2010-2011 Annual Report

Access
Community Action Agency

Partnering to Fight Poverty

Partnerships That Work. Results That Matter.
A letter from our Board Chair and President/CEO

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the Access Community Action Agency’s 2011 Annual Report. In the following pages you’ll find a summary of the results achieved during the past year, and some examples of people who’ve been able to overcome barriers that impair their ability to be economically stable – which is our core mission.

Please take a few minutes to look through it and gain some insight into the good work done and how we are accountable to the community-at-large for what we do with the resources we hold in stewardship.

This has been a challenging year in many ways for the customers we serve. Economic hardship is a reality for more now than ever. Every day people come to us for help who’ve never had to ask for it before.

While so much was accomplished, much more is still to be done. Recent statistics show that more and more people — particularly children — are faced with living in poverty. With the support, collaboration and hard work of those we partner with to fight poverty — municipal, state and federal governments, individual and business donors, other nonprofits, faith communities and foundations — Access has responded to the increased need and will continue to do so as best we can.

So, with your support, our critical work will continue. That support feeds our passion and fuels our action as we carry out the community’s commitment to caring for those in need. We’re privileged to do this work and, in spite of the many difficulties faced by those we serve, we are hopeful because of people like you.

We hope you find this Annual Report informative and that it reinforces what you already know — Access partners to fight poverty and in the process gets results that matter for the whole community. We remain committed to that now and in the future.

Sincerely,

Mary A. DeMarco
Chair, Board of Directors

Peter S. DeBiasi
President/CEO

Access Community Action Agency • Annual Report • July 2010 - June 2011

Basic Needs ..............................................................Page 3
Income and Asset Accumulation ...............................Page 4
At-Risk-Youth Development .....................................Page 5
2011 Annual Appeal ................................................Page 6
Financial Statement ..................................................Page 7
Our Community Vision
Windham and Tolland Counties will be a region whose residents and communities have and effectively use the resources necessary to ensure that all of its families and individuals thrive.

The Mission of Access is:
To create the conditions that empower individuals and families in the communities we serve to overcome the barriers that impair their ability to be economically stable

Strategic Commitments
• Meet Basic Human Needs
• Build Capacity to Accumulate Income and Assets
• Foster Positive At-Risk-Youth Development

Our Values
• Compassion
• Integrity
• Empowerment
• Accountability
• Synergy
• Excellence

Basic Needs

Meeting Basic Human Needs means...
...providing help and hope for people going through difficult times by providing them with access to food, housing and clothes, so that they can get back on their feet and move toward economic stability.

Results that matter:
- 4,849 adults and 1,718 children received meals from Access’ two food banks.
- 54,354 women, infants, and children have access to nutrition education, and to monthly supplemental healthy food vouchers worth $1,399,667.
- 30,564 nutritious meals and snacks were provided to 536 low-income children enrolled in 69 licensed home child care settings.
- 231,695 nutritious meals and snacks were provided to 536 low-income children enrolled in 69 licensed home child care settings.
- 92,000 diapers were given to 620 families and caregivers.
- 362 homeless individuals, comprised of 49 families with 82 children and 220 single adults were temporarily housed in our Emergency Shelter.
- 66 families and individuals moved from emergency or transitional housing to safe, stable housing.
- 77 families were able to maintain permanent housing because of rental assistance.
- 32 evictions were prevented with the use of funds to cover back rent and the development of payment continuation plans.
- 8,376 households received help to pay the cost of heating their homes.
- 123 low-income households were cleared of lead hazards; 46 residents of these homes were children under six years old.

Elisha Brook, a senior housing development of 27 one-bedroom units opened in Franklin, adding to the 32 existing units maintained at Willington Woods in Willington.

Kristie’s Story

Help and Hope for People Going Through Difficult Times

Kristie is a single mother of two who found herself struggling with the increasingly difficult-to-manage effects of a debilitating disease. Diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) 20 years ago, Kristie’s symptoms and multiple hospitalizations made it increasingly challenging to maintain a job, a home, or even a connection to the community around her. She worried about its effects on her family.

“I was very sick. I was drowning,” she shares. “Stress is the worst for MS sufferers. If you have stress, you get sick.”

The stress of being unable to pay her bills, unable to maintain a job, and unable to leave her home or predict her daily energy level worsened her symptoms.

She received rent and utilities assistance, transportation to doctors’ appointments, help with time management skills, and support with daily errands that her illness had made seem insurmountable on her own.

Today, Kristie credits Supportive Housing for Families and the “consistent, compassionate” approach of her case manager with helping her find a newfound level of confidence.

“‘I know I did the hard work,’” she notes. “‘I’ve overcome a lot. But, this program takes the stress away. My bills are paid. My life is organized. I have a nice home. These are things many take for granted. But, they are important. That’s enough for me.’”

Assistance came in the form of the Access Community Action Agency’s Supportive Housing for Families program — a program that provided her with the support of regular, in-home case management and access to resources that could address some sources of stress.
Building Capacity for Income and Asset Accumulation means...
...working with people to prepare them for work, and helping them budget and save their hard earned money for asset purchases, so they can achieve the self-reliance and healthy interdependence with their communities that comes from family economic stability.

Results that matter:

1,266 low-income homes have lowered home heating costs due to their homes being weatherized, at an estimated annual savings totaling $443,100 in reduced energy costs.

1,805 homes lowered their energy costs through other types of energy conservation measures.

35 full-time jobs were created or retained in the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

70 individuals completed job-related training and received licenses and/or certificates.

65 low-income adults and youth actively participated in a matched savings and financial literacy program; of those, four adults and 11 youth were able to purchase the qualifying asset for which they had saved.

19 improvement projects were completed in low-income housing and public areas by low-income youth participating in a construction job skills program.

Andrew’s Story

Working with People to Prepare Them for Work

When Andrew learned that the engineering firm that employed him was moving overseas, he was frustrated and concerned. He and his wife had relocated to another state so he could work for this company not more than a year before.

His concerns grew as job applications went unanswered and it became clear that the couple couldn’t afford the cost of living where they were. “The job market was super-saturated with job seekers for a shrinking field of manufacturing and engineering jobs,” Andrew remembers.

“And, because I hadn’t lived in that state long enough to build community connections, my applications got lost in the shuffle.”

So, the couple decided to relocate to Connecticut, a state they’d always liked and which put them closer to family.

They bought a house and Andrew was referred to the Access Community Action Agency’s case management team at the Department of Labor’s CTWorks site for job search assistance.

As a “displaced worker,” Andrew learned that he was eligible for training dollars that could help him learn new, marketable skills in a high demand trade that would ultimately help him get a job.

“My case worker was very helpful. She was responsive. She told me how to go about getting re-educated — the exact steps I needed to take — and walked me through the process. I was confident in the information she was giving me.”

The training dollars Andrew received helped him achieve an associate’s degree in computer networking — a field of work that is high in demand and relatively stable. The new degree, his previously earned bachelor’s degree, and additional education and experience in manufacturing and engineering combined to make him highly marketable. He was employed as a computer networker within months of his degree completion.

“Thanks to Access,” Andrew shared, “I now have a piece of paper that can actually get me in the door — that proves I have the experience. It makes me employable!”

Andrew’s helpful attitude and strong new computer networking skills have quickly won him fans among his coworkers at his new job.
Fostering At-Risk-Youth Development means...
... working with youth and their families to overcome obstacles and challenges in their lives while teaching them skills so they can become economically stable.

Results that matter:

131 divorcing parents of 217 children completed the Parent Education Program to learn how to help their children deal with difficulties related to divorce.

53 children or youth were able to remain or were reunited with their biological parents through positive parenting skill development and home health and safety improvement and education.

62 children were able to maintain positive relationships with their non-custodial parents through supervised visitations.

25 adolescent girls were supported in developing independent living skills at school, work, and volunteering while living in safe, nurturing group homes.

14 youth improved their academic, athletic, and/or social skills for school success through one-on-one mentoring.

18 part-time summer jobs were created for low-income youth.

Youth Programs

Helping Youth and Their Families Overcome Barriers

The impact of the Youth Individual Savings Account (IDA) program is felt by an entire family — not just by the youth who participate in the program.

By being able to save money — and have those dollars matched — to buy items like school supplies, a laptop computer, and school uniforms and shoes, youth who stayed committed to saving their money and participating in financial literacy classes helped their whole families.

Several parents of Youth IDA shared that without this program, they would not have been able to provide their children with the school items they needed without letting rent or other bills fall behind.

Youth entered school prepared for success with the supplies they needed, alleviated financial hardship for their families, enjoyed the achievement of saving with a goal, and learned critical skills in budgeting, saving, and banking that will build their future economic stability.

An eighteen year old participant in Access’ RISE (Resilient Individuals Striving for Excellence) YouthBuild was referred to the program through adult probation. He faced several barriers to his success, including probation, unstable housing, and having dropped out of high school.

During his first week in the program, he created goals and a timeline to achieve those goals. These included paying off his debt, opening a savings account, completing his GED, obtaining his driver’s license, getting a job, buying a car, staying out of trouble, and getting accepted to college.

With the help and ongoing support of the RISE YouthBuild staff, seven months later he celebrated his early graduation from the program and was acknowledged for successfully achieving every one of his listed goals.

A few months later, he stopped by and gave an encouraging speech to current participants still struggling to overcome similar barriers. He was accepted to a technical school where he is currently studying to become a car mechanic. He works two part-time jobs to support himself.
2011 Annual Appeal*

Many thanks to our donors, whose generosity helps make our work possible.

Individual Donors

Samantha Abbamonte
Faith Alejandro
Dewitt Allen
Maggie Appleton
Jody Aubin
Ken Avery
Angela Bachand
Sean Barnes
Mitch Beauregard
Carmel Belleville
Michael and Elaine Bernier
Harry and Honore Birkenruth
Judith Blakeley
Robert Bogue
John and Susan Boland
Jeffrey Bond
Joan Bourque
Lindsay Bowes
Carole Briggs
Stephen Broderick
Rheo and Faith Brouillard
Melissa Burdick
Howie Bursen
Marlene Cady
Marie and Peter Millman Cantino
Lawrence Carey
Matilde Casoni
Cathy Cementina
Fran Champney
Charles Chatterton
Lauren Cheslick
Daniel Coleman
Lynne and Rene Comtois
Raymond Congelosi
Caitlyn Connors
James Correira
Krysten Cole
Joseph and Audrey Courtney
Kathryn Crees
Carmen Cruz
Grace Curran
Douglas and Charlene Cutler
Robert and Cheryl Darling
Peter and Kimberly Lane Deary
Dorothy DeVille
Mary DeMarco
Danielle Deschenes
Jean deSmet
Mary Lou DeVivo
Thomas Dombrowski
Carlyn W. Duncan
Katelyn Dupontie
Leslie Dutil
Karen and Robert Dyson
Janet and Norman Fellows
Yesenia Figueroa
Kate Fortier
Jennifer Fraley
Alejandro Fuentes
Patricia Gaenzler
Richard and Janet Galante
Patricia S. Gallane
Joelen Gates
Lionel Gaudreau
David B. Gaudreau, OD
Bruce Goldstein
James Goodwin
Samuel Gordon
Marybeth Gorkle-Felice
Sarah Gorton
Holly Graham
Ann Gruenberg
Tony Guglielmo
Kristen Haddad
Christopher Hagen
Christina Hagen
Jo-Ann Heath
Joy Hollister
Atty. John Horak
Eva Stanford Hulme
Bianca Jimenez
Shawn Johnston
Donna Johnston
B. Paul Kaplan
Gail Kennedy
Hal and Susan Keshner
Ann Kouaty
Carol and Eves Krauss
Sherry Kroll
Stephen and Carol Brigham Kulig
Olga Kurnyk-Ezis
Claire LaBelle
Sherry D’Alessandro and Geri Langlois
Deborah Lax
Karen Lechene
Kristian Lester
Catarina Lima
Atty. Nicholas Longo
Angelia Mahon
Rebecca Mainville
Peter Mann
David and Noreen Manzo
John and John Godman McClellan
Bethsaida Mercado-Colon
Brenda Mitchell
Kathleen Mitchell
Anne N. Moore
Yanaira Morales
Erin Noren
Karel Ocasio
Giselle Ortiz-Ruiz
David and Mary Patenaude
John Patton
Aide Perez
Cynthia Perkins
Melissa Phillips
David and Patricia Pinney
Patricia Pipitone
Parrish Protheroe
Amanda and Brian Rice
Peter and Barbara Rich
Shirley Riemann
Jasaira Rivera
Janet Rivera
Angelique Roberts
Dahiana Rodriguez
Jessica Rodriguez
Sally Rogers
Myrna Romero
Daniel Rose
Nathan Rosebrooks
Vincent and Carol Rossetti
Damas Ruiz
Candace Rzeznikiewicz
Jessica Saciowsky
Aisha Salamo
Kim Silcox
Jennifer Smith
Richard Smith
Brenda Soileau
Lissette Soto
Larry and Christine Southam
Jessica Stormberg
Mary Jean Szurkowski
Lee E. Terry
Cindy Thibodeau
Robin Thompson
James and Kelly Tourtellotte
Virginia Valentine
Sherri Vogt
Douglas Warner
Carol Whitehead
Rhonda Wishart
Jennifer Witter
Henry Woodbridge
Jill Zangerl

Business Donors

101 Business Solutions
Arthur Parent Contractor, Inc.
Baruti & Scola, PC
Bob’s Discount Furniture
Borner, Alemam and Davis, LLC
Brooklyn Grange 43
Celebrations Gallery & Shoppes
Charter Oak Credit Union Employees and Board of Directors
Christ Church Pomfret
Congregational Church of Thompson
Control Concepts, Inc.
Core Plus Federal Credit Union
Danielson Rotary
Day Kimball Hospital Clinical Practices Committee
Demers Accounting Service
earth friends discovery
East Brook Mall
EASTCONN Northeast Learning Center
Eastern CT State University, People Helping People
Federaled Church of Christ, WCGCS, Brooklyn
Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund – Wally and Christine Lamb
First Congregational Church, Willimantic
Friendly Spirits Liquor Store
Greater Worcester Community Foundation Newell & Betty Hale Fund
Hampton, Congregational Church
Haz-Pros, Inc.
Hosmer Mountain Bottling Company, Inc.
Insurance Professionals of Eastern CT
Kaplan & Brennan, LLP
Killingly Glass & Aluminum, Inc.
Killingly Quiet Corner Lions Club
King Cadillac-GMC
Landon’s Tire
Liberty Bank Finance Department
Linemaster Switch Corporation
Our Lady of Lasalette Church, Brooklyn
PAP Auto & Hardware
People for Prague
Pepsi-Cola Company
Putnam Bank
Putnam Emblem Club
Putnam Ford & Mercury, Inc.
Putnam Savings Bank
Quiet Corner Democrats
R&R Insulators
Rawson Materials, Inc.
Savings Institute Bank and Trust
Scott’s Cyclery
St. Mary’s Church, Coventry
St. Mary’s Church, Willimantic
St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Plainfield
Staples, Dayville Distribution Center
Storns Friends Meeting
Temple B’nai Israel, Willimantic
Town of Chaplin
Town of Hampton
Town of Scotland
True Value Cash Home Center

*donations received October 2, 2010 through September 30, 2011.
Funding Sources:

**Federal Agencies**
Department of Labor (DOL)
Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA)
Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
Department of Energy (DOE)
United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

**State Agencies**
Department of Children & Families (DCF)
Department of Social Services (DSS)
Department of Education (SDE)
Department of Labor (SDL)
Department of Public Health (DPH)
Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS)
Judicial Branch

**Local Agencies**
Northeast Utilities (NU)
Yankee Gas (YGAS)
United Way

Financial Statement

**Meeting Basic Human Needs**
WIC, CACFP, LEAP, Emergency Shelter, Food Banks, Energy Assistance, Case Management, Housing Preservation, EFPP, ASHoW, ASHoF

$13,380,930  INCOME
$13,289,431  EXPENSE

**Fostering Positive At-Risk-Youth Development**
Residential Services, Mentoring, Parenting Programs

$1,545,423  INCOME
$1,948,531  EXPENSE

**Building Capacity for Income and Asset Accumulation**
VITA, IDA Programs, ARRA CSBG Projects, Energy Conservation, Workforce Development

$9,013,487  INCOME
$8,715,016  EXPENSE

**Administration and Property**

$291,306  INCOME
$276,624  EXPENSE

**Unrestricted Contributions**

$40,000  INCOME

**TOTALS**

$24,271,146  INCOME
$24,229,602  EXPENSE

Change in net assets  $41,544

Thank you to our Board of Directors!

The Access Community Action Agency Board of Directors consists of dedicated volunteers who generously donate their time and talent in the service of the local community while representing local towns, private businesses and organizations, and constituent groups.

**July 2010 – June 2011 Board Members were:**

- Mary A. DeMarco, Chair
- Dolly Von Husen, Vice Chair
- John Patton, Treasurer
- Ann Gruenberg, Secretary
- Grace Curran
- Douglas Cutler
- Mae Flexer
- Veronica Gomez
- Joy Hollister
- Olga Kurnyk-Ezis
- Tammy Miner
- Melissa Phillips
- David Pinney
- Ines Rolon
- Patricia Royer
- Jessica Sacilowski
- Juanita Vazquez
- Sherri Vogt
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.