



CSI COMMUNIQUE

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May is National Community Action Month

Concerted Services, Inc., your local Community Action Agency, is marking forty-five years of service to the southeast Georgia area by celebrating May as National Community Action Month. We take pride in what we've accomplished offering much needed services to low-income families. We strive, in the spirit of hope, to help those families achieve a high degree of stability in their lives. Community involvement is also vital in our work because it helps to bridge the socio-economic divide that exists in our communities and nation.

For the first time in their lives, many people during this current economic crisis have faced unemployment and financial insecurity. But for the millions of families and individuals living in poverty, financial insecurity is a scenario they face daily. For them, it is more than just not being able to eat dinner occasionally at a restaurant; it is whether or not they can afford to eat at all. It's more than just forgoing a vacation or other luxuries, it's a matter of should they buy medication or pay rent? Put gas in the car or pay the electric bill? Buy food or shoes for their child?

Community Action Agencies, like Concerted Services, Inc., are non-profit, private and public organizations established under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 to fight America's War on Poverty. CAA's are a primary source of direct support for the more than 44 million people who live in poverty in the United States today.

The entire staff of CSI invites all citizens to join in celebrating and recognizing Community Action. Together, we all can strengthen and improve the lives of our friends and neighbors of our communities.

Ophelia K. Gaines, Executive Director



The Promise of Community Action

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.

CSI Receives the Greater Tattnall Chamber of Commerce Service Business of the Year Award



Ophelia K. Gaines presented Service Business of the Year Award from David Avery

Rev. James Joyce, CSI Executive Board Chairman, is pleased to announce that Concerted Services, Inc. was presented the prestigious 2011 Service Business of the Year Award at the Greater Tattnall Chamber of Commerce Banquet that was held on March 3, 2011. "This award is given annually to the business that has made the most notable contribution of adding to the quality of life for the citizens of Tattnall County," stated Mr. David Avery, Executive Director of the Greater Tattnall Chamber of Commerce. "This year there were five businesses that were strong contenders for this coveted award. But in the end, the board felt that Concerted Services was our most outstanding business that serves the public," continued Mr. Avery.

"We are honored to be selected to receive this award from such a distinguished group of nominees," stated Ms. Ophelia K. Gaines, CSI Executive Director. "On behalf of our executive board and staff, I want to thank the Chamber for this honor. Our community is fortunate to have such a dedicated Chamber of Commerce investing in our community."

Meet CSI Directors



Bonnie Gaskins

Bonnie Gaskins, a native of Waycross, has been employed by CSI for the past 33 years. During her tenure, Bonnie has held many positions within the agency that include bookkeeper, Head Start Fiscal Specialist, Assistant Head Start Director and currently the Child Development Director for the past 11 years. As Child Development Director, she is responsible for the oversight of the Head Start, Early Head Start, Pre-K, and Child and Adult Care Food programs in the twelve counties served.

The Child Development Department has expanded under Bonnie's direction by the addition of four Pre-K classrooms and 160 Early Head Start slots. She has been instrumental in the improvement of facilities for the Head Start program that includes new Community Development Block grant funding for the facilities in Atkinson, Brantley, Coffee, and Toombs counties. Awards and recognitions for the program include: NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children Accreditation); Standards of Care Centers of Distinction; National Head Start Program of Achievement, and Georgia Head Start Program of the Year.

Bonnie is a Certified Community Action Manager and is active in many local and state organizations. She serves on the GA Head Start Association Finance Committee and is a member of the GA Community Action Association. She has been married for 39 years to Sammy Gaskins. They have one daughter, Shonda Gaskins Summers of Madison, GA,

C. Serge Strickland became Weatherization Director in October 2009. Serge comes to CSI from the private sector. He has a background in production, manufacturing and home building products. He was the director of operations for 16 years with a nation wide manufacturer of products for the multi-housing, hospitality and commercial industry with plants in Atlanta and California. He was a partner with a residential and commercial business that engineered roof and floor systems and windows.

Under Serge's leadership, the Weatherization program has expanded from a 1.8 million dollar program to 7.6 million dollars over a three year period and from five employees to twenty-one employees. CSI has received numerous production awards for exceeding production quota set by the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA). Currently, the agency is the only Community Action Agency that is performing a multi-family housing project under the new pilot program for the State of Georgia.



Serge Strickland

Serge is certified in Essentials for Healthy Homes, EPA Lead Certified, Building Performance Institute (BPI) Analyst Certified, and BPI Building Envelope certified. He currently serves on the Policy Advisory Council at the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority.

Serge lives in Blackshear with his wife Kim and their two children, Sierra, age 9 and Hardt, age 2. He is very active in the community and their church, Bridge Community Baptist Church.

Community Action Loses Founding Father



Sargent Shriver
1915–2011

The Community Action network, made up of 1000 Community Action Agencies in the nation, is deeply saddened at the recent passing of R. Sargent Shriver. Mr. Shriver was a distinguished public servant and visionary leader. He accomplished so much and changed many millions of lives over his decades of public service. Mr. Shriver was the founding director of the Peace Corps, the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), and the Special Olympics, along with his wife, the late Eunice Kennedy Shriver.

As the first director of the Office of Economic Opportunity established under President Lyndon Baines Johnson in 1964, he helped to create Community Action, Head Start, Job Corps, Senior Citizen Centers, Legal Services, and many other programs that grew out of the War on Poverty. But to the members of the Community Action family, he will always be known as the father of our great movement.

Thank you, Sargent Shriver! We will never forget you.

May is Older Americans Month

Every May since 1963, people in cities across the country have come together to celebrate the enormous contributions of older Americans—borne of wisdom, experience, and the will to realize their dreams and speak their minds. Older Americans Month is our chance to show our appreciation and support our seniors as they continue to enrich and strengthen our communities.

This year's theme, *Older Americans: Connecting the Community*, pays homage to the many ways in which older adults bring inspiration and continuity to the fabric of our communities. Seniors are out and about giving back and making a difference in their community. They help one another as well. Seniors connect with other seniors by delivering meals, assisting with shopping, and offering companionship. Their efforts remind us that when older adults are active and engaged in their communities, everyone benefits.

Help CSI celebrate Older Americans Month! Contact your county senior citizen center about volunteer opportunities that will continue to enrich their lives. See CSI web site: www.concertedservices.org for the phone number in your community.



Senior Citizen, Mary Kelly delivers meal to homebound client

ETS Participants Attend SAEOPP's 2011 National TRiO Day Celebration



Mrs. Juan Johnson, ETS Counselor & students from Coffee & Pierce County High Schools

Ninety-one Educational Talent Search (ETS) Program participants from CSI joined over 1250 middle school, high school, college and graduate students who gathered at the Hyatt Regency in Atlanta, GA on Saturday, Feb. 26, 2011 for the annual National TRiO Day Celebration in GA. The theme for this year's celebration was "TRiO Students: Transforming Roadblocks into Opportunities."

Hosted by SAEOPP (Southeastern Association of Special Programs Personnel), TRiO Day brought together students, parents, school and college officials, staff and community leaders from eight southeastern states (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee).

The enthusiasm of the participants was evidenced by the rousing response when the Frederick Douglass High School Band of Atlanta, GA kicked-off Phase 1 of the celebration, along with Greek Steppers from Clark Atlanta University. Two former TRiO students did an outstanding job serving as Masters of Ceremonies for the event. Students from each of the TRiO

Programs gave inspiring and heart breaking testimonies on "What TRiO Means To Me". A "Day of Service" Project was also conducted by collecting toiletries for the Atlanta Women and Children's Shelter for the Abused. Hundreds of items were collected from the students, parents, and staff, and presented to the Shelter during this phase.

Phase II consisted of a College Fair with representatives from various postsecondary institutions; a Career Fair with business representatives, as well as the Atlanta Hawks, and U.S. military. TRiO students and parents were able to gather valuable information on college admissions requirements, academic standards, financial aid, college campus life, student activities, careers, etc.

Phase III concluded the celebration with the guest speaker, Mr. Tyrone J. Flowers, JD, founder and President of Higher M-Pact, Inc., which is a community-based organization located in Kansas City, Missouri dedicated to transforming today's high-risk urban youth into tomorrow's leaders. Mr. Flowers has a combination of over 25 years of personal and professional experience in the juvenile justice field. He was very inspiring, and encouraged students to avoid frivolous and dangerous distractions as they strive to reach their goals.



Tyrone J. Flowers, Esquire

Commodities Distribution Set for May 12 and 27, 2011



USDA Commodities will be distributed in the month of May. Distribution has been set for May 12th for individuals that live in Atkinson, Bacon, Brantley, Charlton, Clinch, Coffee, Pierce, and Ware counties. May 27th will be the distribution date for individuals that live in Appling, Bulloch, Candler, Effingham, Evans, Jeff Davis, Long, Tattnall, Toombs, and Wayne counties.

Items scheduled for distribution include apple sauce, cranberry sauce, diced tomatoes, peaches, plums, vegetable soup, peanut butter, mushroom soup, cherry apple juice, rotini, and kernel corn. *(List is subject to change based on availability.)*

Income eligibility for the commodity distribution is as follows:

Household Size	Monthly Income	Weekly Income
1	\$ 1,173	\$ 271
2	\$ 1,578	\$ 364
3	\$ 1,984	\$ 458
4	\$ 2,389	\$ 551
5	\$ 2,794	\$ 645
For Each Additional Member	Add \$ 405	Add \$ 93

Contact your CSI County Service Center for the time and location in your community or check CSI's web site at www.concertedservices.org for more information.

It is the policy of CSI that no person shall be discriminated against because of race, color, age, national origin, political affiliation, and religious beliefs, physical or mental handicap.

CSI Announces New Business Hours for County Service Centers

Effective April 11, 2011, CSI's County Service Centers' business hours changed. The Service Centers located in Appling, Bulloch, Candler, Evans, Jeff Davis, Long, Tattnall, Toombs, and Wayne counties are open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. Congregate and home delivered meal services for senior citizens are not affected by this change. The Service Centers located in Atkinson, Bacon, Brantley, Charlton, Clinch, Coffee, Effingham, Pierce, and Ware counties are open Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. and will be closed on Fridays.

"We struggled with this decision," stated Ophelia Gaines, Executive Director. "We hope that we can fully restore services soon and regret the inconvenience to the families and individuals this will affect. Funding cuts at the national level have made this step necessary, but we remain committed to providing a full range of services for the low-income and other vulnerable residents throughout our service area and are seeking alternate funding to replace the federal funding we have relied upon in the past."

Head Start Receives Federal Review

The tri-annual federal review for CSI Head Start was conducted during the week of February 14, 2011. The Office of Head Start has the statutory requirement to conduct oversight review of all Head Start and Early Head Start programs around the country. These monitoring reviews must be conducted every three years for existing programs. The ten member team visited the centers, reviewed children and staff records, interviewed Governing Board and Policy Council members, parents, consultants, staff, and volunteers.

"The team members were very complimentary of our program," stated Ophelia Gaines, Executive Director. "We have an outstanding Head Start and Early Head Start program. I want to congratulate Bonnie Gaskins, Child Development Director, and her staff for a job well done and for always striving for excellence."

Head Start Receives Donation of Art



(L to R) HS teachers Morgan Dyal and Daphene Booth; HS students Carmen Palmer, Isabelle Hall and Jada Evan; Artist Roland Thurston; HS staff Deborah Horton, Bonnie Gaskins, and Ethel Blair

The lunchroom at the Ware County Head Start/Pre-K Center received a very special gift recently of a hand painted mural. Local artist Roland Thurston, and Deborah Horton, Education Specialist collaborated on the animal playground mural that has made the lunchroom joyous and fun.

Mr. Thurston's playground includes a lion, elephant, zebra, kangaroo, eagle, moose, bear, whale, parrot, and even a piano playing alligator and a purple surfing hippo. In all, there are 80 figures under a colorful rainbow.

It took approximately a total of 350 hours to complete this beautiful masterpiece. Some of the wonderful volunteers that assisted Mr. Thurston were Julie Lacefield, Dianne Davis, and Sandi Thurston. Local children in the community also volunteered their artistic services. Seven year old Hugh Saussy and Roland's granddaughter, Katherine, age 6 also put some paint on the wall.

"Now that the mural is complete the children just love it!. They are continuously pointing things out and talking about the pictures," stated Bonnie Gaskins, Child Development Director. "We are very appreciative of the countless hours of work and dedication from Mr. Thurston and the other volunteers and would like to invite everyone to drop by the Head Start center to see the beautiful art work," stated Ophelia Gaines, Executive Director.

Weatherization Staff Receive Building Performance Institute Certification Training

Concerted Services' Weatherization crew attended Building Performance Institute Certification training in April. This week long intense training conducted by Apple Energy Group of Texas is a nationally recognized credentialing program that includes written and field examinations.

"For many homeowners and tenants in our area, energy bills account for far too much of their monthly income," stated Serge Strickland, CSI Weatherization Director. "There are energy related problems that a product rebate program, non-certified contractors or the best homeowner cannot solve. Sometimes, you can do more harm than good by inadvertently creating problems with mold, moisture, ice damming, poor indoor air quality and even combustion appliance back-drafting."

The weatherization team at CSI has been trained to meet these problems head-on. The crew applies the house-as-a-system approach that focuses on the relationships between different components within the home, how to identify problems at the root cause and provide solutions that improve energy efficiency, while enhancing important safety functions such as mold prevention, indoor air quality and carbon monoxide testing, as well as combustion appliance safety checks. The diagnostic testing and evaluations that are performed by the crew proves whether or not all systems are working together.

"I feel that it is a great accomplishment for the supervisors, auditors, crew leaders and inspectors of CSI to have completed the BPI certification. It is a very intense and in-depth course that contains two sections, Building Analyst and Building Envelope. The CSI men completed a two week course in one week and achieved high marks in doing so. This training will help to make the work quality of CSI Weatherization improve to an even higher standard with the deeper knowledge of their work," stated Clint Sikes, University of Georgia Weatherization Program Coordinator/Inspector.

"CSI Weatherization program is continuing to raise the bar in home weatherization using whole house science. BPI certification has played a key role in this endeavor that will help us to ensure a consistent, comprehensive outcome for the clients we serve," stated Mr. Strickland.



(L to R) Clint Sikes, UGA Field & Desk Monitor for ARRA; Jonthan Strickland & Jeff Miller, Weatherization Crew Technicians; and Randy Stringer, Weatherization Final Inspector

Thanks to our Community Supporters!

Adolphas Johnson	Ethelyn Creech	L.C. Taylor	Sammuel Murphy
Al Gaines	Fred Husbands	Laura Waters	Sammy Creech
Alex Johnson	Geno Burkett	Lewis Parker	Sammy Gaskins
Ann Russell	Gloria Paulk	Lisa Spires	Shelba Martin
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Cathy Barlow	Jeff Baxley	Nell Harper	Tim Taylor
Charlie Harrell	Jeff Kight	Pam Collins	Tim Varnadore
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Jimmy Burke	Kenya Burkett	Rosemary Street	Citizen Club
Eddie Anderson	Kim Lynn	Rosie Hagans	Zack Marchant
Ellene Henry	Kim Strickland	Ryan Hayes	

CSI Mission Statement

Concerted Services, Inc's mission is to empower people to become self-sufficient by instilling hope through advocacy, partnerships, and services that promote economic and family stability.



CSI's Vision Statement

Concerted Services, Inc. will become southeast Georgia's leader in helping people achieve self-sufficiency.

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Ophelia Gaines, Executive Director
 Linda Steedley, Editor

We're on the Web

www.concertedservices.org

Seniors Enjoy Valentine Banquet and Dance

A special Valentine Banquet and Dance was held on February 9, 2011 at the Toombs County Senior Citizen Center in Vidalia. Seniors from Appling, Bulloch, Candler, Evans, Jeff Davis, Tattnall, Toombs, and Wayne counties danced the day away as they celebrated their "love of life". Music was provided by Carl Kennedy, a well known DJ from Cobbtown. Ms. Almaree Miller and Mr. Laury Byrd from Appling County burned up the dance floor and won best dance couple. Ms. Lealer Davis also showed everyone how talented she was and won best dancer.

Kings and Queens were selected from each center and were honored with special gifts. These winners were: Appling Co.- Carl Tillman & Frankie Tillman; Bulloch Co.- Clinton Wilson & Josephine Wright; Candler Co.- Robert Hutchins & Betty Hutchins; Evans Co. - J.C. Sallie & Maretha Brown; Jeff Davis Co. - Clyde McCall & Ray Carol McCall; Tattnall Co. - Virgil Zes & Juneth Girton; Toombs Co. - Horace Dixon & Carolyn Dixon; & Wayne Co.- James Beaver & Dora Spearman.



Powerful Tools for Caregivers



CSI's Community Care Services Program is currently sponsoring a program for caregivers at the Toombs County Senior Citizen Center in Vidalia, GA. The "*Powerful Tools for Caregivers*," a curriculum developed by Legacy Caregiver Services, is a six week educational program that is designed to teach family caregivers how to take better care of themselves as they care for others.

loss and isolation.

Each of the one and a half hour sessions focus on different aspects of care giving and offers tips to help ease the stress of caring for a family member. The caregivers learn methods to help reduce personal stress; communicate more effectively with family members and healthcare providers; and deal with the difficult feeling of guilt,

Family caregivers are the foundation of long-term care nationwide exceeding Medicaid long-term care spending in all states. "Statistics show that three-quarters of caregivers do not get consistent help from family members, especially spousal caregivers," stated Lucille Husbands, Elderly Services Director. "And unfortunately, 30% of these caregivers die before those they are caring for. This is why we feel that it is so important to provide this free service to the caregivers," continued Ms. Husbands. Plans are to provide this six week program for caregivers in numerous locations throughout the service area. The next session is being planned for early summer and will be for caregivers that live in Tattnall and Evans counties. Check CSI's website www.concertedservices.org in the coming months for information on sessions to be held in your community.