



Annual Report

2016-2017



WARREN-FOREST COUNTIES

STEADY AS SHE GOES

A message from our Executive Director

Never miss a chance to make the world a better place, and recognize that every day brings a new chance, a chance to connect with others, a chance to grow, a chance to learn, a chance to teach, a chance to make a difference, a chance to change at least one person's world, and a chance to serve!

- Sargent Shriver

This past year was one of calm for the Agency. A year in which we began renovating to create one new housing opportunity (with three apartments) and a small commercial opportunity. While this may seem like a huge undertaking; it is small when considering our recent history where we were creating six to ten housing units in a single year.

Even though things were relatively quiet for us, many positive achievements were attained over the year. These included creating new partnerships with the Warren County Wellness Association and the Child Advocacy Center, four individuals took advantage of the transportation program and improved their lives, and our children enrolled in the Head Start program saw a marked increase in their cognitive abilities.

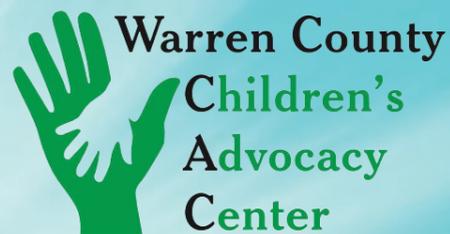
Program year 2016 to 2017 was one we view as the calm before the storm. As we end the year we are already anticipating the many new challenges that we will face in 2017 and 2018. A new strategic plan will be developed to guide our path, expanded hours, days, and adding classrooms in Head Start, and the completion and occupancy of the St. Clair Street facilities which will be a true Fairweather Lodge!

So, it is with great pride that we present the Warren-Forest Counties Economic Opportunity Council's 2016 to 2017 Annual Report. Please review carefully as it highlights the many accomplishments of our clients and the staff who work so hard in giving them the tools to become self-reliant. All deserve recognition for their hard work and dedication.

- Robert A. Raible

"The Warren County Children's Advocacy Center is a safe and supportive environment that is dedicated to serving children and their families. Professionals from multiple disciplines within the community coordinate investigations, interventions, prosecutions, and provide specialized treatment while reducing trauma and promote healing."

This amazing community resource is located in one half of a commercial space developed by the Agency during this program year. The Warren County MDIT and Children's Advocacy Center Board includes community members from the Warren County School District, police departments, YMCA, Family Services, Children and Youth, Warren General Hospital, A Safe Place, and the District Attorney.



ENDING VETERAN HOMELESSNESS ONE FAMILY AT A TIME

In 2016-2017 we continued the Supportive Services for Veteran Families program, made possible through a partnership with Chautauqua Opportunities in neighboring New York. As a sub-grantee we provide services in Warren, Forest, Crawford, and McKean Counties. The program is designed to assist low-income veterans and their families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless with finding, securing, and moving into safe, affordable housing. Proactive case management, outreach, coordination with other providers, linking veterans with community resources, coordinating VA benefits, and in some cases financial assistance all work together to assist these households as they work to stabilize and become self-sufficient.

The following is a testimonial from one of this year's success stories. Part of what makes it possible for this program to continue is the dedication, hard work, and understanding displayed by our Veteran Services Case Workers.



"Hello - My name is Jane Doe, and I'm a disabled Army Veteran of 10 years. One year ago, I was married, had a 10 year old daughter, and we lived in a 2-bedroom apartment. One day, my husband committed a crime that I cannot discuss and left us.

His crimes and the aftermath left my daughter and I traumatized and in a financial crisis.

Desperate to find help with keeping a roof over our heads I approached the local housing authority. I explained my situation, that I was disabled and had a daughter who also had medical needs. The lady I spoke with referred me to Rick Wagonseller, a Homeless Veterans Case Worker. From the moment Rick stepped on the scene, he reassured me that I wasn't alone, and that they would do whatever they could to help. He was absolutely true to his word and worked tirelessly to help me keep a roof over my daughter's head.

Rick explained the SSVF program to me and how it works to help homeless veterans. The way his department worked together with my landlady, with the housing authority, and myself, to get us back on our feet was nothing short of excellence. This program helped us start over and save our apartment. Rick also referred me to the HUD VASH voucher program through the VA. You see, Rick (and SSVF) helped me get caught up with rent, but I would need help to continue to afford it. Rick put me in touch with one of the HUD VASH coordinators. Lori Leonetti, the coordinator, took me through every step of the process. She talked to me and reassured me that things were going to work out even if extra work needed to be done, and she gave me an ear to listen when I needed it. When all the paperwork was done and Lori told me she had secured the voucher for me, I cried. I was so relieved on so many levels all at once, and I was overcome with Thanksgiving.

Watching how passionate and driven Lori and Rick were to help us, was nothing short of amazing. The way I see it, there are lots of vets out there, trying to raise families and do the right thing, who are thrust into situations of crisis. That's the kind of stuff life is made of sometimes. That's why these programs exist for vets now, because life CAN get you down. BUT - we have

people that are dedicated to vets, that put programs like this in motion, and go above and beyond to help us maintain successful lives. For me, I found myself thrown into a dark nightmare. Rick and Lori came in and turned on a light.

If the vets in our community knew there was help for them when they needed it, think of how many lives and families would be impacted by that. I don't know who all I am addressing with this testimonial but if you have any capability of spreading this helpful information to the people that need it, please do so. From a Veteran's perspective, this program was so helpful, but from a mother's perspective, this program was life changing for the ones that mean the most ... our family. Thank you for impacting my family permanently and in a positive manner. We will never forget you!"

2016-2017: SNAPSHOT

Supportive Services for Veteran Families

- **46 VETERAN HOUSEHOLDS SERVED**
- **21 HOUSEHOLDS OBTAINED PERMANENT, AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND NO LONGER NEEDED ASSISTANCE**

For more information on the SSVF program please call (814) 726-2400 and ext. 3304 (Barry McElroy) or ext. 3305 (Rick Wagonseller)

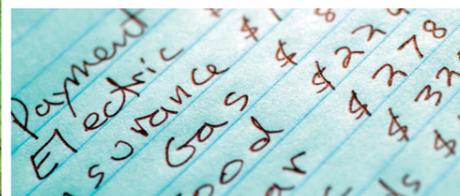
A YEAR IN COMMUNITY SERVICES

The Community Services Department operates out of the offices located at the Faith Inn shelter in downtown Warren. This versatile department works hand-in-hand with other Agency programs to provide vital support services designed to help clients gain the needed skills, knowledge, and assistance that will help them on their journey to self-sufficiency. Programs and services have consistently proven to be beneficial and help our clients as they address personal barriers. This multi-layered approach, which extends throughout all Agency programs, also uses our well-developed network of partnerships with other area social service providers.

BUDGET COUNSELING

The Warren-Forest Counties EOC is an approved HUD Housing Counseling Agency. We offer financial coaching and education programs to help clients create sustainable household budgets, understand and improve their credit, tackle debt, and better manage their finances. We also work with clients interested in purchasing a home and provide education that helps clients understand affordability, hidden costs of homeownership, different loan products, and savings. In addition, we assist with foreclosure interventions and loan modifications. This year:

- **1 HOUSEHOLD AVOIDED A FORECLOSURE**
- **4 HOUSEHOLDS HAD PRE-PURCHASE COUNSELING**
- **20 HOUSEHOLDS CREATED AND FOLLOWED A SUSTAINABLE BUDGET**



UTILITIES & HOUSING

Rent and utilities often come up during our budget counseling sessions. In times of crisis the Agency also offers several programs which can help in different situations. These programs include the Homeless Assistance Program or HAP, Dollar Energy Grant, Neighbor-for-Neighbor (National Fuel), UGI CAP, Columbia Gas CAP Program, and Emergency Food & Shelter. This past year:

- **183 HOUSEHOLDS (419 PEOPLE) ENROLLED IN UTILITY ASSISTANCE OR EMERGENCY PROGRAMS TO STOP SHUT OFFS**

TRANSPORTATION

Winding down throughout this program year was the pilot transportation program first offered in 2015. This program focused on addressing a common barrier to stable employment for low-income individuals and families in our community - access to safe and reliable transportation. An innovative, 12-month program was designed which entailed obtaining vehicles, either through purchase of used vehicles or via donation, and then providing these to eligible clients who met specific criteria. This criteria centered around those individuals in need of a vehicle to maintain their current employment or secure a better employment opportunity.

Participants attended budget counseling sessions, received case management, and agreed to meet at least every 90 days over the course of a year. This past year we enrolled the final four participating households. Two additional households from the previous year successfully completed the program.



GETTING TO WORK

The Agency has two essential employment programs which are designed to help clients identify and address barriers to obtaining and maintaining a job. The first program, Work Ready, is a referral based, time limited program where clients understand their barriers and work closely with a dedicated Case Manager to overcome these. Typically, clients in this program are also working on basic job skills needed to be successful in today's workplace. Similar to Work Ready, Employment and Training is a faster paced program where clients are actively job searching. This program is often an excellent support service for other Agency programs which helps with resume and cover letter writing, interview skills, basic computer skills, and job search.

Last year, Work Ready worked closely with several clients completing vocational programs while also providing community service and paid work experience for other participants. Some notable achievements include:

- **1 CLIENT COMPLETED A CERTIFICATE IN PHLEBOTOMY AND OBTAINED FULL TIME EMPLOYMENT**
- **1 CLIENT COMPLETED 6 MONTHS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE AND OBTAINED JOB SKILLS**
- **10 CLIENTS OBTAINED AND KEPT EMPLOYMENT FOR 90 DAYS**

THE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Northwest Savings Bank (NWSB), headquartered in Warren, PA, rose to the challenge this year and partnered with the Warren-Forest Counties Economic Opportunity Council in our continued effort to address the lack of affordable housing options for vulnerable populations within our community.

Robert A. Raible, Executive Director of the Warren-Forest Counties Economic Opportunity Council is shown at far right accepting a check from (left to right) Shane Oschman and Marina Burch of Northwest Savings Bank for the Neighborhood Assistance Program offered through the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development. In this program,

local businesses partner with agencies in projects that address specific needs within the community.

This generous donation was used to fund predevelopment, site preparation, and professional design for an affordable housing project currently under construction in downtown Warren. Utilizing an empty lot, the Agency used these funds to move forward with necessary infrastructure, survey, site prep, and design of a single-story duplex which will be ADA accessible and be used as permanent, affordable housing for eligible families living in Warren County.



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



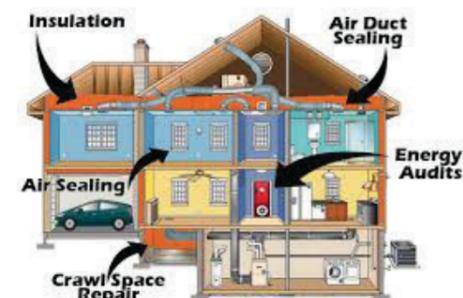
This year marked the beginning of an exciting, coordinated project located on St. Clair Street in downtown Warren at the former Ekey Floral Shop. The project adds to the growing number of affordable, permanent housing option owned by the Warren-Forest Counties Economic Opportunity Council by also including the adjacent residence. The project is a joint venture with the Warren County Mental Wellness Association which plans to utilize the residence as a Fairweather Lodge for up to 4 participants.

The Fairweather Lodge concept was developed by Dr. George Fairweather in 1963. Through extensive study, Dr. Fairweather found that people with mental health issues are less likely to return to institutional settings and/or homelessness when they live and work together as a group. Research also showed that people in this type of program tended to stay in the community longer, employment opportunities were created, and it was less costly.

In addition to the added housing, the project also includes rehabilitation of the Ekey Floral Shop building into interview space for the Warren County Child Advocacy Center and offices / retail space for the Fairweather Lodge's business enterprise - a landscaping/gardening and architectural salvage retail store. A 720 square foot greenhouse was constructed which will allow for fresh vegetables and other items to be grown throughout the colder months.

Photos: (Top left) A view of the residence before, (Top right) A view of the residence after rehabilitation, (Middle) A view of the former Ekey Flower Shop before, (Bottom) A view of the now Warren County Child Advocacy Center and Fairweather Lodge Commercial Space

WEATHERIZATION



Multiple Agency programs fall under the Weatherization umbrella. These programs are available to low-income households and are designed to help clients control heating costs while working to create a more energy efficient, safe, and healthy home.

Programs include Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (both crisis and non-crisis), Penelec WARM, National Fuel, and the Department of Energy's program. All are targeted toward the elderly, disabled, and low-income residents to assist with improvements to the home that will conserve energy and reduce high utility bills.

Weatherization may include blower guided air sealing, improving insulation and ventilation, health and safety measures, and in some situations, may also include the replacement or repair of qualified appliances.

In the 2016 - 2017 year:

- **18 HOUSEHOLDS (32 PEOPLE) RECEIVED DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY SERVICES**
- **147 HOUSEHOLDS IN WARREN, FOREST, AND VENANGO COUNTIES (286 PEOPLE) RECEIVED LIHEAP CRISIS**
- **7 HOUSEHOLDS (14 PEOPLE) BENEFITED FROM THE NON-CRISIS LIHEAP**
- **12 HOUSEHOLDS (35 PEOPLE) WERE SERVED BY NATIONAL FUEL LIURP**
- **5 HOUSEHOLDS (12 PEOPLE) WERE SERVED BY NATIONAL FUEL ERR**
- **104 HOUSEHOLDS (276 PEOPLE) PARTICIPATED IN THE PENELEC WARM PROGRAM**



PRODUCE EXPRESS

Each month the Warren-Forest Counties Economic Opportunity Council helps facilitate the distribution of the Produce Express. This program is brought to the community via the Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest Pennsylvania. Distribution day is the third Thursday of each month. A limited number of boxes are available so this program is first come, first served with the Agency coordinating

applications and monthly sign ups for a distribution slot.

Each box is filled with seasonal, fresh fruit and vegetables as well as non-perishable items. Good nutrition and access to fresh fruits and vegetables has been identified as a need for most low-income households with limited transportation and cost also becoming contributing factors. During the program year:

232 FAMILIES RECEIVED A PRODUCE EXPRESS BOX FOR AT LEAST ONE MONTH!

SAFE & HEALTHY HOMES PROGRAM

In partnership with the Lawrence County Community Action Partnership and the Department of Health, the Warren-Forest EOC was able to offer families in our community the Safe and Healthy Homes program. The goal of this program is to address the leading causes of injuries that can occur in and around the home. In Pennsylvania, the leading causes of these injuries are falls, poison, and hot objects which lead to hospitalization. This is particularly true in homes with children and/or pregnant women.

To qualify, household income must be less than 300% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines OR the family can be referred by another program. A Pre-Home Assessment is completed by asking a brief series of questions prior to scheduling an in-home assessment by a certified Healthy Homes Practitioner. During the assessment households are provided with needed essentials to help improve the safety and health of the home. These may include smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, first aid kits, a fire extinguisher, and a listing of available community resources. The program also focuses on not only assessing a home for safety but also educating the family on potential hazards and ways to address them.

36 FAMILIES PARTICIPATED!

HELPING THE HOMELESS | Our Year In Housing

The Warren-Forest Counties Economic Opportunity Council provides multiple housing programs to help meet the needs of the more vulnerable people within our community. Primarily, our programs are designed to provide needed services and options for homeless individuals and families as well as those with a mental health diagnosis. Our programs include emergency shelter/housing, transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, and various housing assistance options. The success of the programs can only be achieved with the hard work and dedication of our trained case managers as well as coordination and positive partnerships with various human service agencies within the community. This ensures that clients are linked with the essential services that they need in order to stabilize the household and move one step closer to self-sufficiency. Our goal is always to assist individuals in advancing from crisis situations to permanent housing and independent living.

AT ANY GIVEN TIME WE CAN SERVE 64 HOUSEHOLDS IN 19 BUILDINGS THROUGH OUR VARIOUS HOUSING PROGRAMS!



SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

The permanent supportive housing program is based in Youngsville, PA and consists of four apartment units. The program serves chronically homeless individuals and families with disabilities. Officially starting in October 2016, this program has served four households. All have been assisted in obtaining employment and completing steps towards locating and obtaining permanent housing to successfully complete the transition from a homeless situation.

One young woman in the program entered in February 2017. She is a single mother and was due to have her second child in May. She concurrently entered the EOC Work Ready program and obtained needed job skills throughout her pregnancy. After having her second child, this young woman began actively seeking employment with a new sense of confidence which helped her secure and keep a job bringing in much needed income to support herself and her children. The client then focused on the next step with the EOC Housing Specialist and worked to find a permanent housing option for her family. She successfully moved out in October 2017.



PERMANENT HOUSING

The Agency currently oversees ten permanent housing properties with apartment units available to eligible individuals in Warren and Forest Counties. Within the ten buildings are a total of 32 units. This program provides much needed affordable housing for residents with a mental illness and/or chemical dependency disorder, transitional age youth, and forensic mental health clients. Transitional age youth refers to those between 16 and 24 years of age who are exiting state custody or foster care and are considered at risk. Forensic mental health consumer refers to those who have a past record with the criminal justice system and were found to have a mental health issue. Services are designed to help them live independently and crime free.

Throughout the 2016 to 2017 year we had very minimal turn over indicating that our clients are remaining safely housed and actively participating in their support services.

- **57 INDIVIDUALS IN 35 HOUSEHOLDS WERE SAFELY HOUSED THROUGH THIS PROGRAM**

THE PATH PROGRAM

This program is designed to assist individuals with mental health issues to transition into permanent housing. The PATH Mental Health Housing Specialist is responsible for overseeing the 4 transitional houses located on North State Street at the Warren State Hospital Grounds. Referrals come from a variety of sources which include, but are not limited to, jails/prisons, rehab facilities, walk-ins, families, psychiatric facilities, and hospitals. While other housing programs often contain strict eligibility guidelines, PATH is designed to be more flexible so it can accommodate those who might otherwise fall through the cracks. There is no income requirement. Individuals must simply be homeless or at risk and have a mental health diagnosis.



During the 2016-2017 year:

- **34 INDIVIDUALS WERE HOUSED BY THE PROGRAM**
- **AGES RANGED FROM 18-63**
- **9 INDIVIDUALS OBTAINED THEIR OWN APARTMENT**

There was one story which stood out for us this year. JW entered the PATH program with an extensive criminal history. Though he was unable to secure stable employment while in the program, he made the best of a bad situation and is working on being self-employed with his own construction business. He was unable to move directly into his family's home without permission from his parole officer and was seeking a way to reunite his family. Entering the program, JW was thankful to have an opportunity for a fresh start. He had lost his brother to

drug addiction and an overdose. This was eye-opening and ultimately what has pushed him to change. JW put hours into cleaning and job seeking during his time in the program. He constantly brought the EOC Housing Specialist updates on his job search. After several months it became clear that JW wasn't just contemplating a change but was actively working to be self-sufficient and was finally allowed to move in with his family. He left us with this message:

"Change is hard at first, messy in the middle, and gorgeous at the end!"

In the upcoming year our focus will continue to be on instilling life skills for the transitional age youth entering the program while working to ensure that they have obtained the proper education level to secure employment in the future. Other clients will continue to be empowered to seek gainful career based employment. Staff is also trained and certified to assist in submitting initial Social Security applications for clients through the S.O.A.R. program. Our goal is ultimately to continuously strive toward improving our services, having a well-trained and caring staff, and ultimately providing our clients with a positive and rewarding experience.

WHAT IS S.O.A.R.?

The goals of the SOAR program relate to one of SAMHSA's Strategic Initiatives- Recovery Supports. SOAR seeks to end homelessness through increased access to SSI/SSDI income supports, directly addressing SAMHSA's assertion: "To recover, people need a safe stable place to live." This is essential, and for many persons in recovery accessing benefits is a first step. But SOAR extends beyond and also encourages employment as a means to increase individual income and promote recovery.

PATHWAYS TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY

The Faith Inn Homeless Shelter and Rapid ReHousing Program has been operated by the Warren-Forest Counties EOC since 2011 and has been made possible through the Emergency Solutions Grant program. Throughout the 2016-2017 program year:

- **48 HOUSEHOLDS WERE SHELTERED AT THE FAITH INN**
- **18 HOUSEHOLDS SUCCESSFULLY PARTICIPATED IN THE RAPID REHOUSING**
- **THE PROGRAM HAS A 69% SUCCESS RATE IN HELPING HOUSEHOLDS MOVE INTO PERMANENT HOUSING**

The Faith Inn consists of three efficiency apartments, (4) one bedroom apartments, and (2) two bedroom apartments. Households must be between 0-30% of the Area Median Income to be eligible.



While staying at the Faith Inn clients work with the Housing Specialist and meet on at least a weekly basis. Clients are also required to actively participate in Budget Counseling, Employment and Training, and any additional Agency program or those offered by other agencies which may assist them in achieving and success-

fully maintaining permanent housing solution. Other agencies or programs may include, but are not limited to: Beacon Light Behavioral Health, Deerfield Behavioral Health, CCIS, Head Start, Children & Youth, local schools, and the Salvation Army. Weekly apartment inspections are conducted every Friday to ensure that participants are learning and utilizing skills which will help them be better tenants. Once an income has been established and participants demonstrate the ability to maintain a home of their own, assistance in locating and contacting community landlords about apartments is provided. The Housing Specialist will also accompany participants to meet with landlords, discuss rent, security deposit, utilities, and any rules or requirements specific to that apartment. The Housing Specialist will also assist participants with obtaining utility security deposits, turn on of utility services, move-in, and obtaining basic necessities as needed on a case-by-case basis.

STARTING OVER AS A SINGLE DAD

A young man came into the Faith Inn during the past year with his infant daughter in tow. He had no job, no income, limited family or social supports, a criminal record, and a small child depending on him. He relied heavily on his sister for help with his daughter and his Probation Officer who was at that time providing a good portion of his personal care items and funds to help him keep his laundry clean so that he could attend interviews. Despite the barriers he faced, he hit the ground running and was seeking employment the day after he moved into the Faith Inn. Looking for a job soon proved frustrating and he quickly found himself feeling

hopeless. He was certain that every strike was counting against him and he was fearful that he would fail in his quest to be a good provider and father for his young daughter. Each interview brought increasing stress and self-doubt. Often he would say:

"I made a mistake, but never thought I'd pay for it for the rest of my life!"

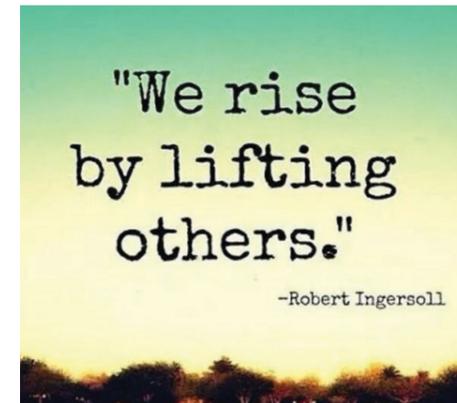
Housing staff provided endless support and encouragement. They practiced "mock interviews" and reminded him that it would only take ONE above average interview to set him apart. He felt as though he was taking away from others in need of assistance and often stated that he "wasn't worthy of all of the help he was receiving." Interviews became an almost daily activity and he would come back to the office each time to discuss how hopeful he was that "this is finally going to be the day I get an offer." Unfortunately the days turned into weeks. But he never gave up hope.

He interviewed for a position he felt he was qualified for on 4 different occasions. Each time he would be told he needed to meet with another supervisor before they could make a decision. By this time he was approaching the end of his 30-day stay and was fearful for what would happen. His court fines were mounting and he was struggling to care for his child. Then, during his 5th interview he was offered a job!

"I can hold my head up and be a good daddy and provider for my baby girl!"

By the end of his 60th day at the shelter he was prepared to move into his own apartment with the help of the Rapid ReHousing Program. He had secured child care for his daughter, had created a manageable budget, made some new friends at his job, and no longer feels alone. He continues to say "Thank you" and tells all of how lucky he was to get a second chance.

THE TRANSITIONAL HOUSING FOR SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM



This program is known as a scattered site program consisting of four total apartment units. Two of these units are located in one building on the west end of Warren while the other two are located in a second building on the opposite side of town. Referrals for this program primarily come from A Safe Place and participants are able to stay for up to 24-months.

While in the program, A Safe Place continues to be an active partner by providing counseling to each participant. The Warren-Forest Counties EOC Housing Specialist provides active case management services which include assistance in finding and securing permanent housing.

In the 2016-2017 program year:

- **8 HOUSEHOLDS WERE SHELTERED**
- **100% OF THE PARTICIPANTS EXITED INTO PERMANENT, SAFE, AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING SOLUTIONS**

A SURVIVOR'S STORY

One young woman who participated in the program during 2016-2017 had been in an emotionally abusive relationship for years. She first applied to the Faith Inn shelter hoping for some help. From there, the housing staff

worked to enroll her into the Transitional Housing Program with her two small children.

Despite being in a crisis, this young woman put a smile on her face each morning and maintained employment at a restaurant. After moving into the Transitional Housing apartment she had time to catch her breath and start looking for a better employment opportunity that would allow her to support herself and her children. Eventually she was offered a job which provided benefits at a local factory. Working with the Housing Specialist, she applied for a child care subsidy through the CCIS program which would allow her to work at her new job.

It didn't take her long to save money and start considering her next step. Working closely with the Housing Specialist from the EOC, this young woman looked for and found a suitable apartment for herself and her two children within the community. She moved out and at her two-month follow up she was still happily situated in the apartment and working at her job. For the first time in a long time she finally felt as though she could honestly tell people that things were going well and she was rebuilding her life.

The program will sadly be winding down to better meet the needs of the community and beginning July 1, 2018 the 4 units will be utilized as permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless individuals / families with a mental illness and/or a disability.

Every minute, 20 people are the victim of domestic violence.

- Center for Disease Control

A YEAR IN HEAD START

"The positive changes in him since starting are amazing! He now loves learning, learned his ABC's in less than a month, and is more independent in helping himself!"

- 2016 to 2017 Head Start Parent



Head Start is a federally funded preschool program promoting school readiness for children ages 3 to 5 by enhancing their cognitive, social, and emotional development in a classroom environment through a combination of individual and group activities. Our qualified teachers, working closely with classroom aides, strive to not only prepare our community's young children for Kindergarten, but also to address health, nutrition, social, and other needs for each child and family based on a family needs assessment. Teachers possess a four year degree in education with certification or experience in early childhood education. The classroom aides, at a minimum, possess the Child Development Associate credential (CDA). This past year we had twelve classes operating 4 days per week for 128 total class days. Classes were held Tuesday through

Friday for enrolled students. There were four double session classes operating 3.5 hours per day and eight regular session classes that operated 5 hours per day in five centers located throughout Warren County. Center location include the McClintock Center in Warren, Seneca Center in Warren, Allegheny Valley Center in Clarendon, Youngsville Center in Youngsville, and the Lottsville Center in Bear Lake.

Of the total enrollment 146 children were income eligible, 5 children were homeless, and 34 were between 101-130% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. There were an additional 11 children who were from over income families. This means that of all enrolled children:

94%
were income eligible

FACTS & FIGURES

- **Funded Enrollment | 185**
- **Total Enrolled | 196**
- **Total Families Served | 181**
- **Number of 4 Year Olds | 110**
- **Number of 3 Year Olds | 86**
- **Second Year Student | 74**
- **Average Attendance | 90%**
- **Children Transported To and From Class by Head Start | 178**
- **Meals Served | 42,539**
- **Total Volunteer Hours | 1,157**
- **Total Volunteers | 105**

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Our Head Start program emphasizes the role of the parents as their child's first and most important teacher. We work to build relationships with families to support well-being, positive parent-child interaction, families as learners and lifelong educators, engagement in transitions, connections to peers and community, and being an advocate and leader. Throughout each school year, the Warren-Forest EOC Head Start program provides opportunities for family engagement such as:

- Volunteering in the classroom
- Curriculum themed celebrations
- Field trips
- Home visits
- Parent / staff conferences
- Policy Council / Governing Board
- Trainings and workshops
- Newsletters from the classroom
- Holiday celebrations



HEALTHY HABITS FOR HEALTHY KIDS!

Health services and screening are an important part of our program each year. We begin with a mass screening event for all new students to assess developmental, mental health, vision, hearing, physical, dental exam, height/weight, and articulation to establish student baselines. This event also allows our dedicated staff to identify areas where children and families may need assistance in order to access services which they may be eligible for.



By the end of the school year:

- 184 children had received all needed immunizations
- 100% of enrolled students had an established medical home and had received a well child exam
- 176 children were screened for lead; 31 were identified as having elevated levels
- 100% of enrolled students had a dental screening
- 67 children needed follow up dental treatments; 57 had received this care by the end of the year
- 100% of enrolled students received a developmental screening; 12 children were referred for additional screening and of those 5 received treatment
- 100% of enrolled students had vision and hearing screenings and a growth assessment
- 32 children had a diagnosed disability and received additional services. Of them, 14 children were identified at mass screening.



LINKING TO SERVICES

Family Resource Assistants work closely with all of our families throughout the year to help address any additional barriers that the family may face. Last year we helped:

- 178 parents completed the Family Partnership Agreement which identified family goals
- 155 parents met their family goals
- 36 children were enrolled in an affordable child care option
- 181 families obtained health care
- 131 families received SNAP
- 100 families received WIC
- 19 families received food assistance via Produce Express
- 109 parents committed to improving their child's health outcomes
- 35 out of 48 identified households received housing assistance
- 9 out of 9 identified families with an incarcerated family member received assistance
- 3 out of 9 identified families took advantage of programs to assist with asset building
- 69 out of 73 identified families received emergency and/or crisis intervention services
- 15 out of 25 identified families obtained transportation

HEAD START HEALTH CARE INSTITUTE

This past program year, the Warren-Forest Counties EOC Head Start program was 1 of 30 programs out of the 150 nationwide chosen to participate in the National Center of Early Childhood Health and Wellness - UCLA Health Care Institute training opportunity which targets key health issues over 4 years. 109 of our Head Start families received training to learn how to provide better care for their children's health needs. By doing so, parents became more engaged, better informed, empowered decision makers, and had an overall boost to their self-esteem and confidence as caregivers for their children.

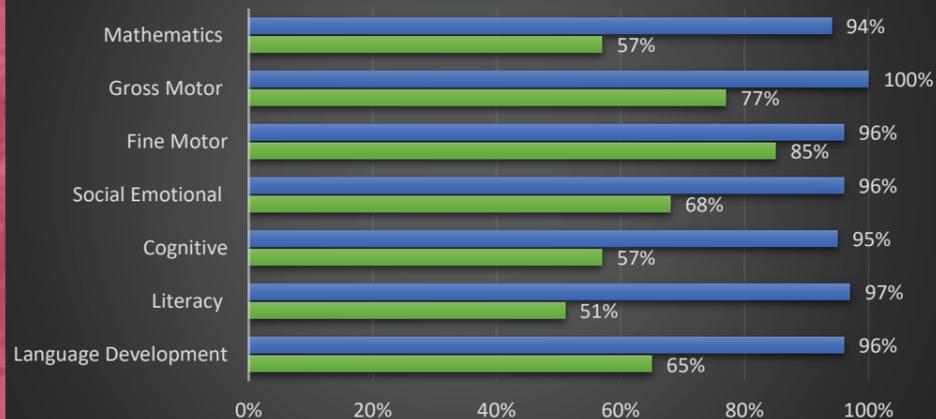
Participating families received a copy of, *What to do When Your Child Gets Sick*, to have at home. The book also reinforces safety in the home and includes tips for: setting the temperature of your hot water tank, poison prevention, medication dosage, and more! Families reported that they were treating their ill child at home first and scheduling appointments rather than using the emergency room.

Year two of training will focus on Oral Healthcare and families will receive *What to do for Healthy Teeth*.

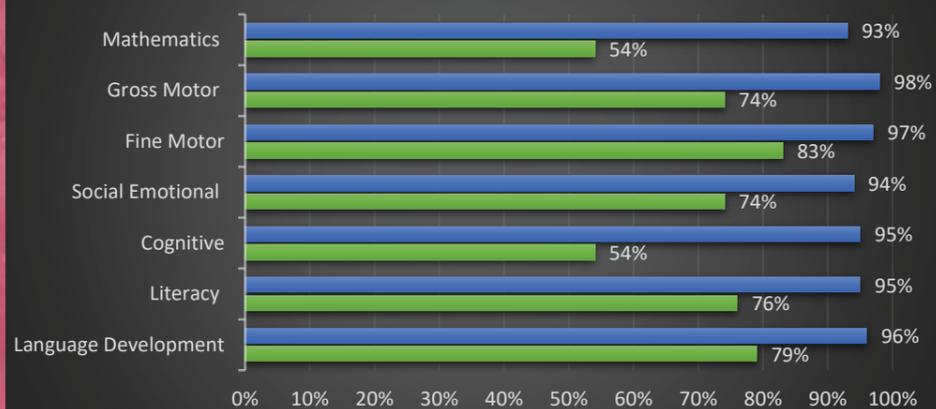
The program is designed to help Head Start grantees improve the health of their staff, families, and children.



Assessment Data - 3 Year Olds



Assessment Results - 4 Year Olds



STUDENT ASSESSMENT



In Head Start, students are assessed continuously through observation, data collection, and evaluation. Assessments are completed in fall, winter, and spring of observed progress in seven key development areas using the Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment System. The charts above show program wide growth in all areas. The green bar is the fall assessment and the blue is for the spring. The seven key areas are defined as follows:

Physical (Fine Motor) | Using fingers and hands, holding writing and drawing tools appropriately

Literacy | Demonstrating knowledge of the alphabet, knowledge of print, comprehends and responds to books, demonstrates emerging writing skills

Physical (Gross Motor) | Demonstrates traveling, balancing, and gross-motor manipulative skills

Language | Listens to and understands increasingly complex language, uses language to express thoughts and needs, appropriate conversation

Cognitive | Demonstrates positive approach to learning, remembers and connects experiences, uses classification skills, uses symbols and images to represent something not present

Mathematics | Uses number concepts and operations, explores and describes spatial relationships and shapes, compares and measures, knowledge of patterns



FEDERAL REVIEWS

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) recently conducted three reviews of our program focusing on Federal regulations critical to the delivery of quality services.

3.7.2017 to 3.8.2017 | An ERSEA (Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance) review for the Warren- Forest Counties Economic Opportunity Council Head Start program. There were no areas of noncompliance found during the review.

3.22.2017 | A CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program) review was completed to ensure that new meal pattern guidelines set forth by the United States Department of Agriculture were being implemented. No areas of noncompliance were found.

4.5.2016 | A CLASS Review assesses the effectiveness of classroom interactions among teachers and children. During federal reviews, teachers are monitored by an outside observer hired by the Department of Health and Human Services. Teachers are observed and evaluated in three areas: emotional support with a national threshold of 4, classroom support with a threshold of 3, and instructional support with a threshold of 2. Our results were:

- Emotional Support - 6.35
- Classroom Organization - 6.3
- Instructional Support - 3.4

5.9.2016 to 5.13.2016 | Comprehensive Services/School Readiness review was completed and no areas of non-compliance were found.

MOVING ON UP & OFF TO KINDERGARTEN!!

In the 2016-2017 year, 110 children transitioned into Kindergarten at the end of the year. Smooth transitions from our Head Start program into Kindergarten are a result of strong connections made between Head Start and families; Head Start and area kindergarten teachers; and Head Start and kindergarten classroom visitations. In the past year we used a variety of activities and methods to help make the transition as smooth as possible. These included providing opportunities for classroom visitations, meeting with the MAWA (Mutually Agreed Upon Written Agreement) agency and principals to ensure that there would be no break in services for children with disabilities, empowering parents to advocate for their children, creating packets of activities for parents and children over summer break, ensuring families have necessary information to register their child, and working closely to collaborate with parents, staff, principals, and kindergarten teachers.



Our goal each school year is for all of our students to have as smooth a transition as possible from Head Start to Kindergarten. The Creative Curriculum used by Head Start is one component used to best prepare students. In addition, PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) is introduced and utilized in all of our classrooms to enhance areas of social-emotional development which include self-control, self-esteem, friendships, and interpersonal problem solving while working to reduce aggression and other behavioral problems. We have seen a decrease in challenging behaviors which leads to a more positive learning environment.



PA PRE-K COUNTS

In Warren County the Warren-Forest Counties Economic Opportunity Council is the lead agency for the state funded pre-school program, PreK Counts, in our community. The program is available to area 3 and 4 year olds living in households with an income that is at or below 300% of the federal poverty level. There are 26 funded slots in the county split between two agencies providing early education services. The Warren-Forest Counties EOC Head Start program provides early education programming to 20 of the 26 slots. Jefferson De-Frees Family Center is contracted to provide programming and services to the remaining 6 children. Children participate in 180 days of classroom instruction. Classes are five days per week and 6 hours each day. This allows for 5 hours of instruction plus breakfast and lunch.

BY THE NUMBERS

- Funded Enrollment | 20
- Actual Enrollment | 20
- Number of 4 Year Olds | 7
- Number of 3 Year Olds | 13
- Children with a Disability | 2
- Children with an IEP | 2
- Income at or Below 300% | 20
- Average Yearly Attendance | 90%
- Total Meals Served | 6,382

PRE-K SCREENING

Similar to their Head Start counterparts, our PreK Counts students begin the school year at the mass screening event where developmental progress, hearing, vision, and growth checks are completed. All 20 enrolled children had a medical home. All children had physicals and had received all recommended immunizations. Additionally:

- 100% had dental exams
- 100% had hearing screening
- 100% had vision screening; 1 child was referred for treatment
- 100% had growth assessments; 2 children were identified as overweight and 3 children were obese
- 19 of 20 children had health insurance by the end of the school year
- 100% had a social-emotional development screening
- Over the course of the year, 3 children were referred for social-emotional development screening due to results or classroom concerns; 1 child was eligible for services, 2 screened but not eligible for evaluation, and 2 were eligible for services via Intermediate Unit 5



DOLLARS & CENTS

STATEMENT OF AGENCY REVENUE & EXPENSES Actual for FY 2016-2017 / Estimated for FY 2017-2018

REVENUE

Federal Revenue	\$3,284,621.98
State Revenue	\$1,432,656.58
Local Revenue	\$281,640.19
Interest/Dividend Earned	\$57,008.34
In Kind Contributions	\$619,138.68
USDA Reimbursement	\$112,951.45
Donations (Cash & Carry Items)	\$71,070.77
Rent & Security Deposits	\$175,876.43
Other Income	\$2,376.24
TOTAL REVENUE	\$6,037,340.66

EXPENDITURES

Personnel	\$2,308,988.66
Consultants	\$113,171.81
Audit	\$42,441.75
Travel	\$27,236.38
Supplies	\$324,598.49
Training	\$55,504.50
Insurance	\$40,266.15
Advertising/Printing	\$9,490.16
Equipment/Vehicle	\$289,134.26
Playground	\$10,285.00
Household Furnishings	\$20,803.06
Fleet of Vehicles	\$47,842.10
Materials-Labor-Rehab	\$127,695.67
Space Costs	\$246,151.06
Inkind / Match (Donated Items)	\$619,138.68
Direct Aide to Families	\$125,710.47
Telephone/Postage/Cable	\$33,985.46
Acquisition Costs/Taxes/New Construction	\$113,777.47
Gain on Investment / Bank Fees	\$6,021.49
Depreciation	\$77,202.80
Maintenance & Repair	\$79,058.50
Other Costs	\$12,231.76
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$4,730,735.68

OBLIGATED FUNDS

Deferred Revenue	\$643,128.68
Due to Grantor (Includes Interest)	\$0
Closed to Fund Balances	\$663,476.30

HEAD START (YEAR 36) REVENUE & EXPENSES Actual for FY 2016-2017

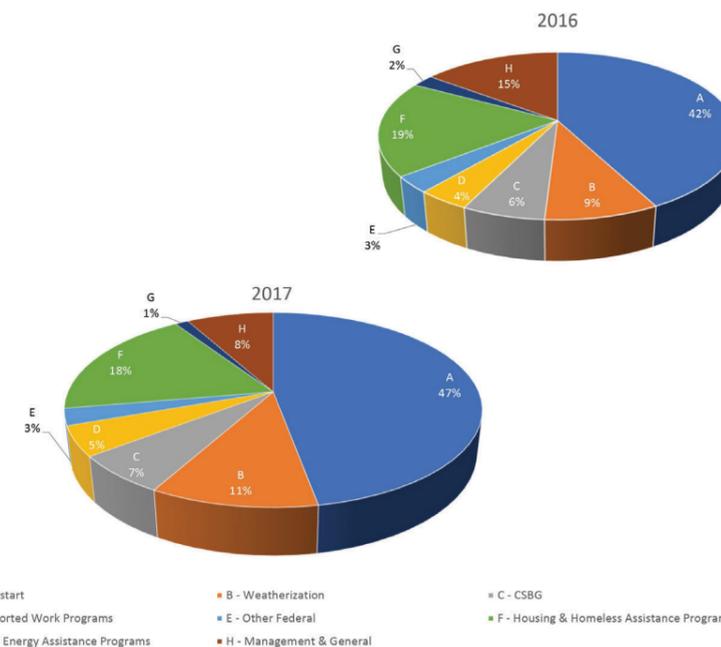
REVENUE

Federal Revenue	\$1,818,466.00
Donations	\$1,700.00
Non Federal Contributions	\$461,158.46
USDA Reimbursement	\$104,649.31
CSBG Support to Programs	\$57,018.23
TOTAL REVENUE	\$2,442,992.00

EXPENDITURES

Salaries	\$781,834.57
Fringe Benefits	\$322,048.47
Indirect	\$217,013.83
Classroom Supplies	\$104,673.53
Child / Adult Food	\$137,597.31
Transportation	\$38,491.91
Training	\$44,249.89
Insurance	\$14,245.04
Space Costs	\$59,244.10
Match (In Kind)	\$461,158.46
Communication (Phone & Post)	\$11,545.19
Computers / Software	\$4,456.85
Equipment / Vehicle (bus) Purchase	\$234,745.90
Other	\$11,686.95
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$2,442,992.00

The 2016-2017 annual audit, conducted by the firm of Mauthe, Yutzey, Gabler, and Troxell, LLC, showed no material findings, and/or deficiencies.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS & AGENCY STAFF



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Head Start Director | Roxanne Carifo

Grant Administrator & Community Services Director | Jeanne Fralick

Weatherization | Brittany Spicer

Community Development | Lyn Pryor

Fiscal Director | Dawn Turner

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Cynthia Gray

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Nokomis Stanton

Paul Streich

Melanie Swab

Tressa Sweeney

Shelly Teska

Shelle Tubbs

Dawn Turner

Rick Wagonseller

Nancy Walters

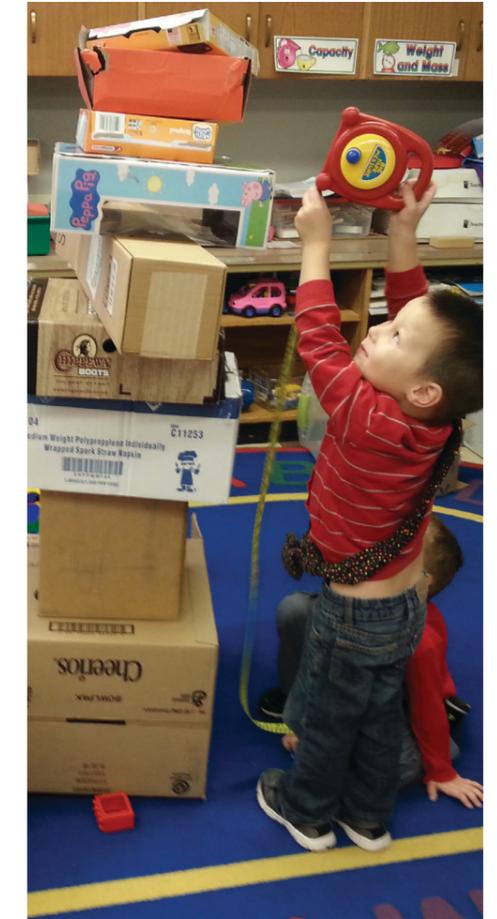
Donna Wilcox

Amy Willisie

Jacob Wolfe

Janene Zaffino

A huge thank you to all of our board members and staff who made all of our accomplishments this year possible!



The Warren-Forest Counties Economic Opportunity Council, Inc. (EOC) is a Community Action Agency sponsored by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The EOC is supported by the Warren County and Forest County Commissioners as well as municipalities, agencies, and organizations in Northwestern Pennsylvania. This project was financed by a grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development.

Warren-Forest Counties EOC is a private, 501(c)3 non-profit organization established in 1965. As such, donations to the Agency are tax-deductible. We appreciate the community's generosity in helping us fulfill our mission. The agency utilizes available funds to operate programs designed to reduce poverty in Warren and Forest Counties through various programs offered to low-income families and individuals. Since its' inception, the agency has ventured to move individuals to a higher economic position through services provided and by instilling a self-reliant and self-sufficient attitude in each client. This is and will continue to be the Agency's highest priority.

If you are interested in donating, please make checks or money orders payable to WFCEOC, 1209 Pennsylvania Avenue, West, PO Box 547, Warren, PA 16365. Donations of gently used clothes and housewares such as furniture, dishes, etc. are always greatly appreciated.

Please contact us at (814) 726-2400 for more information about our various programs and services.

The Warren-Forest Counties Economic Opportunity Council, Inc. is registered as a Charitable Organization with the Department of State, Bureau of Corporations and Charitable Organizations under The Solicitation of Funds for Charitable Purposes Act, 10 P.S. § 162.1 et. seq., and is authorized to solicit charitable contributions under the conditions and limitations set forth under the Act.

