

BOARD & EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2011

FYI



The Three Rs of 2011

Wow, it is 2011!!! There were times when it seemed like it would never get here and there were times one had to question how did it get on us so fast? I suppose one can say that about most any new year, but clearly 2010 magnified both ends of that spectrum.

Looking back, one can certainly say that 2010 was an interesting year in the life of Lakes and Pines. Looking at the challenges that the Agency faced coming into the year, it was clear that it would be important for Lakes and Pines to be flexible, but absolutely needed to keep a keen eye on the mission and vision of the Agency as we moved forward: Back to the basics, if you will.

Just like the three R's served us all well in school, there were three R's that served Lakes and Pines well over 2010. Those three R's would be Resilience, Resolve and Recreation.

Clearly a lot came at us from multiple directions and not all of it arrived in a straight line. There were changing rules, rules as you go, changing timelines, changing (new) people/programs and unclear expectations. There were moving targets, fuzzy targets and some targets just plainly hidden in the dark. There were rapid changes in size and scope and sometimes in direction. A sense of resiliency served Lakes and Pines well. The ability to change and adapt rather than be static or resistant allowed us to prosper rather than suffer or be bowled over.

With the resilience however, comes the danger of losing focus, so a sense of resolve was also necessary. To be resolute, not so much in what or even how we have done things, but in the why of what we do. Keeping in mind that regardless of whatever or whoever's priorities were coming at us, we were going to stay true to why Lakes and Pines is here, and that is to help low income families become self sufficient.

In any discussion of 2010, one has to include a conversation on recreation, both in the sense of re-creation and recreation (does that make it four Rs?). Clearly there is a strong family resemblance between the Lakes and Pines that started 2010 and the one that is starting 2011. However, it is just as obvious that we have been re-created and are quite a different agency than we were before. We stretched, we grew, we changed, and we did things we never had to do before (and in some cases quite frankly hope to never have to do again). But, we put ourselves together in a way that will best serve our low income clients now in 2011. In the recreation sense, we have to say despite the challenges we enjoyed doing it together. We enjoyed watching people grow and change on both sides of our desks, we enjoyed the challenges and the tests of our abilities and we enjoyed the success, both in terms of the amount of help we could provide and the fact that we, as an Agency, did it well.

So on we go: 2011 here we come!!!

Bob Benes
Executive Director

LAKES AND PINES BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Lakes and Pines Staff would like to thank the following people for their dedication to our mission.

Without your representation, all Lakes and Pines does for our community would not be possible.

Liz Dodge, Board Chair:	Representing Area Social Services Directors
Duane Droge, 1st Vice Chair:	Representing Mille Lacs County
Wayne Boettcher, 2nd Vice Chair:	Representing Farmers Union Groups
Lilly Turner, Board Secretary:	Representing Aitkin County
Scott TenNapel, Treasurer:	Representing Mental Health Services
Diane Hansen:	Representing Carlton County
Robyn Jones-Boyer:	Representing Chisago County
Jeri Hirsch:	Representing Isanti County
Liane Heupel:	Representing Kanabec County
Roberta Folkestad:	Representing Pine County
Paul Bailey:	Representing Aitkin County Commissioners
Ted Pihlman:	Representing Carlton County Commissioners
Mike Robinson:	Representing Chisago County Commissioners
Alan Duff:	Representing Isanti County Commissioners
Kim Smith:	Representing Kanabec County Commissioners
Roger Tellinghuisen:	Representing Mille Lacs County Commissioners
Curt Rossow:	Representing Pine County Commissioners
Mary Oja:	Representing Carlton County Council on Aging
Steven Walbridge:	Representing Area Lions Clubs
Kathy Krenik-Minkler:	Representing Area Public Health Directors
Wendy Walburg:	Representing Head Start Policy Council

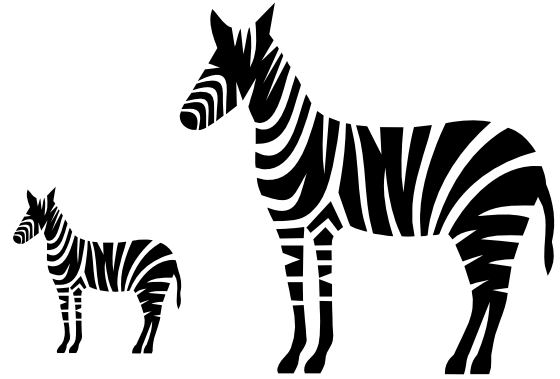
WELCOME TO OUR NEW REPRESENTATIVES:

Donald Niemi:	Representing Aitkin County Commissioners
Les Nielsen:	Representing Kanabec County Commissioners
Dan Whitcomb:	Representing Mille Lacs County Commissioners
Mitch Pangerl:	Representing Pine County Commissioners

BEST WISHES TO OUR OUTGOING BOARD MEMBERS:

Paul Bailey:	Representing Aitkin County Commissioners
Kim E. Smith:	Representing Kanabec County Commissioners
Roger Tellinghuisen:	Representing Mille Lacs County Commissioners
Curt Rossow:	Representing Pine County Commissioners
Duane Droge:	Representing Mille Lacs County

MINNESOTA ZOO TICKETS



Every year, Lakes and Pines receives tickets for the Minnesota Zoo to share with the families we serve. Our Head Start Teachers, Home Visitors and Leads always ask their families if they are interested in attending the zoo sometime that year. If a family is interested, they are given enough tickets for their family to attend the zoo at no cost sometime before July of the following year. The following story was submitted by one of our child care teachers:

October 11, 2010

Every Monday morning at circle time I set aside a few minutes for each child to share about their weekend and what they did. I enjoy hearing about all of their family gatherings and outings. One little girl's story caught my attention more than any others this week. She started by telling the class about her long car ride to the cities to the Minnesota Zoo with her mom, dad, brother and baby sister. She told us about the animals she saw and the food she ate. She also shared with us that her and her brother and baby sister had their picture taken with a monkey (at this point she was glowing). I am so happy that I was given the chance to hand out Minnesota Zoo tickets to our families again this year! A HUGE thank you goes out to Lakes and Pines and the Minnesota Zoo for providing our families with this wonderful opportunity to enjoy the zoo! Thanks again!

So, the next time you take a trip to the Minnesota Zoo, be sure to thank them for giving low income families the opportunity to attend their wonderful site.

Submitted by: Dawn van Hees, C&FP Manager

Minnesota Head Start Association Parent Leadership Event

Lakes and Pines C.A.C., Inc. sent eight parents to the Minnesota Head Start Association (MHSA) 2010 Parent Leadership Event at Cragun's Hotel and Conference Center in Brainerd, MN. The two day event featured five powerful presentations, small group activities and discussion. Presenters included Dr. Verna C. Price, Ph.D.; Maris Gilbert, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist; Roxy Foster, Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota; Jim Hilbert, Attorney at Law; Gayle Kelly, Executive Director of the Minnesota Head Start Association and Valerie Dosland, Lobbyist for Ewald Consulting.

Parents participating in the conference were given an opportunity to meet other parents and gain personal and leadership skills. Networking and forming friendships was noted as one of the most rewarding parts of participating in the event.

Submitted by: Stacy Spaight, Child Care/0-3 Coordinator



MHSA PARENT CONFERENCE / PARENT COMMENT

I feel very blessed to have attended the Minnesota Head Start Association Parent Training Conference in October, 2010. It was a great experience to meet other parents and gain personal and leadership skills. My favorite speaker was Dr. Verna C. Price. She spoke about the Power of People and how do they affect you? The greatest advice she gave was “surround yourself with positive people who will support and encourage you and try to avoid the negative people who bring drama and conflict into your life and drain you emotionally and sometimes financially.” It sounds like common sense, however, how many of us let these negative individuals stay in our lives and discourage us, make us feel bad about ourselves and sometimes throw us off track of our true purpose. This is only a small fraction of her message: I am sure you could find her books at the library if you’re interested in learning more. Dr. Price is a very energetic and compassionate speaker. I left the conference feeling very encouraged and empowered. I would highly recommend any Head Start parent given the opportunity to attend the conference to go!

Jen Anderson, Head Start Parent

Head Start Thankful for Winter Wear Donation

A big “thank you” goes out to People's National Bank of Mora, MN for their donation of winter wear. The bank held a winter wear drive and the donated items were given to the Lakes and Pines' Head Start Program to be given to families in need. There were about fifty (50) adult and children's hats, scarves, mittens and gloves donated, many of which were handmade. Many Head Start families will benefit from this donation and will be a little warmer during this cold winter because of this generous donation.



Thank you!



PEDIATRIC DENTIST VOLUNTEERS FOR HEAD START SMILES

On December 10, 2010 Lakes and Pines' Head Start program held its first "Dental Day" of the 2010-2011 program year. Lakes and Pines' Head Start "Dental Day" is part of a pilot project developed by The Minnesota Dental Association and the Minnesota Head Start Association to get more Head Start children's dental needs met. Federal Head Start Standards require all programs to assist children in receiving preventative, age appropriate health care, including dental care and track children's health care needs. In order to meet this standard, the Head Start Program has scheduled "dental days" with the help of volunteer pediatric dentists to provide dental services at one time in one convenient location.

The Lakes and Pines' seven county service area lacks dental providers that are able to see children with state insurance. Many of the providers in our area have a number of slots available for state insurance patients and once those slots are filled they do not take any more patients with state insurance. There are also some providers that do not accept state insurance at all, mostly due to the low reimbursement rates. There is also a lack of pediatric dentists in the area. According to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, there is only one service provider that is specifically a "pediatric" dentist in the Lakes and Pines' seven county service area. This makes it very difficult for young children on state insurance to be seen by someone in the service area. Many of the Head Start families have had to travel to St. Cloud, the Twin Cities, Brainerd or the Duluth area, which, for some families, is an hour to two hour trip. For some Head Start families traveling is not an option due to lack of transportation, so these families go without dental services. Bringing in an outside resource into our service area is a great way to begin closing the gap on the number of children that can be provided with dental services this year.

The first dental day was held at the Lakes and Pines Mahtowa Head Start sub office. Families from Cloquet, Barnum, Moose Lake, Sandstone and many other communities in the northwest part of the service area participated. There were a total of 15 children that were screened by Dr. Mark Bruzek.

Dr. Mark Bruzek was the dentist who donated his time and service to Head Start children and families. Dr. Mark is a dentist from Duluth Pediatric Dentistry, PLLC out of Duluth, MN. Head Start families really enjoyed Dr. Mark and some have chosen to travel to Duluth to have their child's dental needs met by him.

The children and families received a screening and dental education from Dr. Mark. They were provided with a free toothbrush and tooth paste to continue practicing good oral hygiene.

It was great to see so many families participating in taking care of their children's smiles.

Head Start is very thankful to Dr. Mark for donating his time and service. A thank you also goes out to the Minnesota Dental Association and the Minnesota Head Start Association for heading up this partnership and for donating dental supplies and children's books for the Head Start program's Dental Day initiative.

Another Dental Day is scheduled at the Lakes and Pines Central Office in Mora, MN on January 13th with Dr. Teresa Fong from Metropolitan Pediatric Dental Associates with the hope that it will be another great turnout!

Submitted by Tamara Kelash, Health Services Coordinator



CLASS in Head Start

The Classroom Assessment Scoring System™ (CLASS™) has become an integral part of the Head Start world in that it is being used to identify quality services for Head Start programs and is now a part of the Federal Monitoring Protocol. CLASS is an assessment tool that is unlike any other because it directly looks at teacher/child interactions. It provides a rating scale on the teacher's ability to communicate and involve children's learning in every day experiences. It looks at three domain areas: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization and Instructional Support. CLASS is being used in other programs such as Parent Aware, Child Care Resource and Referral, and Kindergarten classrooms. There is also a 0-3 version of CLASS in the works that should be available within the next year or so.

CLASS observers are required to take extensive training and pass a reliability test yearly in order to conduct CLASS assessments. As the designated CLASS observer for the Lakes and Pines Head Start Program, I have been deeply involved in quarterly Minnesota Head Start Association Quality Assessment team meetings and extensive training through the Center of Early Education and Development on the implementation and professional developmental aspects of the tool. This tool has allowed me to observe classroom teachers in action and to witness the genuine support, perseverance, and overall dedication that they provide for families and children on a daily basis. It is through this lens that we are able to accentuate the positive and find new ways to work on areas to improve. This is done through meetings with the classroom teacher, child care leads, and other classroom aids where possible to team on what's working well and what areas can be worked on to better fit the needs of the classroom.

Teachers are the greatest catalyst in our early childhood classrooms, and it is through their hard work, warm hearts and clear dedication that we can provide a brighter Head Start for young children!

Submitted by,

Pam Covington
Education Coordinator

Emergency & Accessibility Rehabilitation Loan Program

This assistance to homeowners is in the form of a 0% interest, 15-year forgivable loan, which must be repaid IF the property is sold, title is transferred, or the original borrower no longer lives in the home during the 15-year term. (For mobile home owners living in a park, loan term is 10 years.)

The maximum loan amount available through the MHFA Emergency & Accessibility Rehab Loan program is \$15,000 per property.

As security for repayment, a lien is placed on the property for the 15-year term. A 10-year lien is placed on a mobile home taxed as personal property located within a mobile home park. MHFA will only subordinate the lien for refinancing of a first mortgage.



To qualify-

- ⇒ You must own the house, either free of debt, or through a mortgage or recorded Contract for Deed. If you are buying your house on a Contract for Deed, the holder of the contract must sign off on the loan.
- ⇒ You must be current on your property taxes and be able to provide proof of homeowner's insurance.
- ⇒ You must not have assets with a combined value greater than \$25,000. This includes recreational land, vehicles, savings and retirement accounts.
- ⇒ Your household gross annual income (including Social Security, wages and all regular sources) must be within the same guidelines as the HOME Rehab Loan Program.

Emergency & Accessibility Rehab Loan funds are used for repairs to a property damaged as a result of events beyond the Borrower's control, or as necessitated by a system's structural failure such as:

- ◆ Failure of heating, electrical, ventilation, or plumbing/septic system
- ◆ Roof leaks that have lead to significant secondary damage to the home's interior
- ◆ A structural failure of the foundation, walls, or roof top of the home that could cause collapse
- ◆ An Environmental Intervention Blood Lead Level (EIBLL) of a household resident
- ◆ An accessibility need that prevents a disabled person from inhabiting the home+

Ninety-nine Emergency/Accessibility Loan packages have been sent out to homeowners since October 1, 2009. Thirty applications have been returned, and sixteen of these applications were denied for various reasons.

One Accessibility Loan was closed using \$15,000 in Kanabec County, and one Accessibility Loan closed in Mille Lacs County using \$10,048.

Twelve Emergency Loans have been closed – one in Aitkin County (\$6,750); one in Isanti County (\$6,975); three in Mille Lacs County (\$39,230); and six in Pine County (\$36,675). No Emergency Loans were closed in Carlton or Kanabec Counties. Benton County had Lakes and Pines CAC, Inc. close a loan for them in the amount of \$15,000.

Funding for Emergency/Accessibility Loans was depleted on November 12, 2010. Funds will not be available again until October 1, 2011.

LAKES AND PINES 2011 TAX ASSISTANCE CLINICS

It's almost tax season again! Now, many people don't see this as "glad tidings of great joy," but each year at Lakes and Pines we look forward to helping area individuals and families get the most from their tax returns in our comfortable, friendly and professional environment.

2011 will be our sixth season providing tax preparation assistance for individuals and families from lower-income households in the Lakes and Pines service area. This year, in particular, we welcome volunteers for the many duties needed to offer this valuable service. Whether you have a knack for numbers, some tax preparation experience and/or an interest in helping others, we'll welcome your time and enthusiasm!

Training and testing in 2011 follows the schedule from previous years. Training will take place at the Mora offices from 5 till 8 on Tuesday evenings (January 4th, 11th, 18th, and 25th) and from 9 till noon on Saturday mornings (January 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th). Depending on our volunteers' needs, we may add extra sessions on Thursday evenings from 5 till 8.

The 2011 tax deadline for both Federal and State returns is Monday, April 18th. Free tax preparation assistance is available to individuals making \$30,000 or less per year, and families making \$50,000 or less. Tax clinics will begin at the Mora offices on February 1st. Plans are to conduct clinics each Tuesday evening and Saturday morning through April 16th. The tentative schedule, subject to change, is:

<i>Tuesdays, 5:00 - 8:00 pm</i>		<i>Saturdays, 9:00 - noon</i>	
February 1 st	March 15 th	February 5 th	March 19 th
February 8 th	March 22 nd	February 12 th	March 26 th
February 15 th	March 29 th	February 19 th	April 2 nd
February 22 nd	April 5 th	February 26 th	April 9 th
March 1 st	April 12 th	March 5 th	April 16 th
March 8 th		March 12 th	

Please feel free to contact Lakes and Pines' Community Services Department at 320-679-1800 for more information. We will begin taking appointments January 18, 2011.

LAKES AND PINES HOSTS "COFFEE HOUR"

Friday, December 10th, Lakes & Pines hosted a coffee hour for elected officials in our seven county service area. The goal of the event was to familiarize representatives of the many services available to their constituents. The attendees were also able to see various weatherization tools in action. Several new elected officials (from local to the federal level) attended this event. In addition, Lakes & Pines' Board Members were in attendance.



On behalf of the Board and staff at Lakes & Pines Community Action Council, Inc., we would like to thank those who attended our coffee hour.

Adopting a Family for Christmas-2010



This year, the Energy-Housing Department adopted two families for Christmas. Both families were dealing with cancer and would have faced a bleak Christmas due to medical expenses. One family consisted of a mom and seven children, who ranged in age from seven to seventeen. The other family was a mom and a sixteen year-old daughter. The families were sent a wish list to fill out with gift requests and hobbies/interests for each family member.

The Energy-Housing Department employees had a wonderful time coming up with gift ideas, shopping and wrapping all the gifts. Each family member received several gifts and a Christmas stocking. Each family also received food for their Christmas dinner. The gifts and food were delivered to the families by Weatherization field staff about a week before Christmas.

True Economic Stimulus Before It Was A Popular Phrase

The Small Cities Development Program has a three-fold way of affecting the economic growth of a community. It first improves the local housing stock by infusing funds into rehabilitating homes of low and moderate income homeowners, rehabilitating homes that might otherwise fall into disrepair. Secondly, the Small Cities Development Program funding provides work to local contractors, their employees and subcontractors through the construction contracts it generates for rehabilitating the homes. Just one home's project can generate enough work to keep a couple of contractors working for several weeks. Lastly, the Small Cities Development Program encourages contractors to purchase their materials from local lumberyards and material providers, which in turn, can help keep local businesses profitable & people employed during slower months and tougher economic times.

The Small Cities Development Program in Carlton County, with the goal of rehabilitating owner occupied housing, rental housing and commercial buildings, brought approximately \$952,000 of economic activity to the area. The project rehabilitated 36 properties and employed 49 contractors and improved the health & safety, basic structure and overall appearance of housing and businesses in Carlton County.

If you think your community could benefit from a program like this, contact the Energy-Housing Department at 800-832-6082.

For more information on the Small Cities Development Program, contact the Energy-Housing Department at Lakes & Pines at 800.832.6082.

LAKES & PINES CAC INC
1700 MAPLE AVE E
MORA MN 55051

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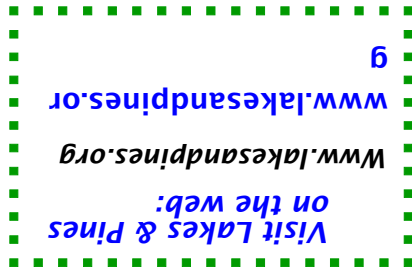
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CORRECTION IN MAILING ADDRESS

For the Agency to continue this savings in postage, it is important to maintain current addresses on file. Please take a moment to review your address label and notify Lakes & Pines of any appropriate corrections.



For further information, please contact:
LAKES & PINES CAC INC
1700 MAPLE AVE E
MORA MN 55051
320/679-1800
Toll Free 1-800-832-6082

stands for **FOR YOUR INFORMATION**. It is a quarterly newsletter provided to the areas seven county officials and personnel of Lakes & Pines CAC, Inc.
We hope our Newsletter will present you with timely, interesting, and sometimes lighthearted information. In turn, we hope that you will present us with your thoughts and suggestions.

