



# Garrett County Community Action

Building better lives, stronger communities – together

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*The mission of Garrett County Community Action Committee, Inc., is to improve the quality of life for people in need by empowering them to become more self-sufficient and by providing essential services in collaboration and cooperation with partners.*

## ***A Word from Duane***



Community Action is seen as an important organization in Garrett County. But most people do not know why we do what we do or even what all is done by persons working at Community Action. This newsletter will try to help people better understand this while also helping connect us across workplaces and successes. Over one third of the persons living in Garrett County participate in one or more of the activities that Community Action sponsors. The Maryland Department of Commerce lists Community Action as one of the ten largest employers in the County. Community Action is now in its 52nd year of operation has a presence throughout the County and currently employs roughly 184 people. Yet, very few people realize that everything we do is intended to assist persons in gaining greater economic security or in the case of persons not able to work to make a living to provide a means for them to improve the quality of their life. Not many people understand that Community Action is a private corporation governed by a Board of Directors comprised of 15 local community residents.

It is not necessary that we *toot* our own horn so to speak. But it is important that we communicate what we want to accomplish and that we need the support and advice of the community if we expect to be valued. The most important voice for doing this is the people who work and volunteer with Community Action.

I hope this newsletter provides a platform for informing, sharing, and inspiring each of us; please feel free to share it with others outside the organization. I, too, hope that everyone will contribute and provide suggestions as we proceed. Ideas, photos, and content can be sent to [Daphne Gooding](#) and [Gregar Crawford](#) and I want to thank for the time and effort that they have given to putting this newsletter into practice.

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## Service Spanning Three Centuries



In 1868 - six years before Garrett County came into existence- the Commissioners of Allegany County purchased the ground where Garrett County Community Action now resides in order to construct a school for the town of Oakland.

Since its purchase the site has now been in service to the community for 148 years cast over the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries.

Having served as an elementary school, a high school and now a multi-purpose center and headquarters for Community Action, the building has educated thousands of children, served multiple generations, and withstood changing times, uses and even fire.



[Read local historian, John Grant's account of the building.](#)

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## *Rural IMPACT Ends First Year with White House Symposium*



The White House Rural Council Rural IMPACT initiative marked the end of its first year with a symposium held on November 17, 2016. The invite only symposium for funders, legislators, and representative from each Rural IMPACT 2-Generation demonstration site highlighted the challenges, achievements, and learning of the first year. To underscore the impact that agencies such as GCCAC do make in people's lives and their communities with a 2-Generation approach, the Annie E. Casey Foundation commissioned the production of a [short video](#) about the White House Rural Council Rural IMPACT initiative. As a collaborating regional site, Garrett County Community Action and Allegany County HRDC were selected to be videotaped.

Now entering a second year, the Rural IMPACT initiative will continue to offer virtual learning experiences for the ten demonstration sites, strive to identify and refine best practices, and foster policy changes that will enhance the sustainability of 2-Generation approaches to help children and families achieve greater economic security.

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## VITA Needs YOU!

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) at Community Action provides free help in filing personal tax returns regardless of your age or income level. Volunteers play a vital role in the success of the program. Last year our volunteers filed 474 returns that generated \$1,160,816 in Federal refunds and \$208,749 in Maryland refunds for the residents of our community. For that success to continue, we need your help. With support and guidance from the Asset Development Department of Community Action you'll become a IRS certified tax assistant. More details are available by clicking [here](#) to view our website or [here](#) to watch brief video. Contact [Jennifer Rexroad](#) to volunteer or answer any questions that you may have. Thank you!

*"The heart of a volunteer is not measured in size, but by the depth of the commitment to make a difference in the lives of others."*

-DeAnn Hollis

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## *In Case You Missed It...* ***Weatherization: Meeting the Challenge to Keep Folks Warm***



Responding to an opportunity, the Weatherization Department of GCCAC recently received access to an additional \$60,000. in funding from the State of Maryland with on one condition: It needed to be spent on [furnace replacements](#) within 10 days. Working with licensed a MHIC-license HVAC contractor, Jason Hensley of Weatherization responded to the challenge and oversaw the installation of 18 new furnaces within the state's timeframe.

One program participant is Doris Lewis. Mrs. Lewis' furnace was in poor condition, unreliable and unsafe to operate. She had contacted GCCAC about her need earlier in the year and soon after funding was made available, Jason visited her home and determined that she as eligible for a new furnace under the

[Maryland Energy Assistance Program \(MEAP\)](#). Once the determination was made, he immediately began to schedule the installation.

Mrs. Lewis, who lives alone and is disabled, was thrilled to receive assistance from GCCAC and repeatedly commented on how everyone involved worked so hard to complete the work. Further stating, "Everyone was polite and explained things to me about the new furnace. I was worried about whether or not I would be able to use the new system with my generator and Jason made sure to ask the contractor about it for me. The contractor told him it was okay to use the generator. That was a relief to me." Mrs. Lewis added that she is looking forward to a safe, healthy and warm winter with her new furnace.



## GC Health Department Seeks Input

The Garrett County Health Planning Tool is now live! It is the online place to make your voice heard about planning for a healthy future for our community. [Click here](#). Register and be heard. Also learn about all the options that exist right around us.

## Did You Know?

Only 15% of GCCAC's income comes from private contributions. Private donations can be directed to support a wide range particular [program or service areas](#) such as health and nutrition or emergency services or education. Individual donations also play a vital role in helping the agency to provide resources when no other sources are available. Click on this [donation](#) link to learn more or to make a donation that can positively impact your community today. Because Garrett County Community Action is a 501-(C)-3 non-profit, your donation is tax deductible.

Some once said.....

*"It is the apathetic person that sees the cause while the charitable person sees the need."*

— Shannon L. Alder

For more timely updates about the activities and happenings at Community Action, click the hyperlink and view the new agency profile on LinkedIn. If you have a profile be sure to click

**'Follow'**

The more followers the faster and wider agency news spreads.



**LinkedIn**

[www.garrettcac.org](http://www.garrettcac.org)

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