



LCDJFS E-Newsletter

Fall 2007

A newsletter from the Lorain County Department of Job & Family Services

This Issue

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Child Support Awareness Month | 2 |
| Gift Card Giveaway | 3 |

Director Notes

Mary Lou Golski
Director

On Tuesday, July 31, 2007 Lorain County Job and Family Services and Common Ground hosted an Open House for the Community ART



WORKS program. Common Ground's Community ART WORKS program utilized collaboration with LCDJFS to address a wide range of concerns. Participants were able to expand their potential and benefit in a number of ways which includes increased knowledge of self, enhanced communication skills, vocational training, enhanced self-esteem, connection to community, exposure to positive role models, the development of life skills, healing and integration. Participating in these programs and the resulting artwork connects participants with their potential, each other, and the community.

Many children had an opportunity to discover more about themselves and their world through art marking and create expression in the Picture Me: Youth Empowerment Art Groups. Youth explored the concepts of self-esteem, building self competence, and celebrating what makes them unique through painting, drawing, mask-making, photography, and creative writing.



Elyria High School junior and senior art students visited Common Ground for an "Environmental Art Day" where they created art using only natural objects found in the environment. Nature became their canvas.

I hope you enjoy the end results which are on display throughout our building.

Job & Family Statistics For Lorain County

Families receiving on-going cash assistance.

| Dec. 2006 | Mar. 2007 | Jun. 2007 | Sept. 2007 |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| 2,026 | 2,061 | 1,889 | 1,879 |

Individuals receiving health insurance through Healthy Start/Healthy Families Medicaid.

| Dec. 2006 | Mar. 2007 | Jun. 2007 | Sept. 2007 |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| 37,608 | 37,095 | 37,097 | 37,069 |

Individuals receiving food stamps.

| Dec. 2006 | Mar. 2007 | Jun. 2007 | Sept. 2007 |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| 27,041 | 26,722 | 27,042 | 27,526 |

Disabled individuals receiving on-going cash Assistance.

| Dec. 2006 | Mar. 2007 | Jun. 2007 | Sept. 2007 |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| 293 | 324 | 381 | 387 |

Aged, Blind or Disabled individuals receiving health insurance through Medicaid.

| Dec. 2006 | Mar. 2007 | Jun. 2007 | Sept. 2007 |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| 8,107 | 8,137 | 8,259 | 8,360 |

Disabled individuals receiving Nursing Home or Home and Community-Based Service Waivers assistance.

| Dec. 2006 | Mar. 2007 | Jun. 2007 | Sept. 2007 |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| 2,072 | 2,044 | 2,053 | 2,071 |

Child Support Awareness Month – August 2007

Dolores Ack

Child Support Administrator

The Lorain County Board of Commissioners and Governor Ted Strickland designated August as Child Support Awareness Month. This year, the Lorain County Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA) joined forces with 32 counties throughout Ohio, including the Northeast counties of Cuyahoga, Stark, Summit, Mahoning, Trumbull, Ashtabula, Portage, Lake and Wayne to encourage delinquent parents in the child support system to “Be the Driving Force in Your Kids’ Lives” and support their children by participating in the Driver’s License Reinstatement program. Throughout the month of August, parents who had their driver’s license suspended for failure to pay their support could have had the license reinstated by paying one full month of their child support obligation (instead of the usual 3 months’ obligation).



This is the third year Lorain CSEA has done a license reinstatement program as part of Child Support Awareness Month. In October 2006, the CSEA received a “Best Practice Award” for its program from the Ohio Child Support Directors Association. Follow-up studies of the last 2 years’ groups revealed that the parents paid an average of 20% of their obligation in the 6 months before the program and three times that amount in the 6 months following. After 18 months the groups continued to pay at twice the rate, a significant change in behavior. Because of the positive outcomes and apparent behavior changes, many counties have replicated the program in hopes of increasing collections for children.

This August, the CSEA collected \$94,105.63, second highest in the state for approximately 500 children from 367 obligors in Lorain County.

With Mary Lou’s blessing, the CSEA also made this August “Child Support **Worker Appreciation Month**”. Laura Mandeville and Paulette Miller were selected to chair a committee made up of one representative from each CSEA unit. The committee included Claudia Csalos, Maritza Davis, Joe Drew, Shanda Gage, Anna Roth, Betty Slipp, Cynthia Smitek, Joan Smith, and Carla Williams. Maria Vitale’s talent and hard work in making creative gift baskets were also a great help.

The committee planned fund raisers in May, June and July to raise money to purchase articles and pay for activities planned for August. All the money that was raised was used to purchase gift baskets, gas cards, meals, prizes and other items for CSEA staff, as well as some of our clients. Among the many activities, two dress-down days were held, a breakfast cart with danishes, juice, and muffins, were available between 7 and 8 am on selected Fridays; pizza lunches, hot dog lunches, a bake sale, and other food events brought more money in, and were enjoyed by staff. Baby pictures and prom pictures were displayed and a 50/50 raffle was held for good guessers.



During August, all events were free to staff, including a fried chicken lunch hosted by management staff, a rigatoni lunch, and ice cream sundaes during break. Also in August, 14 children’s backpacks filled with school supplies, two food gift baskets and one “foo foo” basket were raffled off to clients coming to our CSEA lobby. In addition, Goodie Bags which included pencils, candy, peanut butter crackers, DARE activity booklets and other items donated by the Commissioners, Elyria Police Department, the Dare Program and LCCC were given to 466 children. A Recognition Time was held during two staggered afternoon breaks where staff received individualized “Certificates of Appreciation” from the Administrator. CSEA staff voted to honor individuals for five “MVP” awards. Dian Flynn was elected “VP in CSEA”; Lailanie Schmidt and Carla Williams were “Rookies of the Year”; Joey Miloshoff was elected “MVP Veteran CSEA Worker”; Christie Blair, Janet Pollack, and Ruth Burks were elected “Workers in CSEA You Can Count On”. Paulette Miller was chosen CSEA Supervisor of the Year.

All activities were done prior to the morning shifts and during breaks and lunch. The committee members voluntarily worked on projects on their own time and they worked hard to plan and execute activities for their co-workers.

Gift Card Giveaway

Natalio Rodriguez
Program Administrator

With the 2007-2008 School Year getting ready to begin and parents wondering "where am I going to get the money to purchase school supplies," LCDJFS decided to conduct another Gift Card Giveaway Program for School Supplies. We have done this program in the past and we know that it is quite welcomed in all the homes. Even with different organizations in the county giving away school supplies, it seems like it is never enough after getting the school supply list from the teachers.



The program targeted children ages 5 through 17 attending school. Each eligible child was given a \$50 gift card to shop at Discount Drug Mart. This is an Ohio company with its headquarters in Medina, Ohio. Our clients were able to shop at 10 stores in Lorain County.

Using the June 2007 payroll, LCDJFS determined there were 10,700 children ages 5 through 17 receiving food stamps or OWF cash assistance in Lorain County. LCDJFS sent letters to each of those households instructing the families on how to receive the gift cards.

It was very simple what the recipients of the letters need to do to get the gift cards:

1. They had to retain the original letter and show it for eligibility.
2. The Adult who must also be the case name must show a current and valid picture ID. This would identify the person in receipt of the letter as the responsible person of the case.
3. For each child identified as eligible on the letter, the person presenting the letter had to attest that each child eligible in their household was actually living in the home and enrolled in school for the 2007-2008 school year.

LCDJFS opened the office on two Saturdays in August, the 18th and 25th, to allow people to redeem the letters for the school supply gift cards. It was very rewarding for the Administrative Staff who greeted and serviced the people. The families receiving the cards were very appreciative. Some even had their school list in hand and were headed over to Discount Drug Mart to shop.

People really like our card because we allow items to be purchased that kids do not receive from other organizations, such as, computer paper, calculators, lunch boxes, flash drives, planners, and a lot of the everyday stuff such as, paper clips, index cards, staplers, anti-bacterial gel, scotch tape, post-it notes, poster board, etc.

For those people who were not able to come to the office on either Saturday were able to come directly to the office starting August 27 to pick up the gift cards. The deadline was September 7, yet we still serviced those stragglers. To date, we have distributed 9,339 gift cards. We are not sure what happened to the other 1,300 plus kids who did not pick up gift cards. Anyway, we are continuing the program and just issued more letters to another 535 children identified on the July 2007 payroll who names were not on the June payroll. We will do the same for the August payroll and so on, until the cards are all gone.

Contact LCDJFS

42485 North Ridge Road
Elyria, Ohio 44035-1057
Phone: 440-323-5726
Fax: 440-323-3422
TTY/TDD: 440-284-4125
Child Support Office: 440-284-4401

Hours of Operation:
7:30-4:30 Mon, Wed, Thurs, Fri
7:30-6:30 Tue

