

# COMMUNITY ACTION JOURNAL

A Publication of Community Action Kentucky, Inc.

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## Community Partnership Provides Tools for Learning

A group of about thirty children excitedly awaited the donation of six brand new computers and printers at a Head Start Center on Monday, April 9, in Franklin County. Well, almost brand new!



OWL (Opportunity for Work and Learning) is an organization dedicated to removing employment barriers to individuals in the community by retraining them in a field where they are more likely to find a job. In this instance, that field is

computers. With twelve participants in their computer training program since October 2009, OWL Executive Director, David Boggs, explained that when participants start they may not even know how to open or turn on a computer. They go on to learn all the mechanics of how a computer works, different software programs, and what parts of a used computer can be recycled or replaced to refurbish computers for groups and

individuals in the community with an unfulfilled need.

After the ten week training program, participants

have the skills to find employment as computer technicians or work in other Information Technology positions. The computers they work on are in essence being recycled. The University of Louisville has donated over 100 used computers to the Computers 4 Kids project, operated by ConnectKentucky, and Bluegrass Community Action Partnership has

**Community Partnerships Provides Tools for Learning**.....Continued from page 1

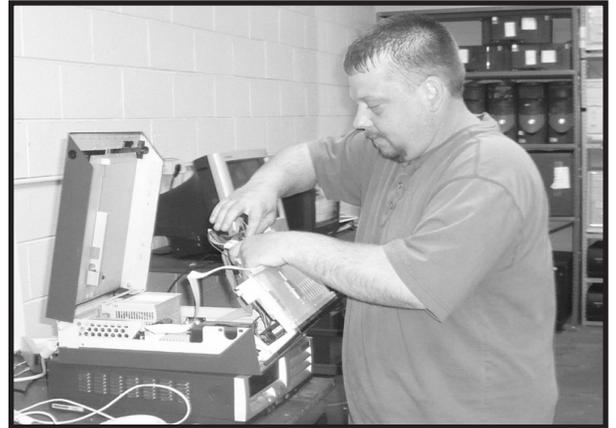
arranged for seven Head Start Centers to be the recipients of the newly renovated final product. The computers help increase the skills of pre-school children and, in some cases, their families as well.

Kelley McMichael, Site Supervisor at Bluegrass Head Start Community Center, explained that one child who learned to use a computer during classes at the Center taught his mother the skills he learned and she went on to find a position as a receptionist in the community.

The Recycling and Re-training program operated by OWL will be replicated soon in another town in Kentucky where other Head Start classrooms

will also benefit from the donations. A grant received by Bluegrass Community Action Partnership has made the donations possible. They have contracted with OWL to carry out the service with the use of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding.

The technology literacy encouraged for young children and their families is a great result of this program. Due to invaluable community collaboration between ConnectKentucky, whose mission is to accelerate the growth of technology in Kentucky communities; University of Louisville who donated older computers which might have



otherwise been disposed; Lexmark who donated new printers; and the Bluegrass Community Action Partnership who strive to eliminate poverty, great things are happening in the Commonwealth.

If you would like to donate your used computer to OWL, they can be dropped off at 650 Kennedy Road, Lexington, KY, or you can call (859) 254-0576 to schedule a pick up for larger quantities.

**Wage Subsidy Program Saves Jobs**

When it comes to communities feeling the effects of difficult economic times, Owsley County, Kentucky is no exception. With unemployment rates at all time highs and negative recent job growth, it is imperative to keep as many jobs in the county as possible. Community Action agencies across the state understand the hardships being faced and are working to ensure employment for many of their clients.

At Middle Kentucky Community Action Partnership, a wage subsidy program has been implemented to help ease the strain.

Funded through the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act, Middle Kentucky Community Action Partnership's program has been able to help several employers in Owsley County keep their employees. By

working with profit and not for profit organizations and businesses, the Work Subsidy Program is now paying wages for seven individuals to remain employed who would have seen layoffs.

One of those seven individuals is Jan Michael Bishop. Mr. Bishop is a 32-year old father and like many, struggles to pay child support for his daughter along with everyday living

## Wage Subsidy Program Saves Jobs.....Continued from page 2



Jan Michael Bishop working on White Oak Road (1704) provides caging to build up the road where it had broken off.

expenses. After an employment period of eight months with the Fiscal Court, lack of funding was going to force lay-offs in Owsley County. A valuable employee would see \$268 in unemployment benefits, only a portion of his previous wages.

With the inception of the new Work Subsidy Program, County Judge Executive Cale Turner was very excited to learn the Fiscal Court would be able to re-hire Mr. Bishop. Judge Turner stated: “Keeping our young adults employed is the foundation for a successful community.”

Through his position at the Owsley County Maintenance Garage, Mr. Bishop is gaining significant work experience, enhancing social skills and developing leadership qualities. His duties include building bridges for the community, maintaining roadways and basic or general maintenance.

One important component of the Work Subsidy Program involves Case Management. Middle Kentucky Community Action Partnership staff work with individuals to make sure they are maintaining good relationships with their employers, reporting on time, keeping track of hours, and helping to resolve any problems which may occur during their employment. The staff also monitor the progress a client is making.

Middle Kentucky Community Action Partnership will continue to work with local businesses and governmental agencies to help establish a strong network for the economically disadvantaged in its community. This allows for low-income families and individuals to become more self-sufficient while providing a viable service to employers.

## May is Community Action Month

In preparation for Community Action Month, a Poverty Simulation was held to help call attention to poverty-related problems. Community Action is the country’s largest anti-poverty network and during the month of May it celebrates a long history of establishing partnerships to help fight poverty.

The Poverty Simulation was a result

of collaboration between Community Action Kentucky, Northern Kentucky Community Action Commission, Bluegrass Community Action Partnership and the Missouri Association for Community Action.

The event showed people how life would be if they couldn’t pay their bills, feed their families or were on a fixed income. It puts participants in the shoes

of those who live in poverty every day. Kentucky has one of the highest poverty levels in the country.

Representatives from the Governor’s Office, KY Housing Corporation, Cabinet for Health & Family Services, Homeless and Housing Coalition of Kentucky, Family Resource Centers, and local Community Action agencies attended.

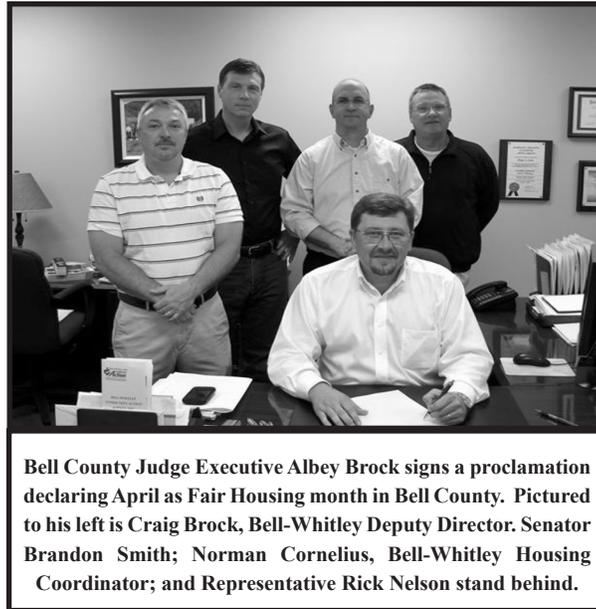
## Bell-Whitley Community Action Agency Prepares to Build and Repair Homes

Bell-Whitley Community Action Agency has received notice of funding from Kentucky Housing Corporation to continue their HOME program in Bell and Whitley counties. Peggy S. Capps, Executive Director, says the agency recently received notice of \$100,000.00 from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and \$368,000.00 from the HOME Partnership Fund to build eight new homes. This, added to the funding received for the current year, means Bell-Whitley CAA will build 16 new homes in Bell and Whitley counties during the next 18 months.

Bell-Whitley Community Action Agency also received grant funding of \$100,000.00 to make repairs to low income homes in the two-county area.

“There are so many homes in our area that need repairs such as a new roof or windows and many times the family just can’t afford the cost of the repairs,” said Capps.

This portion of the grant will be used to make repairs for the low income



**Bell County Judge Executive Albey Brock signs a proclamation declaring April as Fair Housing month in Bell County. Pictured to his left is Craig Brock, Bell-Whitley Deputy Director. Senator Brandon Smith; Norman Cornelius, Bell-Whitley Housing Coordinator; and Representative Rick Nelson stand behind.**

elderly and/or disabled.

Capps estimates that approximately \$1,000,000.00 in funding will be brought into the area through Bell-Whitley CAA’s housing efforts during the next two years. “This not only increases and improves the housing stock in our area but is a big boost to the local economy. It provides employment for local contractors and increases sales for local businesses,” Capps stated, adding that nearly all the materials for construction and repair of these homes will be purchased locally.

The Bell-Whitley CAA HOME building program provides the opportunity for qualifying families who have never owned a home to achieve their dream of home ownership.

Capps asserted that the Bell-Whitley Community Action Agency has been successful in increasing the housing stock in its service area because it partners with local financial institutions and USDA Rural Development for the remainder of funding. In most cases, a

family will receive a new home that appraises for approximately \$80,000 to \$90,000. The home will have a forgivable mortgage over a period of years and the balance will be financed at a lower interest rate by local financial institutions or through Rural Development.

“The funding received from Kentucky Housing Corporation for new home construction and home repairs has certainly been a boost to Bell-Whitley’s housing initiatives. This funding, combined with our yearly Repair Affair and our work

**Bell-Whitley Community Action Agency Prepares to Build and Repair Homes** .....Continued from page 4

with mission groups who come into the area every summer, increases our ability to address the housing needs in our community,” Capps explained.

The Bell-Whitley Community Action Agency encourages anyone who is interested in becoming a home owner to contact the organization and start the application process. The agency does have a waiting list but applicants are approved on a “first come, first qualified” basis. The agency is also accepting applications for home repairs.

Polly Village, a development in Middlesboro with sixteen new homes, provides an example of the types of houses Bell-Whitley CAA builds. During this development, city water was extended to homes already

in the area and underground utilities were provided for each new home. This was a six-year project and funding was provided by Kentucky Housing Corporation, Affordable Housing Trust Fund, Appalachian Regional Commission, Federal Home Loan Bank, USDA Rural Development, a private foundation, PRIDE, and local financial institutions.

This development added sixteen new homes to the tax base in Bell County. Other planned improvements in Polly Village include all paved roads and a small park. Bell-Whitley CAA has also built many new homes on scattered sites throughout Bell and Whitley counties.

April is Fair Housing Month and Ms.

Capps stated that Bell-Whitley is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate in the delivery of their services.

“Everyone should have access to safe, decent housing and Bell-Whitley plans to continue our efforts in housing development over the next several years in the hopes of making housing more affordable for the low income, building more homes, improving the local economy, and creating more jobs in our area,” the Executive Director said. “This will be done by applying for grants through Kentucky Housing Corporation and other funding sources and by partnering with our home town financial institutions. So much more can be accomplished when we partner with others than when we work alone.”

## Liberty Place Celebrates Two Years of Creating Drug-Free Lives



Women in need of drug recovery combat several obstacles. Obtaining sobriety, when once dependent on a substance, is not an easy thing to do. For many female addicts, it is difficult to leave their families to receive help

because of the constraints they feel as wives and mothers. However, there is a strong correlation between drug addiction and homelessness, and ultimately being apart from loved ones temporarily is the right thing to do.

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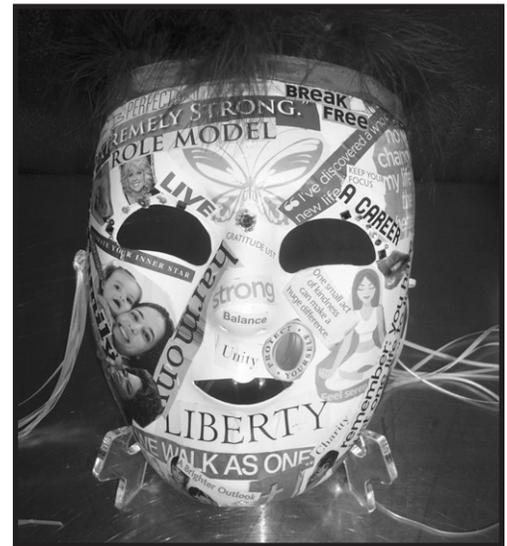
367 women have made that decision over the last two years, entering the Liberty Place Recovery Center in Richmond, Kentucky seeking a different kind of lifestyle. Free to women in the 6th Congressional District (Anderson, Bourbon, Boyle, Clark, Estill, Fayette, Franklin, Garrard, Jessamine, Lincoln, Madison, Mercer, Montgomery, Powell, Scott and Woodford counties), Liberty Place is celebrating two years of creating drug-free lives since its opening in June 2008.

Foothills Community Action Partnership received the grant to build the Liberty Place Recovery Center as part of Recovery Kentucky, an initiative resulting from joint efforts by the Governor’s Office for Local Development (GOLD), the Department of Corrections, and the Kentucky Housing Corporation (KHC). The model incorporated at Liberty Place was patterned after the models successfully used at the HOPE Center in Lexington and the Healing Place in Louisville. It stresses peer-to-peer support, daily living skills training, job responsibilities and overcoming challenges to practice sober living. Consequently, all the buildings and ground maintenance is performed by the clients.

They have job assignments in 2-week increments and the women learn and do everything from making their beds in the morning, cooking, changing light bulbs and furnace filters, to fertilizing plants, edging and mowing. Jeri Allison, Director of Liberty Place, explained that being a part of a “home” is a significant part of the recovery. Many learn responsibilities that they have never been obligated to fulfill.

A client usually arrives homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and makes a commitment to overcome their addictions. They may stay up to two years at the facility but the average stay is around 7-8 months. Not everyone completes all the steps before leaving, but the ones who do leave feeling a lot better about themselves and more capable of living happy and productive lives.

Donations from several community partners help keep operations running smoothly at Liberty Place. During the initial phase of furnishing the facility in 2008, over \$100,000 from vested stakeholders was funneled into personalizing 32 double-occupancy



**In one exercise, participants make a double-sided mask that displays words they feel describes them on the inside and words on the outside that they are working toward.**

bedrooms, six larger apartments, two short-term rooms (twelve people per room) and several offices and living spaces. A Holiday Tea fundraiser during the last two winters grossed several more thousands of dollars to benefit the program. Collaboration with Crossroads Christian Church in Lexington, KY has afforded two women new smiles.

The impact on clients at Liberty Place is hard to measure. A Vocational Counselor works with the women to prepare them for employment and also advocates within the community

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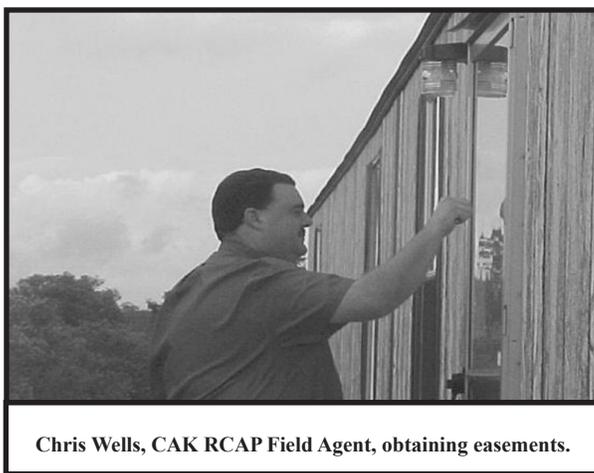
to find job opportunities and possibilities for recovered women once they have left the center. The

clients leave not only sober, but with greater job skills and life skills to make healthy homes for themselves

and give something back to their communities.

## Community of Garrison Pursues Sewer Solution

Along with safe, potable drinking water, communities in our great Commonwealth also need safe, sanitary wastewater disposal to protect public health and the environment. Nowhere is this more needed than in the community of Garrison. Garrison is located at the confluence of Kinniconick Creek and the Ohio River in northern Lewis County, Kentucky.



Chris Wells, CAK RCAP Field Agent, obtaining easements.

result of using these failing systems.

Based on Lewis County Health Department and Garrison, Quincy, KY-O-Heights Water District records, 90% of the septic tanks in the area are failing and 33 straight pipes are located in the area. The straight pipes result in multi-point discharge of raw wastewater into the area waterways. Field surveys have identified potential health risks as a

The Garrison, Quincy, KY-O-Heights Water District is proposing the construction of a 114,000 gallon per day extended aeration package wastewater treatment plant. This plant shall have enough capacity to handle current and projected 2020 flows as well as a wastewater collection system comprised of approximately 43,500 linear feet of 2-inch, 3-inch, and 4-inch

low pressure mains, 355 grinder pump stations, and 2 sewage lift stations.

The estimated cost for the proposed project is \$5.3 million and sources of funding include USDA Rural Development, Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), Kentucky Infrastructure Authority (KIA), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and local funding.

Community Action Kentucky's RCAP staff completed the acquisition of highway rights-of-way for the project. The bids have been awarded and construction is anticipated to start in May.

As a result of our assistance, residents throughout Garrison will have access to safe, sanitary sewer service for years to come.

**~ I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the community, and as long as I live it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. ~**

**George Bernard Shaw**

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Please visit our website!  
[www.communityactionky.org](http://www.communityactionky.org)

Kentucky's Poverty Fighting Network

