

Hampshire Community Action Commission's First Call for Help

News You Can Use

Volunteer Newsletter

May 2000

"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."—Mark Ortman

HOLIDAY

Just a reminder that on Monday, May 29th we will be closed for the Memorial Day holiday.

HAPPY MAY BIRTHDAYS!

May 14	Karen S.
May 15	Fern
May 25	Shanti

May the year ahead bring you all the best!

CONGRATULATIONS

Barb, and her husband Fred, just celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary! Our best wishes to both of them.

Karen S. and Toni will both be receiving the Chancellor's 2000 Outstanding Community Service Awards for outstanding service in a community organization (First Call for Help) during the 1999-00 academic year. This

prestigious award is made through the UMass Office of Community Service Learning at Commonwealth College and will be awarded at a special luncheon on Monday, May 8th. Karen S. and Toni, both graduating seniors, have given a tremendous amount of time over the past year. They have both excelled in their work here at First Call for Help. Thank you to both of you for all you have done and best wishes for the future.

Kate, of Hampshire Health Access, finished the Boston Marathon in under four hours!! Great job, Kate!

A WARM WELCOME

All of us extend a warm welcome to our new Program Director, Fern Selesnick! It's a great help to have a Director again and with Fern in that position, it's a real pleasure, too. Fern holds a master's degree from Antioch University and a bachelor's degree from the University of Massachusetts. She is a resident of Williamsburg and a former member of HCAC's board of directors.

Fern says: "I just want to let both staff and volunteers know that I recognize the tremendous effort and positive impact they have both on our internal programs and on the community at large. This program is a success because of you."

GOODBYE, WE'LL MISS YOU

There are a few people who are moving on to other things and will no longer be able to volunteer.

Eileen—has resigned to focus on her pregnancy and upcoming birth. We really appreciate all the wonderful clerical work she has done here at HCAC First Call for Help. She has been here since February of 1997, giving more than 172 hours. Eileen has always had a very positive attitude, working hard on tasks like filing, typing and copying. For awhile she worked with our former bookkeeper, Jeannine, assisting her with all the paperwork she needed to get in to Central Administration. We all wish Eileen well and we hope she will be able to come by and visit us with the babies after they are born. Thank you, Eileen, for everything!

Karen S.—is a graduating senior at UMass and so will be leaving us to venture out into the world (and the job market). Her last day will be Friday, May 19th. Karen has been a wonderful help during the last eight months. As of April 30th, she had given over 190 hours of time. We have come to depend on her help every Friday and it will be a tremendous loss when she leaves. She has had a wonderful way with clients and has become top-notch in finding the information that callers need. She has also done an exceptional job in entering

updated information into IRis. Good luck for the future, Karen! Thank you for all your help!

Rebecca—is going to be away for the summer and has a busy schedule for the fall, but we're hoping that she might join us again next spring semester. We are surely going to miss her. Rebecca has been here at HCAC First Call for Help since the end of January and has given a total of 71 hours as of the end of April. She did so much work updating the Big Red Book: from faxing, to making phone calls, to gathering information that programs forgot to note, to tracking down contacts to whom we can market the directory when it is published. We really appreciate all that work!! Many, many thanks to you, Rebecca.

Toni—is a graduating senior at UMass who has been volunteering here since the fall of 1999. She has given over 188 hours as of April 30th. Toni has done an exceptional job with the Emergency Fuel Bank this past winter. She took calls, took client applications, verified application information and arranged for fuel deliveries. In addition, under the guidance of Lillian, Toni helped tremendously with the record keeping and with the development of streamlined procedures to build a well-organized system for EFB. This will enable the fuel bank to run much smoother next year. Toni also helped with answering calls for information and referral and assisted with the updating of "All the Help You Can Get". We will miss Toni and her amazingly efficient ways of getting things done. Good Luck, Toni, and thank you for everything!

CHANGES

Physical Set Up

You may have noticed a lot of changes in the physical set up of the office space here at HCAC First Call for Help.

The former Administrative Office is now the Volunteer Office. The volunteer bulletin board, the volunteer mail boxes, the blue volunteer time box and the schedule sheets are there. Karen works there, as well as volunteers who are doing updating and clerical work. The refrigerator and coffee are located there, too. (All refreshment supplies are now located to the left of the desk below the volunteer bulletin board.) This new set up will enable Karen to meet with volunteers privately in this room for monthly meetings or to discuss issues of concern.

The former Family Network Office now includes an administrative space, including Shanti's desk, the fax machine, the staff mailboxes, the postage machine and a counseling space behind the divider for clients of both I&R and the Family Network. The Family Network Case Coordinator's desk is also located there.

The former conference room is now Fern's office.

There is a committee made up of Fern, JoAnn and Shanti that will be looking into space issues and one thing they will be considering is how we might create a nicer, more welcoming waiting area. If you have ideas about this, please let Karen or one of the committee members know.

In addition, Shanti has done a great job sprucing up the area outside of the elevator. In the future, we will have professionally done signs to direct people instead of the computer generated ones. The big storage cabinet will be eliminated/moved.

When there is a walk-in, they should be directed to the waiting area. Lillian or JoAnn will meet them there and accompany them to the counseling space in the Administrative/Family Network Office. If that space is occupied, the Volunteer Office will be the next choice.

Schedules

JoAnn is back to a 20 hour week. She is in Mondays and Tuesdays, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. She will be out on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Karen is also back down to 20 hours per week. She will be in Mondays and Tuesdays from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Wednesdays from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and Fridays 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. One week at the end of the month, she will be in on Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. so that she can touch base with Thursday volunteers. For this week, she will not be in on Friday.

Lillian's schedule will remain the same at the present time.

In the near future, we will be hiring an additional part time Information and Referral staff person to bridge some of the gaps in staffing. Karen will keep you posted on this.

HCAC CONTRACT SETTLED

For those of you who have been following the contract negotiations at HCAC, the strike has been averted! The management of Hampshire Community Action Commission and UAW Local 2322 have reached agreement on a new contract, and it has been approved by both the union membership and the HCAC board of directors. The new contract is in operation as of May 1st. Thanks to all who worked so hard to bring it about.

Don't forget!

The Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon will be held on Friday, May 12th from 12:00 noon to 1:30 p.m. We are looking forward to seeing you there! Please R.S.V.P. to Karen if you haven't done so already. Joyce Onafowokan, Chairperson of the Hampshire Community Action Commission Board of Directors and Tim Diehl, Associate Director of HCAC will attend. Special thanks to Susan for her help in planning the event.

MASS211 UPDATE

News Alert!! Mass211 needs \$1.5 million to be implemented as planned by 2/1/01 and Mass211 supporters were not able to get Mass211 into the House budget. The Senate budget process is now underway. Please call Stan Rosenburg this week to express your support for Mass211, to ask that it become a funding priority for FY2001, and to urge Senator Montigny to include \$1.5 million for Mass211 in the DPH

Family Health Services line item (#4513-1000) in the budget being prepared by the Ways and Means Committee.

Ohio and Tennessee have approved 2-1-1. This brings the number of states that have approved 211 to a total of seven: Besides these two new ones, they are Alabama, Connecticut, Georgia, North Carolina and Utah. The national 2-1-1 petition to set 2-1-1 aside across the country for community information and referral purposes has now been before the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) for nearly two years. There is no indication that the FCC is going to act soon on the petition, and it is not uncommon for the FCC to take several years before acting on such matters. That is why there are grassroots efforts in 40 states to gain state approval for the use of the 2-1-1 dialing code.

Twenty-six national organizations have endorsed 2-1-1 as an abbreviated dialing code to ensure easy and effective access to social service and community resource information. This includes such organizations as: Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America, Girl Scouts of America, National 4-H, National Mental Health Association, Salvation Army, United Way of America and Visiting Nurses Association of America. In addition, the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners has endorsed 2-1-1.

STAFF MEETINGS

Staff will be meeting on Tuesdays from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. At the present time, we will be meeting on a weekly basis, but we may change to every other

week as we begin to catch up on the back log.

Volunteers are welcome to present concerns for discussion and/or participate in the meeting. If you would like to make a suggestion of a topic or concern for discussion, there is now a suggestion box located in the Administrative/Family Network Office. Fern will remove items from this box and place them on the agenda for the staff meeting. Please give all input by the Thursday prior to staff meeting. Thanks!

WAR ON POVERTY

Fern has a video available for loan that shows the beginning of the war on poverty in the sixties. It was in this context that community action agencies such as Hampshire Community Action Commission were born. You may want to take a look at it and get a broader perspective on HCAC's mission and goals.

Have something on your mind? Got an I&R related question or a question about HCAC or First Call? Got a poem or a great saying or a funny cartoon to share? Karen is looking for

- Letters to the Editor
- Questions to answer
- Items to spice up the newsletter

Please leave them in Karen's mailbox by the third Wednesday of the month. Thanks!

IF YOU NEED HELP

The services of HCAC First Call for Help are for everyone. If you have a question you need answered or if you have financial problems and need help, please feel free to use our services. We will do everything we can to ensure the confidentiality of your request.

If you feel uncomfortable about approaching Lillian or JoAnn while you are here doing volunteer work, you can call on the phone or drop a note in their mailbox asking them to phone you. Both Lillian and JoAnn are very careful to respect your confidentiality.

UNITED WAY VISIT

Thank you to everyone who helped prepare for the United Way site visit last week. It was very successful. Bobbe—you did a great job organizing our refreshment area and doing a whirlwind clean up! Fern, Al Sax (Executive Director of HCAC) and Bonnie Dowd, HCAC (Director of Development) will be presenting our funding proposal to United Way on Monday, May 8.

PUBLICITY ABOUT OUR GREAT VOLUNTEERS

Bonnie Dowd, Development Director at HCAC Central Administration has arranged for a free-lance writer to do an article about First Call for Help's volunteer program for the next HCAC Newsletter. If Karen hasn't already asked you, please let her know if you would be willing to say a few words

about your experience as a volunteer here and the importance of your work .

INFO. & REFERRAL NEWS

The Harold Seewald Emergency Fuel Bank is now closed for the season. Please refer all calls regarding fuel to Lillian or JoAnn. Thanks!

There will be a change in the way the Family Network handles car seats. Fern is in the process of making arrangements with the Easthampton Police Department to provide them with the Family Network car seats. The Easthampton Police would do the car seat training and would handle the lending program. This would be county wide, not just for Easthampton. They would also refer families with small children who are in need of assistance to the Family Network. There will be more information to come when this arrangement is completed.

We have begun to get requests for the e-mail address for programs. You may want to familiarize yourself with the internet information on page one of the program screen in IRis.

Please be aware that staff may not always be able to share the details of a call or case. Sometimes, if the person is well-known in the community, or if they are known to a volunteer, or under other kinds of circumstances, a staff person may keep call or case information to herself.

As volunteers leave at the end of the semester and summer vacations start, Karen is looking for I & R help for the following times:

Friday, May 5th

9:15 a.m. – 4:45 p.m.

Thursday, May 11th

9:15 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Friday, May 12th

9:15 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

1:30 p.m. to 4:45 p.m.

Thank you for all you do. If you can help out, please let Karen know as soon as possible.