

Community Action's numbers are 'only half of the story'

by Renée Shreve
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OAKLAND — A review of the Garrett County Community Action Committee's work in 2017 reflects a "dedicated, caring staff," according to President Duane Yoder.

"Annual report messages typically tend to concentrate either on the accomplishments of the past or on plans for the future," he stressed in his February newsletter to staff members and supporters. "Numbers can often take the center spotlight, too."

But numbers are only half of the story, he said.

"Behind the numbers, behind the programs and services, behind the brick and



Staff photo by Renée Shreve

The Garrett County Community Action Committee's Mary Browning, Grantsville, Kitzmiller, Swanton, and Friendsville senior meal sites served nearly 14,000 meals last year. More than 32,380 were delivered to elderly shut-ins via Meals on Wheels.

mortar are you, the staff," he said. "Without you, the numbers just wouldn't add up. Our capacity to respond is often

influenced by you, the staff."

Yoder said employees help shape those numbers and foster outcomes that make an

impact on those served by the agency. This includes delivering meals to elderly residents, providing transportation, weatherizing homes, providing early learning opportunities for children, assisting with tax returns and energy bills, and finding affordable housing.

He provided the following sampling of data from his agency's 2017 report:

- Community Action assisted 4,047, or about 34 percent, of Garrett County's 12,000 households through its 43 unique program offerings. Individually, 7,603 persons were served.

- Aging and Nutrition served 13,960 meals at Community Action's five senior

meal sites. More than 32,380 dinners were delivered to elderly residents via Meals on Wheels.

- Garrett Transit Service logged 571,791 miles and provided 152,408 passenger trips. GTS provided 91,592 rides for ambulatory passengers and 7,775 rides for nonambulatory passengers.

- In the family development sector, 326 children were enrolled in early childhood development programs; 147 children were deemed "fully kindergarten ready"; 230 families pursued their Pathway Plan goals; and 74 adults advanced their job skills through career coaching services.

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- Emergency services personnel helped 2,460 families receive heating and electricity assistance, moved 33 homeless families into affordable housing, and protected 106 families from becoming homeless.

- Homeowner services helped 233 families with rental assistance and repaired, weatherized, and rehabilitated 56 homes. Community Action has 90 new rental units for elderly and disabled persons. In all, the agency offers 700 "affordable" housing units.

- Under asset building,

1,022 households were served; 510 tax returns were prepared; and 57 individuals participated in the Pathway to Home Ownership program.

- Community development grant funding included \$90,000 to increase access to broadband, \$142,000 to assist with Career Ladder and

Career Coaching services; \$147,917 for Workforce Partners; and \$140,000 for municipal revitalization.

- Community Action's 2-Generation Approach helped 300 families by linking "the needs of the children with the goals of their parents to foster greater economic stability."

"The stabilizing force of

a home, the ability to gain job skills, expand upon education, or have access to medical care, either prenatal or as a senior, can all impact the circumstances now," Yoder told his staff. "But they can also extend out to younger and future generations by establishing a foundation of economic security."