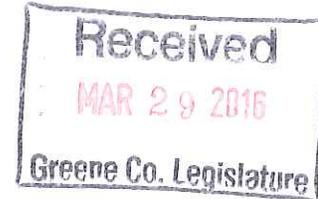


March 25, 2016

Ms. Tammy Sciavillo  
Greene County Legislature  
411 Main Street  
Catskill, NY 12414



Dear Tammy:

Enclosed please find one hard copy of Community Action's 2015 Annual Report. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Florence Ohle". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Florence Ohle  
Executive Director

Received

MAR 29 2016

Greene Co. Legislature

# 2015 ANNUAL REPORT



**“CREATING OPPORTUNITIES, FIGHTING POVERTY,  
CHANGING LIVES”**

7856 Rt. 9W

Catskill, NY 12414

518-943-9205—office

518-943-9211—24 Hour DV Hotline

For 49 years now, Community Action of Greene County, Inc. has been at the forefront of fighting the local war on poverty. Since 1967, this agency has strived to provide individuals and families with the opportunities necessary in order for them to provide for their families, to live and work and be part of their community. 2015 was no different. The board, management and staff of CAGC continue to work towards eradicating poverty, educating the public on the issues surrounding poverty, and giving people the opportunity to do on their own, helping them to make ends meet, and perhaps most importantly, giving them a voice.

In October of 2015, the senior staff and Board of Directors of Community Action of Greene County adopted a new three year Strategic Plan. This comprehensive plan, developed with input from senior staff and board members, addresses the goals for the agency in the areas of governance, management, program, revenue development and infrastructure and technology. We've identified our core values as advocacy, partnership, stewardship and accountability. The Strategic Planning Committee of the Board meets on a regular basis with Senior Staff to review the plan, and to measure activities against our goals. We consistently strive to meet the needs of those we serve; to give people the support and skill necessary for them to obtain or maintain independence, and to be able to meet the needs of their families while maintaining contractual compliance with our funders.

This annual report will provide the reader with insight on accomplishments, and struggles, experienced by the agency and its consumers in 2015, as well as provide a glimpse into the future; informing the reader of what goals the Agency is striving for in 2016. It will also demonstrate that despite the economic growth our beautiful community is experiencing in the areas of the arts, tourism and hospitality, many among us need help obtaining even the most basic of needs.

Our STEHP (Solutions to End Homelessness Program) program, funded through NYSOTDA with HUD funding, which helps homeless families and individuals move into permanent housing, and those on the brink of eviction to remain in permanent housing, exhausted its resources within the first few months of the grant. The need is much greater in our community for those experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity than what we can address with current funding levels. We continue to be an active partner in the Columbia Greene Housing Coalition, the local HUD Continuum of Care, working to eliminate homelessness in Greene and Columbia Counties. With community partners the CoC was able to begin a process of Coordinated Assessment for those experiencing homelessness, establish an active Education and Outreach Committee which to date has produced two successful Community Forums on Housing and Homelessness, and continues to bring HUD monies into our community to address homelessness.

Despite these resources, the lack of decent, affordable housing is a major concern for our community. Rent costs are not in line with the earning capability for many in Greene County- rents have risen while earning potential has not, and much of our housing stock is old and in disrepair, and many renters and homeowners lack the resources to move or address the issues. In the past year we have had requests for assistance with addressing black mold, structural issues, bed bug infestations and leaky roofs.

Food insecurity remains an issue for many folks living in Greene County, including those working full time jobs, or the equivalent. On average we are still serving 137 households a month. Providing each household a three day supply of food, in 2015 we distributed 32, 850 meals! And we are only one of several pantries in our community! Through Feeding America, we continue to be able to benefit from food pickups three times per week from the Catskill Wal-Mart Store.

This food is near expiration, or is being discontinued at the store level, and is available for free for those in need. This program often allows for nutritious "luxury" food items, which we normally would not be able to provide, such as yogurts, fresh produce, meat and fish! This food is available in addition to our regular food pantry service, which is funded through a grant from the Regional Food Bank of Northeastern NY, the Emergency Food and Shelter National Board Grant, and donations from our community members.

We have begun a new partnership with the ARC of Ulster Greene, who is now picking up and delivering the Feeding American food to us as a community volunteer project for their consumers. Another new partnership this year to aid us in providing food is with the Greyfox Bluegrass Festival! Last July the first annual Taste of Greyfox was held on the last day of the festival, Sunday. Headlining acts performed mini-sets, with admission to the festival for that day only a donation to our food pantry! In addition, campers were encouraged to donate food items they had not used during their stay, along with their Greyfox Bluegrass Cash, which was refunded to us dollar for dollar by the organizers. We look forward to this year's event being bigger and better!

Our thrift store continues to be successful on many levels. Knowing that their contributions assist people right here in Greene County, we have developed quite the donor list; we are thrilled with the number of folks who bring us their gently loved clothing, house wares and furniture that we in turn to those seeking a bargain! Rather than send people in need over the river to Salvation Army, we have developed our own voucher system to provide to families in need. With more people than ever concerned with the environment, the evils of fast fashion and waste and excess in our society, we are attracting several different demographics of shoppers, including antiquers, millennials, hipsters and weekenders! We are confident that space with more foot traffic would result in even higher sales, and will explore any opportunity that presents in order to achieve that.

Perhaps the greatest contribution of the store, besides of course the money generated toward program and sales tax revenue, is the opportunity we provide for those with little or no work history. We continue to serve as a CWEP (Community Work Experience Program) site for Greene County Department of Social Services, and as a site for the Columbia Greene Workforce NY youth intern and summer youth programs. In 2015, we have provided job skill training and mentoring to 22 CWEP recipients, four (4) Summer Youth Interns, and three (3) Workforce NY Interns. Moving forward, we are looking to expand our job readiness offerings, and hope to launch a new program area specific to the youth of our community that seem to have limited skills and no sense of direction.

Our Domestic Violence Program, a vital service to the community, continues to thrive and grow. Staff work tirelessly to educate the public on the issues surrounding domestic violence, advocating for stricter penalties and accountability for offenders, and teaching our communities' youth about healthy relationships. A new position was created this year specifically to work with our school districts, reaching out to youth and working towards breaking the cycle of violence. In partnership with the Legal Aid Society of NENY, our Domestic Violence Task Force is up and running with a host of agencies, schools, law enforcement agencies and courts attending meetings, working together towards eradicating violence in our communities. Our Crime Victim Advocate/Community Educator has been hitting the pavement on both sides of the Hudson River, providing information to courts, service providers and municipalities, etc. so that victims receive the advocacy, information and support they are entitled to. Posters, brochures and palm cards have been distributed across the two counties, and you will soon see billboards, even in the remote mountaintop communities. We must inform the public that violence is unacceptable, offenders will be held accountable, and that support is available to victims.

Our Weatherization Program continues to work towards meeting production and providing low income homeowners and renters energy saving measures to help them save on utility bills. New this contract is an extra layer of oversight: each building must have an independent QCI (Quality Control Inspector) sign off that the measures taken meet industry standards. Unfortunately, this place additional burden on the programs, as the QCI is at additional cost, and the budgets do not allow any additional funding for this cost. That being said, we are working within our contractual guidelines and look forward to growing our housing department to include more fee for service measures for those who do not qualify for the free Weatherization services.

Always striving to fill in the gaps and meet the needs of our community, this past year we completed a Community Needs Assessment in partnership with the Greene County Department of Human Services. As no surprise, transportation, housing and employment were issues identified as needs in the survey. With many others, we look forward with anticipation the new public transportation system that will be rolling out from the ARC of Ulster Greene. We continue to seek resources and work with community partners to address housing insecurity in Greene County. We are currently exploring a job training program that will generate revenue for the agency and tie in to the hospitality and tourism industry that is predominant in our community.

As you may recall, Community Action of Greene County, Inc. was instrumental in providing relief following Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee, bringing over \$200,000 in grant funds for flood victims. We were one of the first agencies present in the FEMA tents in Prattsville, and staff received recognition from NYS Assemblyman Peter Lopez for our efforts. Recognizing the need that still exists in Prattsville and surrounding mountaintop communities, we have recently entered into partnership with the Prattsville Art Center and Residency, and have staff stationed at the center each Friday. Public service announcements on WRIP radio are currently being aired to increase awareness of our presence, and we look forward to being able to expand our service provision in such underserved areas of our county.

Along those lines, In 2016 we will be exploring the use of a Kiosk software for intake. With our current database, Cap60, we will be able to provide a link on our website so that persons limited by lack of transportation can on their own, from home or library, complete their own intake and determine for what programs they may be eligible. One of our Resource Specialists can then review the intake and make an appointment to complete the process!

Our agency is committed to providing quality services as well as continuing staff development. Through our membership in the National Community Action Partnership, two staff, Barbara Palmateer and I, became Certified Community Action Professionals in August. This nationally recognized standard demonstrates one's knowledge of and expertise in the area of poverty, the history of Community Action, and management skills. After a yearlong process of preparing for our exam that was held in June, we were thrilled to receive our credentials at the national convention in San Francisco. Karen Van Valkenburgh, our Operations Officer, is currently preparing for her CCAP exam, and Rebecca Alamillo, our Shelter Coordinator, is part of the Emergency Leaders Institute offered by the New York State Community Action Association.

Yet another opportunity we are taking advantage of through our national membership is our participation in a national Learning Communities Group on Asset Development for Families. Understanding that many people, even with healthy incomes, are asset poor, we are learning with and from colleagues across the country on ways to help families learn about finances and credit, help them to save and meet their personal goals. With this knowledge we plan to reach out to a wider audience in the community and offer education to those before they fall into a crisis situation and come to us for assistance.

We have been extremely fortunate this year in benefiting from community partnerships! In addition to the new relationship with Greyfox Bluegrass, in June we were the recipient of Etsy Hudson's day of service. Etsy employees provided our consumers with lunch and an arts and crafts activity, painted a mural on our storage trailer, and helped overhaul our store! In addition, they painted a mural in the playroom of our Columbia County shelter! Former Senator Cecelia Tkaczyk, through the sale of her locally made wool mittens, presented our Domestic Violence Program with a check for \$4,000. Lowe's Home Improvement selected our Greene County shelter for their corporate giving program, and transformed our kitchen from an old, dark, outdated nightmare to a beautiful dream kitchen! And we can't say enough about the individuals and businesses that contribute to our Here Comes Christmas and Adopt a Family programs! We love our partners!

As always, we are proud of the work we do within this agency and this County; it is honorable work, and it is hard work. We work with families on a daily basis who are in crisis, and who often through no fault of their own find themselves in situations we cannot fathom. It seems that the war on poverty has somehow become the war on the poor; there is so much judgment and often, misinformation. We are dedicated to helping people help themselves, and are every so grateful for the support we receive from the Greene County Legislature and other partner agencies so that we are able to address the needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Florence Ohle  
Executive Director

### **Senior Staff**

Executive Director	Florence Ohle
Operations Officer	Karen VanValkenburgh
Director, Family, Community And Victim Services	Barbara Palmateer
Director, Weatherization Assistance Program	Jamie Linzey

### **Board of Directors**

President	Reverend John Bowen
Vice President	Robert Schrock (representing Greene County Legislator William Lawrence)
Treasurer	Carrie Multari
Secretary	Maryanne Scalera
	William Reich
	Charlene Holdridge
	Charlie Shayne
	Carol Pfister (representing Athens Mayor Christian Pfister)
	Tracy Magee (representing NYS Assemblyman Pete Lopez)
	Nancy Barton
	Tracy Jo Szepessy

### *At A Glance*

Food Pantry	3,650 persons, 373 unduplicated households, 1641 food packages, 32,850 meals
Feeding America	150 food pickups, 104, 677 lbs of food
Store Vouchers	213 clothing, 85 household items, 9 furniture
Emergency Assistance	8 rent/security, 14 utilities, 1 auto repair, 1 other
Healthy Homes Case Management	5 households
STEHP (Solutions to End Homelessness)	16 homeless served with security or rent 37 at risk served with security or rent 1 assisted with utilities
Resource Room (computer, phone, fax use)	39 unduplicated people, 108 visits
Wheels for Work Auto Loans	6 loans approved
Domestic Violence Hotline Calls	1433
Shelter – Greene County	116 individuals
Shelter – Columbia County	99 individuals
Greene – Orders of Protection	71
Columbia – Orders of Protection	53
VITA	182 tax returns, \$221, 015 in refunds
Weatherization	38 households, 72 persons
Thrift Store	22 CWEP volunteers, 1,636 hours 4 community volunteers, 251 hours 7 youth Interns 595 donations, \$169,808
Here Comes Christmas	745 children served
Back to School	282 children served



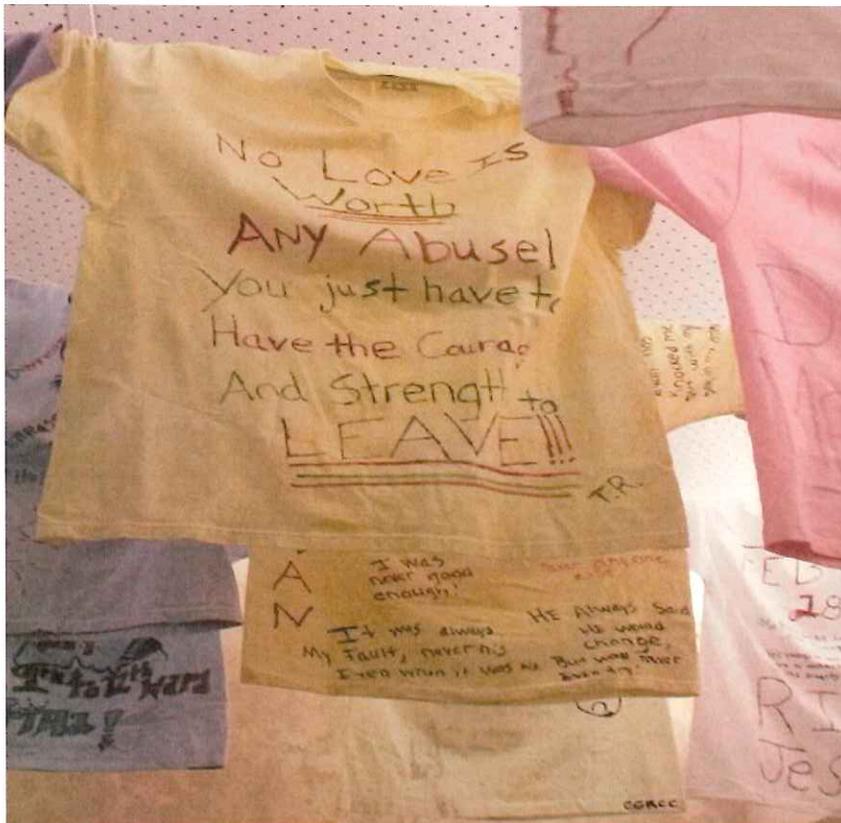
*Florence Ohle collects food donations at "A Taste of Greyfox" in July*



*Balloons and Signs outside the Prattsville Art Center announce our presence on the mountaintop.*

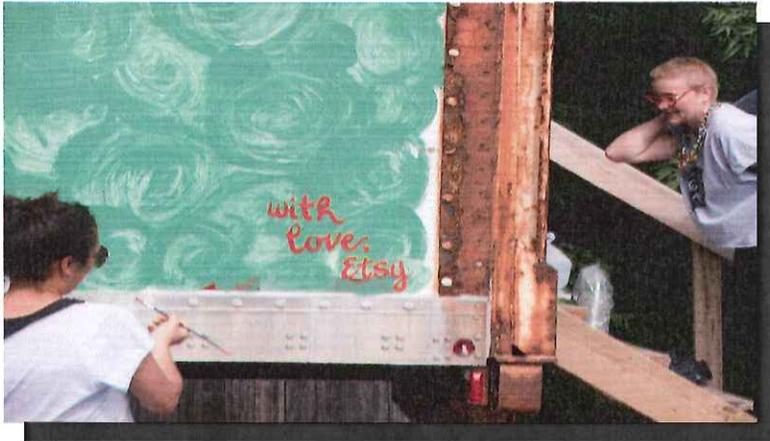


***Florence Ohle & Barbara Palmateer receive their CCAP (Certified Community Action Professional) with the NYS cohort at the National Community Action Partnership annual convention in San Francisco.***



***The Clothesline Project at Columbia Greene Community College brings attention to interpersonal violence in our communities.***

## ***Corporate Giving***



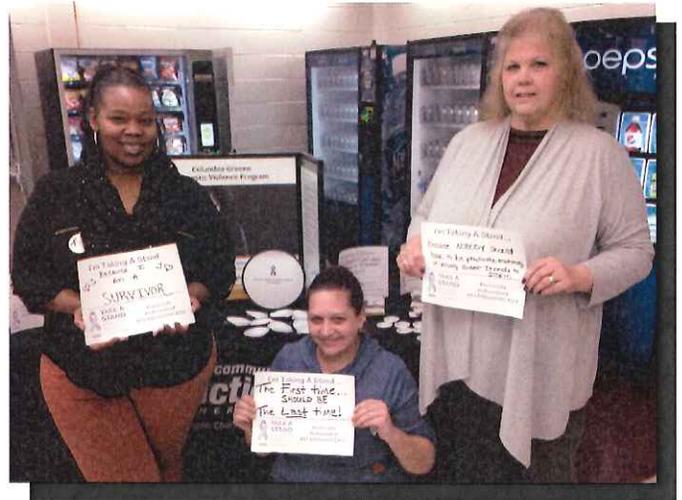
***Etsy staff create a mural on their day of service.***



***New Kitchen at shelter—  
compliments of Lowe's***

Supporting the  
*Fighters,*  
Admiring the  
*Survivors,*  
Honoring the  
*Taken,*  
AND NEVER, EVER  
GIVING UP HOPE.

**Domestic Violence Awareness Month 2015**





***“Home for the Holidays” – staff educated the public on homelessness in Greene County at the annual Fortnightly Festival of Trees.***

Community Action  
of Greene County, Inc.

Annual Report, January 2015 through December, 2015

Funding Source	State	Federal	Local	Private	Total	Prior Year
NYS Department of State- Community Services Block Grant		221103			221103	221332.81
Greene county Dept. of Social Services		0	96998.48		96998.48	87297.97
Regional Food Ban of Northeastern NY				6097	6097	5848
Columbia county Dept. of Social Services			49107.73		49107.73	41668.65
Foundation Grants				56150	56150	56500
NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services					0	22243.52
NYS Office of Victims' Services	220797.67				220797.67	138626.31
Fee for Service & Program Income				3304.88	3304.88	12492.18
Federal Family Violence Prevention		30550.99			30550.99	41837.64
LDSS (Domestic Violence Per Diems)			633515.54		633515.54	610546.75
US department of Housing and Urban Development			71480.95		71480.95	67752.3
Greene County Legislature			36765		36765	36765
Donations				21763.59	21763.59	18859.84
Emergency Food and Shelter National Board		8341			8341	5958
NYS Office of Temp/Dsb. Assistance (STEPH)	93259.83				93259.83	289101.09
Transitional Housing Income			11987.7		11987.7	5416.25
NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal		203885			203885	309887
NYS Empower- NYSERDA		8113.36			8113.36	19991.3
Interest Income				551.91	551.91	925.89
Legal Aid Society of NENY				2497.49	2497.49	3030.75
Pay if Forward Thrift Store Income				61596.71	61596.71	61276.99
In Kind Service/non monetary donations/services				200114.22	200114.22	224683.03
Totals	526055.86	331475.94	828374.45	352075.8	2037982.1	2282041.27
<b>TOTAL AGENCY INCOME: \$2,037,982.05</b>						

*Community Action of Greene County, Inc.  
Annual Income  
2015*

