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.

The Culture of Health

Garrett County recently received the Culture of Health award from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Hundreds of counties from across the United States applied and Garrett County was one of just eight that were selected. Although some funding is awarded, the recognition of having been chosen is far more significant; it is an acknowledgement of shared community vision, collaboration, and shared responsibility to make Garrett County a better place to live.

How does Garrett County Community Action fit into this effort? Think about the long term effects of our work— the creation of affordable housing is a stabilizing community outcome while assisting the municipalities with community development projects helps to keep communities vibrant. Seniors and disabled people who have positive opportunities to socialize around a well-balanced meal are healthier than those who are isolated. Access to safe, reliable transportation enables people to get to medical providers, health and fitness centers, to shop and attend important events. Frontline and support staff working on a daily basis ensure that families working to achieve their goals have the resources they need. These are a few of the ways that Community Action is able to contribute to a Culture of Health.

To build a Culture of Health in a community, it takes partnerships. Our partnerships with Garrett College, the Garrett County Health Department, the Board of Education, and state offices such as Social Services as well as the Garrett County Board of Commissioners enhance the ability of the children, families, and the individuals that we serve and the community that we share to thrive. Each partner contributes their unique strengths and resources. Children do well in families that do well and families do well in communities that do well.

It takes people at all levels who are dedicated and engaged; it takes an understanding that we all can contribute to a Culture of Health. Although it is significant to be recognized by the Foundation, we must not stop as there are always challenges to be overcome.

If you haven’t had the chance to view the video that was produced by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation highlighting some of the many aspects that made Garrett County worthy of the recognition, I invite you to take a few moments and click the link below to watch now.

Warm regards,

Duane Yoder
President, Garrett County Community Action Committee

Click to view Culture of Health video
Garrett County Celebrates Culture of Health

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), in 2013, published a framework for action to assist communities across the country in developing a Culture of Health. The ten underlying principles of this initiative are:

1. Good health flourishes across geographic, demographic, and social sectors.
2. Attaining the best health possible is valued by our entire society.
3. Individuals and families have the means and the opportunities to make choices that lead to the healthiest lives possible.
4. Business, government, individuals, and organizations work together to build healthy communities and lifestyles.
5. Everyone has access to affordable, quality health care because it is essential to maintain or reclaim health.
6. No one is excluded.
7. Health care is efficient and equitable.
8. The economy is less burdened by excessive and unwarranted health care spending.
9. Keeping everyone as healthy as possible guides public and private decision-making.
10. Americans understand that we are all in this together.

Learn more about the RWJF’s Culture of Health

Since 2013, RWJF has awarded yearly prizes to communities endeavoring to make these principles a reality. This year, 2017, Garrett County received the "Culture of Health" award. The effort was led by Garrett County Health Department. Many other local organizations collaborated on building the Culture of Health, including:

- Garrett County Community Action
- Garrett Regional Medical Center
- CARC and Garrett College
- Garrett County Public Schools
- Garrett County Commissioners

Click the [PLAY] icon to watch the Garrett County Culture of Health video
Meadows Ribbon Cutting

Pictured at the Meadows Ribbon-Cutting, October 13, 2017 above are (left to right) Jessica Briggs, GCCAC vice president and project manager; Duane Yoder, GCCAC president; Bryan Hooper, USDA Rural Development deputy administrator; Kathy Beisner, Rural Development acting state director; Andrew Donlon, western Maryland representative for Congressman Delaney; Julianna Albowicz, outreach director for Sen. Van Hollen; Katrin Kark, Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC); Don Sincell, mayor of Mountain Lake Park; Beverly Beard, chair of the GCCAC Board of Directors; Alvin Lawson, MD DHCD construction finance manager; Doug Devlin, Devlin Architecture; Commissioner Jim Hinebaugh; and Dick Devlin, contractor, Delvin, Inc.

Attendees at the October 13, 2017 Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at The Meadows at Mountain Lake were rewarded with a near-perfect Autumn day for Garrett County. Sunny, breezy and mild conditions prevailed for the ceremony and luncheon. The new complex provides 90 apartments for low-income, elderly and disabled residents. The Meadows is more than just an apartment complex; it is place is designed to enable residents to remain living independently with the benefit of onsite advocacy and access to needed services. Raised bed gardens are available so residents can grow flowers and vegetables. The next addition to the site is a senior center that is currently in the design phase. The center would allow for congregate meals and additional social activities to take place.

The late Mayor of Mt. Lake Park was honored for his steadfast commitment to the Meadows project by Duane Yoder, president of GCCAC, who also acknowledged the strong support of town council had provided from the beginning of the project. Mayor Martin and the council worked to mitigate barriers to the building initiative so that the project could proceed in a timely manner. Jessica Briggs, vice president of community development at GCCAC acknowledged the involvement of the late Mayor and presented a plaque to town council which read: “The Meadows at Mountain Lake gratefully acknowledges Leo Martin with appreciation for his support and contributions to this project. His leadership and dedication to our community will be remembered forever. —Britten Leo Martin, Jr., Mayor of Mountain Lake Park, 2001-2017.”

The $15.25 million project was enabled through the financial support of many partners including: the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, USDA Rural Development, National Equity Fund, Garrett County Community Action, Maryland Energy Administration and the Federal Home Loan Bank of America.
Beverly Beard, chair of GCCAC Board of Directors, accepts a letter of commendation from Julianna Albowicz on behalf of Senator Chris Van Hollen.

Awards Presented to GCCAC, Mayor Leo Martin Honored

The Meadow at Mountain Lake received the Enterprise Green Communities designation. The complex was completed with all the most up-to-date features in energy efficiency and resource conservation.

Click here to learn more about Enterprise Green Communities

Jessica Briggs, vice president of community development was presented with the Pink Hard Hat award for her dedication and perseverance to the many housing projects, especially The Meadows at Mountain Lake.

Click here for information on GCCAC's rental assistance programs
Students from the Kitzmiller Head Start Center recently visited the Kitzmiller Coal Museum. Museum curator, Dale Lipscomb and his wife, Barb guided the children through the museum's collections that captured a snapshot of the town's early heritage. The children were enthralled by the collections of artifacts that covered many areas of life in early Kitzmiller. There were lots of questions that Mr. Lipscomb was able to answer for the students.
During the week of November 13-17, children at our Head Start Centers celebrated our local community safety workers by inviting them to visit their schools and talk about what safety workers do for the community. Dennett Road Early Learning Center was visited by the Southern Garrett Rescue Squad, Garrett Medical Group and the Oakland Volunteer Fire Department.

Accident Head Start Center was visited by the Maryland State Police from the McHenry Barracks and the Deep Creek Volunteer Fire Department.

During the week students learned that emergency personnel and vehicles may look and sound scary, but they are there to help people in emergency situations. Students were allowed to investigate the emergency vehicles. They were shown the firefighter's gear and learned that the gear is for protection even though it looks like a monster. Students also learned to never hide from emergency personnel, but to listen and do what the firefighters and police officers tell them. That way the children and their families will be safe.
The **Mom's Group** composed of mothers of children enrolled in the 4 Head Start classrooms at the Dennett Road Early Learning Center met for a fun morning of crafting and fellowship. The event was organized by Family Service Coordinators, Judy Fike and Kathy Reel. The parents completed clothespin sunflower wreaths to hang on the doors of their homes. The Garrett County Judy Center gave financial support to the activity by covering the cost of all materials.

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**GCCAC Currently Accepting Applications for Head Start & Early Head Start**

[Garrett County Community Action Head Start and Early Head Start](#) is currently taking applications for prenatal women and children ages birth to 5 years old for enrollment in home-based and center-based programs. Please call 301-334-9431 for more information and to set up an appointment for an application. Enrollment is based upon eligibility and openings.

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Please feel free to pass this newsletter and remember to visit our website and follow Garrett County Community Action Committee on [LinkedIn](#).