



CANIChronicles

Fighting Poverty. Building Hope.

Stimulus Money Comes to Northeast Indiana

Northeast Indiana will receive a major boost from the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act, commonly known as the stimulus package, through programs at CANI.

To date, CANI knows that two of the agency's programs will receive monies: Weatherization and Child Care Assistance. The agency will receive \$2.2 million in federal dollars for use in Weatherization projects in Allen and Whitley counties. Four and a half million dollars has been committed to Childcare Assistance in Allen, DeKalb, Elkhart, LaGrange, Kosciusko, Noble and Whitley counties.

"We'll be able to serve a whole other demographic we were never able to serve before," Pam Brookshire, director of program operations said about the increase in Weatherization dollars.

This is because the poverty level guidelines have been revised to cater to a wider income bracket. The Weatherization program serves about 200 homes a year and this funding will significantly increase that number, she said.

Pam said the Weatherization program is effective because it's a "comprehensive solution to poverty," and focuses on the root of the problem: inefficiency. When homes are weatherized, they are more energy efficient and therefore homeowner's bills are reduced. In turn, they have more money for daily expenses or savings. And of course, homes that use less energy are great for the community and environment as well.

Stimulus dollars will also translate to more access to affordable childcare for

low-income families. The \$4.5 million in federal money for childcare vouchers is designated as "direct service dollars," which means it's allocated to directly fund the program, as opposed to operational expenses.

According to Family Support Services Manager Marianne Stanley, the dollars will allow more families to work or go to school. That means more opportunities for people who might not otherwise be able to advance.

Enrollment in the childcare assistance program is on a first-come, first-serve basis. Marianne noted this is the biggest expansion of the program in CANI's history.

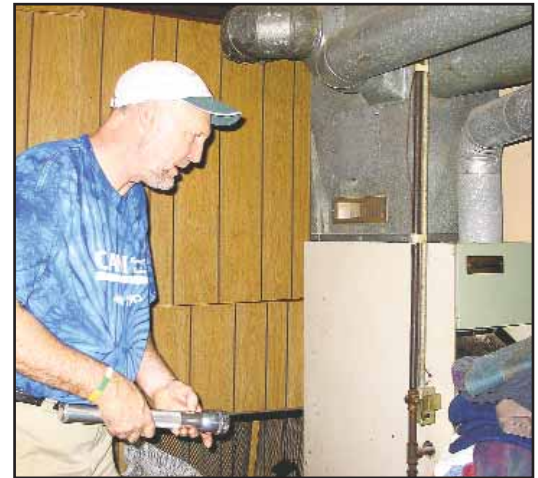


Photo By Kim Myers, Development Coordinator

Weatherization Inspector Tim Dykehouse inspects a furnace for any issues that might need attention.

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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 Management Team

Joseph H. Conrad
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Pamela Brookshire
Director of
Program Operations

Mary Lee Freeze
Head Start Director

Steve Hoffman
Director of Administration and
Development

CANI Mission Statement

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

CANI Offices

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

CANI Chronicles

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For more information call (260) 399-4109.



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IDA Program Makes Dreams Happen

Achieving economic stability puts people on the path to escaping poverty.

Luckily, there is help for people with limited means who want to save for a significant goal. CANI's IDA (Individual Development Account) is an asset development program for low-income Hoosiers. Since 1997, the program has helped many people to enter the economic mainstream through the purchase of a home, obtaining a degree and other milestones.

Overall, the IDA program is designed to assist low-income families in achieving financial independence and self sufficiency by providing the skills to: develop a budget and set goals, establish regular savings habits and invest in assets.

The program provides an incentive to save because IDAs are matched savings accounts; the state offers a minimum 3:1 match. That means, for every one dollar saved by an IDA participant, he or she will receive at least a three dollar match on their deposit.

The monies can be used for the purposes of higher education, small business capitalization, home purchase and home rehabilitation. Participants must have earned income, be an Indiana resident and report an annual household income less than 175 percent of the federal poverty guidelines.

Individuals must do their part to earn this money. Financial literacy education and asset-goal specific training is required to remain a participant.

Andrea Young, Family Development Support Service Worker, is CANI's IDA coordinator. Andrea currently works with about fifteen active families to help them achieve financial goals.

Andrea said the IDA program makes dreams come true for many people: "It's a great thing for people who might not be able to afford (things like a house, education, etc)," she said. Buying a home is a "big dream" for many people and the IDA program is a means to



Stock Photo

The IDA program helps families become more self sufficient through a matched savings account.

make that happen.

The program is available to clients in Allen, DeKalb, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben and Whitley counties.

For more information, contact Andrea Young, andreyoung@canihelp.org, or (260) 423-3546. ext. 215.

Shelter From the Storm

To Kim Schul, "home sweet home," is more than a trite expression of comfort.

The Shelter Plus Care client knows a roof over her head is nothing to take for granted. Schul, 50, battled drug and alcohol abuse and a series of abusive relationships that ultimately resulted in a downward spiral to homelessness.

CANI's Shelter Plus Care program caters to people who are homeless and battling a mental illness, HIV/AIDS or substance abuse. Potential clients are referred to CANI and Housing Coordinator Matt Beer consults with a team to determine the neediest cases. Matt then works with the clients to make sure he or she fulfills the necessary obligations to remain in the program.

It was at her lowest point, living in a shoddy car without heat and making minimum wage at McDonald's that Kim sought help. The Northeastern Center in Kendallville referred

her to CANI, where she was placed on the waiting list for the Shelter Plus Care program. In the meantime she managed to scrape enough money together to pay for a spot on someone's couch.

A phone call nine months later changed everything—a spot opened up and Kim was welcomed into the program. She was able to find a safe, affordable apartment in Kendallville with help from her case worker.

Sometimes great things come from humble beginnings. Kim recalls moving in with a chair and radio. (She has kept the chair to perpetually remind her of her blessings.)

Through the generosity of the Mustard Seed Furniture Bank in Fort Wayne, Kim was able to furnish her apartment and start a new life. This local nonprofit provides "household furnishings to families and individuals as they rebuild their lives after suffering disaster, per-



Kim Schul poses in her Kendallville home. She has turned her life around thanks to the efforts of CANI and other agencies.

sonal tragedy or other misfortunes," according to the agency's Web site. People in need receive furniture through a referral process by 120 local agencies, churches, and non-profit organizations, including CANI.

Shelter continued on page 8

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CANI RECAP: Little Steps Lead to Great Things

Board members, donors, partners, clients, staff and friends of CANI came together for the annual CANI RECAP 2009 on June 9th at Ceruti's Summit Park in Fort Wayne.

Ninety-three people were in attendance at the annual meeting, which Reported the agency's achievements in 2008, Educated guests about CANI's goals, Celebrated the accomplishments of clients, Appreciated supporters and Presented plans for 2009.

The theme, "Little Steps Lead to Great Things," embraces CANI's mission of helping people fight poverty through gradual changes in their lives. Consequently, the speakers' words reflected this idea of perseverance that can amount to great things.

Among the highlights of the morning was keynote speaker Ethan Birch, who spoke about the obstacles of overcoming poverty. His experiences and his passion have compelled him to spread his message, that no matter what your background or circumstances, you can change your life for the better. He pointed out how pride can sometimes get in the way of people seeking help.

Past and present clients and volunteers were also honored for achievements. Connie Howard, a former client, received the "Hope Builder" Award for her outstanding achievements in working toward self sufficiency. Connie is an example of how hope can carry you far. As a single mother, she managed to raise a child while attending college full-time. She now works for CANI and is in the process of getting a house through the Habitat for Humanity program.

All eyes were on Shelter Plus Care client Jennifer Green who gave a moving testimony. Jennifer, also a Hope Builder Award winner, has a lot to be proud of—escaping a life of abuse, mental illness and homelessness. Thanks to CANI, Jennifer has safe and affordable housing and is working to achieve stability in her life.

Volunteers Marty Lopshire and Dawn Federspiel were recipients of the Volunteer of the Year Award, in recognition for time and talent pledged to the organization. Classic Café, a local catering company and banquet facility, was awarded the Partnership Award for its outstanding collaboration with CANI. Classic Café is the caterer for the Head Start sites.

Three retiring board members were honored as



Photo By Lauren Caggiano, CANI Development Coordinator

Ethan Birch is a bit of a local celebrity, known for his inspirational rap music. He is an example of what it means to not give up.

well for their dedication over the years: Mark A. Keen, Ph.D, Matt Schomburg and Tom Knight.

Special thanks go to the RECAP committee for their time and effort in planning the event: Dawn Gallaway, Zenovia Pearson, Deb Brase, Kim Myers, Jennie Renner and Lauren Caggiano.

Parkview, CANI Partnership Focuses on Health

CANI has many community partnerships, but one unique to Head Start helps cater specifically to children's health needs.

Renee Schiebel, Registered Nurse, serves as Head Start's Health Coordinator and her position is funded by the Community Health Improvement Programs at Parkview Hospital, Parkview Noble and Parkview Whitley Hospitals. This program provides CANI Head Start with in-kind dollars and a community partnership with the hospitals. Nursing services include health resources and services for children in the Head Start program. Such services include vision, hearing, dental and height and weight screenings. Renee also works with Family Advocates to ensure children are on schedule with immunizations and current with physical exams.

There is also an educational component to her job. Renee works with parents and teachers to teach them about relevant health topics, such as proper hygiene, dental care, nutrition and poison prevention. She also teaches CPR and First Aid classes.

One challenging yet rewarding aspect of her job, she said, is working with a diverse population. There can often be a language barrier when performing the health screenings, but "that's an exciting moment when you can finally break through (the language barrier)," she contends.

Renee said this is her "favorite job" for many reasons. At the top of the list is working with "the entire family and staff to make a difference in their health."

Renee has served in this position for six years.



Photo Contributed

In addition to a quality curriculum, Head Start cares for the health needs of its students. Renee tests these children for hearing issues.



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Nonprofit Fair Encourages Collaboration

CANI was among several local health and human services agencies who organized and presented at a social services nonprofit summit June 25 at Avalon Missionary Church in Fort Wayne. The purpose of the second annual summit was to educate nonprofit agencies about each other.

Marianne Stanley, CANI Family Support Services Manager said the summit was organized by a committee called NJAM (Not Just Another Meeting) that actually was formed out of another collaboration, the Case Coordination System. NJAM is made up of representatives from Lutheran Social Services, 211, Aging and In-Home Services, and CANI.

“We felt that if caseworkers and front line staff got to know each other and the agencies better, there would be better collaboration between agencies,” Marianne said. “For the most part, the front line staff are the ones who collaborate to accomplish tasks on a higher level.”

In addition to the organizing agencies, Catholic Charities, Fort Wayne Urban League, and Salvation Army attended for a second year. There were also some news faces this year from the Wayne Township Trustees office, Job Works, Fort Wayne Housing Authority and Broadway Christian Church.

Each organization was allotted about ten minutes to speak about their mission and services. Attendees could also visit the agency



Photo By Lauren Caggiano, CANI Development Coordinator

Nyla Fikes-Hardy staffed the CANI booth.

booths to obtain more educational materials and ask specific questions about services.

The summit fits in nicely with CANI’s “No Wrong Door” approach – the Case Coordination System strategy. The idea is that when a client comes to any partner agency, he or she can access services from multiple agencies without going anywhere else.

CANI Launches Youth Program

A new program at CANI focuses on one of our community’s most important resources: youth.

Family Support Service Worker Megan Kinney is the coordinator of the youth program, a division of Family Development. The long-term goal is to help youth successfully transition from school to adulthood. To do this, Megan envisions an all encompassing approach, including, but not limited to: tutoring, a resource center, college preparation, workshops and professional development.

The target age group is ages 13 to 18 because CANI has found that many of the causes of poverty, such as lack of postsecondary education and single parenthood, can be prevented if teens are

provided key resources during this formative time.

“Working with adults (in Family Development), you think, ‘if only they had done this when they were younger,’” she said.

Like any CANI program, the youth program has a firm foundation in research. Megan cited a recent statistic from the U.S. Census Bureau: Adults ages 18 and older with a bachelor’s degree earned an average of \$51,554 in 2004, while those with a high school diploma earned about \$26,645. And another study also indicated the poverty rate for single-parent homes is six times that of two-parent homes.

These figures illustrate the power of a college degree and two-parent households as weapons in the fight against poverty.

CANI intends to cater the programming to each age group. For example, the first program, a job shadow session, targets teens ages 13 to 15. The shadow day will expose them to a career of their choice and allow them to hone their professional skills. Professionals in the fields of culinary arts, law, art and nursing will serve as mentors to the first group of teens. Ultimately, the hope is that these teens will be excited by seeing real people doing these jobs and consider pursuing a higher education.

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All in the Family: A Look at the Role of A Family Advocate

One of the qualities I appreciate most about the Head Start program is its holistic approach to child development. Head Start not only prepares a child for kindergarten, it focuses on his or her home life. That's where Family Advocates (FAs) come into play.

In general, a Family Advocate serves as a go-to person for families of children enrolled or potentially enrolled in the Head Start program. He or she will come into the family's home at least three times a year to help them set and achieve goals and provide any needed help along the way.

In Family Advocate Jesus Escobedo's words, his job is to "point (families) in the right direction," often through referrals to various community agencies and resources.

Indeed FAs are the faces of Head Start in the home, but a more "behind the scenes" step is integral to the success of the program. Long before the home visits, an FA will sit down with interested parents to guide them through the enrollment process. This "intake," as it's called, might be a parent/child's first impression of Head Start, so professionalism is key to a smooth transition.

The session, which lasts about an hour, has two parts: hard copy paperwork and computer data entry. Parents are instructed to bring necessary paperwork. (See sidebar)

Barb Brice has been with CANI for 18 years, nine years in her current FA role. A former teacher, Barb said her position is "such a right choice for me." She finds it most rewarding to see the joy parents derive from the Head Start program.

Barb also contends that CANI lives up to its mission of helping people help themselves to escape the causes and conditions of poverty.

(Through CANI's help) people don't need to jump through hoops," she said. "We make it client friendly."

What To Bring:

- Child's birth certificate
- Child's health insurance card
- Parent's proof of income for 12 months
- Completed application

In addition to this direct service, an FA works to recruit new families for Head Start. I had the opportunity to shadow Jesus on a typical recruitment session on a morning in June. The peak recruitment period is from April to August, so the timing was right to get a glimpse of the recruiting process.

We hand delivered brochures in English and Spanish to downtown places like Broadway Christian Church, George's International Grocery and the Center for Nonviolence. These places are high-traffic areas by Head Start's demographic, so the hope is that families will see the brochures and inquire about the program.

As Jesus and I made the stops, I asked him about the rewards and challenges of his job.

"You need to be discerning and sensitive," he said about the necessary traits of a successful FA.

What's more, Jesus finds the interactive nature of the position particularly fulfilling:



Family Advocates and support staff pose for a group shot: Bottom: Neal Davis, Mary Osheskie, Anjanette Sewell, Barbara Brice, Bridgette Howard-Perry, Cassandra Johnson and Pam Mason (Supervisor)

Top: Fey-Fey Moussosu, Nancy Wait, Evonne Amaya, Emma Amancha, Laretha Green-Manual, Jesus Escobedo and Raheema Watson

"I enjoy my job because it's not just an office job...I'm out in the field...recruiting," he said. "It gives you the variety. We have a great team."



This story is part of a recurring series which details Lauren Caggiano's experiences and observations as a new employee at CANI.

Lauren Caggiano

CANI Completes Self-Study

CANI has recently undergone a self-study to analyze the agency's strengths and weaknesses to learn how to better deliver quality service.

The process is part of a national Community Action Partnership initiative known as Pathways to Excellence. Through this process Community Action Agencies across the country utilize a self-study and comprehensive feedback process as diagnostic tools for setting agency improvement priorities.

Agencies evaluate themselves according to 34 Standards of Excellence. They reinforce those

organizational qualities that set Community Action Agencies apart from others when it comes to performance, community service and overall excellence.

A peer-expert review and feedback report is provided within three months of submission of the self-study. The feedback report provides agencies with instructions for the improvement process and provides a pathway to achieving excellence. The ultimate goal of the Pathways to Excellence process is to attain the Award for Excellence, to be announced in July 2010.

According to Director of Administration & Development Steve Hoffman, "the feedback report will help the agency with planning for the future. We are looking forward to a review of our strengths and weaknesses and working on each to become even more effective."



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"I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you. Without the help that I received through the (Child Care Assistance) program, I could not have afforded to work everyday and support my children and myself."

-Child Care Assistance client

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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Indianapolis Colts Inc. Corporate Giving Program
Wal-Mart

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Please mail this completed form to:

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Fort Wayne, IN 46853-0570

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

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

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Your name will be published in CANI's annual report and newsletters.
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And remember, your gift is tax-deductible.



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Shelter continued from page 3

Soon the apartment felt more like a home than a sterile apartment. Kim called to mind the poignant moment when she first saw the apartment fully furnished:

"I fell on the floor and literally said 'this is my home,' she recalled.

From that day on, a "home sweet home" plaque has been proudly displayed on her wall.

Kim's story does not end here; she would soon find more help was on the way. Another part of Matt Beer's job as housing coordinator at CANI is to make sure that clients are successful in the Shelter Plus Care program. This includes connecting them to resources both inside and outside of CANI. Matt was able to help Kim enroll in utility assistance through the agency.

"They have given and done so much for me...I don't know what I'd do if it weren't for CANI," she said of the agency's help.

Kim said that above all, the program has made her feel more in control of her life:

"The program has brought me a long way....I have choices...my life is like I did a 360," she said.

Kim knows that drastic changes do not happen overnight. However, through persistence

and faith in God, she says overcoming addiction and escaping abuse is possible.

"It has taken me a while...I fell down on my face so many times," she said. "There's always something you can do (to get help)...don't quit."

And talking to Kim, it's clear the hard times have made her more compassionate than most:

"If I see someone in the street sad, I would give them the shirt off my back," she said.

The Marion native is a proud mother and grandmother. Kim values these relationships because they have seen her at her worst times. The mother-daughter bond is one she especially cherishes:

"She's my biggest inspiration...she loves me unconditionally...she's my best friend."

At the end of the day, Kim is just like any middle-aged woman who appreciates the simple pleasures of everyday life: watching Nascar races, tending to her plants, reading the Bible and baking.

An interesting tidbit: Kim hopes to write a memoir of her journey. Watch for it in bookstores someday!



Photo by Jennifer Renner, Development Supervisor

Several CANI employees volunteered to walk in the Three Rivers Parade on behalf of the agency. The Friesian horses were a big hit with the crowd.

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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