a donation to Head Start for a door prize.

Lisa is an active Hillsboro Head Start Center parent and is always available to help out in any way. She is cheerful and willing to give suggestions and support to staff at the center. Brandi Young, Family Advocate for the Head Start Program noted, "Lisa's participation in Head Start sets a shining example for other parents. Her continuous presence also makes a positive difference in the everyday lives of the children and staff. She's a great asset!"

Lisa has served as a policy council member in the past and is currently serving as the secretary. She is a lifelong resident of Taylor Springs and is a well-known member of the community.

## **Head Start Program**

Connie Jerden, Head Start 0-5 Program Director

Brandi Young, Family Advocate

## **Clint Kirkwood**

Clint Kirkwood is a volunteer for the Sullivan Head Start Program. He volunteers in the classroom, for field trips, creative artwork, and interacting with the children. Clint provides a positive influence on the children and gives the staff instructional support. Clint also creates unique props that have been used throughout the year. He holds a Parent Committee position as Vice-Chairperson.

Sullivan Head Start teacher, Charity Russell, noted, "We can count on Clint to go on field trips to have the required adult to child ratio. He is respectful to each child and is sincere when communicating to the children. Clint seeks out the children who are quiet and shy to engage them in activities." When he walks in the room, the children turn and say with a smile, "It's Mr. Clint!" Clint created last year's End of the Year program DVDs for staff and families, and he is creating individual picture DVDs for the parents this year.

Clint resides in Sullivan with his wife and four children. At present time, Clint is going to school to complete his Bachelor's degree in teaching. He has a daughter in the Sullivan Head Start Program and loves to sing karaoke.

## **Head Start Program**

Connie Jerden, Head Start 0-5 Program Director  
Charity Russell, Teacher/Supervisor, Sullivan

## **Vicki Schultz**

Vicki Schultz is a volunteer for the Effingham I Head Start Program classroom. She completes at home activities such as coloring monthly calendars, family literacy activities, and lending library activities. Vicki has also helped out in the Effingham II Head Start even though her child is not in that classroom. Cheryl Will, Effingham I Head Start teacher, and Kelly Kreke, Effingham I Head Start teacher assistant, noted, "Vicki is always willing to help. We can always count on her to be there. She always has a positive attitude and interacts with the children very well." The children all enjoy "Miss Vicki".

Cheryl Will and Kelly Kreke continued, "Vicki is there and willing to help any time we need her. She has come at the last minute several times. We always thank her for all she does to help and her reply is, 'Anything for the school we are willing to help!'" Vicki filled in daily for almost two months as a bus aide.

Vicki and her husband, Charles, reside in Watson and are foster parents. They have had many foster children. Two of the children were part of the Head Start Program. They have adopted one of the children and are in the process of adopting the other one. Both Charles and Vicki work full time jobs. Charles works during the day and Vicki works in the evening so a parent can be at home with the children.

## **Head Start Program**

Connie Jerden, Head Start 0-5 Program Director

Cheryl Will, Teacher/Supervisor, Effingham

Kelly Kreke, Teacher Assistant, Effingham

## **Karen Beccue**

Karen Beccue worked for several years as a RSVP Coordinator until her retirement. During her two-week notice period, the Effingham County Outreach office was notified that a part-time Intake worker was needed for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Robert West, Effingham County Outreach Coordinator noted, "Karen was our first choice, and she agreed to help us." She extended her C.E.F.S. career for two more years of hard work and excellent service for the program as well as for the office. Karen finally reached the retirement years, but has continued to volunteer at the Hi-Rise Apartments as well as for the Effingham Outreach office when needed. Karen provided her cell phone number on her last day of regular service and said to call her if needed. True to her word, Karen has been available to oversee the operations of the office when a volunteer was needed.

Robert West again noted, "When Karen is called in on a short notice and is available to volunteer, I have peace of mind that the office will be fine when I am away. I feel confident that Karen can cope with the problems associated, and when to call me if needed."

Karen Beccue resides in Mason.

## **Community Services Block Grant Program**

Dena Weber, Outreach Director

Robert West, Effingham County Outreach Coordinator

## **Lydia Hemrich**

Lydia Hemrich has been a Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) volunteer for ten years and is a member of the RSVP Advisory Council. As a member of the advisory council, Lydia provides guidance and support to RSVP staff members, input regarding volunteer issues, and strategic planning in regards to addressing community needs. Lydia is also a member of the Midland Area Agency on Aging (MAAA) board of directors. As a board member, she provides guidance and support to MAAA staff members and to agencies who receive funding, to help ensure programs are operating effectively and efficiently. Lydia is both an active volunteer and project council member for the Golden Circle Nutrition Program (GCNP). She has volunteered with the American Red Cross by assisting at local blood drives. She also volunteers with the Family Caregiver Symposium by greeting and visiting the participants, serving dinner to individuals, and other areas where she is needed. Lydia also visits elderly neighbors and friends who are sick or have had surgery and takes individuals to medical appointments and/or other places they need to go.

Jen Sporleder, RSVP/GCNP Specialist, noted, "Lydia has submitted over 3,300 hours of volunteer work while being a RSVP volunteer. She has been very loyal and dedicated to the RSVP Program and to her community, giving her best, and always willing to lend a helping hand. She continues to advocate for RSVP and encourages people to volunteer in the community. She values the importance of volunteering and has made a significant impact in the community."

Lydia resides in Effingham. Lydia and her husband Louis, now deceased, have six children, one of whom is deceased. She has eleven grandchildren and twenty-four great-grandchildren. After fifteen dedicated years, Lydia retired from K-Mart. When not volunteering, she enjoys playing cards and visiting with family and friends.

## **Retired and Senior Volunteer Program**

Debbie Weber, Retired and Senior Volunteer Program Director

Jen Sporleder, GCNP/RSVP Program Specialist

## **Doris Yeske**

Doris Yeske has been a Golden Circle Nutrition Program (GCNP) volunteer for eighteen years helping to start “meals on wheels” in the Witt community. Since then she has been our go to person whenever we need anything at the Witt site, according to Fay Powell, Litchfield Nutrition Site Supervisor. Doris’s generosity and willingness to serve is outstanding. Doris goes above and beyond in her role as a volunteer, coordinating the volunteers for home-delivered meals, and is she is willing to lend an extra hand whenever and wherever needed. She helps with all aspects of the nutrition program. Doris knew that Witt was isolated and had many seniors who needed help so she volunteered her time to help implement the program as well as deliver meals so seniors receive a well balanced nutritious meal.

Doris is a great asset to the Golden Circle Nutrition Program. She is a talented and exceptional volunteer and knows the difference the nutrition program makes in the lives of seniors. Doris is very loyal and dedicated to her community and to GCNP.

Doris resides in Witt with her husband Lemar of sixty years. They have four children, ten grandchildren and several great-grandchildren. She is a lifelong member of the Methodist Church, Witt. Doris and her husband are avid travelers and have visited all fifty states, all the countries of Europe and several other countries around the world.

## **Golden Circle Nutrition Program**

Debbie Weber, Golden Circle Nutrition Program Director  
Fay Powell, Litchfield Nutrition Site Supervisor

## **Ruth Woods**

Ruth Woods is a volunteer for the Vandalia Head Start Program. She is on the policy council, the parent committee board, and attends parent committee meetings. She colors calendars and cuts out classroom activities and helps with other classroom activities. Ruth volunteers on the bus often and can be depended on when she agrees to volunteer. She has a positive attitude and is very encouraging to the younger mothers at parent meetings.

Susie Augenstein, Vandalia Head Start teacher, felt that Ruth went above and beyond with volunteering noting, "Ruth is dependable and is usually available and willing to volunteer when ever asked. She volunteers often, sometimes as often as four days a week. Any time we need someone to color or cut out activities for the classroom, Ruth is agreeable to do so."

Ruth resides in Vandalia and has three children.

## **Head Start Program**

Connie Jerden, Head Start 0-5 Program Director

Susie Augenstein, Teacher/Supervisor, Vandalia

## **Nancy Coble**

Nancy Coble volunteers in the Louisville Head Start Program classroom helping the children during center time. Connie Forth, Louisville Head Start teacher, appreciated Nancy's volunteer time at the center noting, "Nancy is volunteering in the classroom and she has sorted and organized the books in our Head Start Library. She colors and cuts out activities for the classroom."

Nancy resides in Flora and is the mother of four children. She has worked as a cook and has owned her own restaurant. Nancy has also worked as a CNA. Nancy is currently doing foster care for her great-grandchildren.

## **Head Start Program**

Connie Jerden, Head Start 0-5 Program Director

Connie Forth, Teacher/Supervisor, Louisville

## **Stephanie Golden**

Stephanie Golden is a volunteer at the Altamont Head Start Program. She assisted as a bus monitor for several weeks when they were short staffed. Stephanie attended monthly parent meetings and also colored calendars and other activities for the classroom when needed.

“Whenever we need help with anything, Stephanie is the first person we call,” noted Megan Kuentler, Altamont Head Start teacher. “Stephanie is reliable and does a great job. The children also enjoy having her around. The parents are encouraged to volunteer at least once a month and Stephanie does more than that. Any time we need her, she is there to help out. Stephanie is a positive role model.”

Stephanie lives in St. Elmo and has two children.

## **Head Start Program**

Connie Jerden, Head Start 0-5 Program Director

Megan Kuentler, Teacher/Supervisor, Altamont

## **Stanley Kolakowski**

Stan Kolakowski has been a volunteer for the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA) for the past two years at the Fayette County Outreach Office in Vandalia doing income taxes online for low-income families and individuals. Stan was able to assist the customers by answering income tax questions in person or on the phone. He filled out the correct forms so that the customers received the most benefit. Stan was on time for his appointments and polite with the customers. With Stan's background knowledge in computers he was able to assist the customers quickly with very few errors in his returns. It was estimated that Stan put in over two hundred hours filling out over one hundred federal and state returns for low-income individuals and families.

According to Janet Wise, Fayette County Outreach Coordinator, "Stan has been a great asset to the Fayette Outreach office. Stan assists low-income individuals and families so they can receive their tax refunds. During the 2009 filing season, the average federal tax refund was \$1,024 per household. The average income was \$11,065. Without Stan's volunteering, the Fayette County Outreach office would not be able to provide the amount of returns to the individuals and families."

Stan served in the United States Air Force where he obtained training to become a computer programmer. After service in the Air Force, Stan attended Porter and Chester Technical Institute receiving a certificate in computer repairs and networking. Before moving to Illinois, Stan volunteered at a local soup kitchen. He also has been involved with his daughter's Girl Scout troop. Moving to Fayette County nearly three years ago from Massachusetts, Stan was seeking a place to volunteer in order to give back to his community. Stan resides in Vandalia with his wife and three children. Stan is involved in school activities and is presently employed part-time at Wal-Mart.

## **Community Services Block Grant Program**

Dena Weber, Outreach Director

Janet Wise, Fayette County Outreach Coordinator

## **Clark Wright**

Clark Wright's job results in seasonal layoffs. During his layoff period, Clark can be counted on to assist in unloading the Central Illinois Foodbank delivery truck. Until recently, Shelby County Outreach was an office of women only and Clark's willingness to assist and tackle the tougher aspects of the unloading job was an immense relief to us and our backs, according to Beth Beck-Marts, Shelby County Outreach Coordinator. Beth Beck-Marts continued, "We have a very difficult time in Shelby County garnering help on delivery day. Clark's dependability and work attitude make him a most valued volunteer." Clark is willing to tackle the more challenging roles on delivery day. In addition, his personality is that of a friend, neighbor, or family member that is always willing to lend a hand when asked or when he recognizes the need.

Clark resides in Shelbyville and works as a soil tester at KSI Laboratory in Shelbyville. Clark just recently began his own lawn care business. He is a member of the Shelbyville Moose Lodge and the Shelby County Rescue Squad. Clark enjoys sports, working out at the local gym and four-wheeler riding.

## **Community Services Block Grant Program**

Dena Weber, Outreach Director

Beth Beck-Marts, Shelby County Outreach Coordinator

## **Mary Lou Kidwell**

Mary Lou Kidwell has been a Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) volunteer in Moultrie County for ten years and also serves on the advisory council. Mary Lou is involved with the Welcome to Kindergarten Program (WTK). She meets with a few volunteers at the Senior Center (Mid-Illinois Senior Services) on Tuesday afternoons. They mark material off in four inch blocks, cut them, match the plain material with printed material, and then sew the blocks together by hand, beginning the quilts for Welcome to Kindergarten. Mary Lou organizes the WTK stuffing party and volunteers come to the Senior Center to help stuff the bags for the children of Moultrie County that are starting kindergarten. Mary Lou started this program when she was working as the coordinator for Moultrie County RSVP.

In addition, Mary Lou started the Pencil Pal Program for the Sullivan Elementary School. Mary Lou spends many hours collecting and delivering the letters to the volunteers she has recruited to answer the letters. She then delivers the letters back to the school. Mary Lou is the author of the book that each child and volunteer receive when they have their Meet Your Pal Party in May. Mary Lou is also involved with the bookmark program and reading program in the Sullivan Elementary School.

Norma Piper, Moultrie County RSVP Coordinator, noted, "Mary Lou has in the past ten years put in a lot of hours helping with the Welcome to Kindergarten Program, Pencil Pal Program, listening to the children read to her in the reading program, helping with the bookmark program, and she is willing to help where she can and where the need is. She is devoted to her community and truly is a dedicated RSVP volunteer and has made a significant impact in the community by volunteering."

Mary Lou has lived in Sullivan all of her life. She is one of eight children. She loves being involved with her family, friends, church, and community.

## **Retired and Senior Volunteer Program**

Debbie Weber, Retired and Senior Volunteer Program Director

Norma Piper, Moultrie County RSVP Coordinator

## **LaTasha Cole**

LaTasha Cole has volunteered in many ways for the Head Start Program at Cowden. Tasha has been a chaperone for field trips and assisted in cleaning the classroom. Tasha has helped by leading the children in various activities, giving attention to each child. Tasha has also donated various items throughout the year including food, art supplies and clothing. While the Cowden Head Start Center is fortunate to have several helpful volunteers, Tasha and her efforts stand out among the rest. If Tasha is not working, she is always ready and available any time they are seeking volunteers and is willing to do anything asked of her.

Natalie Storm, Cowden Head Start teacher, noted that, "Tasha volunteers at the center on a regular basis and takes time to give special attention to each child in attendance. She assists in daily activities such as cleaning tables, sweeping floors, tooth-brushing, etc. and often does not need to be told what to do but can see an area in which she can help and does it. In the event in which she has a free hand, she will ask what she can do to help."

Tasha resides in Herrick with her husband and two children. One child is in Head Start and the other child is in Early Head Start. Tasha is employed at McDonald's Restaurant.

## **Head Start Program**

Connie Jerden, Head Start 0-5 Program Director

Natalie Storm, Teacher/Supervisor, Cowden

## **Valerie Kruse**

Valerie Kruse volunteered in the Litchfield Head Start Program classroom. She assisted with meal time, colored calendars for the classroom, sat with children, and also volunteered to ride the bus as a bus monitor.

According to Kristi Rogers, Litchfield Head Start Teacher, "Valerie has a positive attitude and is very good with the children. She has been a most reliable person to call if we need assistance. Valerie has a young child at home and still finds time to volunteer in her twin granddaughters' classrooms."

Valerie Kruse resides in Litchfield. She cares for not only her own children, but also for her twin granddaughters and their older sister. Valerie goes above and beyond on a daily basis.

## **Head Start Program**

Connie Jerden, Head Start 0-5 Program Director

Kristi Rogers, Teacher/Supervisor, Litchfield

## **Rita Hubbartt**

Rita Hubbartt has been involved with the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) in the Shelbyville area for the past three years. Rita is very active with the Main Street School Pencil Pal Program and graciously volunteered to coordinate the program. She spends several hours collecting and distributing the letters to the students and volunteers. She ensures every volunteer has written a letter to a student before taking the letters to the schools. Her generosity and willingness to serve in this capacity is outstanding. Rita also volunteers her time by taking elderly individuals to medical appointments, grocery stores, and other places the individuals need to go. Rita assists with the RSVP volunteer recognition banquets, which are a time to recognize and appreciate the dedicated volunteers. Rita helps with registration, serving of the meal, clean up, and more, ensuring every volunteer in attendance feels appreciated, not taking a moment to give herself the credit she deserves for the volunteer work she has done. Rita goes above and beyond as her role as a RSVP volunteer. She is always willing to lend an extra hand whenever and wherever she is needed.

During Rita's three years as a RSVP volunteer, she has reported over 1,000 hours of volunteer work. She is very loyal and devoted to her community and to RSVP. Rita values the importance of volunteering and has made a significant impact in the community.

Rita resides in Shelbyville with her husband, Bob. They have been married for twenty-three years and have eight children between the two of them, and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She enjoys visiting her family, being active in her community, and planting flowers and a garden.

## **Retired and Senior Volunteer Program**

Debbie Weber, Retired and Senior Volunteer Program Director  
Jen Sporleder, Program Specialist

## **Margaret Allsop**

Margaret Allsop has been a Golden Circle Nutrition Program (GCNP) congregational volunteer at Beecher City for ten years. Margaret graciously volunteered to be the volunteer supervisor when the prior site supervisor resigned. Her generosity and willingness to serve in this capacity was outstanding. Margaret helps with all aspects of the nutrition program and also volunteers twice a week delivering home-delivered meals. Margaret loves to bake and the seniors in Beecher City are often treated to her finished products! Margaret goes above and beyond as her role of a volunteer. When asked why she is always so willing to go above and beyond Margaret simply stated, "I volunteer because I enjoy people and want to make a difference."

Margaret values the importance of volunteering and has made a significant impact in the Golden Circle Nutrition Program and in her community. Margaret is an outstanding volunteer, always willing to do whatever it takes when her services are needed.

Margaret resides in Beecher City and was married to Dale Allsop, who is now deceased. They had three children. She has many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Margaret loves to cook and bake, is an avid card player, and loves to listen to country music. Margaret also loves to grow flowers and vegetables in her garden.

## **Golden Circle Nutrition Program**

Debbie Weber, Golden Circle Nutrition Program Director  
Shannon Seaton, Beecher City Nutrition Site Supervisor

## **Ted Boyer**

Many of us see a need and do what we can to help by donating money or time. Ted Boyer took that spirit of helping to a higher level. On January 30th, Ted Boyer packed the Sullivan High School gym to raise money for the food pantries, including the C.E.F.S. Economic Opportunity Corporation food pantry. Ted recruited former Illini players to scrimmage against local high school graduates with all profits going to feed the hungry. Those attending were encouraged to bring nonperishable items for the food pantry. Additional fundraisers included an auction of Illini tickets and a 50/50 drawing. Nearly \$15,000 was raised for the hungry on that day. This unique undertaking brought the local papers and TV crews to the event and spread awareness of the needs of low-income individuals and families in the community. Though Ted Boyer is the township supervisor for Marrowbone Township, he knew the need extended beyond his township and addressed that need. He provided great family friendly entertainment to the community and brought awareness to the needs of those less fortunate.

Ted Boyer embodies the true spirit of helping others. He shared that he is motivated by the needs of the children. The thought of a child not having enough to eat really concerns him. Typical of Ted's personality, he wanted to be sure others were given credit for their efforts in helping with the fundraiser. Ted was reluctant to allow Barbara Waymire, Moultrie County Outreach Coordinator, to nominate him for award recognition, but Barbara wanted others to see what one person with a good supporting cast can do for a community. In 2010, Ted raised \$14,700 in cash and hundreds of pounds of food for the food pantries of Moultrie County. The C.E.F.S. food pantry received the nonperishable items and a check for \$5,000. Since he started this mission to feed the hungry in Moultrie County, Ted Boyer estimated he has raised \$40,000 over the past seven years.

Ted Boyer is a lifelong resident of Moultrie County. He is married to Cheryl and has a daughter who is a senior in Sullivan High School. He is the plant manager for the Bethany Van Horn Fertilizer facility. Ted is an avid sports enthusiast and enjoys going to local, university and professional sporting events.

## **Community Services Block Grant Program**

Dena Weber, Outreach Director

Barbara Waymire, Moultrie County Outreach Coordinator

# Community Service Excellence Award Recipients

- **Litchfield South Township**
- **Wade's Quality Meats**
- **J&L Auto Service**
- **Lutheran Care Center**
- **Shelby County Farm Bureau Young Farmers Committee**
- **Clay County Health Department**
- **Shelby County**
- **Deb's Catering**
- **South Central FS**
- **University of Illinois Extension – Effingham County**
- **Randy's Towing**
- **Graham Correctional Center**
- **Effingham County FISH Organization**



## **Litchfield South Township**

Litchfield South Township, along with Sharon Kuchar, township supervisor, have helped support the mission of C.E.F.S. Economic Opportunity Corporation in Montgomery County. Litchfield South Township donates the building for the C.E.F.S. Outreach office and food pantry so services will be available to the residents in the community who otherwise would not be able to travel the added distance to Taylor Springs. When shelves were needed for storage of food in the food pantry, Litchfield South Township donated the materials and labor to build the shelves and also donated money to help provide food to stock the pantry to help those in need. In addition, Litchfield South Township used their resources to help provide Good Faith Effort (GFE) payments for clients in need of Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) assistance to help prevent shut offs or in obtaining service for clients who otherwise would not have it.

Litchfield South Township continues to cooperate with C.E.F.S. to help provide services for those in need. If not for Litchfield South Township's generous donation of office space, C.E.F.S. would not have a local outreach office to provide the much needed services for the homeless and those in need of other assistance, which would create a great hardship in the area. In addition, they continue to provide much needed donations and cooperation in assistance.

Sharon Kuchar, township supervisor, has achieved the Silver Level Certified County Officials (CCO) status and was recently elected President Zone 2 Illinois Association County official. Sharon Kuchar also implemented the Christmas Senior Bus Trip ten years ago and is in charge of the annual event.

## **Community Services Block Grant Program**

Dena Weber, Outreach Director

Brenda Decker, Housing Counselor, Montgomery County

## **Wade's Quality Meats**

Dennis and Tina Wade, owners of Wade's Quality Meats, have provided significant support to the Shelbyville Outreach Food Pantry and Food Voucher Programs. Due to Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) regulations, the C.E.F.S. Outreach office is prohibited from credit card purchases with these funds. Wade's places food orders for the food pantry with their suppliers as well as supplying meat to the food pantry. They not only invoice the Outreach office to meet EFSP regulations but they also deliver, which provides the Outreach office with great convenience as they lack the necessary transportation to pick up large food orders. Wade's also accepts food vouchers and ensures the stipulations of use are followed. In addition, Dennis and Tina have offered donations of near expiration items to the food pantry and have offered special deals when available.

"Dennis and Tina Wade are strongly committed to "giving back" within their community", noted Beth Beck-Marts, Shelby County Outreach Coordinator. They have supported several causes through donations and sponsorships. During the spring, summer and fall months, you can generally find a fundraising cookout on the store's parking lot on Saturdays. They have supported the Shelby County Humane Society, Habitat for Humanity, Youth Soccer League, Youth Summer Baseball, and the Shelby County Soil and Water Conservation's Field Day. They have also sponsored a local racer and have partnered with Shelbyville Township in providing Christmas Baskets to more than 200 elderly and low-income families. Dennis and Tina's dedication in using their success to assist in worthy causes is exemplary and the level of service they provide is second to none.

Beth Beck-Marts again noted, "Today so many businesses are focused solely on profits. Wade's gives so much back to their community. Dennis and Tina are always ready to assist in any way they can. Wade's Quality Meats is not just a small family business in our community, but a very valuable part of our community's family."

Dennis and Tina Wade purchased the store in 2003 after deciding to leave the restaurant business. Dennis had previously worked at the Findlay Grocery Store and had a talent for cutting meat. Tina has received a Community Builder Award from the Mason/Shiners Jackson Lodge for her role in ensuring the growth and prosperity of our community. The eight years Dennis and Tina have been in business have resulted in them becoming a well-respected and valued asset to Shelby County.

## **Community Services Block Grant Program**

Dena Weber, Outreach Director

Beth Beck-Marts, Shelby County Outreach Coordinator

## **J&L Auto Service**

J&L Auto Service, owned by Leon Haslett, has shown outstanding support for the C.E.F.S. Central Illinois Public Transit (CIPT) and the Head Start Programs' vehicles. Leon Haslett's background experience gives him a unique perspective on the operational requirements of the specialized vehicles that he services, and the restrictions including legal, liability and budgetary areas that apply to the operation of Transit and Head Start vehicles. Leon has donated his time to attend seminars provided by Rural Transportation Assistance Center that allowed him to remain current on changes and requirements imposed on IDOT vehicles and the specialty equipment aboard these vehicles.

J&L Auto Service has shown consistency in affording priority treatment to community service vehicles. J&L Auto Service has been generous with time and discounts on both parts and labor. J&L Auto Services has allowed us to purchase large ticket parts ourselves to allow us to achieve greater discounts. Leon Haslett has great insight into fleet operations and oversees C.E.F.S.'s agency vehicles as he would his own. He takes great pride in keeping our fleet dependable, efficient and in good appearance. In support of our agency's mission, J&L Auto Service has sacrificed both time and profit to keep the CIPT and Head Start Programs serving the community within budget.

Leon Haslett has been associated with bus related fields of occupation for twenty-five years, serving as a bus mechanic for Vandalia School District, Transportation Supervisor for St. Elmo School District, service technician for Southern Bus and Mobility in Breese and as the owner and operator of J&L Auto Service in Vandalia.

## **Central Illinois Public Transit Program**

Kristie Warfel, CIPT Program Director

Robert Bugger, CIPT Transportation Maintenance & Safety Manager

## **Head Start Program**

Connie Jerden, Head Start 0-5 Program Director

Jessy Figueroa, HS/EHS Transportation Facility & Maintenance Specialist

## **Lutheran Care Center**

The Lutheran Care Center along with Marsha Nolan, Activity Director, continuously donate their time and energy to youth of the C.E.F.S. Economic Opportunity Corporation Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Summer Youth and year-round programs. They not only provide the needed supervision and guidance to area youth, but also assist them with developing good work habits and skills. Marsha Nolan and the Lutheran Care Center staff work tirelessly to ensure that the youth placed with them stay in high school or work to obtain their GED. In addition the youth are strongly encouraged to pursue post-secondary education. The Lutheran Care Center strives to provide a great learning and caring experience that the youth workers can carry with them to other places of employment and to assist them in becoming productive members of society.

Charlene Nelson, Family and Community Development Specialist Coordinator, noted, "Lutheran Care Center is one of the best long-term care facilities in Illinois. It not only has a great appearance, but also a great staff. Everyone is very caring and helpful and they strive to make a great place for people with disabilities and senior citizens to reside."

Lutheran Care Center of Altamont is a Continuum of Care Retirement Community (C.C.R.C.) dedicated to providing living options aimed at promoting good health and interesting fulfilling lifestyles. Lutheran Care Center offers individuals a wide range of living options including skilled nursing, senior living apartments and independent, maintenance free homes. Lutheran Care Center is able to accommodate each individual at their different stations in life. Lutheran Care Center also includes a child care facility with the children and residents having the opportunity to participate in planned shared activities together.

## **Workforce Investment Act Program**

Kevin Bushur, Chief Operations Officer/Workforce Program Director

Charlene Nelson, Family and Community Development Specialist Coordinator

## **Shelby County Farm Bureau Young Farmers Committee**

The Shelby County Farm Bureau Young Farmers Committee celebrated National Food Check-Out Week by sponsoring a celebrity grocery food race in February. During this event local celebrities competed to gather the most food made with Illinois corn, soybean, and wheat in ten minutes. The items were then purchased by the Young Farmers Committee and donated to local pantries. This year Shelby County Outreach was the recipient of the event and has had the pleasure to be directly involved in the race several times since its inception in 2005. This year Shelby County Food Pantry received \$3,134.84 worth of groceries. Over the course of the event over \$10,600 worth of food has been provided to Shelby County residents. The Young Farmers Committee also created an account for the food pantry in the amount of \$1,700 to purchase meat from Wade's Quality Meats. These funds were obtained through a penny wars competition between the Illinois Farm Bureau Districts and a \$500 donation to the Committee from this year's grocery race host Windsor Food Mart.

The Young Farmers Committee used the Celebrity Grocery Race to give back to the communities in Shelby County. They also sponsor a Farm-City Breakfast each year to bring attention to farmers' return on their commodities in order to eat one meal. This year the cost of the meal was the farmers' return on a \$4.00 meal which equated to \$0.19 per dollar. The Committee also sponsored the Cutest Farmer Contest, Money in the Straw and the Pedal Tractor Pull events at the Shelby County 4-H Fair. The Young Farmers Committee also works with local FFA Chapters. The Shelby County Young Farmers Committee use opportunities that are designed to provide awareness into the Farm Bureau's focus as an occasion to benefit not only their organization but to benefit the community. Their dedication and service to the entire Shelby County community extends beyond their mission and purpose.

The Young Farmers Committee of the Shelby County Farm Bureau was organized in the 1970s in an effort to contribute to the overall Farm Bureau's goal of providing leadership and development for young men and women ages 18-35 that were interested or involved in agribusiness. The Committee was recognized in 2007 with a Service Award by the Shelby County 4-H.

## **Community Services Block Grant Program**

Dena Weber, Outreach Director

Beth Beck-Marts, Shelby County Outreach Coordinator

## **Clay County Health Department**

The Clay County Health Department is a public health department that excels in service to the residents of Clay County. They have been invaluable to the C.E.F.S. Workforce Investment Act's (WIA) Summer Youth Program participants allowing them to work and gain valuable work experience in a great working environment. The Clay County Health Department Teen Reach Program is also great at coordinating with Clay County's Central Illinois Public Transit Program, ensuring that the youth of Clay County are able to attend the Teen Reach after-school program. The WIA Summer Youth Program, the Central Illinois Public Transit Program and the Clay County Outreach office are better able to serve participants due to the efforts of coordination between the agencies and the great staff at the Clay County Health Department. The Clay County Health Department contracts with both the WIA and CIPT Programs and provides payment to CIPT for the daily transportation for Teen Reach. While school is out in the summer, they contract for additional transportation services as needed from various areas in Clay County.

Clay County Health Department is an integral part of social service programs in Clay County and coordinates with other agencies in effective working relationships. They are committed to fulfilling their mission by working cooperatively with other community agencies to complement their services but not duplicate them. C.E.F.S. is very fortunate to have the resources and coordination of resources that the Clay County Health Department provides to the residents of the service area.

Clay County Health Department provides Home Care Services, Environmental Health Services and Public Health Services. They are committed to setting a high standard for quality and have received numerous awards and accolades for their efforts.

### **Workforce Investment Act Program**

Kevin Bushur, Chief Operations Officer/Workforce Program Director  
Patricia Cooper, Family and Community Development Specialist

### **Central Illinois Public Transit Program**

Kristie Warfel, CIPT Program Director  
Tammy Beccue, Clay County CIPT Office Manager

### **Community Services Block Grant Program**

Dena Weber, Outreach Director  
Sharon Byrd, Clay County Outreach Coordinator

## **Shelby County**

The Shelby County Board has been an outstanding advocate and supporter of the efforts associated with public transportation. “They are wonderful to work with on all of the required paperwork and reporting”, stated Kristie Warfel, CIPT Program Director. Their willingness and dedication for the past twenty-six years to be the grantee for public transportation, with the Central Illinois Public Transit Program being the operator, has benefited public transportation throughout a six county service area. Clay, Fayette, Moultrie, Montgomery and Douglas Counties have Board Ordinances and Intergovernmental agreements with Shelby County. Shelby County has willingly taken on the responsibility of overseeing the grant for public transportation to ensure that the transportation needs for the citizens of the six operating counties are met. The citizens of the counties are able to travel to medical appointments, shopping, nutrition sites, work, school, recreation and conduct their business needs.

Shelby County and the Shelby County Board have shown great dedication not only to the citizens of Shelby County but also to the citizens of Clay, Fayette, Moultrie, Montgomery and Douglas Counties. Their dedication and collaboration with C.E.F.S. Economic Opportunity Corporation and the Central Illinois Public Transit Program provide an optimistic outlook for the future of public transportation.

For over twenty years the C.E.F.S. Shelby County outreach office was located in the county courthouse. Due to the growth and expansion of both entities, the outreach office is now located in a different establishment, but because of insightful county board members and staff, there is still an outstanding collaboration between both entities. The County Board, State’s Attorney, Clerk and Treasurer continue to combine efforts with C.E.F.S. to ensure that the citizens of all six counties are able to meet their transportation needs.

## **Central Illinois Public Transit Program**

Kristie Warfel, CIPT Program Director

## **Deb's Catering**

The Golden Circle Nutrition Program (GCNP) has been doing business with Deb's Catering of Altamont, for almost twelve years. Deb's Catering has shown they are a true community partner with C.E.F.S. Economic Opportunity Corporation's Golden Circle Nutrition Program. "Deb's Catering is a vendor that donates their own time, talent, and treasure to our program," noted Debbie Weber, GCNP Program Director. "They donate their time by fixing special requested meals for a special event at a particular site. Their treasure is given to us by the many extra treats they give to the seniors in our program and the meals that are served during our many volunteer banquets at a lower cost than their normal rate."

Deb's Catering is always willing to go the "extra mile" for the GCNP seniors, including sending extra surprise treats that were not on the menu, such as ice cream with their cobblers. Deb's Catering is willing to do extra work including changing menus for one site because of a special party that the site may be having, which means their staff have to prepare two totally different meals for that day. Deb's Catering understands and supports the importance of volunteers by donating cookies to volunteer meetings and donating catered meals or giving generous reductions on meals for the annual Volunteer Banquets. In addition, Deb's Catering also reaches out to the community by donating sandwiches and desserts to the Cancer Center for their patients and employees. Al Schultz, of Deb's Catering, has said, "If I can bring a little sunshine to the people who are going through cancer, I will."

Al and Debbie Schultz started their business on February 5, 1988 with five employees and have grown their business to more than forty employees. They cover an approximate 250 mile radius from Effingham and specialize in quality, cost efficient catered meals and are best known for their "glazed carrots".

## **Golden Circle Nutrition Program**

Debbie Weber, Golden Circle Nutrition Program Director

## **South Central FS**

South Central FS continues to show support for C.E.F.S. Central Illinois Public Transit (CIPT) and Head Start Programs by providing priority service to buses needing tire repairs, and by offering generous discounts to both programs. They have provided immediate tire repair service so that buses can continue to provide service, thus eliminating route cancellations. South Central FS has gone above and beyond to accommodate program schedules and to keep vehicles on the road to service the community. They have also provided pickup and delivery of vehicles when drivers are unable to complete this task.

Joe Therry, South Central FS manager, considers their dealing with C.E.F.S. Economic Opportunity Corporation to be a community service rather than just a business. South Central FS shows genuine support of C.E.F.S.'s mission, both with the Central Illinois Public Transit and the Head Start Programs by their donation of time and discounts, delivered with eagerness to serve the programs and the community.

South Central FS is a locally owned agricultural cooperative serving producers in Bond and Fayette counties in Illinois. South Central FS was started in 1993 and is the result of two joining cooperatives with deep roots in Illinois agriculture and together have more than 130 years of experience serving farmers of Illinois.

## **Central Illinois Public Transit Program**

Kristie Warfel, CIPT Program Director

Bob Bugger, CIPT Transportation Maintenance and Safety Manager

## **Head Start Program**

Connie Jerden, Head Start 0-5 Program Director

Jessy Figueroa, HS/EHS Transportation Facility and Maintenance Specialist

## **University of Illinois Extension – Effingham County**

The University of Illinois Extension has a variety of programs available for many different age levels. These programs provide links to the local community resources and organizations. One example is the Food Nutrition Program that helps individuals gain practical skills that improve their diets. Each month, Liz Weaver, a representative from the Effingham County University of Illinois Extension office, visited the Effingham Head Start centers and shared health and nutrition lessons with the children. The information she shared helped children to see and experience firsthand how to live a healthy lifestyle.

Janette Beldsoe, Effingham II Head Start teacher noted, “Liz is very enthusiastic when she comes to share her health and nutrition lessons. She encourages the children to try new foods and the information taught is on the children’s age level. The health and nutrition lessons she shares are many times new information to the children.” Liz Weaver also shared with the children how to take care of themselves by teaching and sharing proper techniques in hand washing, how exercise plays an important part of daily life, and brought a variety of many different colored foods for the children to sample that would help their bodies to grow strong and be healthy. In addition, Liz Weaver also brought nutrition and health newsletters that were sent home with each child to share the information with their parents and family.

### **Head Start Program**

Connie Jerden, Head Start 0-5 Program Director  
Janette Bledsoe, Teacher/Supervisor, Effingham

## **Randy's Towing**

Randy's Towing has been a valuable asset to the Central Illinois Public Transit (CIPT) Program by providing quick response time when there is a vehicle issue. This allows Central Illinois Public Transit the ability to maintain passenger schedules. To further substantiate their commitment to community service, Randy's Towing has provided these services to the program at discounted rates. Randy's Towing makes every effort to immediately respond to the needs of Central Illinois Public Transit realizing that when one of the program's vehicles has a mechanical issue it affects the CIPT schedule and ultimately the passengers who utilize transportation services. Randy's Towing works together with other community service organizations including FISH and Catholic Charities, demonstrating their understanding of how important community agencies are to the areas that they serve.

Randy's Towing is committed to giving back to the community. Their collaboration with Central Illinois Public Transit provides a quick response to disabled vehicles ensuring that operations continue to run in an efficient manner. The effort and dedication that is put forth by Randy's Towing enables Central Illinois Public Transit to continue to operate in an efficient manner and to provide timely service to passengers that utilize public transportation services.

Randy's Towing is a locally owned family business in Effingham, rendering their towing and repair services to the community for twenty years.

## **Central Illinois Public Transit Program**

Kristie Warfel, CIPT Program Director

Bob Bugger, CIPT Transportation Maintenance and Safety Manager

## **Graham Correctional Center**

Graham Correctional Center continues to support the C.E.F.S. Economic Opportunity Corporation mission through its generous donations of fresh produce grown at the facility to the Montgomery County Outreach Food Pantry in Taylor Springs. This provides the food pantry with the opportunity to provide highly nutritional commodities otherwise unavailable; and the small deliveries allow the food pantry to provide perishable items to customers without having to store them for long periods of time. Throughout 2010 the food pantry received the following commodities from the Graham Correctional Center garden: 60 lbs. peppers, 330 lbs. cucumbers, 6,000 onion plants, 280 lbs. radishes, 108 lbs. strawberries, 56 cantaloupes, and 1,100 lbs. of turnips. The correctional facility could have chosen to sell the excess commodities or simply not to plant, but instead, they chose to donate and assist the local community.

Andrew Ott, warden, stated, "Our prison gardeners are very conscientious in the care of the gardens and take great pride in their work. It is through their efforts that Graham Correctional Center is able to make the donations we do."

The Graham Correctional Center provides multiple community services through the prison garden. These programs have been shown to reduce relapse into criminal behavior, lower taxpayer costs, and provide education and job training to individuals that otherwise would remain unproductive. So, not only does the Graham Correctional Center benefit the community through donation, they also contribute to the agency mission of self-sufficiency.

The Graham Correctional Center opened in September 1980 and houses about 2,000 adult male inmates. The facility is renowned for its Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities (TASC) program. TASC works with drug-involved men and women in the Illinois prison system to help provide the treatment and services needed to reduce recidivism, maintain public safety, and restore productive citizenship.

## **Community Services Block Grant Program**

Dena Weber, Outreach Director

Kathleen Clark, Housing Counselor, Montgomery County

## **Effingham County FISH Organization**

The Effingham County FISH Organization has been instrumental for the needy working hand-in-hand with Effingham County Outreach for years. Harold Heth, a volunteer for the Effingham County FISH Organization, has been available to assist to prevent shut-offs or to reconnect the heat source throughout the winter months. The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) requires a good faith effort payment on certain shut-offs, but when low-income customers do not have the funding, Harold Heth at the Effingham County FISH Organization has been available to assist with FISH funding. Hundreds of these customers, including disabled and elderly, have been assisted by the FISH Organization in a timely manner to help assure their energy utilities will be restarted or kept from being disconnected. The Effingham County FISH Organization and its volunteers are available for emergencies and usually for same day services.

The fish is an ancient symbol used as a secret code by the early Christians. The need to be good neighbors was cited as the reason behind the development of the FISH movement in England in 1961. The FISH movement came to the United States in 1964 and to Effingham in 1970. Started by Nancy Deters and the late Mary Ellen Rauch, the Effingham County FISH Organization now has grown to help with Meals on Wheels, the Christmas Store, transportation, shoes and food, and emergency assistance to the needy. Fully funded by donations and charitable contributions, the Effingham County FISH Organization is also fully staffed by volunteers. In 1999, the Effingham County FISH Organization received the Governor's Home Town Award for their efforts in building the FISH Service Center.

## **Community Services Block Grant Program**

Dena Weber, Outreach Director

Robert West, Effingham County Outreach Coordinator