

WHAT'S {HAP}PENING

SPRING 2019

LOOKING AHEAD

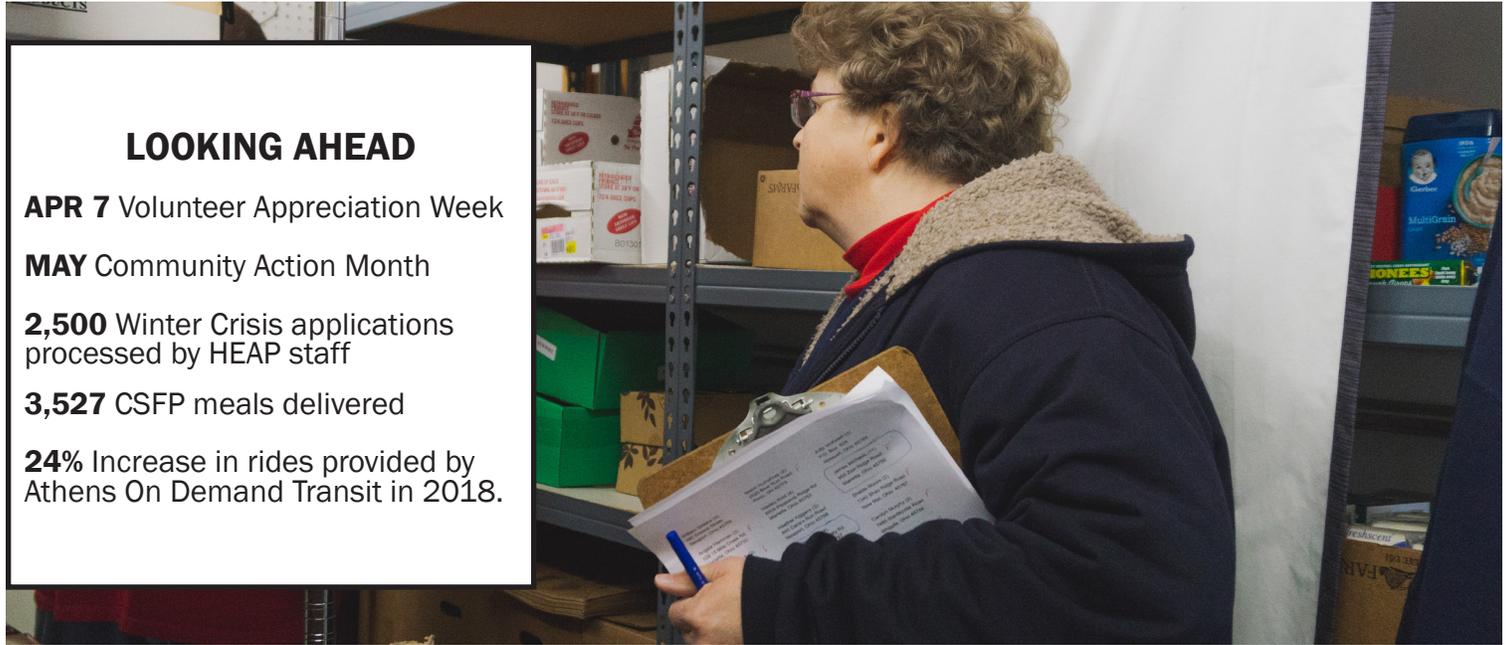
APR 7 Volunteer Appreciation Week

MAY Community Action Month

2,500 Winter Crisis applications processed by HEAP staff

3,527 CSFP meals delivered

24% Increase in rides provided by Athens On Demand Transit in 2018.



PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT:

FEEDING FAMILIES

LOGAN - It's been over a month since the end of the federal government shutdown, yet Southeast Ohio's low-income families are still seeing the effects in their cupboards and refrigerators. The shutdown caused a shift in the distribution of benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), also referred to as food stamps. February benefits were distributed in mid-January, and March benefits have been divided through February and March.

We braced for major strain across our emergency food network in Southeast Ohio. Thanks to OhioHealth O'Bleness and Hunger Solutions of the Mid-Ohio Valley, we were able to provide an emergency SNAP Gap grant to all our eligible member food pantries and cover their food costs, delivery fees, and shared maintenance fees for the month of February. Our goal was to equip agencies with the food resources they needed to expand distribution days, offer more food at distributions, and meet the need in their community without placing additional strain on their limited resources. (CONT'D ON NEXT PAGE)

“We’ve had days where it’s been non-stop. Just go-go-go,” says Darci Shields with the Salvation Army of Athens & Meigs Counties. “We noticed that people were scared and a little more on-edge, just because of all of the uncertainty during the shutdown.”

Margaret Sheskey with the Nelsonville Food Cupboard also noticed a spike in people coming in. “The week of February 11th was high for us,” she said. “That was almost two weeks before the SNAP benefits were loaded again.”

Both Shields and Sheskey mention the amount of working families who come through their doors for food assistance. Shields says that she sees nurses and nurse aids come in still wearing their scrubs.

“Many people just don’t make a living wage,” says Sheskey. “There’s not enough money to save with these jobs that don’t provide a living wage.”

Yet the generosity of the community still runs high. The Newport Community Food Pantry in Washington County received \$200 from an anonymous donor at a grocery store in West Virginia.

“It was wonderful because we serve so many people,” says Jennifer Farnsworth. “We see about 250 every month.”

The Newport Community Food Pantry was able to do an additional food giveaway on March 2nd thanks to the OhioHealth and Hunger Solutions grant. One woman found out about the giveaway through a neighbor.

“I’m picking up food for my grandkids, actually,” she said. “My son has an EBT card and they tried so hard to budget and make it last. But with four kids, it was difficult. This will really help them for the next few weeks.”

Farnsworth says that other conditions have exacerbated the SNAP gap, such as the fact that Newport is considered a food desert which inhibits the availability of fresh produce. She also sees a high amount of grandparents raising their grandkids due to the opiate epidemic.

“We have a strong faith community here, and all of the churches work together. This started as a mission project in a church closet. But we’ve been able to grow to help meet the need that’s here.”

She notes that sometimes a familiar face will come through the doors, and she treats them just as she would any other person. One of the last few people to receive food during the additional giveaway was a member of a nearby women’s group where Farnsworth had recently given a presentation about the pantry’s services. It was her first time needing assistance, and Farnsworth greeted her with a hug and led her through the door, just like she was welcoming a dear friend.

We want to thank the members of our food pantry network as well as the staff in our Food & Nutrition Division. These were the people on the front lines of the government shutdown. We also want to thank our transportation and Head Start staff for helping to distribute the correct information to our social media audience in such a confusing time. Though the shutdown is over, the fight to protect and serve our neighbors is not. See page 6 more information on what’s next in Washington.

HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Athens County Land Bank completed its demolition at 58 & 60 High Street on March 11. We submitted our request for reimbursement from OHFA on 3.11.19 for the properties at 58 and 60 High and are requesting \$23,566.34 or \$11,212.84 for 58 and \$12,353.50 for 60 High.

Group B of the Neighborhood Initiative Program (NIP) contains five properties, four in Glouster and one in Jacksonville, and is currently under way with asbestos surveys completed and we are currently awaiting the results of those tests in order to develop the specifications for these demolition projects. In addition, Commissioner Chmiel used some diversion program folks to begin our waste diversion process for the Land Bank on these properties and have completed clearing out 3 of the six structures slated to be demolished on these five parcels in Group B.

Finally, the Land Bank has agreed to contribute up to \$25,000 for the demolition of the Wonder Bar building in Glouster, which has been deemed a safety hazard for the community. Local Non-Profit group the Glouster Revitalization Organization (GRO) requested assistance from the land bank because the nonprofit would like the building to be removed in order for additional community/public space to be created in the foot print of the Wonder Bar building. GRO would like to extend the depot/Public Square area to include a courtyard with Gazebo/Stage for performances, benches, knee walls, planters and perhaps a water feature that can be used for Glouster's first Friday's and a potential venue for public performances.

Lastly, our division has received funds for the Housing Assistance Grant Program. We have \$181,000 to assist with 16 owner-occupied homes within 50% of the federal poverty guidelines.

- *Nathan Simons and Jeremy Boggs*

CHIP APPLICATIONS NEEDED!

Call Charla at (740) 753-3062

CITY OF ATHENS

4 REHAB slots Owner Occupied
7 Home Repair slots still left to fill -
Owner Occupied

ATHENS COUNTY

1 slot for REHAB Owner Occupied

CITY OF LOGAN

3 REHAB slots to fill Owner Occupied

CITY OF NELSONVILLE

2 REHAB slots to fill Owner Occupied

HOCKING COUNTY

1 down payment assistance

PERRY COUNTY

1 down payment assistance

We also need applicants for EPP (Electric Partnership Program) and AEPCAP (American Electric Power Community Assistance Program). Applicants must be an AEP Ohio customer and under 200% of the federal poverty level.

Call Anita at (740) 753-3062!

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

New Staff: We would like to welcome new staff, Sierra Channel, Sherry Mace, Libbie Danison, Stacy Gibson, Barb VanHorn and Kyle Martin.

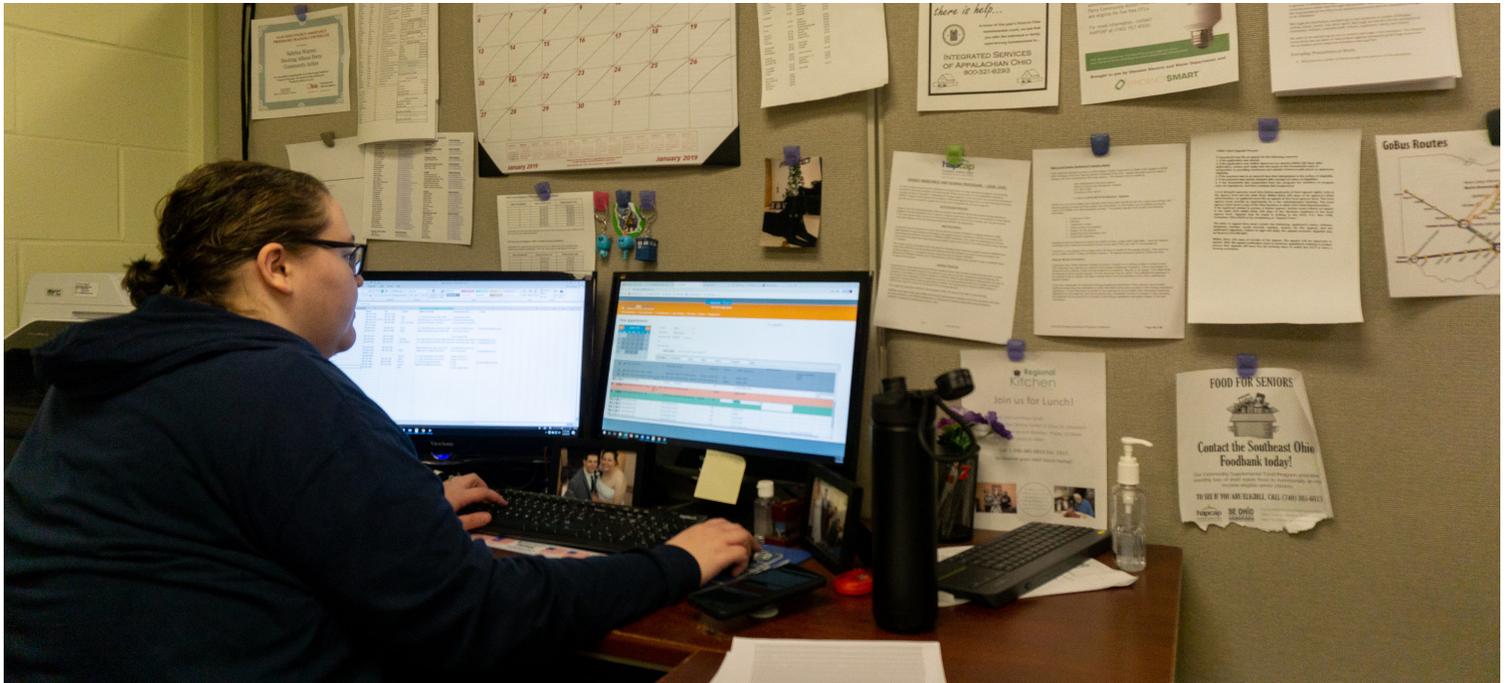
Recruitment: We continue to have openings for children at some of our sites, particularly Athens for the remainder of this program year. Plus we are recruiting now for applicants who wish to enroll their child (ren) for the Fall. Please share this news with friends and relatives and have them contact anyone at the Head Start Centers or at the Main Office.

CLASS: We finally received our classroom assessment (CLASS) scores from our Federal Review. They score our classrooms in 3 broad domains and we were in the upper 10% in 2 of the 3 domains. The 3rd domain is just barely below the upper 10%. These scores are based on all of the reviews completed in 2018.

We are very proud of our teaching staff for this accomplishment and would like to thank them for their hard work.



COMMUNITY SERVICES



The last day to apply for **The Winter Crisis Program (WCP)**, and the **Home Energy Assistance Program (State HEAP)** is March 29th. We would like to thank the HEAP staff for all their hard work and dedication. Unfortunately, we have to say good-bye to the seasonal HEAP staff. We give them our biggest thanks and will miss them and their service to the agency. We would also like to thank the front desk staff in Glouster and Logan, the accounting department, the IT department, Meals on Wheels drivers, and Pat from Head Start for all they do to help the HEAP season go smoothly. We will continue to accept appointments and walk-ins for the PIPP Plus Program.

The Water Bill grant is up and running. This program can assist eligible households with a one-time benefit of up to \$200.00 which will be paid directly to the water company. Households must be income eligible and have a water bill in disconnect or shut-off status and must be in the name of a household member. Help us spread the word! If you know of anybody that may be eligible please contact Sabrina Warren at 740-767-4500 Ext. 2154.

Hocking County was awarded \$115,000 to continue as a provider for the county's Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program. This program serves income-eligible youth between the ages of 14 and 24 and helps them to set and reach their education and employment goals. The contract renewal began January 1, 2019 and will run through September 30, 2019. A new feature of this year's contract is a requirement to host weekly job readiness and career exploration workshops at the local OhioMeansJobs. We began our first workshop series titled "Getting the Job You Want" on Wednesday, March 6. One of our participants left the first workshop of the series feeling great about her goal of passing her GED by June 1st of this year. She is ready to better herself and meet the minimum requirements for jobs that pay more than minimum wage! Lastly, we'd like to note that Kathleen welcomed her daughter Ewurama in January!

As of January 28th, one of our employment program participants in **Athens County** earned her high school diploma. (CONT'D ON NEXT PAGE)

Additionally, another participant is halfway through her GED. She successfully passed the Language Arts test and placed above 12th grade level on her Math test Both of these participants plan to start at Tri-County's Medical Assistant Technology program in May. Finally, we enrolled a participant in Hocking College's Early Childhood Education program as of January 2019. She is doing very well in her studies and hopes to become a daycare instructor in the future.

In **Perry County**, Kyle welcomed his son Everett in March and Elaine White joined the Perry CCMEP team in March.

- *Lyddia Dippre*

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

The HAPCAP agency's benefit plans will have open enrollment through the month of March. After six years of no rate increase, HAPCAP had to institute a rate increase for the 2019/2020 plan year. HAPCAP offers different levels of insurance coverage based upon family size. One of the changes you will see this year is a new tier in coverage called, employee plus two, this change in tier allows for a lower premium level for those who have only two dependents on their insurance. For those who want to cover an entire family the monthly rate is higher, but still far less expensive than most employee premiums in our region.

HAPCAP will continue charging an additional monthly premium for adding either a spouse or children, who are eligible for insurance coverage with another employer, but choose to be on the HAPCAP plan and have waived the other insurance. The additional monthly premium will be \$200. If the spouse or child enrolls in the other insurance but still chooses to be added to our plan, the additional monthly premium will be reduced to \$100. If the spouse or child is not eligible for health insurance coverage through another employer, there will be no additional premium added to the level of service.

- *Ava Mowery*

THE COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT

DID YOU KNOW: Community Action is the ONLY non-profit charged by the federal government to fight poverty in the United States. The Community Services Block Grant is a financial pillar to what we do here at HAPCAP.

The Community Services Block Grant - also known as CSBG - is up for reauthorization in Congress. The White House currently has dramatic cuts to CSBG in its budget proposal. These cuts include the total elimination of the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP).

There is a resolution to stop these cuts. We need you to call your congressional representative and tell them to support H.R. 1695! This is the reauthorization of the Community Services Block Grant. Stress that H.R. 1695 supports jobs, lifesaving services, and is a bi-partisan effort to fight poverty and promote self-sufficiency in 99% of U.S. counties.

Visit www.house.gov to find out how to contact your legislator, or you can check our social media for a step-by-step and a script!

FOOD & NUTRITION

3257 CSFP meals were delivered to participants via numerous distributions. We've had more distributions than we typically do per month and we are excited to continue this current trend. This is due to recent staff hiring of Kellie Bierly, our temporary foodbank clerk, who we are looking to potentially extend into permanent status in April. We are incontract to receive a new roof and construction will begin at the end of March or beginning of April. We currently have a permit to construct with the city of Logan and are prepared to start as soon as possible.

Finally, Amy Renner, our foodbank coordinator had been on maternity leave since the end of January where she gave birth to a healthy baby boy. She is cleared to return to work starting at the beginning of April. We are excited for Amy and her family!

The Southeast Ohio Regional Kitchen is in full summer feeding mode. We are looking forward to building new partnerships, continuing our existing ones, and feeding hungry children. Several of our staff attended the SFSP summit, and we are looking forward to implementing new ideas.

Our congregate sites in Glouster and Athens hosted Valentine's parties on February 13th. We had several new diners at the Athens site who thoroughly enjoyed the party.

Our blizzard meal adventure has come to an end. We are looking forward to warmer weather, as are our Meals on Wheels participants. March kicks off Meals on Wheels America's March for Meals Campaign. This campaign celebrates the importance of Meals on Wheels and the Older America's Act (OAA) that helped establish nutrition programs for senior citizens. It also gives us a chance to advocate for our local program that serves Athens and Hocking county seniors and helps raise resources like pet food and additional funding for our senior nutrition program. We have been hosting numerous volunteers at both the Regional Kitchen in Logan and the Senior Dining site in Athens, collaborating with local business on pet food drives, and engaging in fundraising through donations, special events, and social media campaigns. We look forward to this month-long celebration of Meals on Wheels and importance this program plays in addressing senior hunger and isolation.

- Andrew Mayle



TRANSPORTATION UPDATES

Athens Public Transit: In 2018 APT provided a record breaking 508,572 rides in the community - a 16.6% increase from 2017. We installed three new bus shelters along East State Street in Athens. These can be found in front of the Community Center, Kroger, and Wal-Mart. The shelters are equipped with solar powered lights, provided by a grant awarded to the City of Athens. .

GoBus: In 2018, GoBus ridership surpassed 100,000 trips for the third year in a row. Recently, the Loudeonville stop was moved to the Mohican State Park and will offer direct connection to one of Ohio's premier natural areas.

Athens on Demand Transit: Athens on Demand Transit provided 12,118 rides in 2018, a 24% increase from 2017. They traveled a total of 174,645 miles, the same as circling the Earth's equator seven times! Through a partnership with OhioHealth and GreenCab, AODT was able to help provide 31 rides to patients who had no other transportation options and needed assistance from one medical facility to another or from a medical facility to their homes in 2018.

Logan Public Transit: In 2018, Logan Public Transit almost doubled the number of contract trips provided from 2017 and finished the year with a total of 17,563 rides. LPT received a grant from the Logan-Hall Foundation to purchase new radios, which will help LPT provide better service to the public.

Athens Mobility Management: The AMM program completed multiple grants to continue our efforts towards the APT Line 7 Pilot Project that would service Nelsonville, the City of Athens, and the Village of Albany.

ODOT Grant Awards: APT, GoBus, and LPT were awarded a total of \$5,332,609 in ODOT 5311 Operating and Capital Grants for 2019! AODT and the Mobility Management program completed and submitted their ODOT 5310 grants for 2020 on March 1st.

New Team Members: Please join us in welcoming Betsy Morgan, Jodi Jenkins, Lovell Wells, Hatem Hassannin, and Rick Crigger to the Transportation Division team!



Kelly, Carolyn, Jessie, and Claire visited State Reps Ron Hood (Hocking County) and Jay Edwards (Athens County) to advocate for Public Transportation on Ohio Loves Transit Day!

- Jessie Schmitzer



EMPLOYEE FEATURE: REGINA WESTERVILLER

NELSONVILLE– Regina Westerviller’s gentle disposition and small-town roots will lead you to some fascinating surprises. She is a native of Chauncey, a graduate of Ohio University, and a family support worker at Nelsonville Head Start. She is also the lead actress in the award-winning film, *The Turn Out*. She plays Nevaeh, a teenager who is being trafficked by her stepfather at a truck stop in southern West Virginia.

The Turn Out, written and directed by former OU professor Pearl Gluck, began production in 2014. Regina met Pearl through her sister Robin, and before she knew it, she was auditioning for the film’s lead role.

“I didn’t think I wanted to do it,” says Regina. “We had six weeks to film. It was weird being on camera and hearing myself!”

In the four years following the film’s premiere, she now participates in panel discussions at film festivals and special events. She recently attended the film’s screening at the United Nations Summit in New York City.

The Turn Out is based on interviews gathered by director Pearl Gluck. The film doesn’t just hit close to him for Regina in regards to the scenes that were filmed in Glouster. The testimony from Gluck’s interviews includes that of Regina’s sister, Robin. Regina grew up with 5 siblings and addicted parents. She was one of the younger siblings, so some memories of her trauma aren’t entirely clear. Robin, however, had vivid experiences, including a run-in with the law at age 14, which is referenced in the film.

Regina is an advocate. Not only has her acting experience led to nationwide awareness against human trafficking, she is also using her education to improve the lives of children and families in Athens County. “Miss Regina” visits children every week as a Head Start home visitor and enjoys building relationships with each family.

However, she’s not eager to get back in front of the camera any time soon. Regina is excited to continue her role as a family support worker, with hopefully a Masters degree in Social Work in the future.

The Turn Out is not yet available for streaming or purchase, but visit palinkapictures.com to learn more about the film. For more information on the signs of human trafficking, please visit polarisproject.org. If you or someone you know is a victim, call the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1 (888) 373-7888.

“Without the services of the Southeast Ohio Foodbank, we would have to order hundreds of dollars of additional food to meet the needs of hungry clients. Their programs - especially the CSFP program - provide our families with a sense of security.”

- Darci Shields, The Salvation Army of Athens & Meigs Counties



Dr. Jake helps New Lexington Head Start students with teeth-brushing!



County Commissioner Chris Chmiel helps collect scrap metal on Front Street in Glouster as the Athens County Land Bank continues its clean-up.

GET INVOLVED

For more information on giving or volunteering opportunities, visit our Web site at www.hapcap.org. We also encourage you to follow us on our social media accounts:



Hocking Athens Perry Community Action



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