

Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.



# Community Action Update

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 4

FALL 2013

## THINGS TO KNOW:

- **DCCSD closed:**  
October 14:  
Columbus Day  
  
November 11:  
Veterans' Day  
  
November 28-29:  
Thanksgiving Break
- **CSBG Scholarship deadline has passed.** Look for 2014 application the end of January 2014.
- **Free Tax Preparation assistance begins February 2014.** Check our web page this fall for updated information.

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

From the Director	2
GYP Social Living Group	2
Community Gardens Update	3
CSBG Administrative Board	3
Inside The Numbers	4
Tax Preparation Assistance	4
DCCSD Mission &	5
Outreach Sites	5

## 2013-2014 CSBG Scholarships Awarded

The DeKalb County Community Services Department CSBG Administrative Board awarded the 2013-2014 Community Block Grant Scholarship on September 5. This scholarship is designed to provide financial assistance to DeKalb County low-income and disadvantaged students who enroll in an Illinois college so that they may further their education. The scholarship is awarded for the fall and spring semesters of an academic year. There is a total of \$3,000 per year to award. The scholarships are sent directly to the college or university and is split between the fall and spring semesters.

This year DCCSD awarded \$750 scholarships to four outstanding students. Vanessa Howell (pictured middle right) is attending Kishwaukee College, majoring in Nursing. Angela Isom (pictured above right) is attending Northern Illinois University, majoring in Family Individual Development/Psychology.

Also receiving a CSBG Scholarship is Timothy Wallace (pictured below right), a student at Northern Illinois University studying Rehabilitation Services; and Kianna Thompson, a Kishwaukee College student studying Nursing/Midwifery. Congratulations to the four 2013-2014 CSBG Scholarship recipients!

Since 1994, the DeKalb County Community Services Department has awarded \$80,575 in scholarships to low-income DeKalb County Residents. Persons awarded the scholarships range from graduating high school students to non-traditional students going to college many years removed from high school.

Scholarship applications for the 2014-2015 school year will be available late January 2014. For more information about the scholarship, please call our office at 815-758-3910 or visit us online at [dekalbcounty.org/communityservices/scholar](http://dekalbcounty.org/communityservices/scholar).



## From the Director

It's time to start thinking about taxes! We will be scheduling appointments when our next newsletter comes out so it's time to think about what we can do to strengthen our Tax Assistance Program for 2014. We would like to be able to maximize opportunities for self sufficiency and ongoing household stability for families in DeKalb County. We are looking for partners interested in community reinvestment activities so that we can support asset-building opportunities for low income households. Please contact me at the office if this goal aligns with your plan or those of your organization so we can work together for a stronger, more stable, and sufficient DeKalb County!

*Rhonda Brown*

## Golden Years Plaza Social Living Group

Family Support Specialist Rhonda Brown leads a Social Living Program for residents of the Golden Years Plaza. This group invites all residents of the Plaza to participate in a variety of activities which encourage positive supportive social interactions and relationships. The goal of the group is for the residents to socially interact with each other, build community, and have a good time with different fun activities . Prizes are awarded for specific program activities.

The group meets from 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm on the 2nd and 4th Fridays of the month:

October                      No Group

November                      8

December                      13 & 27

Call Rhonda at 815-217-0194 to see what the next program will be .



# Community Gardens Update

The spring and summer growing season has been very productive! Overall, the weather has been fantastic and rains have been plentiful. The garden at the Health Facility produced a wide variety of vegetables including kale, tomatoes, carrots, beets, beans, squash, peppers, herbs, lettuce, spinach and Swiss chard. Families who receive WIC benefit greatly from this produce, either by picking it themselves or grabbing a bagful from the display inside the Health Department. Volunteers are working hard to make sure the gardens are watered, weeded and harvested. There is always a need for volunteers so if you would like to be involved with DeKalb County Community Gardens, please inquire.

The Community Gardens produce enough food to harvest over 1,000 pounds of healthy food weekly. This produce benefits hundreds of people in the County. Not only does DCCG feed people and help close the food gap, they also raise awareness about hunger that exists among residents of DeKalb County. Be sure to visit DeKalb County Community Gardens on the web at [dekalbgardens.org](http://dekalbgardens.org) for more information.



## CSBG Administrative Board

DeKalb County Community Services Department (DCCSD) is the Community Action Agency for DeKalb County. Community Action Agencies (CAA) are nonprofit organizations established under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 to fight America's War on Poverty. Community Action Agencies help people to help themselves in achieving self-sufficiency.

Today there are approximately 1000 Community Action Agencies, serving the poor in every state as well as Puerto Rico and the Trust Territories. Since 1968, local community action agencies have been required to have tripartite governing boards to gain and retain designation as eligible entities and to receive CSBG funding. The "tripartite board" is to be comprised of 1/3 public officials (people who have been elected), 1/3 private sector (local business leaders, educators, etc...) and 1/3 low-income individuals. Each of these three groups has unique perspectives and insights that help to shape the programming and services of the CAA. Effective tripartite boards reflect and promote the unique anti-poverty leadership, action, and mobilization responsibilities assigned by law to Community Action Agencies. Boards are responsible for assuring that agencies continue to assess and respond to the causes and conditions of poverty in their community, achieve anticipated family and community outcomes, and remain administratively and fiscally sound.

DeKalb County Community Services Department is currently seeking one Private Sector representative to serve on the CSBG Administrative Board.

Some of the requirements for being a Board Member are:

1. Regular attendance at board and committee meetings (these are typically held 4-5 times per year at 8:30- 10:00am at the DeKalb County Community Outreach Building);
2. Gain thorough familiarity with DCCSD information, such as the agency's bylaws, articles of incorporation, sources of funding, agency goals and programs, Federal and State CSBG statutes;
3. Careful review of materials provided to board members;
4. Decision-making based on sufficient information.

If you are interested in serving as a DCCSD Board Member, or if you have more questions, please call Donna Moulton at (815) 217-0191. Thank you.



## Inside the Numbers

DCCSD sees many families and individuals with varying levels of need. For 2013 through September, DCCS has served 277 households with a total of 612 persons making up those households:

- 5 individuals are enrolled in the Family Economic Development Program. All are progressing toward increasing their income due to earnings.
- 455 persons received Emergency Intervention services to help stabilize a current crisis.
- 16 families are progressing in the Family Stability and Support Program with the eventual outcome of a higher level of household stability.
- 75 households received free Income Tax Preparation services, obtaining tax credits and refunds without paying a preparer.
- 10 persons are enrolled in the Social Living Group, learning new social skills that will benefit family and individual functioning.
- 324 households received Information and Referral services allowing them to obtain information and services that will increase household stability.

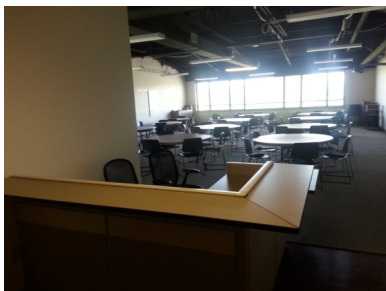
The main qualifications to receive DCCS services are to fall below a household income of 125% of the Federal Poverty Income level for the past 90 calendar days and reside in DeKalb County.

## Tax Preparation Assistance

It's that time again to start thinking about the 2013 tax return season. Community Services will once again offer free tax preparation and filing assistance to low-income DeKalb County residents. Why go to a paid preparer when you can get the same service for free? Our volunteers are certified tax preparers through the AARP VITA/TCE programs.

The free tax preparation service begins the first Thursday in February 2014. We will begin taking appointments early January 2014. The site is at the DeKalb County Community Outreach Building, Blank Slate Room in DeKalb. Tax preparation usually takes 75 minutes but could take less or more time depending on the type of return. Please call Jess Collins at 815-217-0192 for more information. Keep checking [dekalbcounty.org/communityservices/taxprep](http://dekalbcounty.org/communityservices/taxprep) for updates.

\*There are certain returns that are out of scope.



The Blank Slate Room is where customers check in and fill out needed forms.



The door to the computer lab where tax preparation takes place.



One side of the computer lab. The preparer and customer sit here to complete taxes.

# DCCSD Mission and Vision

## DeKalb County Community Services Department

2550 N. Annie Glidden Rd.

DeKalb, IL 60115

Hours: M-F 8:00am-4:30pm

Phone: 815-758-3910

Fax: 815-758-3407

E-mail: [dmoulton@dekalbcounty.org](mailto:dmoulton@dekalbcounty.org)

**Community Action-People Helping  
People, Changing Lives**

### Mission Statement:

**Address the systemic roots of poverty and provide comprehensive support and assistance to households that either live in poverty or experience a temporary crisis situation that causes potential homelessness.**

### Vision Statement:

**To provide leadership in the coordination of diverse services in order to increase the strengths, resources, and stability of DeKalb County individuals, households, and the community.**

**We're on the web!**

[dekalbcounty.org/communityservices](http://dekalbcounty.org/communityservices)

## Outreach Sites



**DCCS serves DeKalb  
County, located in  
north central Illinois.**

In order to provide services to all residents of DeKalb County, the DCCSD Family Support Specialists offer outreach in the Northern and Southern areas of the County.

### Genoa

Where: Heartland Bank and Trust  
327 W. Main St.

When: *By appointment only. Please call 815-758-3910.*

### Somonauk

Where: St. John's Lutheran Church  
235 S. Green St.

When: *By appointment only. Please call 815-758-3910.*

To inquire about DCCSD programs and eligibility requirements or to make an appointment, please call 815-758-3910.