

# The Community Actioneer

GARRETT COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION

Written by and for our Employees



Jody Teets

By Glenn Tolbert & Marguerite Hayhurst

Despite having been with Community Action for 8 years, Jody Teets is hard to find. Taking the elevator, you press "B" and when the doors open you find yourself in the basement. Open the door on your left, walk past a desk and go almost all the way to the back of the room. Finally, there she is. Her wide smile beacons a welcome to fellow workers and to clients alike. Teets became "people friendly" during her 2 years with AmeriCorps. Working full-time and raising a family, she has managed to be only 1 credit away from her AA degree. But they can't teach in any school the warmth and empathy that she exudes to the people she serves. Listen to her as she proudly describes the programs she is involved in:

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## Community & Emergency Services

The After School programs, operated in Friendsville, Grantsville and Loch Lynn, serve grades 3-8; 100 school children are enrolled. The program provides an opportunity for safe, structured learning in a healthy and positive environment. Children receive tutoring and mentoring, supervised activities, receive snacks and socialize.



The Energy Assistance program has taken over 2,000 applications since July 1, and includes EUSP assistance (electric), arrearage program (utilities) and others.

Linda Green, Director of C&ES, said her staff of 16 conducts year-round outreach efforts at community centers and apartment complexes in outlying areas to make it easier for people to apply for assistance.

The Brown Bag program provides nutritious donated food to over 800 county households. The program serves income-eligible residents and assists them in maintaining their independence and self-sufficiency for a nominal charge. The Brown Bag Program is a community-based program; it is not perceived as welfare or charity. Individuals and families who would not consider applying for food stamps or other services are comfortable participating in Brown Bag.

Under TEFAP, Maryland provides commodity foods to nonprofits, which in turn distribute the food directly to income-eligible households. "We've served over 1,100 households this year" says Teets.

C&ES coordinates effort between GCHD and C&ES to provide food baskets to 12 needy families at Thanksgiving and Christmas.

C&ES provides assistance with electric power terminations; Allegheny Power routes donations to Community Action to assist residents in paying electric bills and preventing terminations, donations are received

from all over the US.

The Blanket Drive is a campaign to collect blankets and distribute to needy households throughout the county. Harvest for the Hungry is a food drive combining efforts of local school children to collect donated food. The food will be distributed to households experiencing food crises.

C&ES makes referrals to Christian Crossings and Oak Park Church whose volunteers donate their time, effort and monetary donations to eligible households.

Our Christmas project varies; we select needy families or perhaps an elderly person and give them Christmas presents they would otherwise not have received. She recalled one of last year's recipients, "It gladdened our hearts to see his face..." They assisted 7 families and 16 children last year.

*"It gladdened our hearts to see his face..."*

Jody speaks for C&ES in saying she sees the community's need first-hand, she feels their efforts are improving the quality of life for residents through the wide variety of programs and projects. She rejects the notion that Community Action is a "hand-out" agency, and points out the stringent eligibility guidelines that must be met prior to receiving assistance; only the most disadvantaged benefit from these programs. She noted one example of a child in an After School program whose parents could not read. They were unable to help their own child with homework. Jody feels that program empowered that child to succeed and to become a productive member of society.

"The C&ES staff manages these programs," says Teets, "in addition to many others too numerous to mention; C&ES organizes a host of volunteers to assist with tasks in non-confidential projects."

Jody and her husband Danny reside in Oakland with their three children.

## Electric rates on the rise again...

As part of Maryland's electric restructuring program, electric generation rates were capped in 2001, keeping rates artificially low. Electric rates have increased only 1% since 2001. At the same time, the cost of two primary fuels to generate electricity has skyrocketed: coal is up 278% and natural gas is up 173% since 2000.



To prevent sticker shock when the generation rate caps expire on December 31, 2008, Allegheny Power worked with the Maryland Public Service Commission to create a Rate Stabilization and Transition Plan. Approved by the PSC in March

2007, the plan uses a series of rate changes over four years to gradually transition residential customers from capped generation rates to generation rates based on Allegheny purchasing power at market prices.

More than 92% of Allegheny Power's residential customers are participating in the plan, while approximately 16,000 chose to opt out. Here's how the plan works:

- In June 2007, a Customer Choice Credit expired and a distribution surcharge was added to residential bills resulting in an overall rate increase of 15%.
- On January 1, 2008, the distribution surcharge again increased, resulting in an additional overall rate increase of about 15% – or about \$12.11 per month for the typical residential customer using 1,000

kilowatt-hours of electricity.

- Beginning January 1, 2009, the monies collected under the plan, plus interest, will be returned to customers as a credit on their electric bill, reducing the effect of purchasing electric generation at market prices. The plan is to keep rate increases in 2009 and 2010 in the 15% range, using the credits.

- The credit will continue on customers' monthly electric bills until December 31, 2010, or until all money collected, plus interest, has been returned to customers.

Refunds are available to customers who move outside Allegheny's service territory or to the estate of deceased customers. To assist its low-income customers, Allegheny increased its contribution to the Community Energy Fund by 15% start-

ing in 2007 and will continue to make annual 15% increases through 2010.

For more information about the residential rate stabilization and transition plan, look for a bill insert in coming months, or call 1-800-Allegheny (1-800-255-3443).

Set thermostats between 65 and 70 degrees in the winter. Every degree you turn down your thermostat below 68 degrees saves about 3% in energy costs, and every degree above 68 degrees will increase energy costs by 3%. If you are leaving home for more than a few hours, set the thermostat at 58 degrees.

Visit Allegheny Power's Watt Watchers page at [www.alleghenypower.com](http://www.alleghenypower.com) for more tips to take charge of your electric bill.

[Source: Allegheny Power]

## Partners After School at Loch Lynn

By Elizabeth Gibbons

Students at the Partners After School at Loch Lynn are having fun while learning an enrichment activity. For the month of October the 27 students are learning to play chess, a favorite for the students. During Chess time they learn the playing pieces, moves and strategies. Score is kept and on the last day we celebrate; top winners get a prize.

The Partners After School at Loch Lynn also provides homework assistance, tutoring, mentoring,

and field trips. The program is held in the old Loch Lynn school building M-F from 3-6PM. The Partners After School at Loch Lynn is a coordinated effort between Community Action, the Garrett County Partnership for Children and Families and MSDE.

There are after school programs in Friendsville and Grantsville, also M-F from 3-6PM.

For more information call Elizabeth Gibbons at 301-334-0723.



Aaron Teets and Jordan Sweitzer enjoy a game of Chess  
Photo: Elizabeth Gibbons

## On The Horizon...Electronic Data Management System

By Marguerite Hayhurst

Community Action has been examining ways to better manage our files and the manner in which we file documents (for example, by department, date, program, project, alphabetical, date of birth, etc.). Each department has complex filing needs and federal and state requirements. We believe we've come up with a solution that will work across the entire agency and comply with confidentiality and government requirements. Microsoft offers a product, SharePoint, which manages files electronically, thereby eliminating the need for hard copy filing. Existing documents can simply be filed electronically; older documents can be scanned,

saved and retrieved using a comprehensive search engine.

Electronic document management focuses on the storage and organization of documents to support active work in progress, including document creation and sharing within an organization. When organizations do not have any kind of formal document management system in place, documents are often created and saved in an unmanaged and decentralized way on scattered file shares and individual hard disk drives. This makes it hard for employees to find, share, and collaborate effectively on documents. This also makes it difficult for organizations to use the valuable business information and data in the documents.

Microsoft Office SharePoint 2007 provides a broad set of document management resources that will enable you to:

- Store, organize, and easily retrieve documents.
- Ensure the consistency of documents.
- Manage metadata for documents (descriptive information about the document).
- Help protect documents from unauthorized access or use.
- Ensure consistent business processes (workflows) for how documents are handled.

Community Action is working with an outside provider to in-

stall the SharePoint software and hardware. We hope to install SharePoint and begin implementation by December 2008, and to be fully integrated throughout all departments within one year. We will begin with one department and expand the practice to all departments. Employees using SharePoint will receive in-house training, as well as online tutorials for those who prefer that method of training.

We are excited about the prospect of going paperless, something we've been talking about for a long time! We hope you will join us in our enthusiasm for this exciting new product. For more details about SharePoint, see Marguerite Hayhurst or call her at ext. 101.

## Partners After School at Grantsville

Karen B. Wood, coordinator at the Partners After School Program at Grantsville was recognized as a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Leader representing Garrett County at a luncheon held at the B & O Railroad Museum in Baltimore on October 6. Nominations were based on individuals who have made a difference in the lives of students through extended learning programs. Ms. Wood has been employed by Community Action since November 1997. The After School program is licensed by Maryland's Department of Human Resources Child Care Administration.

Ms. Wood's program has been a huge success due in large part to her ability to involve the staff, students, and parents and collaborate with outside entities such as Frostburg State University, Northern Garrett county

schools, law enforcement, Garrett County Health Department outreach staff, Garrett County Extension Service and Ruth Enlow Library in the overall operation of the program. Wood supervises two staff, 14 Hall Stars and numerous service learning students on a weekly basis. She has 40 students grades 3 thru 8 enrolled in the program. For more information call Karen Wood at 301-895-5818.



Photo: Glenn Tolbert

## Board of Directors

At the September Board of Directors meeting, we bid farewell to five retiring board members: Mayor Jim Browning, Mary Frantz, Roger Kifer, Mayor Asa McCain, and Kendra Todd. Duane Yoder said this has been a great core group, everyone will be missed, and thanked all for their years of service.



New board members include Heather Hanline representing the Garrett Roundtable on Homelessness, Robin Jones for the community of Grantsville,

and Matthew Paugh is the representative for the community of Kitzmiller. The Economic Development Corporation and the GC Health Department have not yet selected their representatives. First United Bank & Trust selected Phil Rodeheaver to replace Jason Rush. The GC Board of Realtors has selected Larry DeBerry to serve another term and GC Department of Social Services selected Larry Bruch to serve another term.

Yoder said board meetings are open to the public and encourages all to observe a meeting.

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COMMUNITY ACTION**

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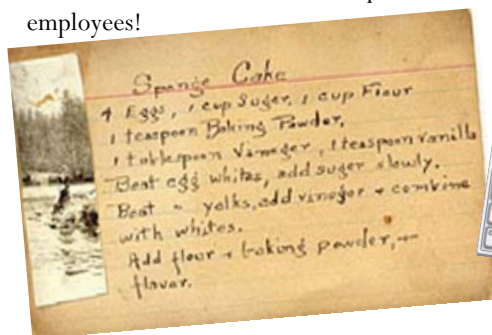
*Glenn Tolbert, Area Agency on Aging*

*Karen Wood, C&ES*

## Pot Luck Lunch

By Marguerite Hayhurst

A Community Action Recipe Exchange (CARE) is scheduled for Tuesday, November 11 at noon in the Mary Browning Sr. Ctr. Bring a dish to share and your recipe—or just bring your appetite. There is a charge of \$1.00 per person to cover the cost of operating the senior center and to provide dishes. Eat good food, share recipes and laughs—all for one dollar!! Call Sheila Ford for more information at ext. 135. This is open to all employees!



## The Windows Key

By Marguerite Hayhurst

What is that key, and what does it do? This little gem is a shortcut key that performs many tasks more quickly than using your mouse and clicking. It is located on your keyboard below the Z key. Try these on for size—windows key + D takes you directly to your desktop, windows key + E automatically opens your 'My Computer' folder. The windows key alone pulls up the Start Menu. Those are all timesavers in my book!! For more shortcuts, see Marguerite Hayhurst.



# GARRETT COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION BUILDING STRONG COMMUNITY, EMPOWERING INDIVIDUALS

## Community Action Anniversaries

The following employees are celebrating an October anniversary for their years of service with Community Action. Thank you for your dedication to those you serve!

- |                    |                |          |                       |      |          |
|--------------------|----------------|----------|-----------------------|------|----------|
| • Wendy Beck       | ECD            | 4 years  | • Wayne Menges        | C&ES | 3 years  |
| • Jeanette Bland   | C&ES           | 8 years  | • Donna Mullan        | ECD  | 5 years  |
| • Adina Brode      | AAA            | 24 years | • Michelle Rodeheaver | ECD  | 5 years  |
| • Heather Fontaine | Housing        | 2 years  | • Beverly Shahan      | ECD  | 21 years |
| • Melissa Frantz   | C&ES           | 3 years  | • Kathy Smith         | ECD  | 6 years  |
| • Glenda Guthrie   | Transportation | 12 years | • Dora Tichnell       | AAA  | 4 years  |
| • Rita Hardesty    | ECD            | 11 years | • Barbara Unger       | ECD  | 11 years |
| • Penny Kelly      | ECD            | 7 years  | • Carol Wakefield     | C&ES | 3 years  |
| • James Kisner     | Transportation | 11 years | • Karen Wood          | C&ES | 11 years |
| • Ralph Liller     | Transportation | 10 years | • Duane Yoder         | Core | 28 years |
| • Dee Lowdermilk   | ECD            | 10 years |                       |      |          |

Welcome! We extend a warm welcome to our newest employees! Susan Durst AAA, Amy Jones ECD, Carrie Passman AAA