



St. Lawrence County
Community Development

2015—2016

Annual Report



Board of Directors

Nancy Berger	Lori Elliott	Sohaib Obeid
Ali Boolani	Tessa Fields	Megan Page
Dee Burlingame	Joseph Finnegan	Carmon Paone
Deborah Chase-Lauther	Regina Fisher	Natalie Spilman
Dawn Colbert	Christina Martin	Rich Will
Ryan Coleman	Anne Mazzotta	

Executive Director

Norma S. Cary

Fiscal Officer

David H. Fenton

Program Directors

Barb Adams	Head Start
Nicole Woods	Housing Choice Voucher
Jerry Snell	Weatherization

Neighborhood Center Directors

Kristal Hayes	Canton
Julie Vaisey	Colton/Pierrepoint/Parishville
Peggy Cronk	Gouverneur
Elaine Eggleston	Massena
Nicole Sharpe	Ogdensburg
Daisy Cox	Potsdam

Executive Director- CDP, like other Community Action Agencies and non-profits, has faced many challenges over the last few years. The challenges came in the form of financial concerns with the increase in health insurance and another increase in minimum wage which added to the cost of doing business. Many Community Action Agencies have struggled with cash flows issues on a regular basis. CDP has been fortunate that in the past we have had some for profit ventures that have given us unrestricted funds to cover short falls. This year those short falls became more critical as we lost funding that gave us some of those unrestricted funds. Tough decisions had to be made. One change is that we no longer pay a portion of family health insurance coverage - only the employee. The insurance is still available for the family but the entire cost is to the employee.

Weatherization dollars look better in this contract over last year's funding. HCR is very pleased with our work and especially the new Quality Control Inspections that are now required. Jerry Snell and Auditor Andy Backus have really fine tuned the lengthy and involved process. We had Development Authority of the North Country funds for rehabilitation this year and they are continuing into 2017. We did very little EmPower work or No Heat Emergencies through the county to bring in unrestricted funds. Jerry is exploring some possible collaborations which have the possibility of unrestricted funds.

Housing Choice Voucher Program is growing by leaps and bounds. We "filled" all of our vouchers that were returned from Sequestration and were told that we could continue to lease beyond our allotted vouchers since other agencies in the state did not lease theirs back up when they were returned. We just received notification that the Cambray Court vouchers that were given to Jefferson/Lewis County will be coming back to us which will be a real positive for the agency since we collect admin. fees for servicing those vouchers. We are pleased with the increase in that department. Their hard work has paid off for the entire agency. The continuing inspections of existing vouchers keeps staff very busy but also the inspections that are associated with families who move to other homes during the course of the year.

Personal Care is a program that we have reviewed on a regular basis for viability. Over the past two years, the director of that program, Shannon Farnham, cut program expenses using a variety of strategies with some success. Although the financial life of the program improved some, it became clear that the cards were stacked against us due to the low Medicaid re-imburement rate. The travel time that we must pay aides between clients is a factor. St. Lawrence County is the largest county in the state which increases the travel time that must be paid between clients and the re-imburement rate by Medicaid does not factor this in--at least not adequately. We decided in March that we would close the program. It has been a lengthy process but it is almost concluded. There is a shortage of PCAs in the county so transitioning the clients with their aides to another agency was the most efficient way to make sure our clients continued care with no gaps in service.. It has been difficult for both the PCAs and clients since a number have worked for CDP for over 20 years and have served their clients for the same amount of time. We also had a Medicaid audit which we do not have a final tally for at this time. The last figure of what

they will recoup from CDP is \$112,000. We are awaiting the final notification with an opportunity to appeal the amount which sounds like it might be another lengthy process.

Head Start has had a very busy year. We had enrollment issues due to a lower number of four year olds and competition with the UPK programs in school districts. We had a good amount of staff turnover as well. We did enroll a number of three's to fill openings but that has increased staffing requirements for the younger age group. Barb Adams successfully wrote the new five year grant and is now completing another grant for funding for full day programming for some of our centers. She also wrote the application for COLA funds. We focused on the areas where there was low enrollment to give parents another option and compete with full day UPK. We are working on a unique collaborative effort with St. Lawrence Central to share children and classrooms with the district UPK. We are very enthused with this exciting new collaboration.

The Neighborhood Centers continue to focus on budgeting and other educational opportunities. Many of their workshops have nutrition as a theme and they have been well attended. We continue to work in the area of Family Development with families which has a core value of obtaining self-sufficiency. Daisy Cox, the Director at the Potsdam Neighborhood Center, started the VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) Program. It went well with volunteers trained by the IRS to do taxes for families that are low-income. We hope to increase the number of volunteers next year and therefore the assistance to families. Nicole Sharpe, the Director of the Ogdensburg Neighborhood Center has started a support group of people who are focusing on goal setting with the objective of those participating to transition to Family Development. We received \$500 in scholarship money which was donated by the Wladis Law Firm. The recipient is Christine Trickey who will be going to BOCES in the fall to study Pharm Tech with a promise of employment at Rite Aid. The scholarship came through United Way of Northern New York. The Ogdensburg Neighborhood Center hosted the first OT intern in May which went very well. Several Neighborhood Centers hosted open houses in conjunction with Head Start to do some community education regarding CDP and its programs - not to mention some Head Start recruitment. We are participating in the "Squeaky Clean" Community Action Angels statewide project. Signs are up and donations of personal care items are sought for the local Neighborhood Centers.

We closed down the CDP Auto Repair business due to lack of business and therefore income. We developed a contract with JT's Garage to continue to repair CDP vehicles - especially the large number of Head Start vehicles - along with assisting in the bus DOT inspection process.

In Finance we welcomed David Fenton as our new fiscal officer. He is a welcome addition with many new thoughts and ideas. Dave is a former CDP board member so he has a good knowledge of the agency. He experienced his first audit here which went very well with an unqualified opinion by the auditors. Dave also has a lot of experience in the area of computers and we are in the process of looking at some different tracking software for the agency. It is called CAPTAIN and looks promising as compared to CAP60.

We had a fundraiser last year at the Potsdam Summer Festival in the form of a bake sale. We distributed agency brochures and sold lots of goodies. We are not sure that we want to dabble in melted chocolate on such a hot day again this year. We have, however, taken on the Tour de Potsdam at the opening of the festival. We are working with Carol Zimmerman from the Health Initiative who was in charge of the Tour de Potsdam in previous years. We will need volunteers to help with the fundraiser in order for it to be successful.

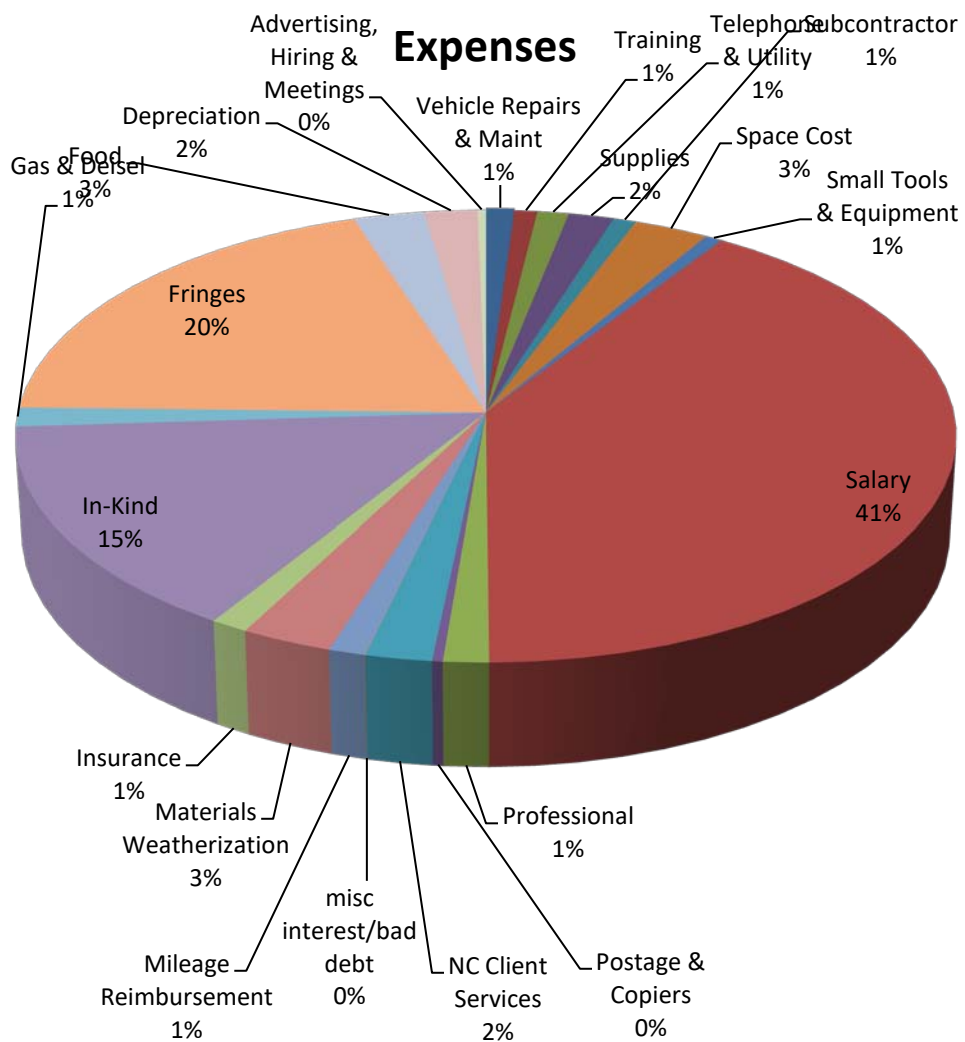
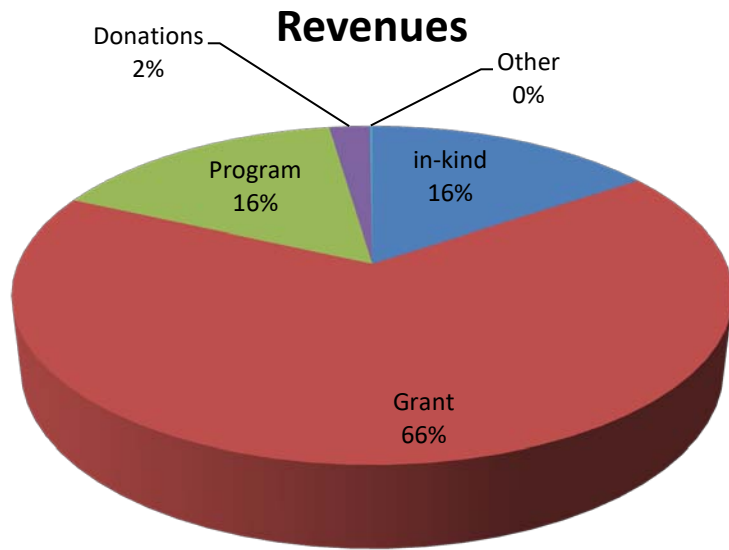
CDP now has a Facebook page which is monitored and information is being added on a regular basis. It was a challenging start to get the page set up and then learning how to add activities and information, but we are now seeing more activity and responses.

There have been many changes and challenges but our staff, board members and volunteers are committed to the agency and the families with low income that CDP serves in St. Lawrence County.

Finance - **Audit** - The firm of Bowers and Company CPA's, PLLC , has completed their audit work for the year ending December 31, 2015. The auditors gave us an unqualified opinion; which is the best report that can be given. The audit went very well, and CDP Staff were able to gather and offer information well in advance of the auditor's arrival date.

Health Insurance Reform - The Affordable Care Act required first time reporting of employee participation and eligibility this year. We contracted with an outside firm and produced the required Form 1095 for our employees prior to mandated date.

Budgeting - Budgeting was difficult in 2015; in part due to changes in the transportation program, and on-going revenue shortfalls in other programs. Minimum wage increases on the horizon promise to be a challenge for the agency as the gap between the NY State minimum wage and the federal minimum wage grows wider. Since most of our programs are federally funded, there is some question regarding whether grant funding will keep pace with our state minimum wage.



Head Start - is a federally funded school readiness program that serves eligible children 3 to 5 years of age and their families throughout St. Lawrence County. The program provides all-inclusive preschool early childhood education, health, dental, nutrition and social services as well as parent education and engagement opportunities to support not only the children but the families served. Social-emotional as well as cognitive development provides support toward positive outcomes for all. Five school readiness domains are used to present the structure in preparing children for kindergarten.

St. Lawrence County CDP Head Start is currently funded to serve 351 children and their families in the county and follows the calendar set forth yearly by the Board of Cooperative Educational Services. Strong collaborations with other programs within the county are used to meet the needs of children and families throughout the year. These collaborations include school districts, Public Health, Social Services, the Children's Home of Jefferson County (serving St. Lawrence County) the St. Lawrence County Childcare Council, Youth Advocacy Program (YAP) and more.

St. Lawrence County CDP Head Start currently operates 14 classrooms in the county serving primarily four (4) year old children and their families. 231 children and their families are served in this capacity. Seven of our eight centers provide programming five days each week for four hours; one center provides programming for 4 days each week for 3 ½ hours. All of our centers use the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) to provide breakfast and/or lunch to the children following nutritional guidelines set forth by CACFP. CACFP is funded by the New York State Department of Health; St. Lawrence County CDP Head Start is reimbursed for providing nutritious and healthy meals to center based children.

In addition to a center based option, St. Lawrence County CDP Head Start also operates a large Home Based option for children who are three (3) years old throughout St. Lawrence County. 120 children and their families are served in this capacity. Children enrolled in the Home Based option are eligible for a second year of enrollment in our Center Based program when they turn four (4). Children in Home Based receive the same services as those enrolled in center with a focus on the home as a learning environment. St. Lawrence County CDP Head Start is "committed to encourage and assist individuals and families to attain self reliance, dignity and self sufficiency through education, guidance and services". St. Lawrence County CDP Head Start scaffolds the sensitivity that parents are a child's most important teacher by encouraging their participation in all areas of the program.

Throughout the year staff uses the Creative Curriculum to promote school readiness in all areas. This curriculum is research based and is aligned with the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework as well as the New York State Prekindergarten Learning Standards. The Creative Curriculum promotes readiness in the areas of language, cognitive development, social, emotional, physical, early reading, and math. Ages and Stages Questionnaire for Social Emotional (ASQ- SE) is reviewed with and completed by families to evaluate and assess the child's social emotional development to help Head Start to deliver the most comprehensive services possible. Assessment is measured three times yearly and individualized learning goals

are established based on the cumulative as well as individual outcomes. All children and their families participate in transitioning, no matter which program option they participate in. Each center and Home Based area have individualized Transition Plans that move the children and their families along in an organized approach, a continuum of sorts, to the child's next placement, whether it be from a Home Based program as a 3 year old to a Head Start Center as a 4 year old for a second year of enrollment or to school for UPK or kindergarten entry. Head Start maintains collaborative agreements with the respective schools in areas where Head Start is located. In 2014-2015, 189 children transitioned to kindergarten.

The Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment System is used to track children's developmental progress for both the Home and Center Based options of the Head Start program. This data is gathered and analyzed for core children (children enrolled the entire year) three times during the program year: Fall, to establish a baseline for developmental growth, then again in the winter and spring to track progress in each of the 15 (out of 38) monitored indicators. The results of each analysis are used to measure growth, as well as shape curriculum, identify areas of need for staff development, set overall program goals and highlight program strengths. Each of the 15 indicators is broken down into reasonable expectations for development and learning. The goal is to have the children progress to the highest reasonable expectation for their ages and class level. At each assessment period, based upon the analysis of data, some of the 15 indicators may be identified as strengths and/or "targets".

The analysis of the exit data, for Home Based, in the 2014-15 program year indicates that the Domains: Social Emotional, Language and Mathematics were target areas for the county. Although these areas remain targets, there was continual growth across all domain areas throughout the program year. The biggest areas of growth were in Social/Emotional and Mathematics. Domains: Physical, Cognitive and Literacy were areas of strengths across the county. The data will be broken down by individual Home Based Visitors and used to shape the curriculum and identify professional development needs.

The analysis of the exit data, for Center Based, in the 2014 - 15 program year indicates that Domains: Social Emotional, Physical, Language, Cognitive, Literacy and Mathematics were target areas for the county. Although these areas remain targets, there was continual growth across all domain areas throughout the program year. The biggest areas of growth were in Physical, Language and Mathematics. The data will be broken down by individual teachers and used to shape the curriculum and identify professional development needs.

In 2014-15 the following Program Information Report (PIR) was submitted:

- 351 – Number of children funded
- 391 – Number of children served during the year
- 33 – Number of classroom staff
 - 9 – Teachers with Master's degrees
 - 1 – Assistant Teachers with Master's degrees
 - 2 – Teachers with Baccalaureate degrees
 - 5 – Assistant Teachers with Baccalaureate degrees
 - 5 – Teachers with Associate degrees (2 working toward Bachelor's degrees)
 - 2 – Assistant Teachers with Associate degrees

- 4 – Assistant teachers with CDA credential
- 3 – Classroom Aides with no credential (2 in process)
- 3 – Teacher turnover
- 389 – Children w/ongoing source of medical care
- 263 – Children w/ongoing source of dental care
- 64 – HS children with a disability
- 852 – Volunteers
- 155 – Single Parent Families
- 7 – Homeless Families Served
- 155 – Number of males involved in activities with their child

Parents were involved at all levels at Head Start. Parent involvement activities differ from location to location around St. Lawrence County. This program year Head Start had a very active Policy Council; they participated in hiring staff as well as made decisions regarding budget and program policies. Around the county parents have participated in family fun nights, father and child activities, local parades, home visits, classroom volunteers, paid staff (where appropriate), field trips to various places around the county, doing at home projects with their child and much more. Parent participation is the strength of our program. This past year there were 870 volunteers in total with 482 of those being current or former Head Start parents.

Parents were engaged in a variety of activities throughout the county. In addition to CPR and Emergency First Aid, parents learned about school readiness through a variety of topics. These included keeping kids on track at home, rules and consequences and parent to parent workshops. Dads participated in pumpkin carving, winter solstice activities, and field trips to the Nature Center, apple orchard and flower boxes. Parents also participated in sing a longs, fire safety events, concerts, sharing individual cultural foods and practices, reading to the children, parent meetings, and Policy Council.

Head Start Centers		Home Based programs	
Brasher Falls	Potsdam	*Brasher Falls	*Ogdensburg
Canton		*Canton	*Potsdam
Gouverneur		*Gouverneur	*Surrounding areas
Massena		*Hammond	
Norwood		*Massena	
Ogdensburg		*Morristown	
Parishville		*Norwood	

Administrative Staff at St. Lawrence County Head Start

Norma Cary
 Barbara Adams
 Janet Allen

Executive Director – CDP
 Director – Head Start
 Parent Involvement

Tona Bouchard
 Laura George
 Rebecca Hannon
 Kelley Martin
 Tammy LaPoint
 Teena Prentice
 Terry Rielley
 Peggy Gaumes
 Tammy Garno

Training Coordinator
 Education Coordinator
 Health/Disabilities Coordinator
 Home Based/ERSEA Coordinator
 Nutrition Coordinator
 Mentor Coach
 Transportation Coordinator
 Administrative Assistant
 Secretary

Enrollment Information

• Funded enrollment	351
• Actual enrollment	391
• Three year olds enrolled	177
• Four year olds enrolled	214

Children are served in classrooms having a maximum size of 17 children with a teacher and an assistant teacher. Each center has a classroom aide to assist when needed to maintain ratio or for breaks. As part of our transition agreement with schools in Brasher Falls, Canton, Massena, Norwood and Potsdam, families who need full day child care may participate in both programs if they are eligible. Children are eating a variety of nutritious foods as well as being introduced to new foods.

**2015 Financial Report
 Annual Budget
 \$3,633,866**

Federal Revenue	\$ 2,756,544	Total Expenses	\$3,621.163
USDA Revenue	\$ 116,408	Depreciation	\$ 92,631
In-Kind	\$ 714,007	Fixed Assets	\$ 57,307
Program Income	\$ 400.66		

Housing Choice Voucher Program - St. Lawrence County Community Development Program's (CDP) Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) currently provides rental assistance to 675 low-income, disabled and elderly families throughout St. Lawrence County. It has been a very busy and productive year in the housing department. Compared to last year at this time, we are currently serving 120 more families with this program. Included in the 675 families are 13 first-time homeowners and 26 families that are enrolled in our FSS (Family Self Sufficiency) Program. Of the 26 FSS families, 8 are new enrollees, 6 have an active escrow every month and 11 have an escrow balance. Last year at this time we had 18 enrollees in FSS.

In July of 2015 the HCVP acquired 50 tenant based vouchers from the Ogdensburg Housing Authority, of which 40 were already filled. Also in July we requested an increase in our pay standard for units in St. Lawrence County as we were finding it difficult for some new admissions to lease up in certain locations where the contract rent tends to run higher such as Gouverneur, Canton and Potsdam areas. This helped make it easier for us to allow participants to lease up without having to negotiate with the landlord on the contract rent while making it affordable to the new participant.

In November of 2015 we received 15 vouchers at Mayfield Apartments in Potsdam. This was a very smooth transition as we met with all of the residents and completed inspections in the same day. The participants were very happy to be receiving rental assistance since the previous subsidy contract that they had, expired in October, leaving one month lapse in assistance. HCVP was able to help cover that lapse in assistance and for that, they were very thankful.

In September of 2015, we sent staff to Nan McKay training in Geneva, NY for rent calculation and admissions. In November we sent staff to Albany to participate in a First Time Homeowner workshop. We recently hired a new staff member to fill a vacant inspector position and are looking at up-coming Housing Quality Standards training in the fall.

In March of 2016, our program requested an increase in our administration fee and that request was granted at a rate of \$41.97 from \$39.96 - an increase of \$2.01 per voucher. Currently we are able to lease up over 100% of our existing voucher size. This is only for a limited time and we have no way to determine when Housing Community Renewal will tell us to stop leasing up, therefore we are busy adding as many people to the program as we can in order to increase our voucher size and assist more families in St. Lawrence County.

Weatherization - The 2015-2016 year was a much better year for the Weatherization Program. We were able to go back to a 40 hour work week with the increased funding from HCR.

We are currently working on funding we receive from DANC (Development Authority of the North Country). We anticipate completing a minimum of 6 full rehabilitation projects. These projects will also receive weatherization work which will count as leverage funding for the Weatherization Program.

We are also working with the Empower NY Program and the HEAP Program to provide maximum service to our low-income households.

We anticipate the completion of at least 80 units this year. We continue to have a long waiting list.

Canton Neighborhood Center - This year has been another full of change for the center. The center began this year's holiday season transitioning to a new director.

The Director has been busy learning the position, the center, the community and those we serve. The new Director is very excited and looking forward to working with and for our neighbors. The weather this year has had a dramatic effect on the services being sought. Our Care and Share program numbers are down from last year. We are also experiencing a decrease in the requests for assistance from those who did not qualify for Care and Share or the HEAP program. We have distributed just under 93,000 pounds of food this year. It has helped to feed just over 2,200 households, averaging 200 households a month. The center is very fortunate in that we are able to secure food for our families from a few different sources. The Food Bank on its own and Walmart's partnership with Feeding America are tremendous assets and we are blessed to be affiliated.

Colton, Parishville, Pierrepont Neighborhood Center - The Colton - Pierrepont and Parishville Neighborhood Center had a year of growth. We have several new organizations that began contributing to our pantry and supporting other needs as they arise. These additional community associations are a great benefit to our program. The Girl Scout Troop 50105 from Colton assisted with our holiday program and will be assisting with a couple programs we are developing for this summer.

We assisted the Colton-Pierrepont and Parishville schools with their backpack programs. This year students could be added throughout the year bringing the total number of students we provided nutritious food for to 110.

A group of volunteers organized a fund raising campaign for our center. These community members designed cards to be mailed to local landowners describing the services provided by our agency. The narrative offered suggestions if the person receiving the card would want to donate to the Colton, Pierrepont and Parishville Neighborhood Center. We continue to partner with local faith-based organizations which enable us to increase the number of families we assist. Local organizations continue to sponsor fund raisers to benefit our center.

Attendance at the workshops we sponsor has increased and we continue to look for opportunities for our clients to attend these workshops to better utilize their families resources and skills. The center will be increasing the amount of workshops offered at each location this year.

The Colton-Pierrepont-Parishville director is committed to providing each site with a stable food pantry and consistent support, respect and a welcoming environment. Increasing the communities' involvement and understanding of the purpose and services of their Neighborhood Center is a goal for the coming year.

Gouverneur Neighborhood Center - The center has had a good year and has regular hours of operation. There are several volunteers who donate time and in addition there are community service workers, high school and college interns who work required hours.

The director has worked closely with several families working on Family Development and has seen them make good progress. One has found employment and another has started his own business. Two individuals are in college and another is taking the GED classes.

The pantry is now open during lunch hours to accommodate working households and continues as a Client Choice Pantry. Due to increased donations to the pantry we have been able to offer more food choices.

The center continues to run a thrift store which supplies low cost clothing and household items to families. Clients who cannot afford Thrift Store prices are given some items for free. It also gives the public a place to donate items. We continue to make improvements to the Thrift Store. Some shelves and racks were donated by a local business landlord and are an improvement to the ones that they replaced.

There have been many workshops in the last year which include: Budgeting, Childcare, Nutrition, "Just Say Yes to Fruits and Vegetables", and Emergency Preparedness.

The director continues to do mobile outreach in the Star Lake area on a monthly basis. The director is working on increasing the number of clients seen there by hanging posters and distributing fliers. A Book Swap was organized and is in operation. The Gouverneur Library donates the books to be swapped and the housing manager oversees the book swap on the days her office is open. Since there is not a library in Star Lake the residents of the housing complex

greatly appreciate the books and tapes. In addition to regular books, large print and audio books are also provided.

Social Services Employment Counselors use a room upstairs two days per week. Also, Massena Independent Living staff and Healthcare Facilitated Enrollers do outreach on occasion at our center as well.

Dr. Saidel painted the building and did repairs to the exterior as well this past year. He donated his time and the paint and supplies. Most recently he bought windows for upstairs with his own and donated funds and has arranged for the windows to be installed by volunteers. Local artist Paula Towne donated her time to paint a new sign for out front and McAdam Tree Service donated their time to remove a decayed tree from the front lawn.

Massena Neighborhood Center - We have had a number of highlights at the Massena Neighborhood Center this past year:

We are committed to treat each individual and family who needs our services with dignity and respect. We always strive to make them feel comfortable, important and very welcome.

We assisted 926 families which included 2,718 individuals with some type of service. A monthly average of 182 families utilized the food pantry for a total of 65,289 meals. We received 113,513 lbs of food.

We have a Community Garden which is planted and maintained by volunteers and staff. We receive a variety of donations from the community to keep it going. Other than the produce we get from the garden, we also receive donations of fresh vegetables and fruit from individuals, local farmers, the prison, the Food Bank of Central NY and Gleaning Program. These items compliment our food packages.

We held a Summer Children's Food Program where we were able to give additional food to 59 children in 25 families. Also, we had a small School Supply Program where we assisted 28 children in 13 families.

The Christmas Program is our largest program. We assisted 503 families with a complete ham or turkey dinner with all the trimmings and provided gifts to 657 children and chocolates to each senior citizen.

We have written, requested and/or received many grants this year. Among them were; Food Bank of Central NY Grant for line of credit for food, Food Bank Operations Support Grant for rent, Food Bank Mini Produce Grant for fruits and vegetables, Northern NY Community Foundation for food, Stewart's Shoppes Holiday Match for children, and Walmart for food and children. Grants through our agency provided United Way Funds for utilities and shelter, FEMA for food, and Legislative grant for food as well as Care and Share.

We held several workshops which included; a Budget Workshop through SeaComm Federal Credit Union, Child Care Workshop through St. Lawrence Child Care Council, Inc., a Low Income Tax Payer Clinic through Legal Aid Society of Northeastern NY, five Food and Nutritional Workshops through the Food Bank of Central NY, a bundled Nutritional and Information Workshop with Cornell Co-Operative Extension, Food Bank of Central NY and North Country Prenatal/Perinatal Council, Inc. (SNAP).

The Mayor of the Village of Massena has created "The Massena Community Services Coalition". This is a group of 15 helping agencies in Massena who have partnered with him and each other for the betterment of our community. The Mission of the Board is "To coordinate efforts and facilitate communication amongst the various helping agencies in our community for the benefit of the residents of the area." The Vision is "To ensure the residents of the greater Massena area can find the resources they need." We are proud to say we are members and are thankful to the Mayor for forming this group.

We strive to engage our families with long term positive changes by empowering them with the tools necessary to become more self sufficient, self reliant, and economically stable. We do this through our Family Development Program. We had 11 families enrolled last year. One male has completed college and will be receiving his Bachelor's Degree in Digital Forensics in June, 2016. He plans on pursuing his education for his Masters. One disabled female has been attending GED classes and took her final test in May, 2016. When she passes she will be attending SUNY Canton in the fall for the Nursing Program. Four individuals are currently employed with full or part time jobs. Three individuals are working on personal obstacles and two have dropped out of the program.

We provided families with assistance with fuel, utilities, shelter, disasters, college books, phone cards, gas cards, clothing, etc. We are able to fund these through the generosity of the community and agency programs. The majority of our community donations are received through the special efforts and dedication of a separate group of volunteers, the "Fundraising Committee to Benefit Massena Neighborhood Center Food Pantry, Emergency Assistance Program and Christmas Holiday Program." Without their dedication and help we would not be able to assist families at our current level.

Last but not least and the most important of all are our 134 volunteers who assisted us throughout the year. Some volunteer on a regular basis, while others work on special projects. Their generosity of time and dedication to the Center generated a total of 3,434 volunteer in-kind hours. They are the true "Heart" of the Center.

Ogdensburg Neighborhood Center - During the summer months last year the Center was grateful once again to receive fresh produce grown at our local Correction Facilities. The Ogdensburg Correctional Facility and Riverview Correctional Facility donate their harvest of fresh vegetables to enrich nutritional benefits from locally grown crops. The

Center also received a makeover thanks to the Catholic Heart Summer WorkCamp volunteers. The new paint job has brightened the atmosphere and improved the view on cleanliness in the Food Pantry. Catholic Heart will be returning again in June for further improvements to the Pantry.

During the month of December the Ogdensburg Neighborhood Center partnered with Salvation Army and Catholic Charities to provide services to the community during the holiday season. The Center joined with the Salvation Army to provide a Christmas food package to low income families in our area. This year was also the first time the Center partnered with Catholic Charities in a Senior Citizens Christmas program. The Center was appreciative to be the recipient from many local events that have happened in the area. Lights on the River, Hobble Gobble, Simms Outreach, and the Ogdensburg Cub Scouts all held events this year that supported the Neighborhood Center both financially and nutritionally. Several surrounding churches and community members have also been inspiring donors as well.

The Center received a grant from the Northern New York Community Foundation to hold their very first baby shower. The baby shower gave expectant mothers the chance to further their knowledge on valuable programs like WIC and SNAP, along with education from Cornell Cooperative's Parenting and financial budgeting information. This event provided expectant mothers with resources and tools that can be utilized both in the present and after their children have been born.

Again this year, the Center was able to aid in the application process for the National Grid program Care & Share. Applicants were able to access the program once their HEAP benefits were utilized. Although we had a mild and late winter the program was utilized and has benefited many families in the community.

The Center is looking forward to holding our annual Summer Food Program to aid families to provide nutritious food packages to children. During the summer months, low-income families can obtain their monthly food package but also the children are able to pick their own food package from a special rack with nutritious kid friendly food. This program not only gives a sense of independence by choosing their own healthy food but also gives them a chance to add up their own points.

Potsdam Neighborhood Center - was active this past year in many avenues. The director continued to serve on the boards of GardenShare, the SLC Fair Housing Task Force and the HPNAP Advisory Board. These partnerships sync well with the agency mission, and facilitate community level achievements.

Additional programming partnerships included the St. Lawrence Health Alliance- which did quarterly outreach clinics at the Center. This partnership has evolved into a Health Club- meeting periodically with hospital staff to discuss topics chosen by the group.

The PB&J program of getting lunches to kids participating in the summer recreation programs has been going strong for two years now, and plans are going forward to enter a third year. We were fortunate to have two major beneficiaries- one with WalMart and another with the Canton-Potsdam Hospital. Both entities supplied complete lunch packages for 3 weeks each. This generosity included their staff time to prep the packages in their certified kitchens. This meant that Center volunteers picked up the packages daily and brought them to the Pine Street Arena. This is a program that was started at the Center as the brainchild of a volunteer, but will ultimately become self sustaining and an independent community owned program. Initiating and progressing programs allows the Center to strive to develop innovative strategies to the new barriers the communities served face.

Perhaps the biggest development of the Center was the addition of the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program. This program utilizes IRS certified volunteers to perform the task of filing income taxes for those whose income is less than \$54,000.00. It's a program that seeks to maximize individuals and families opportunity to access their Earned Income Tax Credit. This tax credit can sometimes amount to an additional 25-30% of a low wage household's annual income. Given all at once in the form of a refund, means that a person has increased their buying power considerably. For a low wage earner to save that kind of money would be nearly impossible or take an extensive amount of time. Customers served spoke of using their refunds in impressive ways- one person saved their home from foreclosure and another sought much needed but delayed medical attention. It is a center goal to increase capacity to serve more by encouraging current volunteers to increase their certification levels and to increase the number of volunteers. We have also been approved to travel to other centers for one day events.

The year saw a significant reprieve in emergency needs. Minimum wage increased again, while gas and fuel prices went down. This combination meant folks were more able to keep themselves from bad situations. Additionally, the warmer weather allowed HEAP funds to be stretched out further.

MISSION STATEMENT OF CDP

St. Lawrence County Community Development Program is committed to encourage and assist individuals and families to attain self-reliance, dignity, and self-sufficiency through education, guidance, and services.

VISION STATEMENT OF CDP

St. Lawrence County Community Development Program is a community organization that envisions equal opportunities and self-sufficiency for low-income individuals and families in St. Lawrence County.