



# CANIChronicles

Fighting Poverty. Building Hope.

## CANI Head Start Touts Accreditation

CANI recently celebrated a milestone: three Head Start sites received accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC.)

In July, CANI Head Start received word that two Head Start sites in Allen County (Hanna-Creighton and Salvation Army) and the site in Whitley County, completed the necessary steps to be accredited. These three sites joined the Ivy Tech site, which is currently undergoing reaccreditation.

Families rely on NAEYC Accreditation to ensure the quality of education and care provided in programs for young children. Put simply, NAEYC Accreditation is the mark of quality and helps parents find the best possible early-childhood experience.

This success was realized through a two-year journey, as all three sites initiated the process in the spring of 2007. Early Childhood Education Manager Kathy Frank explained the process. First, staff familiarizes themselves with the new accreditation process and begins a “self-study” period. This involves teacher and family surveys, which are used to help identify strengths and weaknesses.

Then, using the site surveys and the accreditation criteria, improvement plans are written. Action plans address each of the 10 NAEYC Program Standards: Relationships, Curriculum, Teaching, Assessment of Child Progress, Health, Teachers, Families, Community Relationships, Physical Environment and Leadership and Management.

Once this plan is put into action, sites are required to document progress and fulfill-

ment of the aforementioned standards. As Kathy noted, eighty percent of criteria within each standard must be met by the program overall and every classroom must consistently perform at least seventy percent of all criteria within each standard.

Following this action plan, a site then prepares for candidacy. The needed paperwork is submitted and a site visit is then arranged. An assessor from the NAEYC visits the site and reviews the classroom portfolios, program portfolios, staff/child files, and teaching/family surveys. Then an overall evaluation of the facility is conducted. If the assessor deems the site fit, it can move forward to achieve the ultimate goal: NAEYC accreditation.

Kathy noted this achievement was made possible through teamwork:

“The accreditation process is a collaborative effort involving all CANI Head Start staff, families, and the Policy Council,” she said. “All must work together to complete the program assessment, to revise and update policies and procedures, to implement program enhancements, and to assemble documentation.”



*Photo Contributed*

The CANI Head Start site at the Salvation Army recently became accredited.

A note: Temple Head Start is currently a candidate. The sites in Ligonier and Kendallville have selected a January candidacy date. St. Henry's and Grace St. John will complete the accreditation process during the 2010 – 2011 school year.

For more information about the NAEYC process, visit [www.naeyc.org/accreditation](http://www.naeyc.org/accreditation)

### CANI Board of Directors

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Regular CANI hours are  
7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.  
Monday to Thursday, and  
7:30 to 11:30 a.m. Friday.

**CANI will be closed  
Monday, September 7  
in observance of Labor Day.**

## CANI Management Team

**Joseph H. Conrad**  
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**Pamela Brookshire**  
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Program Operations

**Mary Lee Freeze**  
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**Steve Hoffman**  
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## CANI Mission Statement

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

To find out more about CANI, visit our website at [www.canihelp.org](http://www.canihelp.org).

## CANI Offices

| COUNTY  | LOCATION  | PHONE                               |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Allen</b>  | 227 E Washington Blvd<br>Fort Wayne, IN 46802                               | <b>423-3546 or<br/>800-589-2264</b> |
| <b>DeKalb</b>   | 209 N Jackson St.<br>Auburn, IN 46706                                       | <b>927-0162</b>                     |
| <b>LaGrange</b>   | 109 E Central Ave, Ste 4<br>LaGrange, IN 46761                              | <b>463-5276</b>                     |
| <b>Noble</b>  | 119 W Mitchell St.<br>Kendallville, IN 46755                                | <b>349-0713</b>                     |
| <b>Steuben</b>  | 1208 S Wayne St.<br>Angola, IN 46703  | <b>665-1160</b>                     |
| <b>Whitley</b>  | Lehmberg Medical Building<br>333 N Oak St, Ste K<br>Columbia City, IN 46725 | <b>248-2848</b>                     |
| <i>The following offices only provide childcare assistance...</i> |   |                                     |
| <b>Elkhart</b>  | 421 S 2nd St, Ste 420<br>Elkhart, IN 46516                                  | <b>574-293-3460</b>                 |
| <b>Kosciusko</b>  | 501 E Arthur St.<br>Warsaw, IN 46580  | <b>574-267-4492</b>                 |

## CANI Chronicles

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**Subscriptions are free.**

**For more information call (260) 399-4109.**





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## Training Crucial To Weatherization Program's Success

Weatherization inspectors are required to be certified within one year of being hired. As part of the certification process, two members of CANI's Weatherization team, Heather Mickle and Aaron Travaglini recently attended two workshops: a regional one in Elkhart and a state-wide one in Indianapolis.

The two-week training in Elkhart was rather intensive. The first week was a classroom-based curriculum with a focus on heating systems and how to properly complete auditing paperwork. The remaining time was spent in the field to learn about the protocols in the auditing process.

The Indianapolis training followed a similar schedule. Four instructors from the state organization INCAA (Indiana Community Action Association), along with former auditors, led the training. This training is required for an auditor to receive certification, usually within a year of hire.

While this formal training is helpful, Heather, who has been on more than 30 audits, said the best way

to learn is by watching and participating. Echoing Heather's comments, Aaron said it's important to take a holistic approach to audits. This includes being familiar with the construction and mechanical sides of how a home functions:

"You need to understand if there's something wrong with the furnace...or why air is blowing out of it," he said.

The biggest challenge; however is that "not every house is the same," so the problems are unpredictable according to Heather. This challenge is also an opportunity to make a difference. The "human aspect" of going into everyday people's homes is also appealing.

The program currently employs one BPI (Building Performance Institute)-certified supervisor (Mike Esslinger), three BPI-certified inspectors, and Heather and Aaron, who will be certified within the next year.

The CANI Weatherization Program improves



Photo By Lauren Caggiano, Development Coordinator  
Weatherization Inspector Aaron Travaglini has been with CANI since May.

between 200 and 250 low-income homes each year in Allen, DeKalb, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben, and Whitley counties. For more information about the Weatherization Program, contact CANI at (260) 423-3546.

## CANI, Blue Jacket Partner to Deliver Services

Blue Jacket Inc. and CANI have developed a partnership that serves a population often overlooked in our community: ex offenders.

This summer, CANI entered into a services agreement with Blue Jacket, a local agency that provides training and professional development services to ex offenders in Allen County.

The relationship is truly mutually beneficial; CANI clients are referred to Blue Jacket for services as needed and Blue Jacket refers clients, who are often low-income, to CANI for help.

Blue Jacket Executive Director Tony Hudson cited some statistics that alone justify the need for this partnership. Each year, 1,200 people come back to northeast Indiana from prison. This is exactly the demographic Blue Jacket serves. Ninety eight percent of Blue Jacket's clients are "extremely low income," he said. That means these people likely need help with utility and childcare bills - services CANI can provide.

In reciprocation, CANI clients who meet the requirements are allowed to attend job training classes and receive job placement services.

"Blue Jacket works on dealing with the intrinsic issues," he said. "It's beyond making a resume and

learning how to interview."

Blue Jacket's services break through the superficial layer of professional development. Rather than merely focusing on finding a job, the agency builds on the "second layer" that focuses on keeping the job. This is done by means of a ten-day training session.

"We make them do it...resumes, (mock) interviews, etc," Hudson said. "We also tell them what employers expect."

Once the client completes the training, the hope is he or she will return to the work force and regain trust in society. And this helps to break the cycle of poverty, because when people have stable employment they are less likely to fall prey to poverty related issues.

The client-agency relationship does not end here. A minimum of five hours of community service is required to meet requirements. This service relates back to the third layer, of trust. Or in Hudson's words, "Actions speak louder than words."

"That's why Blue Jacket appreciates the partnership," Hudson said. "It's keeping people out of poverty and out of trouble."

Looking to the future, Hudson said he'd like to



Photo By Kim Myers, CANI Development Coordinator

Blue Jacket appreciates its community partners. A sign in front of its facility on South Clinton Street, thanks CANI for its partnership.

"build a community of people giving back, with the skills to get out of poverty." In the meantime, he's busy maintaining and expanding Blue Jacket's programs.

For more information about Blue Jacket, see [www.bluejacketinc.org](http://www.bluejacketinc.org).

To find out more about CANI, visit our website at [www.canihelp.org](http://www.canihelp.org).



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## 2010 Census: More Than Just Facts and Figures

As mandated by the Constitution, every household in the country will receive a census questionnaire in 2010. Census data directly affect how more than \$300 billion per year in federal and state funding is allocated to communities for neighborhood improvements, public health, education, transportation and much more.

Our country is not static, so communities need accurate data to make informed decisions that can affect residents on a daily basis. The 2010 Census is of particular importance because it will trigger a new round of revisions in elected districts across the country. State and local governments will be using Census data to shape and reshape districts.

Census data directly affects government representation, which in turn affects Community Action Agencies and their clients, because these bodies make decisions that affect the fight against poverty. These revisions will have a direct impact on the preservation and expansion of underrepresented peoples' electoral opportunities and

representation for the next decade.

Legislators determine how much funding is granted to specific organizations. These decisions call for accurate and complete Census information. Although they might not know it, residents hold a great deal of influence on the community when deciding whether or not to participate in the survey. An accurate population estimate allows for the government to determine how much money is needed to fund various social service programs in each community across the nation. In short, accurate counts can mean more help for needy communities.

On a more micro level, community organizations rely on Census data to plan their goals to accomplish their mission. In other words, Census data, in addition to other methods, are used to determine priorities and guide program structure. This in turn impacts the community, who can benefit from more effective programs and services.

So when you get your 2010 Census survey in the mail, take the time to fill it out. It's



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**Data from the Census can translate into more services for our community.**

about more than just facts and figures – it's your chance to stand up for yourself and your community.

For more information about the 2010 Census, see [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).

## Healthy Families Program Delivers Individual Attention

Before her son was born, Lindsay Johnson, now 18, had little or no interaction with children. Obviously, this lack of experience can present a variety of problems for a new mother.

Lindsay was a student at Wayne High School in Fort Wayne when she found out she was expecting a baby boy. The parenting classes ended up leading her to CANI for help. The high school student was referred to Joy Nagel in CANI's Healthy Families program, which later helped her prepare for the challenges of childrearing.

Now more than three years later, Lindsay is still active in the program. It's Healthy Families' holistic approach, she said, that

has maintained her interest:

"They help with so many different fields," she said. "They help you with whatever you need."

The individual attention is an important part of the program. Lindsay said it's not unusual for Joy to go out of her way, sometimes just to provide an "open ear." Also, Joy has pointed her in the direction of other resources she might not otherwise be aware of, like CANI's Child Care Assistance.

Joy spoke of Lindsay's progress since entering the program: "She was a teen mother but has never complained or sought to be dependent on others," she said. "She took

the responsibility to heart and made it her priority to do what she needed to (do)...to take care of her child."

Lindsay said with Joy's help she is confident she can attain her goal: "to be the best mom and help my son learn."

In the meantime, Lindsay is busy working part-time at Subway and caring for her son. She has hopes of going to college to study criminal justice and law.

For more information about the Healthy Families program, call (260) 424-9534.



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## Philharmonic/Head Start Program Opens Doors

The “Mozart Effect” is a phenomenon rooted in the transformational power of music for health, education and well being in children. CANI Head Start’s relationship with the Fort Wayne Philharmonic is rooted in this therapeutic approach.

Since 1998, Head Start has partnered with the Fort Wayne Philharmonic to bring the benefits of music-related activities to low-income children. The “PHIL Kids” preschool program, funded through a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, promotes music as a form of therapy.

CANI Head Start Early Childhood Education Manager, Kathy Frank, is responsible for implementing the program. As an agency, she said, CANI knows that the early childhood years are critical to the development of children’s potential for understanding and producing music. This is the case for several reasons: music can be calming or stimulating; it eases transitions; and it invites movement and serves as a learning tool. Moreover, music helps young children think creatively and divergently. Music gives children an opportunity for social, language, cognitive, and physical development.

Kathy stressed that the Philharmonic program relies heavily on teacher involvement. CANI Head Start teachers are trained how to effectively incorporate hands-on methods into daily routines.

The Philharmonic functions as the support organization, providing tubs of musical instruments to be used in the lessons. And twice a year, a trio or quartet of Philharmonic musicians comes to the sites to perform and further engage the children.

Kathy said the program is beneficial because it “gives the children lots of opportunity they might not otherwise have.” Fort Wayne Philharmonic Director of Education Aaron Butler echoed Kathy’s comments:

“During early developmental stages, children can make more connections, enhance brain functions and overall development,” he said.



*Photo Contributed*

### A Philharmonic musician shows off her violin in a Head Start class.

This early exposure to the arts can provide an opportunity to grasp additional and more complex musical concepts, like volume, pitch, rhythm, etc. In turn, these concepts can be applied to other parts of the curriculum.

CANI Head Start intends to incorporate components of the program into its curriculum at all Allen County, Whitley and Noble County Head Start sites, Kathy noted. Teachers will attend training seminars, host ensemble presentations and complete surveys and evaluations as required.

This year’s PHIL Kids program has expanded to include 60 teachers and 718 children at eight sites in 41 Head Start classroom sessions.

For more information about the PHIL Kids program, contact Fort Wayne Philharmonic Director of Education Aaron Butler, (260) 481-0760.



**CANI staff pose at the Mid-America Community Action Association (MACAA) Conference in Indianapolis. The agency participated in the Pathways to Excellence quality program and was awarded a plaque.**

*Photo By Jennifer Renner, Development Supervisor*

**To find out more about CANI, visit our website at [www.canihelp.org](http://www.canihelp.org).**



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## CANI and Classic Café: A Partnership for Kids' Sake

Studies have indicated time and time again that a healthy diet is critical to optimal performance in children. That's why CANI Head Start works hard with local caterer Classic Café to provide nutritionally balanced meals for the preschool children in the Head Start program.

Since last year, Classic Café has provided breakfast and lunch food service to all CANI sites. The initial relationship started in 2000 with Classic Café providing food for select sites.

And as you can imagine, providing healthy yet appetizing food for more than 800 children can be quite a challenge. Owner Terry Clancy works with CANI Childhood Services Manager Lori Ross to ensure all state and federal nutritional guidelines are met and exceeded. The meals served at CANI Head Start might be the only ones a child eats in any given day, so it's especially important to ensure nutritional value, Terry noted.

Head Start serves both breakfast and lunch at most sites. Both hot and cold items are on the menu, which runs on a six-week cycle to provide some variation and diversity. Terry tweaks the menu based on feedback from the children and

teachers. The menu is not set in stone, he said, to allow for changes in preference. Terry has an overarching philosophy when it comes to making food choices for the menu:

"If the kids don't like it, why make it?"

Terry said the teachers are the "frontline" so feedback is critical to enhancing and improving the menu to make it more "kid friendly."

And what are these "kid friendly" items? Terry said chicken nuggets, chicken legs, grilled chicken, mashed potatoes and tacos get the most "thumbs ups."

Overall, Terry said the focus is on high-quality protein and vitamin-rich choices. Foods low in fat, sugar and carbohydrates are also given more consideration than their less healthy counterparts.

In food production there is a delicate balance between quality and cost. Terry does his best to ensure he does not compromise quality for price. He said he is "always looking for new, cost effective items."

Terry does not limit his services to the classroom setting. Classic Café has pro-



Photo By Lauren Caggiano, CANI Development Coordinator

**Terry Clancy poses in his kitchen next to a steamer used to prepare food for Head Start.**

vided sack lunches for CANI Head Start field trips to the zoo. One time the children came to his facility for a tour, where he provided lunch.

Terry said he has enjoyed the ten-year partnership and is looking forward to its continuation.

"We like what we're doing," he said.

For more information about Classic Café, visit [www.classiccafeinc.com](http://www.classiccafeinc.com)

## CANI Thanks Our Donors

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

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## CANI: Changing Lives Through Empowerment

Through their encounters with the agency many clients come to discover CANI offers much more than help with bills. For Megan Comer, CANI was a support network of caring people who wanted to help.

Megan, now 27, came to CANI for help in 2000 as a single mother needing help with childcare bills. Determined to turn her life around from a series of misfortunes (including marital abuse), Megan was working and attending school. Paying two sitters was out of the question on her limited budget. Luckily, there was help out there in the form of Child Care Assistance.

“With the help of CANI’s childcare program I have completed my associate’s degree in computer software technology and also my bachelor’s degree in business administration,” she said. “I was able to qualify for a job that has better benefits and has brought me to being almost self sufficient with my finances.”

In talking with Megan, it’s clear she’s a fighter. In retrospect, she said there were many times when it seemed easier to

just work and have CANI pay for day-care until she no longer needed the assistance. However, it was the staff at CANI who pushed her to go the extra mile.

“But they offered me more; they offered me motivation to continue to pursue my education,” she said. “They offered me the help I needed to be able to afford to compensate more than one provider when needed. They have offered me a chance to succeed in life, not just live it, and for that I can not be more grateful.”

CANI empowers people to change their lives for the better - something Megan has done with great pride:

“I am most proud of completing my bachelor’s degree,” she said. “It was not about the money that I make now, or the idea of having that credential, it was and still is about the completion of something that only a few people thought you could actually complete.”

Looking forward, she yearns for the day when she can pay her bills without assistance. Homeownership is a dream. And



*Stock Photo*

The CANI Childcare Assistance program allows parents to pursue an education.

most importantly, she hopes to give back:

“I want to be able to pay it forward. I want to be able to encourage, motivate, and entice young people to go to college and to make the right decisions in the first place,” she said.

**“They have offered me a chance to succeed in life, not just live it, and for that I can not be more grateful.”**

*-Megan Comer*

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## Do you dine at Halls?



CANI has free Community Partnership cards available for use at any Hall's Restaurant or specialty service. CANI earns a 5-percent rebate for restaurant dining, catering or specialty services. The reward increases to 10 percent when you show your card at the Guesthouse Hotel for lodging needs. It's a win-win situation: it costs you nothing but a good meal and CANI earns a monthly rebate check reflecting your activity. Call Kim Myers, (260) 399-4106, to get your card today.



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