

**Community Action of Greene County, Inc.**

**2012 Annual Report**



**7856 Rt. 9W**  
**Catskill, NY 12414**

## **2012 Board of Directors**

### **Private Sector:**

**William Reich  
Steve Caro  
Lela Bleau  
Beth Ballard**

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### **Public Sector:**

**Kate Farrell, Representing Michael Bulich, Catskill Board of Education  
Robert Schrock, Vice President, Representing Legislator William Lawrence  
Tracy Magee, Representing NYS Assemblyman Peter Lopez (effective 2/19/13)**

### **Low Income Sector:**

**Reverend John Bowen  
Charlene Holdridge  
Carrie Multari  
Mary Ann Scalera**

### **Staff**

**Florence Ohle  
Karen Van Valkenburgh  
Barbara Palmateer  
Robert Rock**

**Executive Director  
Operations Officer  
Director, Family, Community & Victim Services  
Weatherization Director**

## **Community Action of Greene County, Inc.**

- Goal 1 Low-Income People Become More Self-Sufficient**
- Goal 2 The Conditions In Which Low-Income People Live Are Improved**
- Goal 3 Low Income people own a stake in their communities**
- Goal 4 Partnerships Among Supporters and Providers Of Services To Low-Income People Are Achieved**
- Goal 5 Agencies Increase Their Capacity To Achieve Results**
- Goal 6 Low-Income People, Especially Vulnerable Populations, Achieve Their Potential By Strengthening Family And Other Supportive Systems**

According to the New York State Poverty Report, issued in March of 2013, New York's poverty rate has climbed to 15.1%. While New York has the 25<sup>th</sup> highest poverty rate in the United States, we rate fourth in actual number of individuals living in poverty. According to the same report, Greene County has a poverty rate of 16.2%. 23.2% of children under the age of 18 in Greene County live in poverty! Community Action of Greene County is committed to providing relief for those who are not able to achieve the American Dream, providing opportunity to earn a living wage to those who are unemployed and lacking job skills, and the tools necessary to become self sufficient in today's society. With lack of decent affordable housing in our community, limited opportunity for gainful employment, and a high unemployment rate, it is no surprise that so many among us are struggling financially. We are working diligently to remove the obstacles to individuals and families achieving self sufficiency and maintaining a healthy interdependence in our society.

One of, if not the most significant accomplishments in 2012 was the acquisition of new office space. In April we moved into the former Sawyer Motors building at 7856 Rt. 9W, having the space renovated to meet our needs. Staff, guests and consumers now come into bright, warm, welcoming space that was designed for our use. There are private meeting rooms, a beautiful new spacious board room, ample parking, and space to contain the various distributions (coats, backpacks, Christmas gifts) that we hold each year and normally would have to move off site.

Along with the new office, we opened our Pay it Forward Community Thrift Store with much success! Donations from the community make up our inventory, which varies greatly from gently used clothing, to designer handbags, to vintage clothing and jewelry! We have steadily increased our return shoppers, and have needed to implement monthly "bag" sales in order to deplete inventory! Sales have exceeded our expectations, and due strictly to Thrift Store revenue we were able to designate \$7,000 towards emergency relief efforts. Made possible only through income generated in the store, we have been able to assist families who had depleted all other resources with heating fuel and propane purchases, utility bills and emergency home repairs.

In addition to the income generated, the store has also served as a job training site for a number of CWEP (Community Work Education Program) participants from the Department of Social Services. These individuals receive weekly instruction in preparation for the National Work Readiness Credential, and utilize skills learned through volunteering in the store. We have had two individuals receive their credential, with several more in

progress. The store also serves as a volunteer opportunity for folks through the Greene County Department for Aging's RSVP Program (Retired Senior Volunteers), as well as for program participants of the Mental Health Association of Columbia and Greene Counties, Ulster Greene ARC, area high schools, and the general public.

In 2012 we expanded program in Columbia County, adding a full time Crime Victims Advocate to our staff. Funded through the NYS Office of Victim Services, this opportunity arose when the Columbia County District Attorney's office chose not to renew their grant which was expiring. Seeing this program a natural fit for us, as we have similar funded positions through our Columbia Greene Domestic Violence Program, we sought out the funding and were granted. This position offers support, advocacy information and referral to any victim of crime in Columbia County, as well as assists the victim in filing claims with the OVS.

Maintaining our commitment to providing staff with the tools they need to do their jobs, we are proud to report the accomplishments of our staff in the area of training. In 2012 5 staff earned certification in Financial Social Work, 2 successfully completed BPI (Building Performance Institute) training.

While 2012 was successful in so many ways for our agency, we look to the future with optimistic uncertainty. With the recent sequestration, our core funding, the Community Services Block Grant through NYS Department of State is reduced for the year that began for us in October of 2012.

Our Weatherization Program, minimally funded, that went from \$375,000 annually to \$1,000,000 during ARRA, will be cut drastically for the year beginning in April of 2013, to only \$250,000. In order to maintain our crew and avoid layoffs, we will venture into seeking out fee for service jobs. In order to keep the program "whole", in addition to the EmpowerNY work we have already been involved in, we will promote NYSERDA's Assisted Home Performance program, allowing folks who do not qualify for the free Weatherization services to have the same energy audit and work performed, and allow access to affordable financing options as well. We will also market and perform various "odd jobs" to seniors and others with the need for small home repairs. As we are fully insured and hold the BPI (Building Performance Institute) Accreditation our crew can be trusted to perform such small constructions jobs as building ramps, installing rails, hanging windows, etc.; jobs that many larger contractors don't have time to address.

Our Wheels for Work and Partners Catch a Ride Programs continue on; Wheels for Work is no longer funded by the State, but through program income earned via loans repaid over the years, we can continue with this car loan program for at least another two years. Partners, our vanpool transportation program, is being funded now solely through our allocation from the Greene County Legislature. We will continue this program into the fall, where after the program's future is uncertain. Both Greene and Columbia County Departments of Social Services have applied for funding to support these vital transportation programs to support the working poor, but no awards have yet been made, and the start date for these grants was January of this year.

As funding on both the federal and state levels continues to be uncertain, Community Action will continue to seek out alternative methods of supporting our efforts. We have been very fortunate throughout the years in obtaining grants through such private foundations as Dyson Foundation, Bank of Greene County Foundation, Hudson River Bank Foundation, and Ulster Savings Foundation and Wal-Mart. We will continue to be creative, diligent, working in partnership with other agencies in order to bring necessary programs and services to individuals and families in and around Greene County.

As always, we are most appreciative of the support we receive from our community.

Florence Ohle  
Executive Director

## *Family, Community, and Victim Services*

Community Action of Greene County, Inc provides a wide array of services to assist individuals and families throughout the year, beyond our established program areas. Holidays, the start of the school year and the winter season are particularly challenging times for many families in our local community that are already struggling financially. Community Action of Greene County, Inc offers seasonal assistance to help families during these difficult periods.

### ***SCHOOL SUPPLIES***

Monies received through the Stewart's Holiday Match Grant, along with the 100 backpacks filled with school supplies provided by United Stationers in Coxsackie, permitted us to provide school supplies and backpacks to needy families who reside in Greene County. During 2012 **236** back packs full of school supplies were provided to **112** Greene County families.

### ***COAT AND BLANKET DISTRUBTION***

During the fall of this year Community Action administered our annual coat and blanket drive. Made possible by the generous donations of new or gently used coats and blankets by community members: **181** individuals, **72** families were able to pick out a winter coat and blanket free of charge. As budget cuts and hard economic time continue, bringing warmth to families in need continues to be essential.

### ***HOLIDAY***

During the holiday season many find themselves in a difficult place financially and may need a little help around Christmas in order to provide for their families. Again made possible by donations received from community members, businesses, houses of worship and civic groups, Community Action coordinated our annual Here Comes Christmas Program which results in either a family being assisted through our Adopt a Family program, or through our toy distribution event. New clothes, toys and even sometimes food are provided to program recipients. **554** children, **214** families in Greene County were assisted in 2012. It is also important to acknowledge that this program allows compassionate community members an opportunity to share in the holiday spirit through their donations and participation!

### ***WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT***

As unemployment rates continue to be a source of concern in Greene County, Community Action is dedicated to doing its part to give County residents the tools they need to be successful in earning a wage and being able to support themselves and their families. During 2012 as a result of funding received through a Community Services Block Grant, Community Action of Greene County partnered with the Columbia Greene Work Force New York Office to offer Greene County residents the ability to receive training that would result with them earning a certificate or degree, such as in the areas of phlebotomy, CDL or CDLA, etc. Our partners at the Work Force New York office provided the initial screening to determine eligibility; at or below 125% of the federal poverty guideline, and unemployed. Community Action, through the grant, covered the expense of the training, as well as provided case management services to program participants. Over the course of the year

fourteen individuals were provided this opportunity; of which thirteen actually completed the course and achieved their certification. Unfortunately one applicant completed the course work but failed the test and did not receive his certification. Of the thirteen that achieved certification ten have obtained employment in the area that they studied for and one is actively seeking employment in her desired field. This training permitted applicants the ability to gain skills and knowledge that they could utilize out in the workforce in order to provide for themselves and their families, ten program applicants obtained employment, ten program applicants went from living at or below 125% of poverty guidelines to actually making a living wage! It was simply stated in a Christmas card received from one of the program participants what the training had done for him; the applicant wrote “you gave me a new life”.

## ***SOLUTIONS TO END HOMELESSNESS***

Effective in October of 2012 Community Action of Greene County, Inc received funding through The NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) to administer the Solutions to End Homelessness Program (STEHP). The goal of STEHP is to assist individuals and families in obtaining, or maintaining, permanent housing, and assist them with supportive services during their experience, through the eviction process and housing stabilization. Program participants may qualify for either the prevention or rapid rehousing parts of the program. While a small portion of the homeless population requires long term, sustained assistance and intensive support services, such as those individuals and families assisted through our HUD Supportive Housing Grants, the larger number of individuals and families experiencing homelessness can be assisted through the provision of short term rental assistance, assistance with security deposits and some housing stabilization services, such as help with employment, connecting with resources such as TANF and SSI/SSDI, and budget counseling. Others can prevent homelessness by receiving assistance in paying rental arrears to the landlord—and limited services. Since being awarded these grant funds in December of 2012 Community Action has assisted 39 households in Greene County either obtain or maintain secure housing.

## ***Columbia Greene Domestic Violence Program***

On March 7, 2013 President Obama signed a bill that both strengthened and reauthorized the Violence Against Women Act. The signing and reauthorization of this bill was vital to the continuation of services provided by the Columbia Greene Domestic Violence Program. This enhanced bill means that women and men in our own community who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking will be able to continue to access resources they need in our own community to help them heal from the trauma they have experienced. In 2012, 331 clients accessed the Columbia Greene Domestic Violence Non-Residential office for assistance in obtaining a total of 221 orders of protection, 99 in Greene County, as well as attended support groups or individual support counseling sessions. In addition, the program provided residential services to 154 women and children. The enhanced VAWA bill also permits for law enforcement offices to receive training that Columbia Greene Domestic Violence offers so that they will be better equipped to respond to domestic violence calls. In 2012 Columbia Greene Domestic Violence provided over fifty presentations throughout the community and provided information and education, increasing awareness of the impact of domestic violence on its victims and community members.

## *Weatherization Assistance Program*

The Energy Program received \$366, 564 in Weatherization grant funds for the 2012 contract year. The grant was issued through the Division of Housing and Community Renewal, Energy Services, U.S. Department of Energy, and the Home Energy Assistance Program. As of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013 a total of 44 Greene County families have had Weatherization services completed on their homes, 19 families are currently in progress, and 32 are waiting for services to begin. Weatherization funding will be decreased to \$250,000 for program year 2013.

The Energy Program provides Empower New York services to qualified Greene County residents. The focus of Empower New York is on cost-effective electric reduction measures, particularly lighting and refrigerator replacements, as well as other cost –effective energy measures. Since we began offering this program in 2007, a total of 360 Greene County families received Empower services with the Energy Program receiving over \$250,000 in additional funds to provide these services.

Community Action of Greene County, Inc. has made a commitment to provide our Energy staff with the training and tools needed to address the ever-changing energy issues of Greene County residents. This training has included the installation and service of heating systems, indoor air quality testing, health and safety issues, and the whole house approach to diagnosing and treating a buildings energy usage. The agency has received accreditation from the Building Performance Institute, Inc. This accreditation is given to contractors who demonstrate a proficiency in the building sciences through testing and on site evaluations.

The work that we perform is based on the fuel usage of the building and on information gathered during a comprehensive energy audit. First we address the heating system by making improvements to increase the efficiency. Wall, attic and floor insulation may be added to help reduce heat loss from the building. Caulk, foam, and weather stripping may be used to reduce air infiltration into the building. Hot water heaters and pipe insulation may be added. Water reducing showerheads and faucet aerators are added to assist in water savings. Refrigerator replacement and energy saving light bulbs also helped to reduce energy costs. Health and safety measures include Smoke and Carbon Monoxide detectors .A post inspection is done at completion of the work and the client is educated on the changes made to their home and what they can do to save energy in the future. Households can expect to see an average energy savings in excess of 20%.

We look forward to increasing our services to households above income for Weatherization Services for fee, in order to maintain a full crew during this time of financial restraints. Through NYSERDA's Assisted Home Performance Program, qualified homeowners may receive a grant to cover up to 50% of the cost of weatherizing their home, with additional assistance through flexible, low interest loans. In addition, the crew will begin performing and marketing small home repairs.

## *Community Action Works.....*

### *A Year in Stories*

*An elderly man living near Greenville NY had no heat for over 2 years.*

*To keep warm he would bundle himself in layers of clothing and stay in one room with a small electric heater. He tried to get help through HEAP but was denied because the heat had not been working the previous year. Normally weatherization would replace the existing heating system with one of the same type. However this system had radiant heat tubes within a cement slab that were leaking water.*

*Our solution to this problem was to convert the system to a hot air system with ductwork in the ceiling. On our last visit the man commented on how warm he was and how he no longer had to wear his coat all day.*

**A Hensonville family of 5 was left homeless after Hurricane Irene.**

**With limited FEMA and insurance funds the family had very little available for a new heating system. Weatherization with special disaster funds from the State was able to install a complete heating and hot water system for the family.**

*Another flood victim was an elderly man in Prattsville.*

*Weatherization installed a boiler and hot water system for the man. This allowed him to return to his home and be one of the first to move back to Main Street Prattsville, giving a sign of hope to his neighbors.*

The issue of homelessness is a major problem in this country including our own local community due to lack of affordable housing and the crumbling of our economy. This is a dilemma we face on a regular basis. In December of 2012 a woman came to Community Action, she was literally homeless, she had nowhere to go and had no food. The staff of Community Action referred the client to the Department of Social Services for temporary housing assistance but since she was sanctioned for failure to comply with the drug and alcohol screening requirement they would / could not assist. This client began working with Community Action Family Resource Specialist. Utilizing the agency's Solutions to End Homelessness Program she was temporarily placed into a motel. In addition she accessed our food pantry and the agency's other resources, food was provided and referrals were made to Twin County Substance Abuse Services and Greene County Mental Health. Within days the sanction from the Department of Social Services was lifted. The client continued to utilize the programs that Community Action provided including agency's Chronically Homeless HUD supportive housing program. (to qualify as chronically homeless, one must be homeless for a period of one year or more continuously, or have experienced 4 bouts of homelessness in the past 3 years) Two months later this client has obtained permanent housing, currently receives food stamps as well as Medicaid. Although great strides have been made, due to the client's mental health issues there have also been set backs but the Family Resource Specialist continues to provide supportive services taking each day in stride.

## ***Stories, continued.....***

*A woman had accessed Community Action services periodically over the past few years. Over the last year the client utilized the Food Pantry as well as the "Here Comes Christmas Program" offered through the agency. In April of this year the client came to Community Action seeking rental assistance as she had fallen behind in her rent and was facing possible eviction. The client explained that her daughter had been seriously injured and had to be hospitalized causing the client to remain at the hospital with the child and not work her regularly scheduled hours, the daughter also had several follow up appointments with specialist out of the area. The client received rental assistance which stopped the eviction, as well as gas cards which permitted her to travel back and forth to the specialist. The client was provided information and referral on several vital resources and because of this the child will be receiving a cornea transplant. The client later attended and graduated from a phlebotomy class paid by discretionary CSBG funding we had received. Client is piecing her life back together, her child's health is improving and she is currently looking for employment which will permit her to utilize her recently obtained phlebotomy certificate. Client continues to access Community Action Services on an as needed basis.*

**A gentleman and his family have accessed the agency's food pantry regularly over the past few years. Last year the client's employer had reduced the client's work hours causing the client to seek alternative employment, for this he used the agency's computer in the resource room. The client managed to obtain full time employment elsewhere but continued to access the agency's services, such as assistance with his past electric bill and car insurance, preventing termination of both. The agency, knowing the family's history, advocated on the family's behalf with the electric company and applied for and was granted a medical waiver due to the wife's disability. The agency continues to work with this family on budgeting, nutrition education and future plans and though this family was recently evicted, they managed to move directly into another apartment they believe better suits them as it includes everything. The family is actively working with the agency regarding their current budget and identifying needs verses wants. The family has also recently junked the old family car as it was too costly to repair and just received a smaller, newer car from their daughter.**

## Community Action Works 2012 A Year in Pictures



Our new location allowed us to host both our 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary dinner and our 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Family Fun Day.



One of the many attractions at Family Fun Day was a demonstration by Greene County Sherriff's K-9 Unit and Blaze.

## Community Action Works 2012 A Year in Pictures

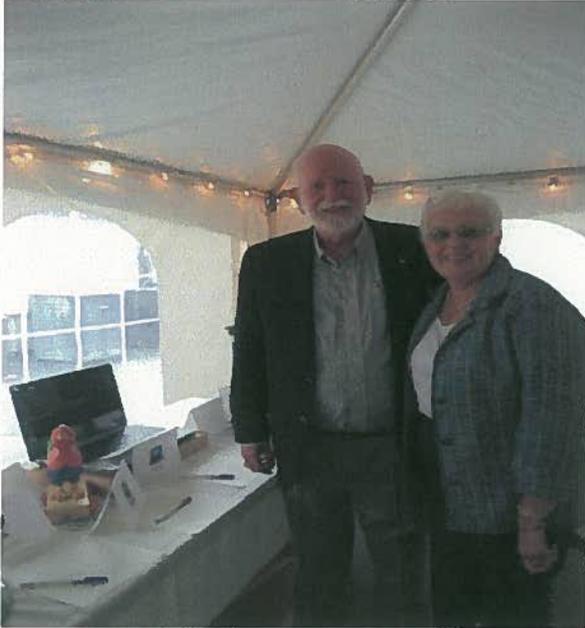


Former Greene County Legislator Karen Deyo visits a display on the WIC Program of Catholic Charities at Family Fun Day.



New York State Assemblyman Peter Lopez attended our 45th Anniversary Dinner, and recognized staff members for their outstanding efforts in response to the needs of Greene County residents following Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee.

## Community Action Works 2012 A Year in Pictures



**Board President Reverend John Bowen and his wife, Phyllis bidding on silent auction items.**



**Staff participate in the annual Walking with Our Neighbors for Our Neighbors at Dutchman's Landing, raising money for the Greene County Community Cancer Fund.**

## Community Action Works 2012 A Year in Pictures



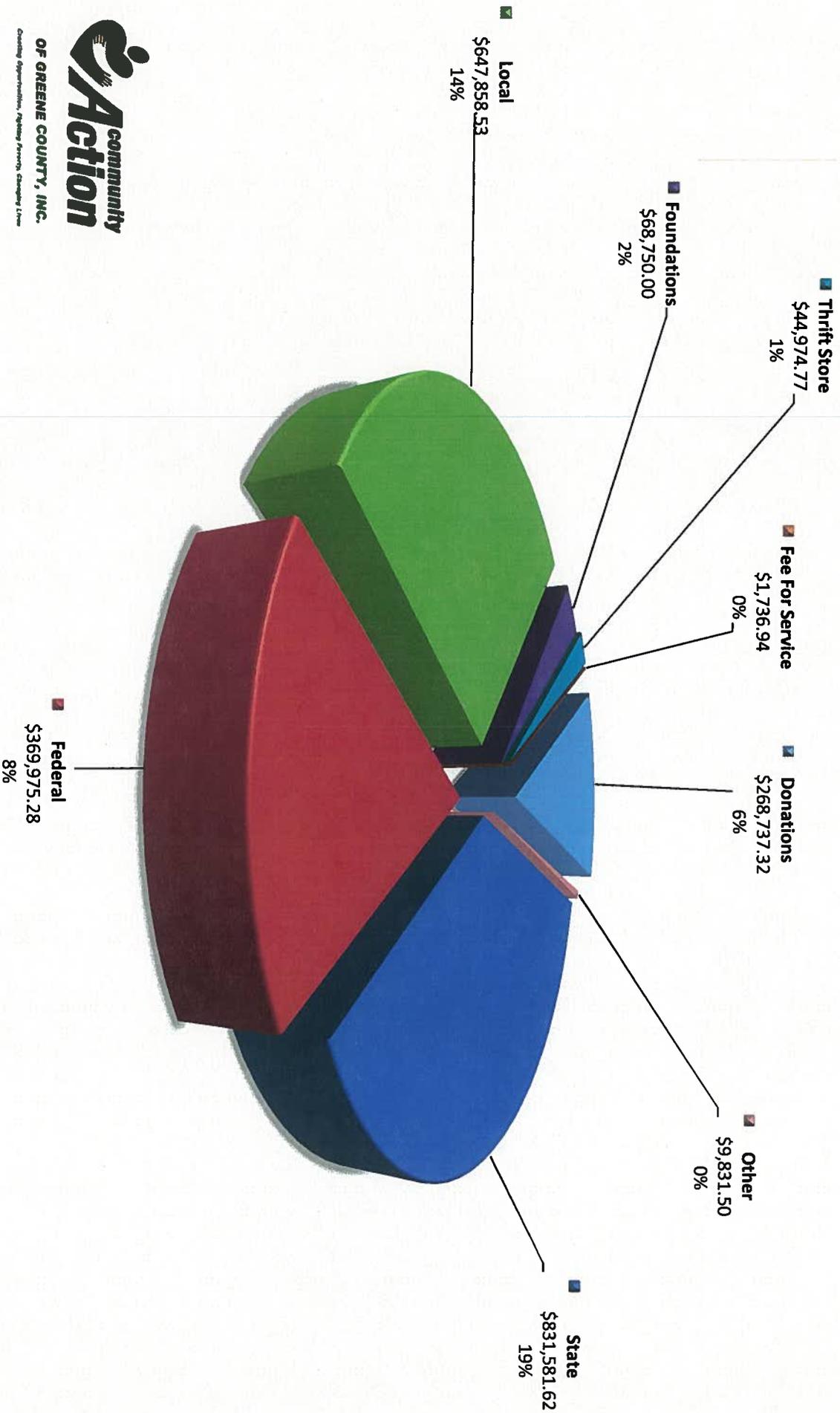
Staff and volunteers pose for a photo for inclusion in the Department of State's report to the Governor. The Pay it Forward Thrift Store, funded in part through a DOS Workforce Development Grant, serves as a job training program for those with limited or no work history, and as a volunteer opportunity for older Americans and those with disabilities. Secretary of State Cesar Perales chose our site to kick off for National Community Action Month in May of 2012!

Community Action  
of Greene County, Inc.

Annual Report, January, 2012 through December, 2012

Funding Source	STATE	FEDERAL	LOCAL	PRIVATE
NYS Dept of State - Community Services Block Grant		\$190,629.00		
NYS Dept of State - Community Services Block Grant Discretionary		\$100,000.00		
NYS Dept of State - Community Services Block Grant Hurricane Irene		\$7,383.35		
Greene County Dept. of Social Services			\$92,622.19	
Regional Food Bank of Northeast New York				\$4,831.50
Columbia County Dept of Social Services			\$34,419.47	
Foundation Grants				\$58,750.00
Foundation Grants - Hurricane Irene				\$10,000.00
NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services	\$27,415.99			
NYS Office of Victims Services	\$217,702.89			
Fee for Service & Program Income				\$1,736.94
Federal Family Violence Prevention		\$32,429.05		
LDSS ( Domestic Violence Per Diems)			\$440,068.75	
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development		\$39,533.88		
Greene County Legislature			\$36,765.00	
Donations				\$28,504.37
Donations-Hurricane Irene				\$38,683.31
United Way of Columbia and Greene Counties			\$36,000.00	
NYS Office of Temp/Disab Assist ( Wheels for Work II)	\$35,605.08			
NYS Office of Temp/Disab Assist (HPRP ARRA)	\$218.00			
Transitional Housing Income			\$7,983.12	
NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal	\$525,255.00			
NYS Empower	\$25,384.66			
Legal Aid Society				\$5,000.00
Pay It Forward Thrift Store Income				\$44,974.77
IN KIND Services, Non Monetary Donations and Services				\$201,549.64
Totals	\$831,581.62	\$369,975.28	\$647,858.53	\$394,030.53
<b>TOTAL AGENCY INCOME:</b>		<b>\$2,243,445.96</b>		

# Community Action of Greene County, Inc. 2012 Income



OF GREENE COUNTY, INC.

Creating Opportunities, Rebuilding Futures, Changing Lives

*Community Action of Greene County, Inc*  
*2012 Statistics*

- Served **2315** individuals and **1531** families
- Assisted **6 individuals** in accessing **reliable transportation** through a used car loan
- Provided transportation for **44 individuals** to and from **employment, job trainings**
- Provided **19** adults with **GED** instruction
- Provided **44 low income households** with **Weatherization** services
- Provided **35 low income households** with **EmPowerNY Services**
- Provided **1394 emergency food packages** ( **12,546 meals!**)
- Provided **262 households** with **clothing**
- Provided **236 children** with **backpacks and school supplies**
- Provided **331 women** with **protection from violence** through **non residential** services
- Assisted in obtaining **221 Orders of Protection**
- Provided **154 women and children, effected by Domestic Violence**, with temporary **shelter**
- Responded to **1252 Domestic Violence Hotline** calls
- Assisted **39 families** in finding or maintaining permanent **housing through providing security deposits or rental assistance, assistance with utilities.**
- Provided **rental subsidies for permanent supportive housing for 3 chronically homeless individuals and 5 victims of domestic violence**
- Assisted **232 households** by **preparing income tax returns resulting in refunds in excess of \$313,000**
- Provided **554 Greene County children** from low income households with **Christmas gifts**
- **Provided financial assistance to 61 Greene County households who experienced loss due to the floods in August and September of 2011, in excess of \$106,000**