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Helping People...Changing Lives



The Community

Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc.
Chautauqua Opportunities for Development, Inc. Fall 2008



Silver Creek Business Welcome Corridor Project *A Comprehensive Revitalization Strategy*

This project, several years in the making, is a comprehensive revitalization strategy for the downtown Silver Creek area. Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc. has collaborated with the Silver Creek Community Development Corporation, the Chadwick Bay Regional Development Corporation, Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc., and Village government in order to secure funding and offer local business and property owners the opportunity to improve the energy-efficiency of buildings, increase the availability of decent, affordable rental units, and renovate building facades to enhance the overall physical appearance of the commercial district.

While the primary funding source is the State government through a NY Main Street grant, this project is a true private/non-profit/public partnership: private citizens must first invest in the local properties and then they will

receive dollar for dollar matches through the Main Street grant.

Rural villages are not sustained by just one industry or company, and as a result, there is no single solution to the improving the fortunes of such a community. This partnership has a multi-pronged approach for meeting the unique needs of Silver Creek:

- Service businesses can renovate their current space to increase their customer capacity, increasing the economic viability of the business and potentially adding employment opportunities
- Property owners can renovate empty commercial space to attract new business and jobs to the area
- Property owners can renovate residential space to increase the availability of safe and affordable housing, increasing the number of residents in the village
- Use of Energy efficient construction methods and appliances will allow participants to access additional funding while decreasing business and residential energy costs at a



critical time in our nation's history

- Building upon the strengths and character of the Village, all façade designs will be reviewed and approved by the Silver Creek Code Enforcement Officer and as necessary the Zoning and Planning Boards.

Community development is most successful when community members are driving the changes. In this project, business and property owner decide what improvements they want to make to their businesses and properties. And, they choose what contractors to use when completing the work, offering one more opportunity for local business and local jobs.

Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc. is proud to facilitate this local project that will build on the civic nature of the community, increase the economic capacity as a place to do business, and increase opportunities for individuals to work and live in the Village.

“Community development is most successful when community members are driving the changes.”



Executive Director's Corner

What does 'the bailout' have to do with me?

Roberta Keller

What is the changing economic climate, and how will it impact the average citizen? You may be asking, "What does 'the bailout' have to do with me?" As the market has declined and institutions whose overall viability is tied to their investments (banks, insurance companies), these institutions must change the way they have been doing business and who they have been engaging services with. Credit will be more difficult to attain and interest rates on charge cards may be increasing. Overall access to credit will tighten and be more costly. Companies who depend on accessing lines of credit to run a business will be experiencing cash flow problems. These cash flow problems will translate into less inventory and high late fees for customers not paying their bills on time. Many businesses will scale back in order to tighten their own credit issues, which may result in increasing layoffs.

Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc. is preparing to readjust our services and service delivery over the next few years, anticipating a growing clientele with changing needs. We have been seeing a different population who are increasingly unable to meet their financial obligations and are also unaware of service options that might assist them before a crisis hits home. In addition to revising service options, we are advocating with institutions and policy makers to consider different service options that might better assist these people.

Who are "these people" that I am referring to? They are hard working taxpayers, many of whom are home owners. Some of these new customers are seniors who have retired and are living on fixed incomes, others are young parents and new homeowners, some are well established residents who have recently become unemployed or are concerned about a pending lay off' others are hard working families that are over extended with credit and are realizing the need to live within their means and tighten up their expenses.

Some may refer to this national economic crisis as a "reality check" for Americans who have

lived beyond their means for too long. We have done so on a national, state and individual basis and it is time for us all to re-discover the art and joy of delayed gratification. There is an inner sense of accomplishment to saving over a period of years to attain the down payment for a new home or working together as a family to afford a vacation by denying ourselves the day to day "extras" in order to have that one week special trip. What happened to the inner smile that comes as we watch our savings account grow? For many of our youth the 80/20 principle of home budgeting is an unknown economic principle of the past.

For individuals and families who want to reduce their debt, develop a budget that will afford savings and contingency funds, learn how to reduce expenses and live within their means; Chautauqua Opportunities will have classes and support groups that will provide assistance. We will work with people on debt reduction, credit counseling, budgeting, understanding and operating within sound financial principles, reducing household expenses through energy savings, better food planning and shopping tips, and community gardens with canning and freezing of food supports.

Credit Builders Alliance *Building and Repairing Credit*

Chautauqua Opportunities for Development, Inc. (CODI) is committed to providing the best possible financial counseling & education service to our customers. Our goal is to help our customers learn appropriate money management and financial goal setting skills as well as to help them successfully recover from difficult financial situations. Our Financial Literacy Course is extremely beneficial to our clients because it offers knowledge to assist them in building personal assets and wealth through financial planning, moving them toward self sufficiency and financial stability. CODI strongly believes that it can make a difference in the lives of people who are experiencing financial difficulties or a crisis, whether it is foreclosure or bankruptcy by providing debt counseling and education.

CODI is building on its current Financial Literacy program by providing credit reporting services, and is excited to provide a new service for its' lending clients. CODI has joined Credit Builders Alliance, a new non-profit initiative to report client repayment history to the major credit bureaus, made possible through a donation from Northwest Savings Bank. This will help our clients with future opportunities for safe, affordable financing for themselves and their businesses, and eliminate the need for them to rely on non-traditional lenders for their credit needs, often

paying a premium and exorbitant interest rates for those services.

Since many of CODI's Home Appliance Loan (HAL) recipients have little or no credit history, or derogatory history, CODI's reporting of timely payments will allow customers to begin to rebuild their credit. Additionally, CODI business loan recipients will also be creating credit history while growing their businesses. Payments made on time each month will build a good credit history resulting in increased credit scores which may make other credit opportunities available to them. This is a tremendous opportunity for CODI customers to get a national credit rating and score on record, or to improve their current score.

CODI will begin reporting repayment history to Experian and TransUnion credit bureaus in October 2008. The payment history of all current and past loan recipients for the previous 24 month period will be reported.

For additional information about our lending programs, contact CODI, at (716) 363-6364, or (716) 661-9430, Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.



Family Development Training and Credentialing

Family Focused, Strength Based

Beginning in March, 2009, Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc. (COI) will be offering the Family Development Training and Credentialing Program (FDC) to community service providers including frontline workers from public, private, non non-profit service systems, including home visitors, case managers, youth workers, community health workers, and teacher aides. The focus of the training is to enable workers across all disciplines to develop skills and competencies needed to work effectively with families, and to transform the way services are delivered to a more family-focused, strength-based approach.

The FDC was developed under a partnership between the New York State Department of State, Division of Community Services and Cornell University, in collaboration with fifteen state agencies working as the NYS Commissioners Interagency Work Group on Family Support, under the leadership of the New York State Council on Children and Families. Cornell University's Empowering Families Project designed and implemented the FDC curriculum, Empowerment Skills for Family Workers. The curriculum was developed with input from families, family workers, program supervisors, and policy makers.

The course consists of 90 hours of interactive instruction offered by instructors trained and supported by their state FDC system, development of a Skills Portfolio documenting knowledge and skills with guidance of a trained portfolio Advisor, and a state credentialing exam. Successful completion of the course not only results in earning the nationally rec-

ognizes and respected FDC credential, but are also eligible to apply the FDC credential toward college credit and continuing education units.

Research conducted on the outcomes of FDC training revealed that workers:

- Used family development skills in their professional and personal lives.
- Enhanced skills in helping families develop their own goals toward self-reliance.

Agency supervisors reported FDC training:

- Increased effectiveness in helping workers work with families.
- Improved communication among workers.

On October 10, 2008, COI proudly recognized 12 graduates of the FDC Training and Credentialing Program during its biannual Staff Development Day.

Registrations for the March, 2009 course are now being accepted. For fee schedules, registration forms, and more information, please contact Raquel Spears of Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc. at 366-3333 ext. 247.

What is the FDC achieving?

For families – Services are more focused on helping families use their strengths and set and reach their own goals.

For frontline workers – The FDC offers quality, sequential training enabling workers to develop skills and competencies needed to work effectively with families. The FDC also provides a career pathway or avenue into college for workers with no or little formal training.

For New York State – With its interagency nature, the FDC is transforming the way agencies work with families – fostering collaboration, reducing duplication, and providing a way to streamline training for frontline workers. The FDC credential is recognized by all major family-serving agencies.

What Happens in Family Development?

The family develops *a partnership* with a family development worker.

A family development worker *helps the family assess* its needs and strengths-an ongoing process.

The family *learns and practices skills* needed to become self-reliant.

The family uses services as stepping stones to reach their goals.

The family's sense of responsibility is restored. *The family (and each individual within the family) is strengthened by the family development process* so they are better able to handle future challenges.



From left to right: Bottom row: Cathy Szukala, Cindy Swanson, Stephanie Tanner, Heather Stronner. Top row: Myrna Zanetti, Tom Delp, Tami Berg, Kelley Potter, Mary Ryder, Bradley Brown, Raquel Spears, Irene Culpepper.



Sharon Rinehart, Director - Lake Shore Family Center

Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care Challenge

They did it! Five licensed child care centers in Chautauqua County accepted the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAP SACC) “challenge” to assess their centers; develop goals around nutrition and physical activity; and “roll up their sleeves” to meet those goals. It took work and dedication from the directors and staff of those centers over the course of several months to meet those goals.

Congratulations to the participating centers: Lake Shore Family Center, Irving, Sharon Rinehart, Director; Campus and Community Children’s Center, Fredonia, Judy Metzger, Director; and three Head Start/Early Head Start programs of Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc. in Dunkirk and Jamestown, Kathy Webster, Youth and Family Services Director, with Crystal Bunic, Early Care and Education Deputy Director; Tammy Racino, Child/Staff Development Coordinator; and Beth Mulkin, Disabilities Transition Coordinator Site Director assisting. A program of Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc., the Chautauqua Child Care Council, supported the child care centers that participated in the NAP SACC initiative.



Mitali Lele, Chris Wigren, Marilyn Terry - Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc.

NAP SACC was one of the major components of the North Carolina Healthy Weight Initiative to target preschool children and their families. The Healthy Weight Initiative was developed in October 2000 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as part of an obesity prevention grant awarded to address childhood overweight. In 2005, the Activ8Kids! Program, created by the New York State Departments of Health and Education, was launched in New York State to address childhood obesity and promote better health for children. As a part of the Activ8Kids! Program, Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies in New York State have been receiving training to assist child care centers that opted to participate in NAP SACC. In January 2008, three Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc. (COI), employees: Marilyn Terry, Nutrition Counselor; Mitali Lele, Nutritionist; and Chris Wigren, CACFP Program Specialist, attended a training in Corning, New York, in order to learn more about and help facilitate NAP SACC in Chautauqua County.

*"The NAP SACC program has not only helped us teach healthy eating habits and activities for the children, but has opened our eyes to our own personal habits that were not always healthy."
Sharon Rinehart*



Brandy Smouse, Jacob Galati, Jace Vangiesen - Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc.

As an initiative that encourages child care centers to improve nutrition and physical activity through policies and practices with technical assistance and support from program consultants, NAP SACC uses five basic steps. The first step is for participating centers to complete a self-assessment. Next, the centers, with the assistance of a NAP SACC consultant, develop an action plan. The third step is for participating programs to attend four required workshops on the topics of childhood obesity, personal health, healthy eating, and physical activity. In addition to the required workshops, the Chautauqua Child Care Council offered participating centers an additional workshop, “Leaping Little People,” conducted by a licensed speech pathologist and a licensed occupational therapist to encourage more physical activity. Considered the fourth step, centers have access to the NAP SACC consultants over the course of several months for technical assistance and support and to note progress on their goals. The fifth and final step is for centers to complete a post-self-assessment to discern whether their goals were met or not and whether further technical assistance is required.



Brandy Smouse, Amaya Holmes, Nija Slater-Hawkins, Jace Vangiesen - Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc.

As a reward for successfully completing the NAP SACC initiative, centers will be given activity kits valued at \$300 each. The kits, designed to encourage more physical activity in children, will include curriculum manuals with lesson plans and cd’s to use with parachutes, crawl tunnels, and more. The overall response by participating child care centers has been positive. “The Campus and Community Children’s Center focuses on good health and nutrition, and this program provided suggestions to help us improve our policies and practices,” states Judy Metzger. “Thank you for providing this opportunity.”



Universal Pre-Kindergarten Partnerships

Holistic, Integrated Services

COI's Early Care and Education services have forged new and expanded Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) partnerships with four school districts in Chautauqua County. These partnerships afford preschool children and their family's access to holistic, integrated services that support school readiness and success. At the very start of the 2008-2009 school year, each family served through one of these partnerships had already been given a list of support services that they were potentially eligible to receive, as well as a step-by-step guide to access services. These families also attended an orientation, which not only provided an overview of services, but also further explained how integrated services could support their family in meeting their individual goals, whether they are around preschool education and childcare, employability and income growth or housing stabilization and utility assistance, among others.

The formal partnerships that are being developed with the county's public schools are designed to help districts meet their goals, as well. For instance, COI's Early Care and Education service area has aligned its curriculum with the two largest districts in the county, Dunkirk Public Schools (DPS) and Jamestown Public Schools (JPS). Although very similar in nature, both of these partnerships are unique.

The similarity begins with the alignment of curricula and includes the collection and sharing of data on children's preschool performance. This will be accomplished through research-based, formal child assessments, which will be done periodically to allow for educational and/or social emotional intervention when the results indicate a need. The assessment data will also serve as a link between UPK services and the public school as the districts will have a complete picture of the child's progress and abilities prior to entry into Kindergarten. Data sharing will also occur with the Westfield and Bemus Point School Districts, which have entered into formal agreements with COI for UPK services.

The Jamestown partnership also resulted in a collaborative preschool classroom being established in one of the district's facilities.

This not only fosters a stronger working relationship between partners, but it also supports children and families developing positive school relationships prior to Kindergarten. This may be especially important for those parents whose school experience may have been difficult.

Although COI has been providing UPK services for the Dunkirk Public Schools for a number of years, a need to serve preschool children with special needs in an integrated setting became evident. After several months of planning with DPS, COI and the Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center, the NYS Education Department gave its approval to establish a Special Class/Integrated Setting (SC/IS) class in Dunkirk for the 2008-2009 school year. This classroom is currently serving six children with identified disabilities in a setting with ten UPK children.

COI continues to be open to the development of unique partnerships with the county's schools as a means of meeting our mission of breaking the cycle of poverty for Chautauqua County's poor by promoting school success.



Building Personal Assets

Positive Youth Asset Development

Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc. incorporates positive youth development as a key principle in all of its youth programming. Positive youth development builds off youth strengths and helps them feel safe, while improving self-sufficiency and motivating them to set goals for positive change. Recently, COI has shifted the focus to Positive Youth Asset Development. In addition to a strength-based approach around safety and self-sufficiency, we now also seek to engage youth in opportunities that will help them build personal assets to develop skills that will lead to economic security.

One way of looking at youth asset development is to provide opportunities for youth to acquire skills and supports that will make them successful navigators of hard assets as adults with measurable, self established targets and incremental accountability. Elements such as home ownership, vehicle ownership, higher education, tools or resources for skilled trades and savings accounts for example are things that many of the youth that we encounter are ill prepared to not only strive for, but understand. Youth asset development focuses on personal achievements that help youth close the gap on their capacity to be asset minded. Elements such as independent living skills, community connectivity, civic leadership, developing entrepreneurial thinkers, employment skills and portfolio development for access to higher education are key components.

The youth that we encounter at COI are at several stages, some more ready than others to engage in asset development. In the wide variety of youth that we serve, included are those youth that are homeless or at risk for being homeless. These youth are in need of the most support and are often more in need of basic crisis assistance: housing, basic health, transportation or food. Skills developed by entrepreneurial training are secondary to basic crisis assistance. These youths often have excellent potential for making changes that lead to asset based thinking because of the resourcefulness required to maintain life with unstable housing and food insecurities.

COI's Transitional Independent Living Program (TILP) is a main component of our youth asset development services. The TILP program seeks to engage youth at the crisis level and see them exit as safe or thriving young adults with key assets such as savings accounts; jobs; educational enrollment; memberships to civic, cultural or recreational organizations; affordable, safe and sustainable rented housing; as well as having developed positive future focused personal relationships.

The TILP program features full service apartments where youth can live for up to 18 months as they first develop increased self sufficiency skills and then progress to more comprehensive asset work. The apartments are fully furnished and youth are engaged in life skills and inde-



pendent living skills training with a well established set of boundaries, youth acquire added responsibilities and autonomy in increments that will help them control instant gratification and increase personal successes.

COI has operated TILP apartments in Jamestown since 1999. Since incorporating the asset development model, youth have increased their length of stay and the number of youth recording safe exits into independent living, family reunification or college is over 80%. The Jamestown facility has served the whole of Chautauqua County youth since it opened. Recent data has shown a growing need for an expansion of TILP services to Northern Chautauqua County.

Currently 50% of youth enrolled in TILP services in Jamestown are from Dunkirk, and over an 18 month period of data tracked from 2005 to 2007, 29% of all youth inquiring or being referred to these services were from Northern Chautauqua County. In order to respond to the needs of the community, COI has partnered with NRG Energy, Inc. with support from the US Department of Health and Human Services and the Chautauqua County Youth Bureau to expand TILP services to Northern Chautauqua County.

COI will open and operate a new facility starting in the summer of 2009 with the capacity to serve seven youth at a time. These expanded TILP services will allow COI to greatly increase positive youth asset development activities to Northern Chautauqua County and double the number of youth that achieve successful independent living each year.



Nutrition Education

Nutritious, Affordable, Delicious

Sixty percent of Americans are overweight or obese. This percentage has grown over the past 30 years as the popularity of processed food, television and video games has increased. Unfortunately as obesity rates increase, instances of diseases such as heart disease and diabetes increase also.

With the addition of two Registered Dietitians to its staff, the Health Services Division has rekindled its focus on nutrition education. As food prices climb, it's hard to believe that a healthy diet can be affordable. COI is helping customers realize that with a little organization and know-how; anyone can prepare nutritious, affordable and delicious meals!

Education offered by COI staff includes proper nutrition for age; utilization of menu planning, shopping habits and food preservation methods that stretch grocery dollars; and the importance of family meal times. Health Services teams with CODI, Youth and Family Services and Family Growth and Development to bring these messages to customers. Customers benefit from learning such things as how to plan nutritious and affordable menus for their families; how to purchase affordable kitchen appliances; and how to develop healthy relationships with their families over the dinner table.

The Health Division Staff is working with external and internal agency partners on many exciting projects for 2009. These include community garden development, food preservation classes and after school programs which will provide nutrition education to adolescents. By offering these services we will be helping our customers reach their goals of providing healthy and affordable meals to their families, an important milestone as they work toward self-sufficiency.



Services

Child Care Council

Bonny Scott-Sleight, Director

Employer Outreach & Education on Child Care Issues
Child Care Resource & Referral
Provider Recruitment, Registration & Monitoring
Provider Training & Resources
Child & Adult Care Food Program
Health & Safety Inspection & Monitoring
Parent & Child Advocacy

Economic Development

Wendy O'Connor, Director

Business Start-up & Expansion
Training Workshops & Seminars
Technical Assistance (TA)
Cottage Industry Development
Individual Development Accounts

Homeownership
Foreclosure Prevention
Credit Counseling
Homeownership Preparation
HUD Family Self-Sufficiency

Incubator
Low Cost Business Rental Space
Shared Business Services
Training Workshops & Seminars
Technical Assistance

Lending
Business Loan Capital
Home Appliance Loan Program
Training
Technical Assistance (TA)
Consulting

Health Services

Kerry Milhalko, Director

Community & Adult/Senior Health
Insurance Enrollment & Managed Care
Education
Alzheimer's Education & Support
Skilled Nursing Services
Respite Care
Personal Care

Maternal & Child Health Services
Access to Health Services
Prenatal/postpartum care
Nutrition Education
Breast feeding Education & Support
Smoking Cessation
Outreach & Home Visiting Services for
High Risk Pregnancies
Health Screenings
Well-child health education

Housing & Energy Conservation

Bill Vogt, Director

Tenant Services
Long-term Affordable Housing
Transitional Housing
Rental Subsidy
Homeless Prevention
Heating Assistance

Rehab Services
Weatherization
Energy Conservation
Homeowner Rehab
Rental Rehab

Youth & Family Services

Kathy Webster, Director

Youth/Residential
Respite
Runaway/Homeless Youth Shelter
Transitional Independent Living

Early Care & Education
School Readiness
Licensed Child Care
School Transitions
Parent Education
Court Supported Child Care

Youth/Asset Development
Coalition Building
Outreach
Education: School Partnerships
Licensed School Age Programming
Employability
Teen Pregnancy Prevention
Juvenile Diversion

Family Growth & Development
Financial Literacy
Family Development Training
Individual & Family Mentoring
Family Mediation
Individual or Group Life Skills Education
Support Groups & Advocacy

What is Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc.?

Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc. (COI) is a private, not-for-profit, community based organization incorporated in 1965 as part of a network of 1100 Community Action Agencies formed to implement the initiatives of President Johnson's War on Poverty. Since that time, COI has evolved in response to local needs and conditions and now has a number of designations and licenses related to specific programs.



Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc.
Central Administrative Offices
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Dunkirk, NY 14048

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
DUNKIRK, NY 14048
PERMIT #8

Designations

Community Action Agency
Registered NYS Charity
NYS Designated Rural Preservation
Company
NYS Licensed Day Care Provider
NYS Licensed Home Care Provider
Community Development Corporation
HUD Housing Counseling Agency
US Treasury Dept. Community
Development Financial Institution
NYS Licensed Runaway and
Homeless Youth Shelter
NYS & City of Jamestown Community
Housing Development Organization (CHDO)
Safe Place
US Justice Dept. Budget & Credit
Counseling Agency
US Justice Dept. Provider of Personal
Financial Management Training
Community Development Entity

Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc.

“COI...leading the fight against poverty by mobilizing resources and creating partnerships to promote empowerment, economic independence, and opportunity.

COI...Helping people ... Changing lives.”

Chautauqua Opportunities for Development, Inc.

“CODI . . . leading the fight against poverty by mobilizing resources and creating partnerships to promote and create economic independence through business development and opportunities.

CODI ...Helping businesses ... Creating opportunities.”

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