

Community Developments

Summer 2005

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Chester County Department of Community Development
Chester County Community Action Agency

Self-Employment Assistance Program Produces Success

This article was developed with the assistance of:



The Chester County Economic Development Council, in partnership with the Kutztown University Small Business Development Center (SBDC), has recently completed the 3rd, and most successful, year operating the Self Employment Assistance (SEA) Program. The SEA program, which provides free entrepreneurial training to new unemployment claimants, is funded by the PA Department of Community & Economic Development and is administered in Chester County by DCD. In Program Year 2004-2005, a total of 52 people completed training, resulting in 44 new businesses. During the program's first three years, over 100 new businesses were created.

The Chester County SEA program would like to highlight two recent graduates:



Suzanne Kelly, a lifelong books and reading enthusiast, had worked in various bookstores and publishing companies since graduating college. Now she is sharing her passion with the Phoenixville community after opening the *Bridge Street Bookshop*. With entrepreneurial training through the SEA Program and a \$50,000 Small Business Assistance Program (SBAP) loan through CCEDC, Suzanne has turned her dream into reality by opening a 1,700 sq. ft. shop stocked with over 5,000 books. Suzanne specializes in finding out-of-print or special order books. "If it is out there, I'll try to find it for you," she said. "If I can't find it, I'll find out information on the book and where it can be found."



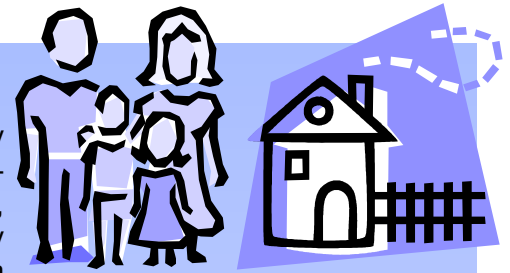
Heide Vandever also decided to turn a lifelong passion into a business opportunity. Heide combined her passion for flavorful cooking and grilling, along with her experience with multimedia marketing design, and developed *Vandy's Grill*. Also located in Phoenixville, Vandy's Grill exclusively develops and markets "spice rubs" for grilling, all natural products designed to bring out the natural flavor of foods. "Grilling *should* be fun" says Vandever, "It's all about hanging out with family and friends and enjoying great times. That's the feeling I wanted to capture with *Vandy's Grill*".



These are just two examples of the successes achieved by graduates of the SEA program. With continued state funding, DCD looks forward to another year of partnership with the CCEDC and KUSBDC in providing entrepreneurial training and support to eligible Chester County participants.

Reducing Homelessness in Chester County

Patrick Bokovitz, Deputy Director



To most residents of Chester County, homelessness is something that only occurs in Philadelphia, New York and other large American cities. Unfortunately, the reality is that homelessness is an issue in our county. In 2004, there were 970 individuals served in the eight County-funded emergency shelters. The good news is that there are significant steps being taken on a daily basis to reduce the number of homeless individuals and families by offering them a Continuum of Care from homelessness to permanent housing and ultimately self-sufficiency.

The first step in the Continuum of Care is the eight county-funded emergency shelters:

- Community, Youth and Women's Alliance**
- Domestic Violence Center of Chester County**
- Friends Association for the Care and Protection of Children**
- Good Samaritan Shelter**
- Safe Harbor**
- St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter**
- Salvation Army**
- W.C. Atkinson Memorial Community Resources Center**

Through these emergency shelter's quarterly reports, DCD is able to better understand the demographics, income, employment and special needs of the homeless population in the county.

2004 Demographic Summary:

- ▶ The total number of people served by County-funded homeless shelters was **970**, which were thirty-six individuals less than were served in 2003.
- ▶ The total number of homeless adults served by County-funded shelters was **786**.
- ▶ The total number of children served was **184**. This figure represents a decrease of 10% from 2003's total of 206.
- ▶ There were **218** veterans served in the homeless shelters, which accounts for over **25%** of all adults served in the shelters.
- ▶ Approximately **25%** of the sheltered homeless population in Chester County was employed, either full- or part-time.
- ▶ Roughly **35%** of all homeless served were drug dependent clients. Approximately **38%** were alcohol dependent clients and approximately 30% of the homeless persons were mental health clients.

In addition to emergency shelters, the County's Continuum of Care also consists of transitional and permanent housing units that are available to previously homeless individuals and families. Countywide, there are currently 99 transitional beds available for families and 142 transitional beds available for individuals. The final step in the County's Continuum of Care is permanent housing. Countywide, there are 15 permanent beds available for families and 111 permanent beds available for individuals. The glue of the Chester County Continuum of Care system is the Building Bridges Program, which provides case management and supportive services to homeless individuals and families in emergency shelters, transitional housing and permanent housing.

From emergency shelter to transitional housing to permanent housing, there are some tremendous efforts being made in Chester County to eliminate homelessness. To those in this arena, thank you and please stay the course.

For more information about homelessness in Chester County, please contact:

Pat Bokovitz, Deputy Director
or
Dolores Colligan, Community Services Manager
at (610) 344-6900



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SPOC Program Clients Succeed

The Single Point of Contact, or "SPOC" program, is designed to address the needs of welfare recipients with multiple barriers to obtaining employment. This program, funded through the PA Department of Public Welfare and administered by DCD, provides a wide range of activities and services related to moving clients from dependence on public assistance along to self-sufficiency.



In Chester County, SPOC program clients have recently achieved many successes. Fourteen clients have completed a computer-training program; six clients have passed their high school equivalency test (GED); and two clients have completed the program to become Certified Nurses Assistants (CNA). In addition, one of the program participants has accepted a part-time position with County government.

The SPOC program is staffed with a Spanish-speaking interpreter at the Coatesville *CareerLink* location, where many program activities are conducted. The SPOC program coordinators provide a comprehensive array of services, all designed to meet the specific needs of each individual client. Services include job search and placement, adult literacy, life skills instruction and assistance with childcare and transportation.

The new program year, beginning July 1, 2005, will bring with it many new and innovative supportive services intended to better serve the clients on the road to self-sufficiency.

Joint Job Initiatives / Single Point of Contact / PY 2005

The Chester County Local Management Committee has selected the following agencies for administration of the Joint Job Initiatives and Single Point of Contact (SPOC) programs for Program Year 2005:



Main Line Driving School / \$4,000 / Driver Education Training
Chester County Alliance / \$135,495 / Assessment, Literacy, Computer Skills Training and ESL
TMACC / \$120,000 / Pending continued authorization from DPW
Community, Youth & Women's Alliance / \$160,000 / Single Point of Contact program activities
/ \$ 23,919 / Supported Work Program
Chester County Chamber Foundation / \$25,000 / Life Skills Training and Job Readiness Workshops
Handi-Crafters, Inc. / \$113,990 / Supported Engagement Program
/ \$ 8,667 / MPPE Program Services

Chester County Homeownership Fair



Saturday, October 1, 2005
9:30 am to 2:00 pm
at
Olivet United Methodist Church
310 East Chestnut Street
Coatesville, PA

SPOC Program Year 2004 Performance

123 clients enrolled / 51 Job Placements
Placement Rate: **67%**
Medical Benefit Rate: **59%**
Job Retention Rate: **74%**
Average Wage Rate: **\$9.12/Hr**

The Coatesville Homeownership Fair will be sponsored by the City of Coatesville and a dozen housing non-profits currently participating in the revitalization of Coatesville. The purpose of the Coatesville Homeownership Fair is two-fold. First, the Fair will provide workshops for those interested in acquiring a home. In addition, the Fair will provide workshops for individuals and families that currently own a home, but are concerned about remaining in the home because of renovation costs or difficulty in paying their mortgage. As additional incentive for participation, the Coatesville Homeownership Fair will be raffling off quality prizes for individuals attending the Fair's workshops. If you are interested in learning more about the Coatesville Homeownership Fair, please contact Pat Bokovitz at (610) 344-6959.

DCD Funding Awards



The Chester County Homeless Continuum of Care

The U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development has awarded \$1,478,607 to Chester County through the 2004 McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Program. The following initiatives have been awarded funding:

- ▶ **Local Housing Options Team (LHOT)** - \$811,440 to provide rental assistance for 15 scattered-site units of permanent housing for homeless persons with disabilities.
- ▶ **Northwestern Human Services / Open Arms**—\$94,320 to provide permanent housing for 15 adults with serious mental illness, chronic substance abuse or AIDS.
- ▶ **Chester County Homeless Management Information System**—\$315,000 for implementation of a computerized tracking system that will capture unduplicated client-level system-wide data on the characteristics and service needs of homeless persons in Chester County.
- ▶ **The Salvation Army of West Chester / William Booth Initiative** —\$210,072 for transitional housing and supportive services for 7 homeless disabled male individuals.
- ▶ **W.C. Atkinson Memorial Community Services Center**- \$47,775 for permanent housing and supportive services for 8 homeless disabled male individuals.

Community Service Program Awards



▶ **Community Services Block Grant**—is federal entitlement funding allocated to the states by the Department of Health & Human Services. Funding comes to Chester County through the PA Department of Community & Economic Development (DCED). DCD, as the Community Action Agency of Chester County, subcontracts with local agencies that support holistic approaches to move individuals and families toward self-sufficiency. For program year 2005-2006, the following programs have been awarded funding:

- ▶ **Open Hearth, Inc.** - \$38,800 for transitional housing, money management and Family Savings Partner programs.
- ▶ **Maternal & Child Health Consortium** - \$17,460 for a prenatal and postpartum case management program serving low-income women and children.
- ▶ **Community, Youth and Women's Alliance** - \$101,850 to provide self-sufficiency case management to low-income households.
- ▶ **Community Service Council of Chester County** - \$24,250 to provide supplemental food to low-income households and nutritional supplements to medically-vulnerable low-income households.
- ▶ **La Comunidad Hispana** - \$29,100 to provide case-management services to low-income residents in southern Chester County and low-income Latinos in the Coatesville area.
- ▶ **Chester County Opportunities Industrialization Center** -
 - \$24,250 for "Preparing for Independence", an employment support and job skill remediation program serving homeless persons.
 - \$22,310 for a Certified Nursing Assistant program that provides job training, literacy, and work essential skills training.
- ▶ **Family Service of Chester County** - \$24,250 for case management services that assist low-income households to eliminate barriers to self-sufficiency.
- ▶ **Human Services, Inc.** - \$34,920 for the Building Bridges program that provides case management services to homeless individuals countywide through the emergency shelter system.
- ▶ **Chester County Health Department** - \$13,000 to support its Nurse Family Partnership program that teaches parenting skills to first-time, low-income mothers.

- ▶ **Department of Public Welfare Homeless Assistance Program (HAP)** -DCD administers this program for Chester County . HAP funds are made available to counties to mitigate the effects of homelessness on families and individuals through the provision of housing, prevention activities, and case management services. For program year 2005-2006, the following programs have been awarded funding:
 - ▶ **Domestic Violence Center of Chester County** / \$37,540 / Bridge Transitional Housing
 - ▶ **Community Service Council** / \$120,000 / Homeless Prevention
 - ▶ **PA Home of the Sparrow** / \$32,790 / Transitional Housing
 - ▶ **Friends Association for the Care & Protection of Children** / \$112,000 / Emergency Shelter & Transitional Housing
 - ▶ **Good Samaritan** / \$24,000 / Emergency Shelter
 - ▶ **Interfaith Housing Assistance Corporation** / \$20,000 / Rental Assistance (Housing Trust Program funds)
 - ▶ **YWCA of Chester County** / \$24,700 / Transitional Housing (Housing Trust Program funds)

DCD Funding Awards



Workforce Investment Act—Title I Youth Activities Program Year (PY) 2005

The Chester County Workforce Investment Board receives funding through Title I of the Workforce Investment Act for employment and training activities which serve youth. Utilization and distribution of this funding is overseen by the Chester County Youth Council. To be eligible for services, youth must be between the ages of 14 and 21, be economically disadvantaged, and have at least one additional barrier to employment. The Chester County Youth Council has selected these local providers for the provision of youth services in PY 2005:

- ▶ **Goodwill Industries of Mid-eastern PA** - \$62,000 for a job development program that includes job-readiness, GED and academic enrichment activities.
- ▶ **Handi-Crafters, Inc.** - \$100,000 for a summer employment program that offers year-round workshops and follow-up activities.
- ▶ **Chester County OIC** - \$72,000 for the "I CAN" program, featuring Tutoring, GED, Literacy, Workplace Essential Skills and Leadership Development.
- ▶ **Community, Youth & Women's Alliance** - \$36,000 for a traditional summer work experience program that includes remediation activities.
- ▶ **West Chester Area School District** - \$30,000 for a traditional summer work experience program that includes remediation activities.
- ▶ **Henkels & McCoy, Inc.** - \$65,000 for the Tech Bridge program featuring computer training, remediation, and literacy activities.

▶ *For more information about Title I Youth Programs, please contact DCD @ 610 344-6900.*

The Chester County Youth Council has also awarded **PA Department of Public Welfare TANF Youth** funding for PY 2005:

- ▶ **New Life Youth and Family Services** - \$50,000 for a truancy prevention program serving youth in the West Chester, Coatesville, Phoenixville, Downingtown and Oxford school districts.
- ▶ **Family Service of Chester County** - \$50,000 for the Early Secondary Intervention Program serving middle school students in the Octorara School District.

2005 Supplemental Housing Awards

In March of 2005, the Chester County Commissioners awarded funding through the federal HOME Investment Partnerships Program and the County Housing Trust Program for the following affordable housing activities:



- ▶ **Open Hearth Inc.** - \$25,000 of Housing Trust funds to assist in the construction of a fully accessible home for a low-income family that has an adult member who requires the use of a wheelchair. This homeownership activity is a partnership between three county housing non-profits: Open Hearth, Habitat for Humanity and Residential Living Options. This accessible home will be located in Coatesville.
- ▶ **MBI Development Company** - \$1,289,508.50 of HOME and Housing Trust funds towards the rehabilitation of Elmwood Garden Apartments on Harlan Drive in Coatesville. Fifty-nine general occupancy rental units will be renovated, with six of these units slated to be fully accessible.
- ▶ **Con-Lyn Construction** - \$175,000 of HOME funds to assist with the demolition of a structure on Merchant Street in Coatesville and the new construction of four affordable rental housing units.
- ▶ **Housing Authority of the County of Chester (HACC)** - \$66,100 of Housing Trust funds for the acquisition of two properties on Mount Pleasant Street in Coatesville, which will improve access to thirteen homes that HACC is building at that site.
- ▶ **Good Samaritan Shelter** - \$50,000 of Housing Trust funds for the acquisition and rehabilitation of a property located on High Street in Phoenixville that will serve as a transitional housing facility for eight homeless persons.
- ▶ **Alliance for Better Housing** - \$225,000 of HOME funds to assist with the construction of the Las Rosas housing development in Kennett Square, which consists of the development of sixteen affordable town-homes for homeownership.
- ▶ **Community, Youth and Women's Alliance** - \$42,100 of HOME funds to renovate a rental unit on North 5th Avenue in Coatesville.



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