

AUDUBON AREA COMMUNITY SERVICES, INC. ANNUAL REPORT 2004



CARING COUNTS...

“ Life’s most persistent and urgent question is:
what are you doing for others?”
—Martin Luther King Jr.

AUDUBON AREA COMMUNITY SERVICES, INC.

Developing resources...

Investing in human potential.

Audubon Area Community Services Inc. is the largest of Kentucky's 23 Community Action Agencies. Serving primarily 34 western Kentucky counties, its goal is to lift its clients and customers from poverty by providing services that improve their lives.

AACS' mission statement, *Developing resources... Investing in human potential*, is truly reflected in the services the agency provides, including Head Start, Low-Income Home Energy Assistance and the Child Care Assistance Program. Kentucky families have come to rely on these services. Whether they need help paying a heating bill or finding transportation to medical appointments, low-income families trust in the high quality programs provided by Audubon Area Community Services. And they know that the agency's more than 700 full and part-time employees will help them in a respectful and caring manner.

Community Action Agencies are predominately nonprofit organizations created to fulfill the mission of hope for America's low-income families. CAAs were implemented with President Lyndon Johnson's signing of the Economic Opportunity Act in 1964. Since then, their focus has remained largely unchanged.

CAAs are funded from federal and state appropriations as well as private funding sources, with their core support being the federal Community Services Block Grant. The CSBG is the "unifying" center that ties CAAs together, providing administrative and program support and filling funding gaps when other dollars are not available.

A tripartite board of directors governs each CAA in Kentucky, with one-third members representing the low-income sector, one-third representing local elected officials and one-third representing local businesses, civic organizations and citizens from the community.

In addition to its board of directors, Audubon Area Community Services has a senior staff comprised of one executive director, Ronald Lee Logsdon, and 11 program directors.



Daisy B. James
Board Chairperson



Ronald Lee Logsdon
Executive Director

BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

I've had numerous opportunities, first as board member and now as chairwoman of Audubon Area Community Services Inc., to hear stories of how the agency's clients and customers have been impacted by its services. Elderly people with limited incomes receiving assistance with their heating bills. Families on the brink of separation being reunited. Single mothers overcoming obstacles that hindered their success.

It's these stories that come to mind when I think of this year's annual report theme – ***Caring Counts***. Without the caring of our dedicated employees, many of these families would still be in crisis today, still searching for a hand to help them climb from poverty. No person chooses to be impoverished. But our employees do have a choice between doing their best job to alleviate the suffering of our clients or apathy in their work. It's not a hard choice. Doing their best is their goal, and it reflects the agency's mission: ***Developing***

resources...Investing in human potential. When our employees come to work every day, they know their customers and clients are depending on them to carry this theme and mission statement closely.

Audubon Area Community Services has striven to equip its employees with the tools and knowledge necessary to ensure the agency's mission is carried out thoroughly. The agency provides services that foster individuality, personal growth and self-sufficiency to all in need. And it continues to expand to reach out to those on the fringes of society who may not otherwise receive assistance. This year, for example, the agency began a Migrant Head Start program in Henderson County, its second facility in its services area to serve primarily the growing Hispanic population.

We do our best here at Audubon Area Community Services to live up to our mission, serving last year more than 43,000 unduplicated clients. And I hope that as you read through these stories on the next few pages that you will agree – ***Caring Counts!***

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

The past year has challenged Audubon Area Community Services Inc. But throughout, the agency strove to keep its customers top priority. That is why we chose this year's annual report theme – ***Caring Counts***. Regardless of the numbers we must crunch, we remain dedicated to our Mission: ***Developing resources... Investing in human potential***.

Like other social service agencies, we, too, struggled with budget constraints while striving to maintain quality services, a difficult task but not impossible. Federal regulations requiring case management nationwide for the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) lead the agency to combine two departments — Counseling Services (KISP, Family Preservation, Family Reunification) and Community Services (CSBG, LIHEAP, Senior Employment) – in an effort to reduce overhead.

Yet, despite these challenges, AACS Head Start received — for the *second* time — the National Head Start Association's Program of Excellence (2003-2006) Award, one of only seventeen nationwide. And our *second* Migrant Head Start center opened in Henderson to serve the area's fast-emerging Hispanic population. We see this as a growth opportunity and as a great future need.

This fiscal year promises additional challenges. In April 2004, the state announced a funding cut to the KERA 4-year-old at-risk preschool program, which we administer in a joint venture with local school districts. This brings the cost per child to a proposed \$1,982 for 2004-05, down from \$2,505 per child in 1999. We are quite concerned about the impact from this reduction, but we wait in anticipation following recent reports of additional state dollars for education. Meanwhile, too, we still await the final approval of the reauthorization of Head Start, which may mandate increased obligations without additional dollars — and could jeopardize the program itself.

Fortunately as advocates' voices are heard, good things have happened. Last year, for example, regulations governing the Child Care Assistance Program were tightened to require students to work twenty hours a week. Some students had to quit when it became too difficult to work and attend school. The requirement was rolled back recently, however, to exempt some students. Clearly, they, their families, and the nation are better off getting an education ... and like Audubon, ***Investing in human potential***.

CHILD CARE ASSISTANT PROGRAM

Darlecia Ballard always knew there was a better life she could be living. A few years ago, she survived off government assistance and lived in subsidized housing. She had no car, and her chronically ill son kept her from finding steady work.

But there was a spark in her that poverty couldn't distinguish, a desire so intense it drove her to work three low-paying jobs and to apply for assistance from the Audubon Area Community Services Child Care Assistance Program. From that point on, there was no direction to climb but up.

"After I had my son, I realized there was no way I could keep going unless I went back to school," said Ballard, now 32. "I didn't feel good about myself, because I knew I could do so much better. I'd look at my son and think he deserves so much more."

Audubon Area Community Services administers CCAP in the 34 western Kentucky counties located in the Barren River, Green River, Pennyrite and Purchase districts. The program provides subsidies to low-income families for childcare while the parents work or attend school or a training program or to allow them to participate in the Kentucky Transitional Assistance Program (K-TAP). The program also provides services for those in need of protective childcare services or to prevent the potential abuse, neglect or exploitation of a child.

Reaching her goals was a struggle for Ballard, but it was worth it. After graduating from high school, she attended MSU for a brief time. But like many young people her age, she was not ready. So, she packed up and moved to Tennessee with a friend where poverty set in. She met a man, became pregnant and realized her dream of a college education was slipping away fast.

"My mother had me at 18 and she was a single mom, so I saw my fair share of poverty," Ballard said. "I knew I had to break that cycle."

She certainly did. Ballard had a network of support in Murray, so she moved back home to be with her mother and grandparents. She almost immediately reenrolled at the university and became a student worker for CCAP, where she learned a professional manner needed for the work environment.

"CCAP did so much more for me than subsidy payments for childcare," Ballard said. "Being in this environment taught me how to handle myself professionally."

Today, Ballard is a few credits short of earning her bachelor's degree in organizational management from Murray State University. The assistance she received from 1997 to 2002 allowed her to place her son in a quality childcare center without worry while she attended school. She now works as a family support specialist, helping low-income families sign up for food stamps and Medicaid, in the Murray office of the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services.

When she sits down with a client who comes to her for help, she can empathize with them. She's been there.

"I can say to them, 'Let me tell you something. I'm a success story.'"



CHOICES

Judy Fenwick had dreamed of being a nurse for years, but she never thought the goal was within reach. She thought she would have to raise her two children, now 7 and 9, by working a lifetime of \$7 an hour jobs and with government assistance.

After enrolling in Audubon Area Community Services CHOICES program, however, the 38-year-old realized dreams do come true through persistence, integrity and lots of hours bent over school books.

On February 5 she received official notice in the mail that she had passed the state Board of Nursing exam. Today, the Union County resident is a registered nurse at Deaconess Hospital in Evansville, Ind.

“I always wanted to be a nurse, but I never thought I could do it,” said the Union County resident. “But I realized how my children’s lives would be if I didn’t do it. I had to be an inspiration to them.”

Audubon Area Community Services CHOICES program provides case management to residents in the seven county Green River area to help them achieve their goals. Coordinators discuss needs with clients and provide information on how those needs may be filled. They discuss issues such as household budgets, education and employment goals and where to turn for help.

Recently under the Community Services department at Audubon Area, this program was folded into the agency’s Counseling Services department in early 2004 in an effort to streamline services and offer a more effective case management system. The results have been tremendous.

Fenwick needed financial assistance to reach her goals. Food stamps covered her family’s meals, but she often had to carpool when her own car broke down. When it did run, she often couldn’t afford the gas. She was behind in her rent and lost telephone service after she didn’t pay her bill.

“She was good at managing money. She just didn’t have much to manage,” said her case manager Melanie Bealmear. “She persevered through some tough times.”

When she wasn’t a stay-at-home mom, most of Fenwick’s work experience related to customer service. When she separated from her husband, however, she knew education was the key to becoming self-sufficient.

It was an uphill battle, but a challenge met with tenacity. Bealmear helped Fenwick with her utility bills and a down payment on a car. Through Audubon Area’s educational assistance program, Fenwick received \$150 scholarships twice. She received help with gas and costs of a pin that was required upon graduation from the nursing program.

“There were so many times that I would get so frustrated,” Fenwick said. “The kids could only eat peanut butter sandwiches so many times a week.”

All that changed, however, when she graduated in December and began her nursing career later that month. Fenwick, who now is reunited with her husband, still has a tough road ahead of her. Digging from debt will take a while. But the progress has been monumental. She holds her head high and with great pride.

“The CHOICES program is a great program,” she said. “It really helped me out a lot.”



GREEN RIVER INTRA-COUNTY TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Rick Boggess had a decision to make in the early 1990s. Either he had to find safe and reliable public transportation or he would have to reconsider living and working in Owensboro. Blind since birth, Boggess has taught in the Owensboro and Daviess County school systems since 1978, helping visually impaired students adjust and advising teachers on equipment and supplies needed to teach those students. With his personal experience and training, he touches the lives of students in ways no others could match.

That was about to change, however. Before 1990, Boggess worked primarily in the city schools, relying at that time on city buses and walking. But when his outreach grew to include county schools as well, he knew transportation would be an issue, not only of convenience but of safety as well.

While in the city, he would often walk from one school to another after exiting a city bus to meet with his students. That was not an option when he began teaching in the county schools. Even when he did try to walk, noise would often be so loud he couldn't hear the traffic.

Boggess, now 50, recalled exiting a city bus near a middle school one afternoon and having to walk a distance to the entrance of the school building, located near a granary. The noise from the plant overpowered traffic noise.

"I decided at that point to explore other options," he said, sitting behind his desk in his Owensboro office. "It wasn't worth getting killed. So at that point I began using GRITS and have used it continuously since. It does make things more efficient and safe."

Since 1999, GRITS has been providing non-emergency medical transportation to the Green River seven-county region's Medicaid recipients and to persons eligible for the Department for the Blind and Vocational Rehabilitation program. The Kentucky Department of Transportation contracts with GRITS to provide these services in its Region #3 under the auspices of the Empower Kentucky Human Services Transportation agency.

Transportation is a key component to living a healthy and fulfilling life. GRITS plays a vital role in ensuring riders' independency by providing more than 100,000 trips each year to doctors' offices, hospitals, grocery stores, daycare facilities and other qualified sites. Most riders receive service through contracts with other agencies.

For those who need it, GRITS provides curb to curb service, so safety is never an issue. That means riders are picked up near their door and taken deposited close to their destination. GRITS also provides door to door service when needed.

"If you can't get from point A to point B reliably, it really becomes a moot point if you can do the job," Boggess said. And without his expertise, many students who are visually impaired would not receive his assistance. He teaches them Braille and computer skills and advises teachers on selecting materials needed for his students.

Fortunately, GRITS provided the safe and reliable transportation he needed to continue his service in the Daviess County and Owensboro school systems.



COUNSELING SERVICES

Raising children is hard even for the most skilled parent. Add a child with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and the outcome could be disastrous.

Just ask Rita Linville, a 33-year-old Henderson mother who has battled her son since he was diagnosed at age 3 with ADHD. Those battles, however, have been reduced to infrequent skirmishes with the help of a family therapist through Audubon Area Community Services Family Preservation Program.

“We’re better at communicating,” Rita said. “When Dalton has his fits, I know how to handle it. I know when to talk and when not to talk.”

Getting to that point was not so easy. Dalton, now 8, went to school one day last year and told his teachers “that we whooped him in his face,” Rita said.

The courts stepped in, jailed Rita and her husband, Billy, overnight and removed Dalton and his sister, Makalah, now 6, from the home. Parenting classes were ordered, and the couple was told the children could only return if another adult lived in the home. A family member did for three weeks, but tensions lead her to leave. Finally, the couple was ordered to enroll in the Family Preservation Program, one of the most intensive family counseling programs within Audubon Area Community Services Counseling Services department.

Through it, trained therapists spend up to 10 hours each week for four to six weeks working on problems that threaten to tear families apart.

For the Linville couple, the problem was learning how to discipline properly. So, the therapist gave the couple the tools to help. She made STOP signs, which stands for “Stop, Think, Options, and Price,” for the parents to hold up when their children disobey. It reminds them to think about their options and the price they will pay, either time out if the behavior continues or rewards if it doesn’t.

The couple learned through the “123 Magic” system to tell the child once, twice, and then follow through with time out if the behavior continued. Now Rita holds up her finger and says “1” and nothing more. If the behavior continues for several minutes, she says “2.” With “3” she sets them in a dining room chair and stands near in silence to keep them in the seat for five minutes plus a minute for their age.

Rewards are also dispensed lavishly. A treasure box of trinkets sits on a shelf of the entertainment center in the living room. Rita sifted through the assortment of pencils, stickers and coloring books as she explained the process.

“If Dalton goes three days and does everything he is supposed to do, he gets to choose something,” she said, raking her hand through the box.

When first introduced to these skills, Rita didn’t think they would work on her son. But now she is convinced they have helped.

“I thought this would never work on Dalton,” she said. “But it really works. I was amazed. They hate sitting in that dining room chair.”



EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

Lora LaRue is concentrating on herself for once. After two soured marriages and years of staying at home with her two children, the 26-year-old is attending adult education classes in Caldwell County to obtain her general equivalency diploma. She was unable to pursue her dreams before due to the difficulty of finding quality childcare for her youngest child.

But she doesn't have to worry about that any more. When her daughter, Cassandra, turned 3 last year, Lora enrolled her in Audubon Area Community Services Head Start program in Caldwell County. Now she's on her way to a career in what she hopes will be health care.

"I put her in Head Start so that I can go to the adult learning center to get my GED," Lora said. "I got all these big goals. I can't wait."

Audubon Area administers Head Start in the 16 western Kentucky counties in the Pennyriple and Green River districts. It has been recognized as a national Program of Excellence by the National Head Start Association from 2000 to 2006, one of only seventeen nationwide to receive the honor. An enriching curriculum provides low-income families with programs that enhance the development and health of children and that support the family as a whole and the communities in which they live.

When the family advocate in Caldwell County first met Lora a year ago, she noticed a shy young woman who wouldn't dare dream of getting her GED. But after a few classes, she realized she was capable.

"I see a totally different person now," said Teresa Jones, family advocate and program assistant for AACS Head Start in Caldwell County. "She is not that shy person anymore. I think she's doing wonderfully."

Lora had just begun the 11th grade when she dropped out of high school in Crittenden County. She was pregnant, and she had no one to care for her baby fulltime. So, she stayed at home. Got married. Got divorced. Got married again with the birth of her second daughter. And stayed home some more, working odd jobs that paid little and offered even less hope.

After another divorce more than two years ago, she knew things had to change. Food stamps and a medical card weren't enough anymore.

"It's been okay, but I want to be on my own and have insurance and be a role model for my kids," said Lora, sitting in a Head Start classroom with her golden hair pulled tightly back. "I want them to know I didn't quit. I always knew I had to go back. But I just had to get Cassandra situated. I wouldn't leave her with just anybody. After I knew the girls were okay, I knew it was my turn. I feel like I can hold my head up high for once."

Like thousands of other parents of Head Start children, Lora is on her way to fulfilling her dreams of an enriching life.



HOME PROGRAM

Betty Finney won't have to worry about her adult children who are developmentally disabled not having a decent home anymore. The Lewisport home that the family had lived in was more than 100 years old, a one-room log cabin with so many additions the whole structure leaned. The floors had pulled away from the walls so badly, the ground shown through.

But the 70-year-old woman moved into her new three-bedroom, 1,060-square-foot home in Lewisport on August 5, 2003. It was built with funds from the Audubon Area Community Services Home Program.

"It was a dream come true," Finney said. "My children are so excited. They can't wait to go home."

Audubon Area's Home Program builds two to three homes every two years. Homeowners are referred through the agency's Weatherization Program, which helps low-income people seal their homes to save energy costs. If a home is in too bad shape, however, the agency may replace it entirely. That's what happened in Finney's case.

"The home was in such bad shape, you walked down hill when you went in," said Sheila Boling, director of Audubon Area's Housing Services, the department under which the Home Program is administered. The home was used as a training exercise by the Daviess County and other fire departments in March, and construction started immediately.

"We see so many people living in substandard housing," Boling said. "This program gives them an opportunity to own a home that is safe and energy efficient."

The program gets its funding from the Kentucky Housing Corporation. Last year, the program received \$193,600, which must be spent in two years. Federal guidelines limit the agency to spending only \$60,000 per dwelling. But with donations and funds from the weatherization program, the agency was able to spend \$71,083 on Finney's home.

Applicants must fall at or below the 125 percent poverty level, which for a family of four would be a little more than \$23,000 a year. Homeowners must also agree to pay back a portion of the loan. For seniors and the disabled, that would be 20 percent of the no-interest loan over a 20-year period. Finney's monthly payment will be \$50 a month.

"She put the home in her children's names so that they would always have a place to live," Boling said. Finney's adult children are 45 and 48.

The family moved its belongings into a mobile home about a ¼ mile away while the new home was being built. Finney had lived in the log cabin for 49 years. But on Thursday, she said she is excited about the opportunity to live in a new home.

"My other home was in such bad shape," she said. "I was afraid one of the walls was going to fall in."



JUVENILE SERVICES

The little things in life used to make Patty and Melissa Confer argue, such as when to come home or when to get up and get ready for school. A typical week-day morning might begin with Patty entering her daughter's room several times to wake her, first with a gentle nudge but then escalating to the point of yelling. Those times often ended with Patty's head aching and her daughter's mood soured for the rest of the day.

Similar tensions rose when deciding on curfew. When Patty would set one, Melissa would argue that her friends could stay out longer.

But the breaking point between the two came when Melissa, now 16, was picked up two years ago for attempting to shoplift a purse full of colorful gel pens from an Owensboro department store. Patty knew the breakdown in communication had to mend.

"We really never talked," Melissa said. "I wouldn't talk to her much because I figured all she would do is yell at me."

The teenager was assigned a court designated worker who recognized the problem and recommended that the family attend Audubon Area Community Services Parenting Program. It was then the mending began.

Parents and children enrolled in the program attend the parenting classes once a week for about two hours. During the meetings, a nurturing program facilitator talks to the parents while another talks to the youth. They discuss a range of issues, such as conflict resolution, problem solving, appropriate discipline, communication and praise. Then at the end of the session, the two groups come together to practice the skills they've learned.

The parents learn what their children are really asking for while the children learn that Mom and Dad aren't just "being mean;" there are reasons behind their requests.

Sitting next to one another recently, the mother and daughter agreed that attending the ten-week classes helped them to heal the rift. Just listening to other parents with similar problems helped Patty, she said. She also learned when it was appropriate to walk away from a confrontation.

"You have to stick to what you tell your child," Patty said. "You can't always give in."

Arguments do still happen at times, but their severity and frequency have decreased, both agreed. Now, when it's time to get up from bed, Patty tells her daughter once, and then later tells her goodbye. It's up to Melissa to get herself to school, and she usually does on time.

Curfew is still a point of contention, but Melissa knows not to press the case.

"We communicate a whole lot better now," Melissa said. "I can talk to her and actually tell her things that I can't tell anyone else."

"We've learned how to discuss without arguing," Patty added.



RESOURCE AND REFERRAL

Kenny Keller gets excited when he talks about improving the quality of care at the Owensboro childcare center where he is director. He leans forward in his chair, widens his eyes and expresses a passion that clearly demonstrates his commitment to his profession.

He wants to make his childcare center better, earning an additional star through Kentucky's STARS for KIDS NOW initiative. And to do that, he has turned to Audubon Area Community Services Resource and Referral program to assist him.

"Childcare centers aren't babysitters anymore," Keller said. "We provide a learning environment. We're lucky in Kentucky to have STARS. It will make a lot of positive changes for all of us."

The STARS program is a voluntary rating system for identifying quality in licensed childcare and certified child care settings in Kentucky. Centers can receive up to four stars, marking enhanced quality with each successive star achieved. The Cabinet for Health and Family Services contracts with Kentucky's Resource and Referral programs to provide the expertise to guide centers as they improve the quality of their care.

Keller's center, Over the Rainbow, currently is a two-star facility but is working toward becoming a three-star. The primary difference will be the number of continuing education hours staff must attend and the child-to-caregiver ratio. Audubon Area's R&R program has been guiding Keller's employees through the training, which encompasses early childhood development.

From these courses, employees learn appropriate activities for children of various ages and how to promote early learning. Children learn through play, Keller said, developing their own imaginations and language skills by participating in age-appropriate activities.

For example, instead of merely reciting their ABCs, children touch them, walk around letters that have been placed on the floor and trace them in pudding.

"Any way that you can think of them to interact is the best way for children to learn," Kenny said.

Separate "stations" are created where children play dress-up or learn about housekeeping.

Crayons are scattered on the floor for children to draw what's on their mind, not the teachers.

"They're using their imaginations to draw what *they* see and know," Keller said. "Good childcare workers will then sit down and ask children to describe their pictures. That develops language skills."

In addition to the training, staff also can receive financial assistance through the KIDS NOW initiative to earn up to a bachelor's degree in early childhood education. The centers must pay 10 percent plus cover the costs of course books, Keller added.

"It's a great opportunity for anyone who wants to go into childcare but can't afford tuition," he said. "That's how I'm going."



SENIOR SERVICE CORPS

Vannie Willis always knew she wanted to work with children. She raised six of her own and loved on 11 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren, volunteering in their schools and making sure they walked a straight path.

So when she retired after 10 years of cooking at the Wendell Foster Campus for Developmental Disabilities in Owensboro, she turned to her calling. For five years, Vannie, 72, has been a grandmother to hundreds of school children, ages 4 to 6, through Audubon Area Community Services Foster Grandparent Program. When she walks in their classroom, they climb on her lap and hug her and kiss her and tell her stories. She returns their affection with warm smiles and generous hugs of their own.

“The children empower me, just like I’m trying to empower them,” Vannie said. “It gives me something to focus on. I really love it. I get tired sometimes, but I get a great joy from it.”

There are three volunteer opportunities for seniors through Audubon Area’s Senior Service Corps. In addition to the Foster Grandparent Program, seniors may also help frail elderly through the Senior Companion Program, or volunteer at area agencies through the Retired Senior Volunteer Program. In exchange, seniors receive a stipend that does not affect any government entitlement program, and they receive travel reimbursement and meals.

The opportunities are great ways for seniors to stay active and maintain vital roles in their communities. Vannie benefits by knowing she is helping children reach their full potential.

“They have someone to look forward to, to be with them and make them feel secure,” she said. “If they’re not smiling when I see them, I know they will be soon. They even call me Grandma.”

Vannie volunteers more than 20 hours a week at an elementary school in a low-income area in Owensboro. She helps them with their reading lessons and writing skills and provides a soft shoulder for them to rest their heads. If they aren’t practicing a skill, they’re hopping around her vying for her attention.

“I call them my little angels,” she said.

On one recent day, the children in her class took a break from their dance lessons to give Vannie a quick hug. They raced to where she sat at the edge of the room, gave her a squeeze and then went back to their dance. They giggled and smiled, hopping from dance floor to Vannie’s side. One of the teachers in the room commented on how “Miss Vannie” is loved by everyone who steps through the doorway.

At the end of the day, Vannie knows she has touched the hearts of children and taken them one step closer to reaching their fullest potential.

“If I’m tired, let me be tired,” she said of her work. “It’s a good tired.”



MIGRANT HEAD START

Parishioners at First United Methodist Church in Henderson had been looking for opportunities to expand their missionary services. They already offered children and youth programs but knew more was needed in their community, especially for the growing Hispanic population.

They found just the right fit with the expansion of Audubon Area Community Services Migrant Head Start program. In May, the church at 338 Third Street began offering Head Start for migrant children birth to age 5.

“This childcare center seemed like a perfect way to open our arms to the Latino community,” said The Rev. Gary Chapman, senior pastor at the church.

Before the Henderson center opened, 20 Migrant Head Start slots in Daviess County were available. The original grant funding the outreach, however, called for 20 more. Henderson County was chosen because of its increasing Hispanic population. According to the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau count, there are 433 persons of Hispanic decent living in Henderson County. But that number includes only those who filled out the survey and, therefore, would exclude illegal immigrants apprehensive about the count. Those who work with the population know that the numbers are far greater.

During the first month of operation, four children ages 2 to 5, were enrolled. On one recent day, they romped through the spacious common area equipped with pint-sized tables and chairs. Some understand a little English, but the four staff members are all fluent in Spanish for those who don't.

To be eligible for either of the Migrant Head Start facilities, a family must earn at least 51 percent of its income from agricultural work, be at or below the federal poverty level and must have moved at least one time the past year.

Poverty and transient life-styles aren't the only barriers migrant families face, according to Michelle Montalvo, Head Start family advocate. They often must overcome language barriers and need additional training and education. She helps them obtain their GEDs and finds translators when needed.

“I actually have one family member who has graduated high school and wants to go on to college,” she said.

Norma Avila-Brown, local area manager of the Migrant Head Start program and native of Mexico, said she was “thrilled” to expand the program.

“When they come here and suddenly I start talking to them in Spanish, they say they are surprised,” she said. “They feel more familiar and are not that shy to talk to.”

A consortium of four community action agencies provides Migrant Head Start in Kentucky – AACS, Lexington Community Action Council, Ohio Valley Education Cooperative and Kentucky River Foothills Development Council.



LOW-INCOME HEATING & ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Charlene Carter's story is not unlike other single mothers struggling to overcome poverty. She has survived two abusive marriages, one that she said sent her to the hospital 300 times during a seven-year period. She's been homeless, once sleeping in her car with her five children. And she has been struggling with obesity that has prevented her from obtaining employment.

Others in a similar situation might fold, but not Charlene. Ask her what she's proud of, and she'll say her kids, three of whom have college degrees. Ask her what she wants to do with her life and she'll say graduate with a degree in early childhood development. Ask her what keeps her going, and she'll say help from agencies, such as Audubon Area Community Services.

"If you get knocked down, you just get right back up," said Charlene, voice full of optimism.

The 47-year-old survives on a monthly disability check of \$560 a month, out of which must come \$208 for her mortgage on a home built by Habitat for Humanity. That leaves little left to cover utilities, food and everything else it takes to live.

When winter comes, however, she knows she can always depend on Audubon Area's Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

"It helps immensely," she said, sitting on her sofa in the living room of her home in Daviess County. "Without it, there's no way I could pay it all by myself."

The federal LIHEAP operates on two cycles — the subsidy component and the crisis component. During the subsidy component, implemented during the months of November and December, the benefit amount a family receives is based on its household income. During the crisis component, which begins the first of January, a family must be within two days of running out of fuel, or they must have received a disconnect notice.

Charlene, of Owensboro, usually receives help during both components.

Paying her bills has been hard, but it's a lot easier than what she has had to endure. Married at age 16, she escaped one marriage to a man whom she said beat her regularly and traded him for one not much better. Twelve years ago, she was left to raise five children alone and moved from Ohio back to Owensboro where she was born. Initially, she was homeless, but she eventually she was able to get a home through Habitat.

A degenerative spine and knee keeps Charlene from working. But despite the obstacles, Charlene continues to hope for a brighter future. With help from area agencies, such as Audubon Area Community Services LIHEAP, she inches toward her dreams of self-sufficiency every day.



WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE

Kathy and Bill Byrne knew they couldn't afford to make repairs to the heating unit in their home. But if the unit wasn't fixed, they knew they risked a fire breaking out.

"Every time we turned it up to stay warm, it would get blood red on top," Kathy said. "We were scared of it."

Fortunately for them, Audubon Area Community Service's Weatherization Program replaced their furnace and insulated their home to keep them warm and safe throughout the 2003-04 winter. As an added benefit, the couple already has seen a reduction in their heating bills since the work was completed in December.

"It went from nearly \$200 a month to a little over \$100," Kathy said. "I don't know what we would have done. There was no way we could get the money to do all they did."

Bill said he felt an immediate 10 degree increase in the temperature inside his home after 12 inches of insulation was laid in the attic.

Audubon Area's Weatherization Program is available to low-income residents who own their homes in the seven-county Green River region, consisting of Daviess, Hancock, Ohio, Webster, Union, Henderson and McLean counties. Trained technicians first complete an energy audit on homes and then caulk, weatherstrip, insulate and repair or replace the heating unit – all for free for those who qualify. For a family of four, that means no more than \$23,563 a year can be made.

To qualify, a family must provide income verification for all household members for the past 12 months, social security cards for all household members, the title or deed to the home, and the past 12 months of heating and electric bills. The program is even available for landlords who want to help their renters. They must agree, however, to not raise rent on the dwelling for 30 months and pay 75 percent of the energy system repair or replacement costs over \$150. Landlords who own three or more properties must pay 25 percent of the total cost of the job.

Kathy, 58, and Bill, 63, certainly fell under the income limit of no more than \$15,613 for a family of two. The couple survives on monthly checks from Social Security, disability and a pension. That allowed the family to have Audubon Area insulate and ventilate their attic, weatherstrip and caulk windows, and replace their furnace, more than what they had expected, Kathy said.

"All we asked for was a new furnace," she said. "We were so surprised they did all the other work."

The technicians did the work around the Owensboro couple's schedule. The work was originally scheduled for November, but Kathy had to have surgery. The couple also has a Cocker Spaniel, Heidi, who is prone to seizures when she gets around strangers.

No problem, Kathy said.

"We told them about my surgery and about Heidi, and they worked around us," she added.



AUDUBON AREA FISCAL AGENTS

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS, INC.

Several local funding partners, including Audubon Area Community Services, collaborated to create Community Conversations Inc., a Daviess County-based organization that fosters the public deliberation of various difficult and complex issues.

This year, Community Conversations has conducted deliberations on community planning and regulated development, racial tensions, illegal drugs, gambling and palliative care (death and dying).

GRANDMA'S CORNER

Grandma's Corner Inc. is a licensed childcare center that cares for the children of families in the middle of a crisis and in which there is no child care available. Such crises may include court appointments, medical appointments, job interviews and stress. Child care is provided on a temporary basis and at no cost to the parent. Grandma's Corner is located at 316 Hale Avenue, Apartment 7A in Owensboro, Kentucky and operates Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

KENTUCKY CHILD CARE NETWORK

The Kentucky Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies is now the Kentucky Child Care Network. It is the association of Kentucky's 14 "R&R" contractors. These contracts are operated by 10 different agencies, with four agencies, including Audubon Area Community Services Inc., having multiple contracts. The Child Care Resource and Referral agencies (CCR&Rs) cover Kentucky's 15 Area Development Districts. KACCRRRA funding flows from the Kentucky Department for Community Based Services, Cabinet for Families and Children.

The Network exists to promote the development, maintenance and expansion of quality child care services for children throughout the state-wide network of regional child care Resource and Referral organizations.

MISAS, INC.

The Migrant/Immigrant Shelter and Support, Inc. in Daviess County exists to provide safe, decent and affordable housing to migrants and immigrants and to help them to integrate into the surrounding community.

The MISAS mission also is committed to supporting programs with similar goals.

AUDUBON AREA SENIOR MANAGEMENT



John Blaney
Juvenile Services



Carrie Blackham
Child Care Assistance



Sheila Boling
Housing Services



Lydia Carrico
Public Info/Outreach



Cindy Ferrell
Senior Service Corps



Judy Grant
Personnel Director



Cathy Lamar
Counseling Services



Aubrey Nehring
Head Start



Kevin D. Rock
Chief Financial Officer



Rajen Shah
GRITS



Tim Stenberg
IS/IT Director

2003-2004 FINANCIAL RESOURCE SUMMARY

SOURCES—AND AGENCY-GENERATED MATCHING AND ANCILLARY (RELATED) FUNDS.

Department of Health and Human Services	\$16,162,933
Head Start/Early Head Start/Migrant Head Start, Western Kentucky University, Family Day Care, KIDS Now—Stars, Helen D. Sears, Westen End Day Care Center, Other	
Kentucky Cabinet for Families and Children	\$30,734,846*
Mostly Federal pass-through grants—CCAP, R&R, R&R Early Childhood Grants, CSBG, Weatherization, LIHEAP, & Family Preservation Program/Family Reunification, F.A.C.T.S—CCC&CSBG, Title V—SCSEP, Other * Includes \$24,487,033 paid through the Commonwealth's MARS payment system	
Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (and Local Sources)	\$3,531,054
GRITS <i>Empower Kentucky</i> brokerage, 5310—Operating Assistance, 5233—Capital Assistance, Unrestricted Cash, other	
Kentucky Department of Education	\$1,259,265
KERA 4-Year-Old At-Risk, and Disability Program (P.R.A.I.S.E), and Child Care Food Services, other.	
Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice	\$3,375,480
KISP—2-year Statewide Grants, Reconnecting Youth, Parenting Program, other.	
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	\$1,384,499
Lincolnshire Apartments, Inc./Lincolnshire North Apartments, Inc., Kentucky Housing Corporation—HOME, et.al., Management Fee/Laundromat, other.	
Corporation for National and Community Service	\$6,017,914
Foster Grandparent Program, Retired & Senior Volunteer Program, Senior Companion Program, other	
Kentucky Department of Mental Health	\$143,000
<i>F.I.R.S.T. Project</i> , other	
United Way of the Ohio Valley/United Way of Henderson	\$172,743
Foster Grandparents, Head Start/Early Head Start/Migrant Head Start, Helen D. Sears Family Development Center, Retired and Senior Volunteers, Senior Companions, Venture Grant—HelpOwensboro.org, West End Day Care Center, other.	
Other Programs and Supported Agencies	\$7,506,261
AACs administration/Reserves, Atmos Energy C.A.R.E.S. Program, Emergency Food and Shelter Program (FEMA), Kentucky Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, Community Conversations, Grandma's Corner, WinterCare Energy Assistance, Church-County Local Assisnace programs, other.	
Total Resources Available (Grants, Contracts, AACs Funds, and Other)	\$70,287,955

Totals Include "Value Added" Services (value of certain AACs-administered services) of \$6,923,857

Family Preservation Program / FRP	\$1,924,560
CNCS / NSSC Programs' Volunteer Hours	4,999,297

Total Resources Less Adjustments

"Value-Added" Services	\$6,923,857
CCAP payments through the Commonwealth's MARS payment system	\$24,487,033
Less non-federal matching share/ in-kind, AACs	\$2,374,047

Total 2003-2004 Resources (Cash) **\$36,503,058**

Note: The AACs 2003-2004 organization-wide audit is underway, but audited numbers are unavailable at the time of the publication of this Annual Report. The above summary represents the best available staff estimates of AACs financial resources for the 2003-2004 administrative year

Non-Federal Matching Share

Most AACs funding from the federal government requires a cash or in-kind matching share. Any required non-federal match not provided requires a cash reimbursement to the government in lieu of the disallowable federal expenditures, i.e., those funds not "matched." Therefore, actual matching funds are an integral and essential part of AACs funding and are included in the budget as though they were cash transactions.

AACs "Cognizant Agency"

The federal Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is the "cognizant agency" for AACs, Inc. This fiscal monitoring lead responsibility is according to the requirements of the federal Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Circular A-122, which prescribes the cost principles, and fiscal and administrative requirements for non-profit federal grantees. This OMB-mandated designation is based on the fact that DHHS—principally through the DHHS Atlanta Regional Office/ Administration for Children and Families—has the largest dollar volume of awards with AACs. This means that DHHS serves as AACs' lead agency. The DHHS, Washington, DC, is the designated entity through which AACs negotiates its annual Indirect Cost Rate Agreement and the DHHS Regional Office in Kansas City is accountable for receiving and approving its organization-wide audit. The AACs operates on an A-122 cost principles in all regards.

2004-2005 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Rev. Royce Pile—Chair

Ms. Shauna Boom—Secretary

Mr. Kyle Shrewsbury—Treasurer

Representative

Sector/Organization

Daviess County

Dr. Kathleen McKee	Brescia University
Dr. Ronald M. King	Owensboro NAACP
Sr. Fran Wilhelm	District VI Consumer
Jenny Thompson	District VII Consumer
Hon. Reid Haire	Daviess Judge/Executive
Daisy James	Mayor of Owensboro

Hancock County

Glenna Deck	Hancock Judge/Executive
Kim Harley	District VIII Consumer
Fouchee Young	Lewisport Senior Citizens

Henderson County

Chip Williams	Henderson NAACP
Hon. Henry Lackey	Mayor of Henderson
Barbara Jones	Henderson B&PW Club
David Ligon	District III Consumer
Shauna Boom	District IV Consumer
Hon. Sandy Watkins	Henderson Judge/Executive

McLean County

Lisa Ayer	District V Consumer
Hon. Larry Whitaker	McLean Judge/Executive
Rev. Charles Thomas	McLean Ministerial Assoc.

Ohio County

Hon. Wayne Hunsaker	Ohio Judge/Executive
Barbara Nevill	District IX Consumer
Kyle Shrewsbury	Ohio County Chamber

Union County

Jerry Manning	District I Consumer
Paul Hart	Sturgis Kiwanis Club
Rev. Royce Pile	Union Judge/Executive

Webster County

Robert Webb	District II Consumer
William Winstead	Dixon Lions Club
Hon. James Townsend	Webster Judge/Executive

HEAD START POLICY COUNCIL

Policy Council Officers

Ms. Helen Singleton– Chairperson

Ms. Melissa Wolfe – Vice-Chairperson

Ms. Cheryl Givens– Secretary

Ms. Patricia Wolfe – Parliamentarian

Community

Parent

Alternate

Area 1	Michelle Allen	Julia Nichols	Mary Barr
Area 2	Cheryl Tanner	Leisha Dame	Anglea Debruler
Area 3	Weley Nugent	Lora Lahnam	Stacy Greathouse
Area 4	Bernie Ballard	Cheryl Givens	Vacant
Area 5	Amanda Sapp	Melinda Langley	Karen Page
Area 6	Karen Wallace	John Cysewski	Larissa Collins
Area 7	Patricia Hawkins	Tiffancy Powell	James Pleasant <i>Jo Lynn Marsh (Parent Alternate)</i>
Area 8	Melissa Wolfe	Angela Peercy	Mary Ann Winders
Area 9	Del Henson	Denise Wilson	Kathleen Cockrel
Area 10	Charlotte Brockman	Patricia Wolfe	Ellada Hadjisavva
Area 11	Vacant Seat	Vacant Seat	Vacant Seat
Area 12	Jennifer Davis	Sara Wilson	Sheila Tucker

Home Based Option Representative Vacant

Child Care Partner Option Representative Leandna Watkins

AUDUBON AREA SERVICE NUMBERS

Early Childhood Services

Enrollment*		Children Served By County Continued	
Total Children Served	3,068	Hopkins	450
Child Care	12	Livingston	78
Early Head Start	196	Lyon	61
Head Start	1,921	McLean	98
KERA	939	Muhlenberg	310
		Ohio	266
Age		Todd	26
Prenatal	11	Trigg	118
Age 0-1	123	Union	173
2	161	Webster	129
3	1,060	Total:	3,068
4	1,698		
5	15		
Sex		Children with Disabilities	
Male	1,629	Vision Impairment	8
Female	1,439	Hearing Impairment	1
		Emotionally Disturbed	1
Race		Physical Impairment	4
African American	548	Speech Impairment	579
White	2,265	Health Impairment	9
Other	255	Mental Retardation	1
		Autism	7
Child Care Food Program (USDA)		Developmental Delay	327
Number Free	86%	Multiple Disabilities	5
Number Reduced	6%	Total:	942
Number Paid	8%		
Medicaid Eligible	1,932	Parent and Community Activities	
Parental Status		Parent Volunteer	2,854
Single	1,774	Volunteer hours	46,306
Two Parent	1,617	Value In-Kind Volunteer hours	\$625,685
Foster	16	Health Services	
Non-Parent	19	Health Screenings	1,932
		Dental Examinations	2,086
Children Served By County		Follow-Up Treatment (Referred)	1,257
Caldwell	18	Immunizations Up-to-Date	2,669
Christian	268		
Crittenden	86	Social Services	
Daviess	786	Number of Families Served	2,854
Hancock	83	Referrals to other Agencies	521
Henderson	118	Received Direct Social Services	1,104

*Numbers Include Head Start, Early Head Start, and State Preschool

Child Care Assistance Program

Client Family Case Count	
Current Clients	4,729 families / 8,281 children
Students	698 families / 1,091 children
Low-Income	2,855 families / 5,137 children
Social Service Involvement	1,176 families / 2,053 children
Total Served (duplicated) ...	10,214 families / 19,902 children
Current Active Providers	1,134
Total Number of Providers	1,814
2002-3 Provider Payments	\$24,487,033

Resource & Referral

Trainings:		
Training Events	460	
Training Hours	1,377	
Providers Trained	6,187	
Referrals	231	
Scholarships Awarded:		
	Number	Amount
College Scholarships	265	\$102,317
Non-College Scholarships	163	32,600
CDA Mini-grants	6	22,100
Related Education Expenses		11,250
TOTAL Educational Awards		\$179,202

Senior Service Program

Foster Grandparent Program		
County	Volunteers	Hours
Daviess	21	20,266
Hancock	2	1,672
Henderson	15	13,954
McLean	2	278
Muhlenberg	4	2,810
Ohio	4	4,464
Union	6	6,247
Total	54	49,691

Retired Senior Volunteers Program		
County	Volunteers	Hours
Daviess	299	99,858
Hancock	59	5,298
Henderson	110	18,582
McLean	88	9,913
Ohio	111	16,031
Union	19	1,744
Webster	34	13,978
Total	720	165,404

Senior Companion Program		
County	Volunteers	Hours
Daviess	36	36,629
Hancock	2	1,936
Henderson	34	33,164
McLean	1	147
Ohio	5	4,273
Union	9	6,550
Webster	8	8,280
Total	95	90,979

Counseling Service Program

Subsidy Component		
County	Families	Assistance
Daviess	1705	\$142,566
Hancock	170	15,414
Henderson	724	60,791
McLean	266	24,053
Ohio	679	70,124
Union	278	27,853
Webster	290	29,682
Total	4,112	370,483

Crisis Component		
County	Families	Assistance
Daviess	1457	\$118,498
Hancock	153	15,035
Henderson	703	69,507
McLean	218	19,322
Ohio	529	55,951
Union	250	24,809
Webster	295	31,742
Total	3,605	334,864

LIHEAP Client Benefits Summary		
County	Families	Assistance
Daviess	3,162	\$261,064
Hancock	323	30,449
Henderson	1,427	130,298
McLean	484	43,375
Ohio	1,208	126,075
Union	528	52,662
Webster	585	61,424
Total	7,717	\$705,347

2002-2003 LIHEAP Vendor Summary	
Western Kentucky Gas	\$134,479
Kentucky Utilities	70,654
City of Henderson	82,094
City of Providence	18,862
Owensboro Municipal Utilities	87,949
Kenergy	91,632
Suburban Propane	8,869
Housing Authorities	20,728
112 Other Vendors	190,080
Total Benefits Paid	\$705,347

FEMA Assistance		
County	Families	Benefits
Daviess	51	\$5,197
Hancock	14	1,810
Henderson	42	4,736
McLean	51	5,659
Ohio	93	14,804
Union	43	4,255
Webster	41	5,953
Total	335	\$42,414

Wintercare Energy Fund Program		
County	Families	Assistance
Daviess	9	\$899
Hancock	2	276
Henderson	6	369
McLean	16	1,942
Ohio	24	2,260
Union	9	755
Webster	13	1,266
Total	79	\$7,767

F.I.R.S.T./In-House Crisis/Parenting

Families Served	
DJJ In-House Crisis	280 families
F.I.R.S.T. Project	224 families
Parenting Program	135 families
Total	639 families

Program Funding	
DMH/SIAC	\$143,000
DJJ/In-House Crisis	\$75,000
DJJ/Parenting Program	\$18,000
Total	\$236,000

FPP Slots Used by County	
Daviess	21
Hancock	3
Henderson	9
McLean	6
Ohio	6
Webster	5
Total Cases	50

FRP Slots Used by County	
Daviess	14
Hancock	1
Henderson	6
Ohio	1
Webster	1
Total Cases	23

F.A.C.T.S. Slots Used by County	
Daviess	10
Henderson	2
Total Cases	30

KISP East Slots Used by County	
Clark	5
Fayette	25
Harlan	9
Laurel	4
Madison	9
Total Cases	52

KISP Central Slots Used by County	
Adair	7
Carrollton	10
Jefferson	39
Jessamine	4
Fayette	4
Franklin	5
Green	4
Henry	1
Metcalfe	2
Nelson	3
Oldham	1
Russell	4
Shelby	7
Spencer	2
Taylor	4
Woodford	7
Total Cases	104

KISP West Slots Used by County	
Christian	23
Daviess	10
Graves	7
Hardin	17
Henderson	15
Logan	1
Meade	2
McCracken	11
Warren	16
Total Cases	102

Green River Intra-county Transportation

Ridership History

1997-98	94,348
1998-99	77,101
1999-2000	101,456
2000-01	108,000
2001-02	113,000
2002-03	142,500

Ridership by County

Daviess	5,100
Hancock	432
Henderson	823
McLean	534
Ohio	702
Union	847
Webster	235
Total	8,673

AUDUBON AREA COMMUNITY SERVICES, INC.
1800 WEST FOURTH STREET
POST OFFICE BOX 20004
OWENSBORO, KENTUCKY 42304-0004

(270) 686-1600 PHONE
(270) 686-1614 FAX

www.audubon-area.com
www.audubon-area.net
www.RideGrits.org