

TCAPtivating News

Agency golf outing aims to drive away poverty

TCAP's 2016 fundraiser will take place Sept. 23, 2016 at Riverview Golf Club

The Tee-off with TCAP: Drive Away Poverty Golf Outing will be held on Friday, September 23, 2016 at Riverview Golf Club, 3903 State Route 82 SW, Newton Falls, OH 44444. Registration and breakfast begins at 7:30 a.m. The outing format will be 4-person, 18-hole scramble with a shotgun start at 9 a.m. The entry fee is \$75 per person or \$300 per foursome and includes: green fees, cart rental, light breakfast, lunch on the turn, catered meal, auctions, raffles, prizes and refreshments. Individual registrations are welcomed (teams will be assigned).

The top 2 teams earn prizes (1st - \$500, 2nd - \$300). In-game contests will consist of: Closest to the Pin (men and women), Longest Drive (men and women) and Longest Putt (men and women).

Skins and Mulligans will be sold at registration.

Not a golfer? No problem. You can still come out, have some fun and support the agency.

For \$25, non-golfers can choose the buffet only portion of the event which includes: catered meal and refreshments, access to auction/raffle portion of event, and eligibility for putting contest (non-golfers only, prizes awarded).

Registration forms can be accessed online at www.tcaphelps.org or picked up at the Warren West Community Center: 1230 Palmyra Road, SW Warren, OH 44485.

Contact Michael Santillo, TCAP Public Relations Officer, at 330-393-2507 ext. 256 for further information.



Sponsorship and donation opportunities available



In order to ensure the success of this fundraiser, we are seeking community participation. General donors like you are important to our success and make it possible for TCAP to achieve its mission of eliminating the barrier and boundaries of poverty.

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Senior Picnic scheduled for June 16

Trumbull Community Action Program (TCAP) is hosting a Senior Citizens Summer Picnic from 12-3 p.m. on Thursday, June 16 at the Warren West Community Center (1230 Palmyra Road, SW). Residents 55 and over are invited to come out and socialize with friends and neighbors while enjoying food, music, and games. Lunch will include hot dogs, hamburgers, pasta salad, dessert and assorted beverages. Attendees will also have the opportunity to learn more about the many programs offered by TCAP. There is no charge to attend. For more information, call Charles Williams at 330-393-2507 ext. 231 or Eleanor Popovic at ext. 251.



Making the most of an unexpected opportunity



Sarah Edmonds

*By Michael Santillo,
TCAP Public Relations Officer*

When Sarah Edmonds moved back home to Warren, she took a seasonal job to get by for the time being. That was 26 years ago.

Today, she is supervisor of the Client Services Department at Trumbull Community Action Program (TCAP) – turning that seasonal job into a rewarding career.

“I took a job as an intake worker, knowing I would be laid off,” Edmonds said. “To my surprise, I was called back; I guess I was a good worker.”

She got her start under the tutelage of Janice Ferebee, who served as supervisor of client services at TCAP for 34 years.

“I try to treat people the way I want to be treated. I sat on the other side before and had a wonderful experience. I model a lot of my leadership after her. I hope my staff views me the way I did Janice. If that’s true, I know I’m doing a good job.”

That work ethic that earned her the initial call back all those years ago still holds true today.

Edmonds oversees a staff of 7 in addition to servicing hundreds of clients weekly.

“You really get to know people over the years. Some clients only talk to certain workers simply because of the familiarity and trust with that person. Our clients truly rely on us and see us as an extension of family, and we view them the same way.”

The closeness can make it difficult to separate personal from professional, but it’s part of the job.

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Client Services at a glance

HEAP- provides a one-time benefit annually to your primary heating source account.

Winter Crisis Program (WCP) - provides a one-time benefit annually to your primary heating and/or electric account.

Summer Crisis Program (SCP) - provides a one-time benefit annually to your electric bill and or the purchase of fans and air conditioners.

PIPP Plus—An extended payment arrangement that requires regulated gas and electric companies to accept payments based on a percentage of the household income.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Motherly advice propels Bourgoin

Ebonie Bourgoin has experienced the lowest of lows. Today, she is living her dream – a dream she nearly gave up on.

It wasn't an easy road to her new-found success.

A high school dropout at 16, education was a distant thought for Bourgoin. Six years later, she was a single mother of two small boys with another one on the way, working in a factory in order to provide for her children.

After returning home from work one afternoon, Bourgoin came to a realization: she wanted more.

Going back to school was something she talked about, but never pursued. That all changed with one look.

"I looked at my two boys after work one day and thought, how am I going to tell them about the importance of education when I don't have one myself,"

Bourgoin said. She enrolled in the TCAP Even Start program (now the RISE/ABLE GED program) the next day - and received some wise advice from her mother in the process.

'If you believe it, you can achieve it,' she told me," Bourgoin said with a smile.

"Those words echoed with me then and still do today. It's incredible how a few simple words can carry so much weight."

Now enrolled, she vowed to never quit anything again. Keeping that vow was not easy.

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Hard work paying off for Milliner

School may be out, but for Head Start teacher Stacey Milliner, there is still work to be done. Milliner, who just completed her third year as a teacher TCAP, will be working on her bachelor's degree this summer. She is expected to graduate in October 2017 from Ashford University,, an accomplishment that once looked bleak.

Milliner's journey is an encouraging one.

Her youngest son enrolled in Head Start back in 2000, leading to a parent volunteer role for Milliner. The next year, she accepted a position as a Bus Aide in the Transportation Department, where she would stay for 10 years, earning her Associate's Degree in the process. In 2012, she was a TA before getting her own classroom in 2013.

Long days and nights got her to this position – and she wouldn't have it any other way.

"I was difficult at times, sure, but in the end it's worth it, just the knowledge alone I gained is incredible. I love teaching and continue to learn every year."

Her advice for those teetering on their dreams, or having doubts: "Definitely go for it! There will be times of doubt and some restless nights, but never lose sight of the big picture and how beneficial it truly will be when you're done."

Milliner was quick to credit the agency when describing her success.

"I'm grateful to the agency for providing me opportunities over the years and now to have my own classroom is truly a dream come true. TCAP has given me the opportunity to better myself and I will continue to do so."

Fun Fact: Milliner's favorite NFL team resides in Pennsylvania – but it's not the Steelers. No, she's a proud Philadelphia Eagles fan.

Summer Hours announced



Trumbull Community Action Program (TCAP) will be open from 7 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday-Thursday and closed on Friday until further notice.

Notable days and hours include:

- Food Co-Op: 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
- Senior Center: 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
- Client Services: 7 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- C.A.T.S. will operate under its normal business hours, Monday-Friday.
- Senior Computer Class: 10-11 a.m. on Thursday.



Fun in the Sun

All six of our Head Start Centers celebrated the end of the school year with fun activities for the kids. Activities included obstacle courses, a Bounce House, Jumpers, tunnel crawls and more. Above, students from Warren West race in Spud Jumpers.

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Working and going to school is difficult enough. Bourgoin, however, in addition to raising two boys, was going through a divorce, a trying pregnancy, had no vehicle and was mourning the passing of her grandmother.

“I was the country song of the century,” she said.

After completing the necessary course work, Bourgoin was ready to take the GED exam.

She passed all parts with the exception of math, missing out by mere points. However, all she needed to do was retake the math portion of the exam and the GED would be her’s—or so she thought.

The GED format changed between the first and second time Bourgoin was scheduled to retake the exam. With the new format guidelines, previous test takers needed to take the exam before December of 2001. Otherwise, those students would have to take all portions of the exam again, essentially wiping out all previous work.

Bourgoin fell into that category.

“I was not coming back. I felt like a horrible mother, just horrible, being away all the time,” Bourgoin said, “and then to have the format change, I just felt like it would never happen.”

With tears streaming down her face, she went to TCAP RISE/GED Program Director, Kathy Hutton’s office ready to quit. “I really thought I was going to lose a student that day. I looked her directly in the eyes, told her I believed in her and asked her to see this process through,” said Hutton, who developed a close relationship with Bourgoin almost instantly upon her enrollment.

“As a mother, I know how hard of a job it can be, and to be doing it on her own, working and going to school, I admired her for that. I knew she had the potential to do great things, but she had to believe it herself,” Hutton said.

Bourgoin entered Hutton’s office that day ready to quit. She left a believer - and never looked back.

Now a mother of three, Bourgoin passed the math portion the next time she tested – two years later. The first person she called: her mother.

“That one little piece of paper showing I passed literally changed my life,” Bourgoin said. “I called my mother and told her ‘I did it, mom. I believed in myself and accomplished my goal.’ ”

And that was just the beginning.

After receiving that little piece of paper, Bourgoin, with her mother by her side, enrolled at Kent State University the next day. In December of 2015, she earned her BA in Integrated Studies. And in typical Bourgoin fashion, she’s not done yet. Bourgoin plans on returning to Kent State to pursue a master’s degree in Integrated Studies, focusing on criminal studies, psychology and geology. In the meantime, she is closing in on her first year as a Family Advocate at TCAP.

“I’ve been in this field for 34 years. To watch her accomplish her goals despite all the obstacles in her way and now to be able to mentor her is truly a privilege. It’s one of the best highlights of my career to share her experience and watch it all play out,” said Hutton, now Bourgoin’s supervisor at TCAP.

“I’m truly honored,” Bourgoin said. “I’m learning so much from her (Hutton). I could not ask for a better boss. She’s smart and caring, and that’s something I knew early on. She was genuine, she cared, and knowing that made me care. She’s the same way as a boss. She cares about the staff and this agency. I love working for her.”

Bourgoin regularly talks to RISE students and Head Start parents at TCAP, sharing her story: a story of strength - a story of determination - and most of all, a story of believing.

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“It’s one of those situations you have to draw a fine line, and it can be extremely stressful, but you do the best you can. We do everything necessary to help people, but we still need to follow the guidelines,” she said.

The Client Services sees close to 2000 households per year through its services: HEAP, Winter Crisis Program, Summer Crisis Program and PIPP Plus.

Change is part of any job—but as a supervisor, she is continually adapting to new methods of operation to make sure cases are getting completed in the necessary fashion and her knowledge of the different plans is impeccable.

“I know we (staff) are appreciated. However, I don’t think what we do is fully understood. Things have changed drastically. Now, everything needs to be scanned and uploaded in all client applications in 48 hours, all under the state computer system. Everything was manual when I started.”

According to Edmonds, looks can often be deceiving.

“It may appear we just sit at a desk and look at papers, but we work! We work overtime to get the job done, come in on days off to accommodate our clients; we’re willing to help out in any way and it’s all to benefit agency and clients,” she said.

Nearly one year ago, she came across a client who was without electricity for an extended period of time. After doing all she could, Edmonds was forced to let her go after things were beyond the control of the agency. She felt helpless. But that all changed. That individual reconnected with Edmonds a month later and Edmonds was able to make sure electricity was restored and has been running ever since.

“That is one of my greatest accomplishments in my career. I talked to her in March, and I am just thrilled. To be able to finally help her after everything, is just an amazing feeling. That’s what this job is about.”

Yes, it’s been 26 years since Edmonds was given the opportunity to prove herself. It’s only fitting she has made a career of providing opportunities to help others.

Opportunities continued from page 1

All proceeds from the 2016 Tee-off with TCAP: Drive Away Poverty Golf Outing will go toward agency programs, directly impacting low-income individuals and families in Trumbull County. Sponsorship opportunities are as follows:

Major Sponsorships (\$500) - includes a free golf round for 4, individual/company name and/or logo on hole signage, recognition on welcome banner at registration, recognition in event brochure and prominent placement on the TCAP website.

Hole Sponsor/Tee Box Signs (\$100) - includes individual/company name and/or logo on one hole/tee, recognition in the event brochure and placement on the TCAP website.

Contest Sponsor (\$100) – Limited availability. Individual/company name and/or logo on one hole, recognition in event brochure and placement on the TCAP website.

Beer Cart Sponsor (\$75) – Limited availability. Individual/company name and/or logo on cart, recognition in event brochure and placement on the TCAP website.

Donate an item for Auction/Raffle – includes listing on TCAP website and in event brochure.

Monetary/Private Donation

Contact: TCAP Public Relations Officer, Michael Santillo, at msantillo@tcaphelps.org or 330-393-2507, ext. 256 to find out more about sponsorship opportunities.

* All individuals/organizations will have the option to specify what and how they want their sign to say/look