



CANIChronicles

Fighting Poverty. Building Hope.

CANI, Lowe's Partner on Home Improvement Project

Lowe's and CANI are making a dream a reality. Opal Brinager, of LaGrange, whose story we featured in the June/July issue (p. 9) of CANI Chronicles, will be the beneficiary of a large-scale home improvement project.



Photo By?

Volunteers from CANI pose with Opal in front of her home. The crew helped with cleaning and sorting items to prepare for Lowe's.

At the time the June issue went to press, CANI was waiting to hear from TV network ABC regarding their application for Extreme Home Makeover for Opal, but did not get a reply. In the meantime, CANI learned about the "Lowe's Heroes program" and began telling Opal's story to associates at the Lowe's store on Lima Road in Fort Wayne.

Lowe's Heroes volunteer program helps to improve the communities where Lowe's employees work and live. Together, each store team identifies a community improvement project for store volunteers that will make a difference in their community.

The project seemed a good fit for Lowe's initiative and planning began immediately. Development Coordinator Kim Myers worked with Lowe's staff to set up a work schedule. Before Lowe's could work their magic, howev-

er, the home needed to be thoroughly cleaned and items organized. A team from CANI generously volunteered a few hours of work to the cause.

Lowe's began work on Sept. 10. The crew will make several improvements, including new flooring, insulation, doors, dry wall and painting. When the job is complete, Opal will have a new home that is more "kid friendly."

Special thanks to these local businesses for donating their goods and services: Subway in LaGrange, Applebee's in Kendallville, Terminix, Kendallville Iron & Metal, Logan's Landing and Lakeland Glass Inc. Thanks goes out to CANI employees and Cosperville Baptist Church for donations of food and time. CANI also thanks Kendallville Iron & Metal who donated a dumpster for waste.

Lowe's is a proud supporter of Habitat for Humanity International, American Red Cross, United Way of America, and the Home Safety Council, in addition to numerous non-profit organizations and programs that help communities across the country. In 2008, Lowe's and the Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation together contributed more than \$25 million to support community and education projects in the United States and Canada. Lowe's also encourages volunteerism through the Lowe's Heroes program, a company-wide



Photo By Lauren Caggiano, Development Coordinator

The project includes two bedrooms for the boys. The Lowe's team is hard at work to make this dream a reality.

employee volunteer initiative. Lowe's is a FORTUNE® 50 company with fiscal year 2008 sales of \$48.2 billion and has more than 1,675 stores in the United States and Canada. For more information, visit Lowe.com/community.

Note: At the time this story went to press, construction was still underway. Look for a story in the November issue about the outcome of the project.

CANI Board of Directors

Mr. Robert Lee
President

Mr. Todd Fleetwood
Vice-President

Mr. Tony Jeffers
Secretary/Treasurer

Ms. Karma Austin

Ms. Laura Dwire

Ms. Dawn Gallaway

Mr. Randy Holler

Mr. Karl Kostoff

Ms. Glenda Kendle

Ms. Amy Lazoff

Mr. Robert Myers II

Ms. Zenovia Pearson

Mr. Chris Wallace



CANIChronicles

Fighting Poverty. Building Hope.

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, October 12th in
observance of Columbus Day.**

CANI Management Team

Joseph H. Conrad
Executive Director

Pamela Brookshire
Director of
Community Services

Mary Lee Freeze
Head Start Director

Steve Hoffman
Director of Administration and
Development

CANI's Mission

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

CANI Offices

COUNTY	LOCATION	PHONE
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

October - 2009

Published monthly except for combined issues in
January/February and June/July by
CANI (Community Action of Northeast Indiana, Inc.)
P.O. Box 10570
Fort Wayne, IN 46853-0570

Vol. 4, No. 6

**All articles and photographs by CANI Development
Coordinator, Lauren Caggiano, unless otherwise noted.**

Subscriptions are free.

For more information call (260) 399-4109.



To find out more about CANI, visit our website at www.canihelp.org.



CANIChronicles

Fighting Poverty. Building Hope.

Career Shadow Program A Success

Five high-school age students had a glimpse of life in the workplace, thanks to the 2009 WHO CAN I BE shadow day.

The youth were invited to shadow individuals at eight participating companies in a variety of industries. The companies included: Journal Gazette newspaper, Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne's Community Counseling Center, Brown Mackie College, The T.A.G. Art Co., Roxyby, Spielman, Flora, LLP, Holiday Inn-IPFW & Coliseum and St. Joe Veterinary Hospital.

Time spent in the workplace varied from a few hours to as long as six. Overall, Megan Kinney,

who coordinated the program, reported favorable results. The students said they learned more about the workplace as a result of the experience. Moreover, Megan saw an increase in their developmental assets. In simple terms, this means they acquired important life skills.

Megan is working to expand the youth program to offer additional services. To do this, she would like to work with other youth-serving agencies to coordinate efforts.

For more information about the youth program, contact Megan Kinney at: megankinney@canihelp.org, or call (260) 423-3546, ext. 287



Photo By Megan Kinney, Family Support Services Worker

WHO CAN I BE participant Dwight Huff had the opportunity to shadow TAG Art Co. owner Troy Ganser on a face painting assignment.

CANI Hope Builder Receives Statewide Recognition

By Jennifer Renner

In June, Consuela Howard, or Connie as she is known at CANI, received a 2009 Hope Builder award. CANI's Hope Builder awards are given to individuals who have used the programs, services, and resources at CANI to achieve outstanding personal success.

On September 1, Connie was again recognized for her accomplishment as a guest speaker at an awards luncheon held during the 5th Annual Statewide Conference on Housing and Community Economic Development. The conference was held in Indianapolis and was organized by the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA) and the Indiana Association for Community Economic Development (IACED.)

At the awards luncheon, Connie was introduced by Lieutenant Governor Becky Skillman who acknowledged the struggles Connie had endured and congratulated her on overcoming them.

Connie was born and raised in Fort Wayne, Indiana. She became a mother while still in high school, but graduated in seven semesters; a semester earlier than most other students. Known for her determination and dedication to succeed in life, Connie went on to college and earned a Bachelor's degree in Business from Indiana Tech.

Being a young mother and going to school was a struggle, but Connie said that programs and services offered by CANI and others truly made a difference.

"I was able to turn to people and agencies who cared – really cared. I turned to the subsidized housing program when I had no one else to turn to," Connie told the luncheon audience. "If it had not been for this program I cannot imagine how I could have provided a home for my family."

During college Connie also received energy assistance and childcare assistance from CANI. Having help with her utility bills and knowing that her daughter was in quality daycare, helped Connie maintain concentration on her schoolwork.

Connie is currently employed at CANI as a Family Support Caseworker. She believes her main purpose in life is to help others eliminate the conditions of poverty as many social services agencies have done for her.

"I am the product of hope. I am now returning that hope to each individual I can reach out to. CANI has given me that chance to give back."



Photo By Jennifer Renner, CANI Development Supervisor

Connie Howard speaks at the statewide conference on Housing and Community Economic Development awards luncheon in Indianapolis on September 1.

Connie concluded her speech with these words:

"Thank you to everyone who has helped me and is helping those who are just as determined. Please keep fighting – it works. I am a result and we are hope. Thank you for all you do!"

To find out more about CANI, visit our website at www.canihelp.org.



CANIChronicles

Fighting Poverty. Building Hope.

CANI Head Start: That “Extra Push”

He remembers his preschool days as if they were yesterday: the building, the bus, the teachers, everything.

Jonathan Morales is a proud graduate of the 1988 Head Start program housed in St. Peter's Church at the time. Fast-forward more than 20 years and the 26-year old is now a branch manager at a local bank.

The son of two Mexican immigrants,



Photo Contributed

A young Jonathan boards the bus for an exciting day of school at Head Start.

Jonathan grew up in a Spanish-speaking household on the south side of town. Head Start, he said, gave him the extra push he needed to remain confident in social situations and ultimately succeed as an individual in the work force.

“(Head Start) helped me tremendously with socializing,” he recalled.

After Head Start, Jonathan continued his education and eventually went to South Side High School. He found the social skills acquired in Head Start once again paid off in language barrier situations. Jonathan said he remembers making phone calls on his parents' behalf to take care of daily needs. These experiences, he said, caused him to learn about the inner workings of the world at a young age.

And when college called, Jonathan was well prepared for the demands and challenges it presented. He enrolled in classes at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne, where he studied business. College opened many doors for him, especially given the fact he was the first in his family to graduate.



Photo Contributed

Jonathan is an example of what it means to succeed through hard work.

Immediately following graduation, the young man went to work at the bank. Currently as the branch manager he is responsible for supervising staff and operations. Looking to the future, he sees himself in an entrepreneurial position someday.

Uno, dos, tres! Head Start Staff Learn Spanish

As the Hispanic population continues to grow in northeast Indiana so does the need for qualified Spanish-speaking Head Start teachers. That's why Head Start is offering a Spanish course for staff through Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne.

Funds through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), more commonly known as the stimulus package, will allow for two college-level

Spanish classes to be taught at the CANI Head Start site at Hanna-Creighton.

Twenty Head Start staff are currently enrolled in a three-credit hour “Reality Spanish” course. According to Head Start Director Mary Lee Freeze, this class is designed to be a “practical, hands on” curriculum that will engage students. She also noted the targeted group of staff members are those working towards a bachelor's degree, because by 2013, new

requirements will call for at least 50 percent of staff to have one.

“It's a great opportunity for Head Start staff who are working towards a degree,” Mary Lee commented.

The class for the spring semester will be an early childhood/mental health course. More information will follow.



CANIChronicles

Fighting Poverty. Building Hope.

CANI Receives Donation from Local Chiropractor

CANI relies on contributions from community organizations and individuals to help fund its programs and services. Most of the time, donations are in response to an ask, but occasionally companies will generously step forward unprompted. The latter was the case for VanHorn Chiropractic Center.

In June, the office advertised a Patient Appreciation Week in correlation with the office's 20th anniversary. Patients were invited to make donations to CANI. According to Dr. VanHorn, the office chooses a

beneficiary organization each year based on staff consensus and CANI was the lucky one in 2009.

Donations totaled \$420, which were directly given to CANI.

Thanks to Dr. VanHorn's patients and staff for their generosity. We hope more organizations will follow their lead!

To make a corporate donation to CANI, contact Kim Myers, (260) 760-8927.

Target Grant Engages Fathers, Children

Ten minutes is all it takes.

Reading to a child for a few minutes a day can open up a world of opportunity he or she might otherwise not have. That's the concept behind the Target Foundation's *Boys, Books and Barbershops* grant.

CANI is the proud recipient of the \$2,500-grant, which funds literacy and male involvement programs. CANI Early Education Coordinator Kathy Frank applied for the grant in May and the agency received word of the award in July.

Fey Fey Moussou, CANI Head Start's Male Involvement Leading Children (MILC) Coordinator said the Target grant is a perfect fit for MILC because it encourages fathers and male role models to take an active role in children's lives. Moreover, it provides the resources, i.e. books, to do so:

"The goal of this project is to reach out to fathers and empower them to take responsibility to be effective fathers and participate in their children's education," said Fey Fey. "This project encourages fathers to read to their children and brings a greater interaction between men and children."

Specifically, the grant will be used to purchase books to be strategically placed in local barbershops – a common place for fathers to bring sons, and thus a possible venue for reading. It is anticipated that as many as 2,400 young boys will have stories read out loud to them as a result of this project. The project is slated to begin in mid-October.

Since 1946, Target has given 5% of its income to the communities in which they serve. Target stores carry on the tradition by making local grants and supporting volunteer initiatives. Target encourages non-profit organizations to work directly with their local Target stores because they best understand the needs of their community. Target intentionally makes annual commitments so that they can remain flexible and respond to changing community and business needs.



Stock Photo
Reading can help travel to new places. It can also be a father/son bonding activity.

**Have you heard? CANI has a blog.
Check it out here: www.insidecani.blogspot.com**

Inside CANI offers news and commentary relating to the needs and contributions of low-income citizens in Allen, DeKalb, Elkhart, Kosciusko, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben and Whitley counties, as well as the services of the Community Action of Northeast Indiana (CANI) Program.

Please bookmark this page for easy accessibility. We welcome feedback and suggestions.

To find out more about CANI, visit our website at www.canihelp.org.



CANIChronicles

Fighting Poverty. Building Hope.

Get “Money Smart” In October

The fourth annual Money Smart Week (MSW) Indiana is October 10–17.

Events and activities will take place throughout the state to help consumers better manage their personal finances. Locally, Allen County’s Money Smart Week partners have organized a Money Fair Saturday, October 10, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Abundant Life Tabernacle, 3301 E. Coliseum Blvd. in Fort Wayne. The event is free and open to the public.

Highlights of the day include a panel discussion led by Indiana Secretary of State Todd Rokita to educate attendees about community resources designed to help them manage their money. Fort Wayne Mayor Tom Henry, United Way CEO Jerry Peterson and Urban League Director Jonathan Ray will also be part of the discussion.

After the panel discussion, various agencies will present educational information and displays covering topics such as: How to Save Money, Stretching Your Dollar, Help with Applying for Indiana Unemployment Benefits and Food Stamps, Budgeting and Saving, Getting a Bank Account, and Improving Your Money Management Skills.

In addition to CANI, local partners in this year’s Money Smart efforts include: Volunteer Center @ RSVP, Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service, Internal Revenue Service, The Indiana Secretary of State, Junior Achievement, Euell A. Wilson Center, Lake City Bank, United Way of Allen County, Fort Wayne Housing Authority, Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Northeast Indiana,

National City Bank, City of Fort Wayne, Wells Fargo Community Development/Social Responsibility Group, Fort Wayne Urban League, Hispanic Leadership Coalition of Northeast Indiana, Public Service Credit Union, Abundant Life Church, Fifth Third Bank, NE IN Continuum of Care Coalition, and Community Connections.



Stock Photo

The old adage holds true: a penny saved is a penny earned. CANI’s programs help people learn to manage money more effectively.

CANI encourages families to embrace smart financial practices year-round through the programs and services offered. Here are just a few:

- CANI’s Weatherization Program provides free, energy-efficient improve-

ments for the homes of low-income families. Weatherization is a cost-saving practice because when homes are more efficient, they require less energy and therefore reduce bills. When occupants have lower energy bills that means they can have more money for other needs, like food and clothing.

- Individual Development Accounts, or IDAs, are matched savings accounts for people with limited incomes. 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 savings can be used for 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.
- Client education is a component of the Family Development program. Workshops are offered throughout the year on various topics including saving energy and budgeting. These workshops teach life skills and help families use money smarter.

For information about more Money Smart Week events, visit CANI’s Web site (www.canihelp.org) and click on the link for Money Smart Week.

To find out more about CANI, visit our website at www.canihelp.org.



CANIChronicles

Fighting Poverty. Building Hope.

Stepping Stones to Success: Lesa Cassel's Story

An organization is most effective when its mission is in accord with its actions. You might know this as "practice what you preach."

I believe that to be the case at CANI. Our organization employs several people who benefited or currently benefit from the programs and services. To me, there's no better compliment than when a client wants to work for the agency.

Planning & Quality Coordinator Lesa Cassel is a fine example of someone who has beaten the odds in life. Twelve years ago, Lesa was a stay-at-home mother with four children. One of them, Andrea, was enrolled in Head Start at the time. One day her husband was severely injured on the job and she had no choice but to find work.

Active as a volunteer and a member of the Head Start Policy Council, it was no coincidence that she was offered a temporary teaching position. While with Head Start, she was able to earn her Child Development Credential and later work towards an associate's degree in early childhood education.

Looking back, there is one person who was always there to offer words of encouragement.

"Edith (Woolever) was always pushing me on," she said.

And it's clear they have a mutual respect for each other:

"I 'walked with' Lesa as she went through difficult times relationally, financially, and spiritually," Edith said. "I discovered an individual with great determination to succeed, dedication to her children and to CANI Head Start, and diligence to set goals and then accomplish them."

While her professional life was flourishing, her marital life wasn't as promising. Lesa and her husband filed for divorce and she was caught in a bind once again. With four young children to raise, moving in with her parents was the best option. In retrospect, Lesa said the four years living there united the family. Her parents provided a "strong backing" and to this day, her children are still close with their grandparents.

In the face of this tragedy, Lesa turned to her coworkers at CANI once again. She turned to Family Development Supervisor John Robb as a support anchor, who encouraged her to set and keep goals.

"They've been a supportive family," she said about CANI. "There's no way I could have done it without them."

Thanks to CANI and her family, Lesa was able to move forward and thrive in her career.

"We all fall down, but I got up," she said about this trying time.

While working at Head Start, she noted some quality issues that might be corrected. This prompted her to write a letter to Executive Director Joe Conrad with some suggestions and was commended for her assertiveness. Lesa transitioned by leaving her teaching responsibilities to work part time for CANI administration and continue as part-time Quality Specialist for Head Start. Later, she assumed the full-time position and has been a huge asset to the agency's operations.

Because of her personal experience fighting poverty, Lesa has come to appreciate CANI and its services more than most employees. As a person who received help, she said she knows what changes to



Photo Contributed

Lesa's family poses for a family photo.

make to improve the efficiency of the organization.

In regards to changes, Lesa has made some observations about the agency as a whole:

"We have become more client-focused," she said. "For CANI employees, it's more than just a job."

And it's clear that Lesa believes in CANI's mission:

"I'm very passionate about what we do here," she said. "I have seen how (CANI) has affected my life and others," she said.

This story is a part of a recurring series which details my experiences and observations as a new employee at CANI.



Lauren Caggiano

CANI Thanks Our Donors

October - 2009

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!

Advocate (\$100-\$249)

Beauchamp & McSpadden, Inc.
Mr. Todd Fleetwood
Ms. Dawn Gallaway

Friend (\$1 - \$99)

Mrs. Dorothy Korte
Mr. James E. Shriner

To find out more about CANI, visit our website at www.canihelp.org.



CANIChronicles

Fighting Poverty. Building Hope.

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.



CANI
 227 E. Washington Blvd.
 Fort Wayne, IN 46802

NON-PROFIT ORG
 US POSTAGE
 PAID
 FORT WAYNE, IN
 Permit No. 1107

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



Name _____

Phone number _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Email address _____

Please mail this completed form to:
CANI

PO Box 10570
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:

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

Your name will be published in CANI's annual report and newsletters.
If you wish to keep your donation anonymous, please check here _____.

And remember, your gift is tax-deductible.



To find out more about CANI, visit our website at www.canihelp.org.