



Cayuga/Seneca Community Action Agency, Inc.

2009 ANNUAL REPORT



Steps to Self-Sufficiency

*The first and most important step towards success
is the feeling that we can succeed.*

Nelson Boswell

STRENGTHENING SELF-SUFFICIENCY...

...WITH PERSONAL TRANSPORTATION:

Samantha Queen is a motivated, dedicated single mom. Within two weeks of moving to Auburn from California in 2002, she obtained a job with Tessy Plastics. Samantha has maintained employment with Tessy for six and a half years and has worked her way up to the position of Certified Floor Auditor. With no personal transportation, she used public transportation (cabs and buses) and relied on family and friends to get to work, get groceries and other supplies, and meet her own and her son's health care needs. But even the most motivated and skilled person would be hard-pressed to continue in this situation indefinitely – constantly weaving together bus schedules and rides from other people to meet daily needs. Samantha knew she really needed her own vehicle so she could rely on herself, but her income was already stretched from supporting her family. Saving money for a vehicle seemed a remote possibility. She knew she needed assistance, but didn't know how someone could actually help. Then she heard about Wheels to Work.



Family Development Coordinator Jennifer Gallow with successful customer Samantha Queen in front of her Wheels to Work car.

Samantha enrolled in the Agency's Wheels to Work case management program. She methodically moved through the program, completing all the requirements. The rigorous steps included documentation of income and expenses, completion of a defensive driving course, participation in Essentials for Employment, and fulfillment of other criteria. After reviewing her case, the committee for the Wheels to Work program approved Samatha's application for a grant/loan combination to purchase a vehicle. Samantha was thrilled – this was her VERY FIRST CAR! Since getting the car six months ago, Samantha has been getting to work on time and meeting other family needs without the stress and worry associated with waiting for other people to take her places.



The Agency

Embarrassed and afraid
I didn't know where to turn
My children and our safety
Was my biggest concern.
Then, Theresa said,
"You need to get this book."
With the knowledge it gave me,
I could release his hook.
I was always confused.
I couldn't figure him out.
He was a master manipulator,
There was no doubt.
They paid for my lawyer fees,
And the locks on my doors.
They helped me to heal

My mental sores.
Like a solid oak beam,
They gave me support,
and accompanied me
When I went to court.
The Agency has been there for me,
Like a close friend.
I pray they will be there,
Right till the end.

*Written by a Customer of the C/SCAA
Domestic Violence Intervention Program
(name withheld to protect her privacy)*

BUILDING SELF-SUFFICIENCY...

...THROUGH STABLE LIVING SITUATIONS AND EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT:



Brett, a 19-year-old TASA customer who was referred to the program through a local high school guidance counselor, has been in the program for nearly a year. When he joined the program, Brett was struggling with an unstable living environment, academic issues, and unemployment.

He was eager to set goals and work with his case manager to stabilize his living situation so he could attain his goal of finding employment and preparing himself to graduate and attend college in fall of 2009. A relative was able to provide a safe home and Brett, his guardian and his case manager worked together to ensure that Brett was attending school and meeting his academic requirements. He

was also accepted into the Summer Youth program and maintained employment working in the Agency's maintenance department.

Brett successfully obtained his GED in June of 2009 and enrolled in college.

“TASA helped me become successful by helping me obtain what I needed for my GED, keeping me on top of things I needed to get done, and helping me get connections.”

Brett

...WITH INFORMATION AND SUPPORT:

In March of 2008, Ciara, a single mother of a week-old baby boy, enrolled in Healthy Families Cayuga/Seneca and began her amazing journey towards success and self-sufficiency. With assistance from her Family Support Worker, Ciara developed and achieved several sets of goals that she considered important, not only to her future, but also to the well-being and future of her baby. Ciara has achieved those goals through hard work and dedication and continues her commitment to making a better life for herself and her son, Eathin.

Since enrolling in Healthy Families, Ciara has moved out of her parents' home and into her own apartment. She has purchased new furniture and her own washer and dryer. She is enrolled part-time at Finger Lakes Community College, recently became employed at her second job, and is pre-approved for a loan to purchase her own home. In addition to her busy schedule, Ciara also set several developmental goals for Eathin and she worked hard to help him achieve those goals, including having him sleep through the night, helping him learn to crawl, and working with him to say “ma-ma.”

Ciara has done a remarkable job of becoming self-sufficient with the assistance of her Healthy Families Support Worker.



Ciara is “proud to be part of this program” and is “very thankful that she and her son have had so much support and have gained so much information from Healthy Families.”

Message from the Executive Director

It is an honor to have been chosen to serve as Cayuga/Seneca Community Action Agency's Executive Director; I will strive to build on the legacy left by Gloria Griffin as she enjoys her retirement.

This Annual Report focuses on steps to self-sufficiency and how the Agency's services and resources assist families along their individual paths.

People do not choose to live in poverty; everyone has hopes and dreams of a better life. Poverty entraps people, making your everyday focus about basic survival necessities such as food, shelter, utilities, transportation, and clothing. Many helping systems are fraught with barriers such as waiting lists, eligibility requirements, and limited hours of operation, to name just a few.

Cayuga/Seneca Community Action Agency seeks to remove those barriers through the provision of direct services such as emergency food and shelter, along with advocacy, transportation, and case management to assist people to achieve and sustain self-sufficiency and self-dignity.

Together we work toward organizational excellence and continuous improvement. "We, as community action professionals ever respectful of cultural diversity, dedicate ourselves to eliminate poverty in the midst of plenty in this nation, by opening to everyone the opportunity for education and training, the opportunity to work and the opportunity to live in decency and dignity." (*Introduction to Community Action Code of Ethics*)

Let us all strive for a better tomorrow. Enjoy this year's Annual Report.


Terry DeFelice, Executive Director

About C/SCAA

Cayuga/Seneca Community Action Agency is a private, not-for-profit corporation that was incorporated in 1965 through the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 to fight the war against poverty. Since its incorporation, the Agency has achieved enormous success. Cayuga/Seneca Community Action Agency began serving one county, with three staff members. Today, the Agency has expanded to serve both Cayuga and Seneca Counties, with a staff of more than 150 employees. The Agency's objective is to serve all low-income families and individuals respectfully, on a personal basis, so that they may live a life of decency and dignity while becoming self-sufficient. The Agency has gained a positive reputation throughout the community for advocating the rights of economically challenged families and individuals and changing society's stereotypes regarding poverty. We currently administer more than 20 different programs including Healthy Families, Emergency Services, Essentials for Employment, Green Jobs Training, Employment Transportation Services, Head Start, Early Head Start, Supportive Services, TASA (Teen Age Services Act), Domestic Violence Intervention Program, and Weatherization.

2009 Board of Directors

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Chairperson

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Vice Chairperson

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Secretary

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Mark Lincoln
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With Gratitude...

Cayuga/Seneca Community Action Agency wishes to remember **Brendan McGrath** for his 21 years of service to the Agency on the Board of Directors, and for 19 years as Chairperson. His kind and thoughtful leadership helped guide the Agency through challenging and exciting times. During his tenure, the Agency saw the expansion of numerous programs and services, including Head Start, Early Head Start, Essentials for Employment, Green Jobs Training Program, Transitional House, Homeless Assistance, Weatherization, and expansion of programs in Seneca County.



PASSING THE TORCH

As I write this for the Agency's annual report, I have mixed emotions.

I realize after 40 years in a job I have truly enjoyed, after 40 years of coming to work in what really was a second home, this is my last annual report. Nowhere else would I have had the opportunity to work with some of the most committed individuals, the most caring, and the most hard working individuals from the Board of Directors, staff, Policy Council, other agencies and communities.

Throughout the years I've had the opportunity to make many friends, not only locally, but on a state and national level. I've had the opportunity to see individuals and families become self-sufficient, the opportunity to see staff branch out to other jobs, the opportunity to work with other staff who have, as I have, made a career working in this Agency.

As I say good-bye, I leave knowing this is a strong viable organization clearly rooted in the community and recognized by the state and federal government as an outstanding Community Action Agency. We are fiscally sound and all of our programs continue to exceed their goals.

The Board of Directors and the Policy Council are well informed and, with their leadership and Terry DeFelice as the new Executive Director, the Agency will continue to meet its mission to assist individuals and families to achieve and sustain self-sufficiency and self-dignity.

As I venture into the next phase of my life I am grateful for the privilege of working for this Agency and those we serve.

I thank the present and past members of the Board of Directors and Policy Council, the present and past staff, and the community for their support and generosity. I especially thank Senator Mike Nozzolio for his many years of support to this Agency, and my family to whom I can't say "thank you" enough. They passed out cheese, they carried boxes, they did it all and were truly a part of community action.

I wish Terry DeFelice the best of luck as she takes over as Executive Director. Terry has been with the Agency for 31 years and is ready to move the Agency forward. You can't get a stronger team than them. Thanks to all for all you do. See you in the grocery store. Signing off, passing the torch. Leaving behind not a job, but a mission that I believed in and will always believe in.

Gloria Griffin, Summer 2009



Terry DeFelice (left), the Agency's new Executive Director, receives the leadership torch from Gloria Griffin, the Agency's former Executive Director.

**Cayuga/Seneca
Community Action Agency, Inc.**

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MAINTAINING SELF-SUFFICIENCY...

...AS ENERGY COSTS RISE:

Mrs. Onan values her independence and self-sufficiency. For decades, she and her husband worked hard to maintain their home and raise a family. She continued her independent living after the death of her husband, but has been increasingly challenged to meet growing costs with a fixed income. Heating fuel costs, in particular, have shot past her budgeted amount. Like 57% of the homes in Cayuga County, Mrs. Onan's home was built during a very different time; a time when heating fuels were cheap. Mrs. Onan's home was not insulated and was heated by a huge, old, inefficient furnace.



Mrs. Onan, maintains self-sufficiency in her newly weatherized home.

Mrs. Onan feared she would not be able to keep the house for which she and her husband had worked so hard; her family was beginning to talk to her about selling the house, rather than making costly repairs and renovations for increased fuel efficiency. The house also needed a new roof and a bathroom installed downstairs so that she did not have to make the physically difficult trip to the upstairs bathroom.

Mrs. Onan's story is one of many stories of existing or impending hardship with which Cayuga/Seneca Community Action Agency has been involved this year. The cost of living in safe, decent housing has stretched many struggling families and individuals to the limit, while costly repairs and upgrades to homes that are old and in dire need are not possible on salaries and retirement income that is barely living wage. Fortunately, the Agency's staff knows how to coordinate community programs to provide the

necessary resources to bring happy endings to these stories.

The first step was to promptly enroll her in both the Weatherization and EmPower NY Programs. Through these programs a new high-efficiency furnace and distribution system was installed and the home fully insulated and airsealed. Mrs. Onan was also referred to Homsite Development Corporation which was able to provide assistance with replacing the roof and installing a bathroom downstairs. In all, the repairs and remodel would have cost over \$30,000 and would not have been feasible on her retirement income.

Today, Mrs. Onan continues to live in her own home and remains an active, self-sufficient member of the community.

2009 Highlights

- 100+ partner organizations worked with C/SCAA to meet community needs.
- 6,827 individuals benefited from opportunities provided by C/SCAA.
- 26 unique programs and 8 facilities are run by C/SCAA, offering centralized intake and integrated resources.
- \$511,488 in in-kind and cash donations were received by our programs.
- 678 community volunteers dedicated 13,483 hours of service to C/SCAA.
- 119 homes received weatherization services through the Weatherization Assistance Program and Weatherization Referral and Packaging (WRAP).
- 109 youth in Cayuga County and 47 youth in Seneca County (156 total) participated in the TASA program.
- 840 families in Cayuga County and 831 families in Seneca County (1,671 total) received food baskets.
- 134 children in Cayuga County and 47 children in Seneca County (181 total) received new, safe, child passenger seats.
- In Seneca County, 54 homeless families received assistance for temporary shelter and/or utilities. Another 90 customers received vouchers for prescriptions, food, clothing, personal care items, and emergency shelter.
- 15 households benefited from the Wheels to Work program, earning a combination of grants and loans to secure a car to assist with transportation for employment, medical, and household purposes.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Cayuga/Seneca Community Action Agency is to assist people to achieve and sustain self-sufficiency and self-dignity.



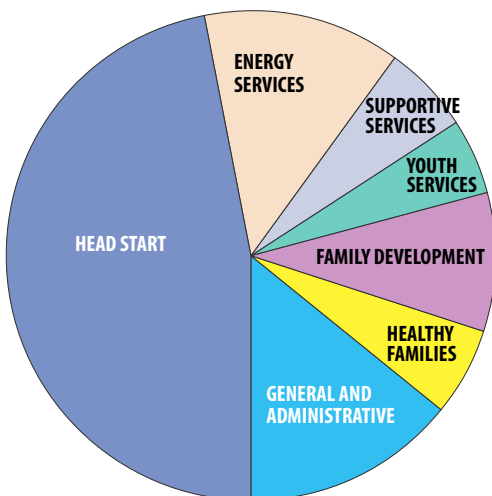
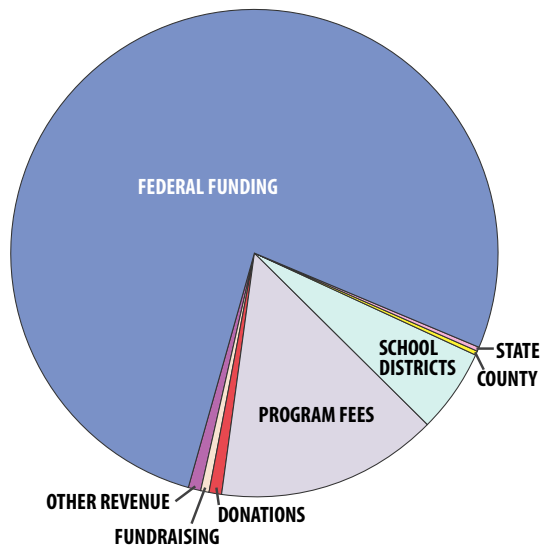
Financials

Cayuga/Seneca Community Action Agency's total revenue for fiscal year ending July 31, 2009 was \$5,456,752. This is an increase of \$412,046 or 8.2% from 2008.

Sources of Funds

Federal*	4,210,767	77.2%
State	6,184	0.1%
County	20,500	0.4%
School Districts	300,510	5.5%
Program Fees	800,405	14.6%
Donations	53,767	1.0%
Fundraising	19,295	0.4%
Other Revenue	45,324	0.8%
Total	\$5,456,752	100%

*Federal funding includes pass-through funds from State, County, and City.



Uses of Funds

Head Start	47%
Energy Services	13%
Supportive Services	6%
Youth Services	5%
Family Development	9%
Healthy Families	6%
General & Administrative	14%
Total	100%

SELF-SUFFICIENT...

...IN HER OWN WORDS:

Cayuga/Seneca Community Action Agency, under the guidance of former Director Gloria Griffin, has affected the lives of many people. I wonder if Gloria will ever know just how many and how much her work has brought about positive change for those living in poverty and how the Agency directly affected my life and gave me the tools to become a productive member of society.

I first became affiliated with the Cayuga/Seneca Community Action Agency when I was 19 years old. Believe it or not, I had a 4 year old son entering the Head Start program. I was a high school dropout with a dead end job. I was at the mercy of the social services system. I felt that was just my life and that there were people who were smart and able to attain things in life, and people like me who just couldn't help the circumstances into which they were born and could do nothing about it.

It wasn't long before I realized that the Agency wasn't only interested in serving my son, but me as well. I was treated with dignity and respect and learned that the only way to defeat poverty was to fight it.

I was invited to serve on the Head Start Policy Council; I had never been a part of anything like that before and wasn't sure if I would be able to do it. But with the support of the Agency's staff, I ultimately experienced my first leadership opportunity. I was inspired by the feeling of having "a say" in something, considering that those living in poverty rarely feel that they have a voice that will be heard.

I also learned the power of volunteerism. What I realized is that no matter where you are in your own life, there is always an opportunity to serve others. With these principles, I have successfully defeated poverty in my own life and have had the opportunity to inspire others. Today, I am the Director of Nursing for Finger Lakes Center for Living and am working on my Master's Degree.

Abby Bovee, Summer 2009



Abby Bovee, former Head Start parent and current Director of Nursing for Finger Lakes Center for Living, shares how Cayuga/Seneca Community Action Agency changed her life.

2009 Highlights

- In Cayuga County, **34** homeless households received assistance to secure permanent housing, **26** households benefited from temporary housing, and **325** homeless vulnerable households benefited from housing advocacy services. In addition, **50** families received transportation assistance, **42** families received prescription assistance, and **134** received utility assistance.
- **77** women and children fleeing domestic violence received **1,016** bednights of safe shelter.
- **172** Head Start children successfully transitioned to Kindergarten.
- The Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange program provided **613** one-on-one supervised visits and **168** monitored exchanges.
- **72** individuals increased their employability by learning new computer and work readiness skills.
- **390** adult victims of domestic violence received non-residential assistance.
- **50** families benefited from home visits that provide support and information to new and expectant parents.