

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 3, ISSUE 1

WINTER 2014

## THINGS TO KNOW:

- **DCCSD closed:**  
January 1:  
New Year's Day
- January 20:  
MLK Jr. Day
- February 12:  
Lincoln's Birthday
- February 17:  
Washington's Birthday
- 2014-2015 CSBG Scholarship applications available late January.
- Free Tax Preparation assistance begins February 6.

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## Free Tax Preparation Assistance



DeKalb County Community Services is partnering with the AARP/Tax Aide Program to provide free tax preparation assistance to elderly and low to moderate income level individuals/households in the community.

### Where:

DeKalb County Community Outreach Building  
Blank Slate Room  
2500 North Annie Glidden Road, DeKalb, IL

### When:

Thursdays beginning February 6, 2014

**\*\*\*By Appointment Only\*\*\***

### Contact:

Beginning Monday, January 6, 2014 please call **815-217-0192** to schedule an appointment

### \*Families in Illinois:

Whether or not you owe income tax, you could get thousands of dollars in tax credits. You could qualify for:

- Up to **\$2,100** from the federal Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit.
- Up to **\$6,044** from the federal Earned Income Tax Credit and up to **\$604** from the Illinois Earned Income Tax Credit.
- Up to **\$1,000** per child from the federal Child Tax Credit.

\*Taken from the National Women's Law Center Tax Credits Outreach Campaign, tax year 2013.

Some tax returns may be eligible to take part in a raffle for a \$25 gas or food card. See page 4 of this newsletter for more information.

### What to Bring:

Copy of previous year tax return. If necessary, [contact the IRS](#) for a copy of last year's return.

- W-2 forms from each employer
- All 1099 forms (1099-INT, 1099-DIV, 1099-misc., etc.) showing interest and/or dividends as well as documentation showing the original purchase price of your sold assets
- If you were paid Social Security benefits, bring your SSA-1099
- If you received a pension or annuity, bring your 1099R
- All forms indicating federal income tax paid
- If applicable, unemployment compensation statements
- Child care provider information (name, employer ID, SSN)
- If itemizing deductions, bring all receipts or canceled checks for items such as medical expenses, taxes paid, mortgage interest paid, and charitable contributions
- Social Security numbers for all dependents
- Property Parcel # if homeowner
- Bank routing and account number for direct deposit of refund for payment of taxes owed

## Director's Message

Happy New Year! We are excited to be starting another year of providing supportive services to families that are experiencing poverty in DeKalb County. While we will be supporting these families with many of the same services that we have been over the last few years, we are looking forward to some additional offerings in 2014. One of these, that will commence early this year, is the incentive that we are building into our tax return program and will enter families into a drawing for a gift card for each \$50 of their tax return that they set aside in a bond. We believe that building assets is an important component of increasing stability for a household moving forward and provides a degree of hope about the future. In addition to our incentives, we will also have tax return services available in Spanish, thanks to the assistance of our own Family Support Specialist, Minerva Perez.

Our Community Garden will also be expanding this spring! While we were successful in planting and distributing lots of fresh vegetables and herbs this past year, we weren't able to provide fresh fruits in the summer. We will be establishing an orchard on our site this year. While we may not have a lot of fruit in the first year, we are so glad to be able to plant trees at this site so we can provide a more diverse local crop to DeKalb County residents for many years to come!

*Rhonda Brown*

## Taylor Street Plaza Social Living Group

Family Support Specialist Rhonda Brown leads a Social Living Program for residents of Taylor Street 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. Snacks are provided.

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

January 10 & 24

February 14 & 28

March 14 & 28

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



# 2014-2015 CSBG Scholarship

## The 2014-2015 CSBG Scholarship Application Availability

This scholarship is designed to help low-income and disadvantaged students who enroll in college so that they may further their education. The applicant needs to be a permanent DeKalb County resident who is attending an accredited Illinois post-secondary school. The scholarship is awarded for the fall and spring semesters of a school year. The Scholarship application will be available at our office and on-line by late January. Applications are due Friday, April 11.

To be eligible to apply, you must meet the following criteria.

- Be a permanent resident of DeKalb County.
- Be a member of a family whose gross income does not exceed 125% of the poverty level. The income is based on the last 90 days.
- Be of high academic potential and have a class rank and an ACT score at levels acceptable to the institution to which you are applying.
- Be accepted at an accredited Illinois 2 or 4 year institution for an undergraduate degree.
- Only C.N.A., C.M.A. or other growth area certificates are acceptable and must be from a Community College.

If receiving other Financial Aid, CSBG Scholarship will not be awarded if Financial Aid covers the entire cost of tuition, books, fees, and room and board (if in student housing).

Check [www.dekalbcounty.org/communityservices](http://www.dekalbcounty.org/communityservices) in late January for the 2014-2015 application.

## Family Spotlight

Welcome to a new feature of the DeKalb County Community Services Newsletter! We are excited to showcase families who have benefited from our services. This quarter we shine the spotlight on the Armato family.

Angelo first came to our agency seeking housing assistance. At the time, 2009, he knew very little about the resources available to him as he was new to the area. His Family Support Specialist at DCCSD helped him to understand what is available in the community and how to access helpful resources. The two worked together to identify and establish necessary action steps for Angelo to meet goals that would help him to increase his self sufficiency. He then worked with staff to accomplish each of those steps and goals. The process to increase his self sufficiency was made difficult due to the fact that Angelo is unable to work as a result of his disabilities. Along the way, he qualified for housing through the Housing Authority of the County of DeKalb. While he applied and qualified for other assistance as well, the process for gaining Disability benefits was very arduous. Staff assisted him by reviewing frequent and lengthy correspondence in the process and also assuring that copies of important reports and documents were made for submission and support of the application. Staff was able to help him get to food pantries and to some appointments. Angelo also qualified for various incentives through our Family Stability and Support Program as a result of working so hard on his goals and completing each of the agreed-upon action steps toward achieving those goals. Angelo also qualified for SSI and Medicaid last year. As a result, he was able to have necessary medical procedures done and pay off some of his bills. While this has been a long and frustrating process, Angelo persevered with the support of his Family Support Specialist and accomplished a great deal. He now has stable income and has become self sufficient. Way to go Angelo!

## Impact of Services

DCCSD sees many families and individuals with varying levels of need. In 2013, DCCS served 357 households with a total of 797 persons making up those households:

- 6 individuals enrolled in the Family Economic Development Program. All progressed toward increasing their income due to earnings.
- 616 persons sought Emergency Intervention services to help stabilize a current household crisis.
- 42 household members progressed in the Family Stability and Support Program with the eventual outcome of a higher level of household stability.
- 72 households received free Income Tax Preparation services, obtaining tax credits and refunds without paying a preparer.
- 11 persons enrolled in the Social Living Group, learning new social skills that will benefit family and individual functioning.
- 415 individuals received Information and Referral services allowing them to obtain information and services that will increase household stability.
- 922 calls were logged for those seeking some type of community resource.

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.

## U.S. Savings Bonds \$25 Gas/Food Card Raffle

DeKalb County Community Services is holding a weekly raffle for a \$25 gas or food card for households that are DeKalb County residents, fall below 125% of the Federal Poverty Income Level, and have successfully prepared and e-filed their taxes at the Community Outreach Building site. See details below:

### ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS AND DETAILS

- Have tax return successfully prepared and e-filed by a volunteer at the DeKalb County Community Outreach Building.
- DeKalb County resident and fall within 125% of Federal Poverty Income Guidelines.
- Purchase a U.S. Savings Bond with Federal tax refund.
- Purchases are made during the preparation and once refund amount is determined.
- You may purchase more than one U.S. Savings Bond.
- U.S. Savings Bonds must be bought in increments of \$50.
- One entry per \$50 purchased.
- U.S. Savings Bond(s) will be mailed to you.
- You will be contacted via e-mail or phone if a winner of a gift card.
- Call Jess Collins at 815-217-0192 for further details

### SAVINGS BOND INFORMATION

- The U.S. Savings Bonds are Series I.
- May use all or part of Federal refund.
- Must be purchased in increments of \$50 up to \$5,000.
- You may buy a U.S. Savings Bond for someone else such as a child or grandchild.
- You can designate ownership or co-ownership.
- You will receive a paper U.S. Savings Bond Certificate in the mail in three to four weeks.
- U.S. Savings Bonds accrue interest until they are redeemed, up to 30 years.
- U.S. Savings Bonds cannot be redeemed during the first 12 months.
- U.S. Savings Bonds can be redeemed at most financial institutions.
- U.S. Savings Bonds interest is subject to federal income tax but not state/local income tax.
- For more information, visit [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

# 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.**

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

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## 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.