

*Hampshire Community Action Commission's First Call for Help*

# News You Can Use

*Volunteer Newsletter*

*July 2000*

## Heartfelt Thanks

The staff would like to say a special thank you to all the volunteers who have weathered our computer difficulties with such grace. We really appreciate your flexibility and understanding.

## Holiday

HCAC First Call for Help will be closed for the Independence Day holiday on Tuesday, July 4th. We *will* be open on Monday, July 3<sup>rd</sup>. Have a wonderful holiday.

## Program Reorganization

It is possible that HCAC First Call for Help may be closed for the week of July 17<sup>th</sup> through the 21<sup>st</sup>. This will allow us to reconfigure our office space to better suit the needs of volunteers, staff and clients. Karen will let you know more about this as we get closer to the date.

## Milestones

Special congratulations are in order for Bev, who has reached a very extraordinary milestone of 1,000 hours! Bev does a fantastic job answering the phones in Information & Referral, keeping us updated on new information that comes in and making changes in the database. Bev is great co-worker, with a wonderful sense of humor and a calm and focused manner.

## Change in Hours

For those of you who aren't aware, our hours of service here at HCAC First Call for Help have changed. We are answering the phones Monday through Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. instead of 9:15 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. as we were previously. We will still be here from 4:00 – 4:45 p.m., but we will use that time for return calls, paperwork, entering information into the computer or special projects. This change will occur because we have been stretching

ourselves too thin by being available for callers with our limited staffing.

For the time being, I & R volunteers who were scheduled to begin at 9:15 a.m. should plan to begin at 9:30 a.m. instead. Those who previously ended their shift at 4:45 p.m., will now be leaving at 4:00 p.m. At some point, we will invite you to stay longer since there will still be plenty of work to do on resource updating and various other projects. Thank you, as always, for your patience and flexibility.

## United Way

Volunteer representatives from United Way came by on Tuesday, June 6<sup>th</sup> to talk with Fern and to see the program. It was a nice group. They asked some questions about the services we do here and about our volunteers. Karen was happy to report the extraordinary commitment and dedication you all show as volunteers. When she reported the number of hours given per year, one United Way representative quipped that the volunteers' time was worth \$100.00 per hour. A big thank you to Barb for speaking as a volunteer on behalf of First Call for Help!

### Al Sax Visits First Call

On Tuesday, June 6<sup>th</sup>, Al Sax, Executive Director of Hampshire Community Action Commission visited First Call for Help. He came to speak about HCAC's Strategic Plan, especially the second year and he brought a state of the agency speech that he recently made

to the HCAC board of directors. Karen has posted the speech on the volunteer bulletin board so that you can read it if you like.

Al also spoke about some of the ideas they have for one stop access and for assisting with the development of a specialized network software that will serve the needs of clients, agencies and funders. Many of the plans being discussed have increased use of technology as a theme. It is important for volunteers to note that, as far as we know, these technological changes will probably not occur for awhile. When they do occur, there will be a transitional period *and* there will be lots of support and help to make the needed adjustments.

## Fern's New Line

The second Hampshire County Family Network line—256-8361 is now Fern's private line. We will not be picking up this line unless specifically instructed to do so. Fern will have voice mail on her line so that people who call her can leave a message.

## Happy Birthday

Birthday Greetings to:

Ann July 7<sup>th</sup>  
Sandy July 28<sup>th</sup>

May you enjoy your birthday and the year ahead!

## Welcome!

A warm welcome to two new volunteers who will be working on special projects (e.g. the marketing of our directory, "All the Help You Can Get") this summer.

*Peggy* is new to the area. She has done clerical work at San Francisco State University and at the San Francisco Ballet Association. She has been active on the YWCA board and the board of the San Francisco Department of Social Welfare, and has done volunteer work for hospice and food sharing programs. *Peggy* will add a lot to our program at First Call for Help. She has begun to work on preparing mailing lists for our marketing project.

*Sandy* is an at home mom of a four year old daughter. She has worked as an information and referral specialist on a master gardener hotline. (Maybe she'll have some suggestions for our office plants). *Sandy* has also done a lot of volunteer work including being a companion for a blind woman and doing secretarial work for a Voluntary Action Commission. We are very happy to have her here. She has begun, like *Peggy*, to assist us in the preparation of our marketing mailing list.

We also have a new staff member joining us this month. We want to extend a warm welcome to *Cristina*, the new Case Coordinator for Hampshire County Family Network. Having *Cristina* here will make a huge difference!

You may also be seeing a new face in the Hampshire Health Access office. *Mary Rives*, who some of you may know as the Director of the HCAC Amherst Family Center, will be serving as interim Director of Housing Services for the summer. HCAC Housing Services oversees Hampshire Health Access.

## Heavy Hearted Goodbye

It is with great sadness that we say goodbye both to *Marianne*, Project Director of Hampshire Health Access and to *JoAnn*, I & R Resource Coordinator.

*Marianne* recently resigned from her position. She has worked at HCAC First Call for Help since the fall of 1996. She began as a volunteer, single-handedly coordinating the Emergency Fuel Bank for that winter. She received the Chancellor's Award for Outstanding Community Service from UMass for her work. She then joined HHA as a paid staff member, investing her skills and expertise in nurturing that growing program.

Thank you, *Marianne* for all your help and support, especially during that time that we were without a director here at First Call. You kept us going through thick and thin. We will miss you and we wish you all the best for the future.

*JoAnn* has done an amazing job in her role as I & R Resource Coordinator at First Call. She has been responsible for the high quality of the information and referrals that are given to callers. She also has had responsibility for coordinating updating

for the two directories—*All the Help You Can Get* and *Programs That Help People in Western Mass.* JoAnn has also done a fabulous job providing back up and supervising I & R volunteers on the phones.

We wish JoAnn well in her new job as Registrar at a Music School in Springfield. We will miss her careful and conscientious work and the warmth and kindness she shows in so many ways. JoAnn has been a wonderfully creative problem solver and has provided inspiring leadership for us all. JoAnn, it will not be the same here without you. Thank you for everything! We'll miss you! Best of luck for the future!

## Vacation Time

Vacation time is here as we begin the summer. If you have vacation planned, please let Karen know as soon as possible. Then be sure that you make out a schedule sheet and put it in the bottom folder on the bulletin board above Karen's desk.

Also, staff will be taking vacation time in the summer and we may have to work volunteer schedules around it, particularly for those who work with Karen. Thank you in advance for your flexibility.

Have a great vacation and don't forget to send us a postcard!

## Poll Results

The informal poll conducted regarding the use of the extra coffee pot yielded the following results:

Prefer tea	7
Prefer decaf coffee	0
Prefer neither	5

Therefore, we will have a coffee pot set up with hot water and various teas. If you like, you may bring in your own tea.

## Summer Fun

Karen is planning a potluck summer picnic for the end of August or the beginning of September. If you have suggestions for a date or a place, please let Karen know. Look for more information in the next newsletter!

## MAIRS News

The latest newsletter from the Massachusetts Association of Information and Referral Services (MAIRS) is posted on the volunteer bulletin board. Included are articles on the New England I & R Conference that was held this past March, information on MASS211, MAIRS membership goals and the MAIRS registry. Please be sure to take a look at it when you have the chance. Thanks.

## Mass211 Update

Mass211 Task Force is now Mass211, Inc., a non-profit organization that is now preparing its application for 501(c)(3) status. The President of the Mass211, Inc. Board of Directors is Jean Strock, Vice President for Community Services at United Way of Central Massachusetts.

The new address and phone number for Mass211, Inc. is: Jean Strock, Mass211, Inc., c/o United Way of Central Mass., 484 Main Street, Worcester, MA 01068. The phone is: (508) 757-5631 and fax is (508) 757-2712. The new phone number and contact are posted at the volunteer I & R desk.

Mass211, Inc. has announced the recent approval of two grants: a \$25,000 grant from Northeast Utilities and a \$5,000 grant from the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts. Suggestions about additional funding sources are most welcome (as are donations).

The next challenge for Mass211 is to get approval for the enabling legislation that is under review by the Joint Committee on Government Regulations. Please ask your legislators to support the Mass211 legislation (“for an abbreviated dialing code”), which is House Bill #5130 and Senate Bill #2160.

## Work Box Clean Up

Please take a few moments this month to weed out the old papers in your work box. Get rid of any old newsletters and meeting announcements and return any project materials you had been using in the past. It will be easier to see new notices and notes if your box is not encumbered by outdated papers.

Please be sure to check your work box for memos and messages when you first come in for your shift. Thanks!

## HCAC Newsletter

A big thank you to everyone who agreed to be interviewed and agreed to have their photo taken at the Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon. Seven of our volunteers were highlighted in the latest edition of the HCAC Community Newsletter—*The Community Action Report*.

If you did not receive a copy at your home address and would like to be on the mailing list, please let Karen know. Karen also has additional copies of the newsletter if you'd like one.

## I & R Volunteers

## Pink Slips Change

When taking a phone message on a pink slip, please be sure to date the message (using the full date including the *year*). The reason for this change is

that sometimes the pink slips get included in a client file and it becomes confusing when there is no year.

## Need for I & R Help

For the next month, if any of you have extra time, join us in our air-conditioned office to do an extra shift or two. We are in need of help for Thursdays and Fridays, any part of the day or all day. If you can do an extra few hours, please let Karen know. Your help would be greatly appreciated. Thank you.

## Low-Income Youth

You might want to look at a report in the reading box: *An Assessment of the Barriers and Gaps to Services for Low-Income Youth in Hampshire County.*

Submitted by Lillian (Thank you!):

## To Achieve Your Dreams, Remember Your ABC's

**A**void negative sources, people, places, things and habits.

**B**elieve in yourself.

**C**onsider things from every angle.

**D**on't give up, and don't give in.

**E**njoy life today; yesterday is gone, and tomorrow may never come.

**F**amily and friends are hidden treasures. Seek them and enjoy their riches.

**G**ive more than you planned to give.

**F**amily and friends are hidden treasures. Seek them and enjoy their riches.

**H**ang on to your dreams.

**I**gnore those who try to discourage you.

**J**ust do it!

**K**eep on trying. No matter how hard it seems, it will get easier.

**L**ove yourself first and most.

**M**ake it happen.

**N**ever lie, cheat or steal. Always strike a fair deal.

**O**pen your eyes, and see things as they really are.

**P**practice makes perfect.

**Q**uitters never win, and winners never quit.

**R**ead, study and learn about everything important in your life.

**S**top procrastinating.

**T**ake control of your own destiny.

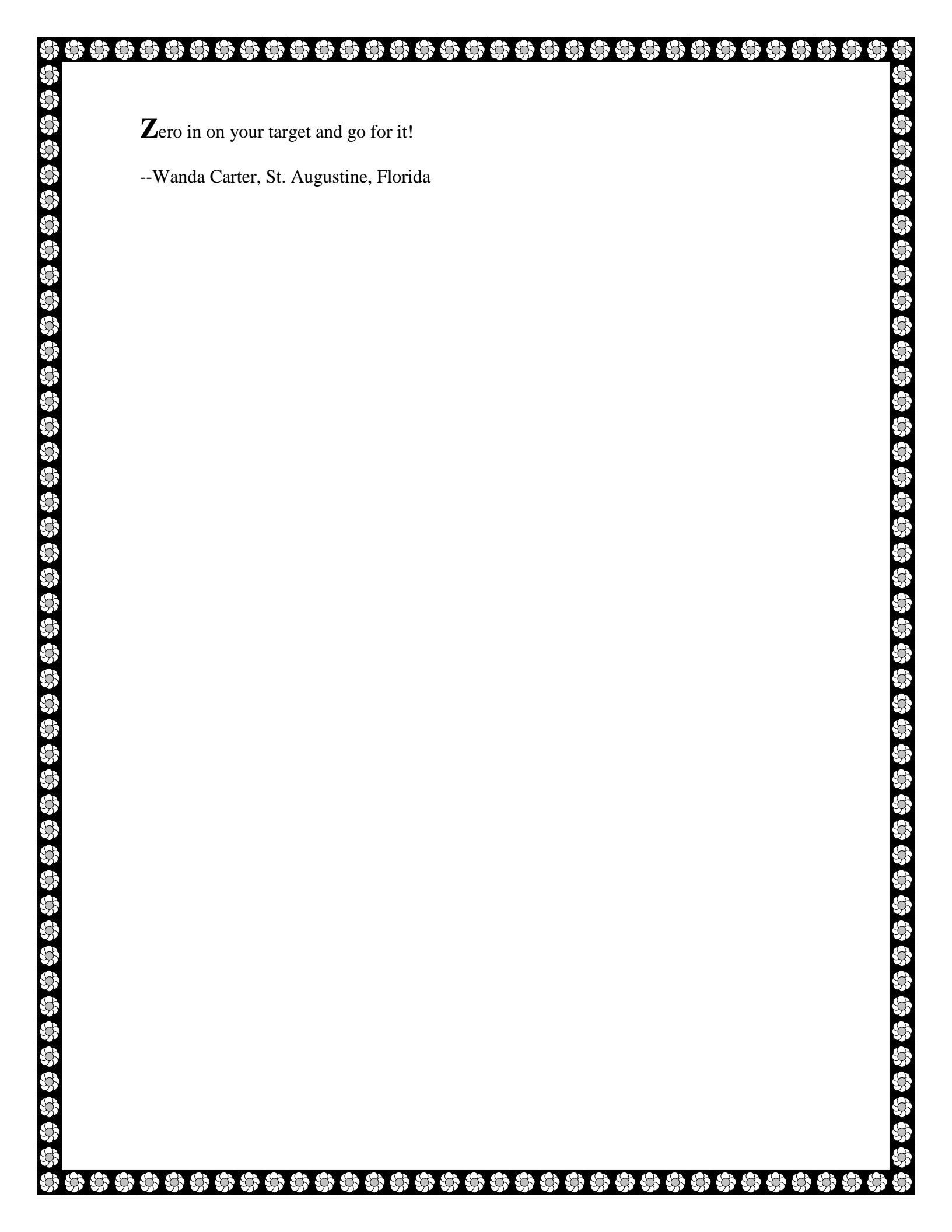
**U**nderstand yourself in order to better understand others.

**V**isualize it.

**W**ant it more than anything.

**X**ccelerate your efforts.

**Y**ou are unique. Nothing can replace you.



**Z**ero in on your target and go for it!

--Wanda Carter, St. Augustine, Florida