

# Community Action of Orleans & Genesee, Inc.

## 2022-2023 Agency Highlights

Our mission:

*“To provide services, with dignity and respect, that help people become self-sufficient”*



# Agency Highlights of 2022-2023

- Joined Digital Literacy Initiative
- Achieved 58 of 58 standards score on TRACS
- Moved 403b to Mutual of America to save staff \$14k annually
- Main Street Store Express hosted weekly weekend Farmer's Market
- Realigned health insurance offering to exclude overpriced platinum plan and add high deductible with HSA option.
- Hired a New COO
- Fiscal system "Accufund" moved to the cloud
- New employee handbook completed and communicated
- Community Action was featured on WBTA and several press releases.
- Certificate of Recognition from the Department of State
- Community Service Award from the Batavia Business and Professional Women's club
- No adverse findings in CSBG Fiscal Monitoring review
- FA2 Monitoring Review was completed. Received positive results.
- Emergency Plan updated-Fobs issued to all staff
- Community Action Angels in Action of Orleans and Genesee Guiding Light Project
- Restructured Leadership Roles to provide more direct support at sites for staff.
- 211 WNY Ride Delivery Program-Partnering with Door Dash
- Axis of Care-Telehealth hub to help people access healthcare. Renee Hungerford and Community Action of Orleans and Genesee received 2022 Innovative award from NYSCAA.
- Stone Soup-Healthy Recipes using ingredients you already have.
- Fiscal Policy Updated.
- Leadership Orleans Class of 2022 Graduates-Katrina Chaffee and Renee Hungerford Alumna of the year.
- Changed fiscal system Blackbaud
- Exhale/Caregivers Revitalize Initiative- will provide weekly 3 hour long respite sessions along with free, onsite wellness programming and activities for caregivers of aging family members. Coming soon in 2023



Jackie Gardner and Renee Hungerford had the opportunity to travel to Buffalo to receive an award from the Highmark Blue Fund which will support a new program called Food Rx: Stone Soup Success. Our plan for this project is to improve health outcomes in Orleans County by increasing access to healthy food but also by ensuring people have the tools and knowledge to prepare tasty meals with the food that is available. This program will arm people with the tools, knowledge, and the access to healthy and nutritious ingredients and at the same time benefit our local farmers and our community. Prescriptions for healthy food items will encourage people to make healthy choices and our hope is this will contribute to healthier people with better health outcomes.

We are proud to be among the 16 winners selected from hundreds of applicants.



## United Way, Community Action and YMCA Teamed on Project.

Grant will fund respite program for caregivers of older adults.

A new \$290,000 family caregiver initiative will provide respite for caregivers in Genesee and Orleans counties. Notification of approval of the grant came recently and will provide funding for a Caregivers' Revitalize program developed in collaboration with United Way of Orleans County, GLOW YMCA, and Community Action of Orleans and Genesee. Exhale is a Family Caregiver Initiative which funds innovative collaborative projects that are reimagining and increasing respite opportunities for family caregivers of older adults.

“Exhale, the Family Care Initiative, has approved Caregivers Revitalize for three years of programming, with a budget of \$290,000,” Holland said. “The first two years, beginning in the winter of 2023, will utilize the YMCA in Medina and Main Street Store location in Albion, while a third expansion year will create three new respite locations – one at the Holley Community Center, another at Genesee County YMCA’s Healthy Living Campus in Batavia and a third location to be determined in Genesee County.”

Caregivers Revitalize will provide weekly, three-hour-long respite sessions along with free, onsite wellness programming and activities for caregivers of aging family members. “This program is an excellent opportunity for our community’s caregivers to get a break from their daily schedule and utilize the amazing programs and locations provided by the YMCA and Community Action,” Holland said. “Whether it is getting time to hop on a treadmill, participate in communal activities with other caregivers or just get some alone time, Caregivers Revitalize will provide a variety of respite opportunities for our community’s caregivers.”

More information on the Caregivers Revitalize program will be released in the winter of 2023.

## November 2022 Highlights

Renee Hungerford, director of Community Action of Orleans and Genesee, has been chosen as the recipient of the 2022 Innovation Award for their work with the Axis of Care Program. “We strive to help people become self-sufficient, and wellness is a foundational need in achieving that”.

In October we hosted our first two vaccination clinics as part of the Axis of Care program. They were a phenomenal success! It is great to be part of such an important part of keeping our communities healthy.



## Congresswoman and National Community Action Leader Tour Local Agency

Representatives from Community Action of Orleans and Genesee met at Community Action in Batavia on Monday with Congresswoman Claudia Tenney who is seeking to represent a district that would include Genesee and part of Orleans County.

Renee Hungerford, executive director of Community Action, said that the visit was an opportunity for Tenney, who supports the H.R. 5129, Community Services Block Grant Modernization Act, as well as the H.R. 4040, Advancing Telehealth Beyond COVID-19 Act, to see the work Community Action is doing.

“The former brings important changes, such as a 10-year reauthorization of our foundational funding source, as well as the adoption of a 200% federal poverty level eligibility, which increases the number we are able to help become self-sufficient,” Hungerford said. “This is especially important as minimum wage increases result in reduced eligibility of services for hard-working, low-income individuals and their families. Telehealth is an important tool that connects people to greatly needed healthcare services, which are not limited to the pandemic. It is an important component of our innovative ‘Axis of Care’ program.”

“It is very much ‘to the point’ that we appreciate her support of these two bills,” Hungerford said. “We are thankful that Congresswoman Tenney is a supporter of these acts. The Community Service Block Grant is the backbone funding for Community Action Agencies, Hungerford explained.





# December 2022 Highlights

The FFA donates thousands of pounds of food, grown, harvested, and collected by Albion High School staff and students participating in the FFA. Each year, Community Action partners with local churches, and various nonprofits; working together to distribute this food across Orleans County.

## FFA Day December 10, 2022



Volunteers Sorted and Organized Toys for 100 Local Children.



## Albion Middle School Volunteers Packed 150 Holiday Food Bags



## Parade of Lights Toy Drive in Medina NY

The 6th annual Parade of Lights Toy Drive resulted in sixteen big bags filled with donated toys and \$160.00 in donations. Canalside Tattoo was the collection point for the donations.

The toys and money were given to MAAC and Community Action, which then distribute the toys to many local children.







As 2022 is coming to an end, it's time to look forward to exciting new possibilities!



The holiday season is upon us and 2022 is coming to a close. We have accomplished so much, there would be no way to list all of it in a newsletter. Our Axis of Care program has been connecting people to services to help take control of their health, we are in the beginning stages of FoodRx: Stone Soup Success, partnering with Cornell Cooperative Extension to help people gain the knowledge and tools to prepare healthy meals. In addition, we will have a new program called Exhale: Caregivers Revitalize – a partnership with the YMCA in providing respite care for those who care for others.

It's time to look forward to an exciting new year for our agency. Our mission is to help people to become self-sufficient. In 2023, we will continue to expand our services toolbox and broaden our partnerships to better help those who are working hard to overcome financial insecurity. A new year is a time for hope and possibilities.

Be Part of the Solution



# Stone Soup Rx Program

A new program funded by a Highmark grant of \$250,000 is teaching families with limited incomes how to eat healthy on a budget.

The grant was an idea developed at Community Action of Orleans & Genesee with assistance from Orleans County Cornell Cooperative Extension. Called Stone Soup, the first six-week classes at Cornell Cooperative Extension on the fairgrounds just ended with 21 graduates, said Cooperative Extension nutrition coordinator Marie Gabalski.

Each week, participants in the classes learned something different, such as food groups, fiber, fats, and carbs, how to read food labels, fruits and vegetables, and how to shop affordably, Gabalski said. “We try to make it fun,” she said. “Twenty-six people registered for the first series of classes and 21 graduated. Classes for March and May are already full.”

Participants who attended all six classes and graduated received a kitchen kit which included a skillet, utensils, hot plate, and an Instapot.

Many positive comments were received on the classes. One lady said, “I enjoyed learning how to pair healthy ingredients into a meal and knowing what and how to choose.”

Another commented, “What was important to me was being talked to and not ‘at.’ The information was easy to understand.”

Yet another said she enjoyed learning about nutrition and healthy options. “I didn’t know the difference in types of fat before,” she said.

During July, the nutritionists are planning a similar program with school children. Registration for May classes is being prioritized for those who attend the meal program at Community Action’s center in Holley. Others will be placed on a waiting list for the Stone Soup program in the fall. Members of the first graduating class of Stone Soup at Orleans County Cornell Cooperative Extension get their free gifts, including an Instapot, hot plate, and utensils.

First class graduates from program that teaches to prepare healthy, affordable meals





## Food distribution in Albion aided by Elks Riders

ALBION - Members of the Elks Riders Motorcycle Clubs in Albion and Brockport unload a truck this morning as part of a food distribution in Albion.

The pop-up food distribution was scheduled for Monday but was moved to this morning.

The motorcycle clubs stepped up as volunteers in this morning's freezing cold after the change in schedule.

The parking lot is nearly full with vehicles at 8:30am. The events in Albion are run by Community Action with food delivered by Foodlink in Rochester. About 200 people typically receive bags and boxes of food.





## New Telehealth Service at the Main Street Store in Albion Will Help Veterans With Medical Appointments

Renee Hungerford, director of Community Action; Katrina Chaffee, director of CAOG's Community Services and Reporting; Cassie Eagle, manager of the Main Street Store; Paul Galantowicz, Facility Telehealth coordinator for the VA of Western New York; and Paul Pettit, director of the Orleans/Genesee County Health Department, announced a partnership between their agencies to bring Orleans County veterans access to VA Hospital services via telehealth.

Using virtual technology and a safe and secure VA Video Connect app, veterans can reserve time to connect to their VA providers using a soundproof booth located in the training room of the Main Street Store.

Plans for providing such a service began at the Genesee and Orleans County Health Departments prior to the Covid pandemic. The health officials participated in a program to develop telehealth and an axis of care, Pettit said. In 2017, the health department received a grant from the Kresge Foundation and Pettit began searching for a place to set up a telehealth booth.



## Main Street Store in Albion- Free Proms Dresses for Local Girls

ALBION NY – Cassie Eagle, manager of Community Action's Main Street Store, is a firm believer that no girl should miss her senior prom because she can't afford a dress. Eagle was appointed manager of the store last year, and shortly after a large donation of prom dresses was received. Some are gently worn, but many others are brand new. They are all colors, sizes, and styles.

Originally Eagle thought she would have a special sale and offer the dresses at a low cost, but then the idea hit her to offer them free, so every girl could have the opportunity to go to her prom, regardless of their financial situation.

On a designated day in May, High School Principal Jenn Ashbery will bring a cosmetology class from BOCES on a field trip to Albion High School. During the day, high school girls can come in and learn how to do simple updos and makeup from the cosmetology students. Students will be asked to bring their own makeup and hair supplies.

Later on the chosen day, Eagle will open the Main Street Store at 6 p.m. and invite girls from any Orleans County school to come and pick out a prom dress.





June 2023  
Highlights

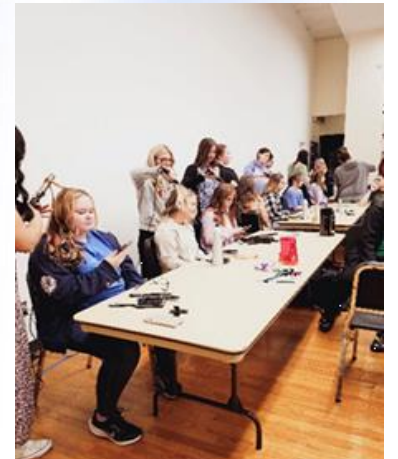
## Prom Dress Event was a Success!

Thirty-Five local senior girls will be looking like queens for their proms, without breaking their budgets, thanks to the efforts of Cassie Eagle, manager of Community Action's Main Street Thrifts, Gifts and More Store. In late winter, Eagle got the idea to offer free prom dresses to local girls who might not be able to afford one. The store had received an entire shipment of assorted styles and sizes of dresses last summer, and Eagle offered them to seniors who needed them. The community stepped in to help, with volunteers offering to do makeup and hair, hair stylists offering their services, Orleans-Niagara BOCES cosmetology students coming in to do makeup and the MAAC Thrift Shop in Medina donating makeup and hair products.

In all, 35 girls received free prom dresses, including 13 students at the New York State School for the Blind in Batavia. Community Action's executive assistant Melinda Daniels arranged to have the facilities employees load the gowns in a truck and take them to the School for the Blind on May 23. This is the first time Community Action has taken their services to the client, said Katrina Chaffee, director of community services and reporting.

Three more events took place prior to prom night - two at the Main Street store and a joint event at Albion High School where Orleans-Niagara BOCES cosmetology students demonstrated makeup tips. The Albion prom will be celebrated this Friday at Hickory Ridge in Murray.

Community Action hopes to make the prom dress giveaway an annual event, Chaffee said. They are in the process of creating a room at their store to house the dresses year-round.





June 2023  
Highlights

# Community Action working with families to grow own food at 'garden of love'

A new program underway at Community Action in Albion is intended to further the agency's mission of "giving a hand up, rather than a handout."

On Thursday morning, staff and volunteers began planting a community garden in the back yard by the canal.

The idea came about when director Renee Hungerford attended the first Stone Soup graduation, a program Hungerford developed to teach families how to prepare food.

"A woman approached me and said it would be nice if we could distribute seedlings so people like her homebound mother could plant some food," Hungerford said.

Hungerford wrote to SowRight Seeds asking for a donation and they sent a ton of seeds, she said.

"We began offering seed packets to our clients and then started a wide variety in our office windows, so we could distribute growing plants at planting season," Hungerford said.

She next wrote to [Vego Garden](#) to request raised beds. They offered six metal beds, but Hungerford asked for only three.

Next, they received a donation of fertilizer from Dunham Farms in Knowlesville. Another very generous donor provided the soil.

"Many hands of staff and volunteers went toward planting, watering and assembling," Hungerford said. "This is not just a garden of produce, but truly a garden of love."

Community Action has refrigerators for their food pantry behind their buildings, so when the plants start to produce, the vegetables can be picked and refrigerated for families to help themselves.

"We hope families will come out and weed and help care for the beds," Hungerford said. "We hope it will be therapeutic for them."





# Community Action of Orleans and Genesee

Community Events in June & July to help raise money for  
Emergency Services



## Charity Motorcycle Run

Mason's Chicken BBQ donated \$2,121.32 to support food pantry expenses. Thank you to all of the donor's that made this event possible.

The Motorcycle Charity Run on July 8th raised \$2,441 after expenses to support our Emergency Services. Thank you to Ricky Standish and his fellow Elk's riders and the Elk's lodges in both Brockport and Albion along with Stan's Harley-Davidson shop!

