LACCA’s Strategic Plan for the next three years has just been approved by the board. One of the first priorities in the plan is to increase healthy lifestyles of our families and staff. LACCA staff has done a fabulous job of revamping our Head Start and Early Head Start meals to include more fresh vegetables and fruits, and reduce salt and sugar content. We have created a breastfeeding room at our Central location, and strive to maintain a smoke free environment. But we have more work to do.

So this year we will be focusing on advocating and supporting policies in our community that increase healthy lifestyles such as bike paths and safe walkways to increasing access to affordable healthy food options in our community. We have made a commitment to increase physical activity in our early childhood programs and will focus on reducing the prevalence of smoking by educating staff and parents on the risks of both smoking and second hand smoke. We plan to open up discussions with the families we serve about stress, and how it effects mental health, and how that relates to healthy behaviors.

Why is this an important focus of LACCA? According to the Centers for Disease Control, healthy lifestyle habits, including healthy eating and physical activity, can lower the risk of becoming obese and developing related diseases. The dietary and physical activity behaviors of children and adolescents are influenced by many sectors of society, including families, communities, schools, child care settings, medical care providers, faith-based institutions, government agencies, the media, and the food and beverage industries and entertainment industries. Schools play a particularly critical role by establishing a safe and supportive environment with policies and practices that support healthy behaviors. Schools also provide opportunities for students to learn about and practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors.

The same is true for smoking. There is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke. Secondhand smoke causes numerous health problems in infants and children, including more frequent and severe asthma attacks, respiratory infections, ear infections, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Smoking during pregnancy results in more than 1,000 infant deaths annually. Some of the health conditions caused by secondhand smoke in adults include coronary heart disease, stroke, and lung cancer.

Many of us have been raised in a way that was unhealthy, so it is important for us to stop the cycle if we can. In the words of the late and great poet Maya Angelou, “Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better!” Let’s help ourselves and our families know better so we can do better in 2016.
Head Start classes are open for the 2015-16 program year. We are looking for individuals who are interested in volunteering in one of our Head Start classrooms.

If you are interested in volunteering please contact Janet Buchanan at (419) 227-0158 EXT. 116

This program can help you earn up to $6,000.00 for a down payment and/or closing costs.

In this program you will be learning and doing activities that will help you in the process of purchasing a home.

LACCA’s Homeownership Classes are held four times a year, with alternating day and night sessions. They are held for a total of six days, two hours each day.

We are excited to announce Our Superior Home Ownership program, which offers down Payment assistance for homes purchased in Auglaize, Mercer and in Allen County outside City Limits. If you have at least $12,000 in annual income, a credit score of at least 620 you may qualify for up to $4,000 in down payment assistance to purchase a home in these areas.

For more information please contact Heather Hedrick
(419) 227-0158 ext. 122

Have you ever wanted to “live the American dream” of owning your own home? You may be eligible to earn up to $6,000.00 in Down Payment Assistance!

There is a program for First Time Home Buyers.
Martin Luther King Jr. (1929-1968), a Baptist minister and social activist who changed the world. One person with big vision and great faith that said the famous words, “I have a dream”. Doctor King did not succumb to the society’s pressure to keep silent during such great time of controversy, because he understood that “Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter”.

One dream that changed a little girl’s dream of being the first African American female to serve in National Security, to a reality. A dream that transformed a little boy’s dream of becoming a local politician, to the reality of being the first African American President of the United States of America. One Dream that took a little Caucasian American girl from being the former first lady of the United States of America, to being one of the running candidates for Presidency of the United States of America.

A dream, just a dream, which declared to many Americans, “We may all come from different ships but we are on the same boat now”. This Dream that said there is something bigger for this Country, something that will transform our country into a great army that will one day be a model country of greatness and liberty.

As we celebrate doctor Martin Luther King Jr. on this January 18th Day, let us reflect on the lives that have touched ours. Let us reflect on the lives that we have touched. These lives that would have never crossed paths due to differences of belief, race, culture and skin color. Imagine a life of separatism. A life where everything and everyone around you were just like you. A dull world would produce dull dreams. Dull dreams would produce dull vision. Dull vision produces dull reality. Doctor King understood that many would perish if no one had vision.

It would have been easy for a man in such a low standing, as measured by society at that time, to choose to stay at home and take care of his family. Doctor King understood that his family was greater than those within his own household. He knew he was from a kingdom that could not be seen by the natural eye, a kingdom that could only be seen by a dream. Doctor King arose to the challenge of his dream to cover a multitude of hate with love, by standing for what this country truly believed in. His courage, integrity, and peaceful strength caused many to fall in line with a movement that changed the world as we know it.

Today we salute a man that shared his colorful, creative, and inspiring dream. We salute a man who choose not to accept the disappointment of the word “no.” We salute a man who stood in the face of adversity and even death and said “I choose forgiveness as my permanent attitude”.

Please Join LACCA in celebrating the greatness of Doctor Martin Luther King Jr.’s Life, Hope, Dream, and Vision which is now our reality. Let us continue to “keep hope alive”.

Veronica Mc Laurine
Community Development Director LACCA
Tommy, a single guy in his early twenties applied for LACCA’s First time Homebuyers Program in April 2015. At the time of application, Tommy lived with his mom and wanted a place of his own. His work hours were 8-5, which made it difficult for him to meet with the housing counselor. Tommy would meet once a month with the housing counselor during his lunch breaks.

Throughout the process LACCA’s housing counselor would offer guidance to Tommy on how to complete a purchase contract, and on other important first time homebuyer information. Class arrangements were made to better suit his schedule, along with one other participant.

It took Tommy a while to get through the loan process and close on his house. He became impatient, as he was ready to have a place of his own. The housing counselor continued to encourage him and explain the processes. Finally in July 2015, Tommy closed on his house.

During Tommy’s post purchase visit, he informed the housing counselor that he got a new job with better pay and better benefits. He said that he now has more money to save for future maintenance. Tommy felt that he could accomplish this goal because he was a hard worker and because he had LACCA’s help.

The Thatcher’s (not real name) a family of 7, which includes mom, dad and 5 children, were living in Louisville KY where they were evicted from their home due to the husband losing his job and not having enough income to keep up with rent and other expenses. There were no available shelters for the family to go to. The mother has an ill aunt living in Lima and she wanted to be close to her. They called to see if Lima had any available shelters and they received placement at Family Promise. The family moved here and sought housing with LACCA through the HCRP program.

Mom found employment and began working while dad was receiving unemployment. They needed help to get them back on their feet and established with stable housing.

The family was approved for the HCRP program and we were able to pay deposit and 3 months’ rent for this family to help get them started and stable.

Both adults are now working full time jobs and able to maintain housing and other expenses on their own, and they have reliable transportation. Their youngest child is enrolled in Early Head Start and attending regularly. The family is receiving Medicaid through Department of Job and Family Services and have applied for food stamps.

The family was very grateful for our help and our services.
At Little Rascals Child Development Center, we have been busy preparing for winter! The weather has been, and will continue to get colder. Our answer to this change in weather is to make SNOWMEN for the classroom. We have been staying inside more and doing some fun activities. The children have been listening to winter/snowmen themed books in our three Early Head Start Classrooms. We will be making snowmen out of different materials on hand in the classroom. There will be snowmen made out of cotton balls, snowmen out of white paper plates, and snowmen out of white Styrofoam cups.

Our favorite activity from December was the Partnership Teachers creating feet and hand print reindeer with each little one.

We are excited about the New Year beginning.

The Early Head Start children at First Baptist Day Care have been enjoying the rather warm temperatures for this time of year and have enjoyed walks and exploratory time outdoors. We have enjoyed books and various nursery rhymes. The children are always up for reading and love to have people come and visit with their books. Our art activities have been snow/winter related and our children are patiently waiting for the weather to change so they can experience all the fun first hand.
The Winter Crisis Program will continue until March 31, 2015 as designated by the Ohio Development Services Agency, Office of Community Services. Lima/Allen Council on Community Affairs (LACCA) will continue to accept applications for emergency assistance in Allen, Auglaize, and Mercer Counties until the end of the program. Customers can either schedule an appointment by calling toll free 1-855-286-7559 or signing in at one of the 3 LACCA locations of their choice as a walk-in. To be eligible for the program the customer must meet the income eligibility guidelines and have a disconnection on gas, electric or both. Customers requesting assistance with bulk fuel must have less than 25% supply of fuel to receive emergency assistance with propane or fuel oil. Customers who heat with coal or wood may also be eligible for the program.

LACCA believes the significant decrease in the number of regulated customer’s requesting emergency assistance is related to the changes in the PIPP Plus Program. Customers are encouraged to pay their PIPP Plus payments on-time in full every month for a reduction on their utility bill(s). The reduction is called arrearage crediting. Arrearage crediting promotes good payment behavior while allowing the customer to have 1/24th of their bill forgiven every month as long as they are paying their designated PIPP amount.

Whether seen by appointment or as a walk-in, any person applying for emergency energy assistance must provide documentation of:

- Income for all household members 18-years of age and older for the most recent 13-weeks.
- Explain how maintaining food or shelter if declaring zero-income.
- Most recent gas and electric bill showing a disconnection status.
- Bulk fuel customers must have less than 25% of fuel in their tanks.
- Social Security numbers for all household members
- Landlord’s name, address, and telephone number.

Please note if applying on behalf of another person a notarized statement giving that person permission to apply on their behalf is required.

For additional information please call:

LACCA in Allen County at (419) 227-2586.
LACCA in Auglaize County at (567) 356-5063
LACCA in Mercer County at (419) 584-1550

As parents and guardians, it is our responsibility to keep our children safe.

Here are just a few safety reminders to keep your children safe around vehicles:

Children must be secured in an age appropriate safety seat to be safe in a car no matter how short the trip. Here are the child passenger safety requirements or you can visit www.nhtsa.gov for more information.

Rear-Facing Infant seat/Birth to age 1 and at least 20 pounds
Forward-facing seat.Age 1 and 20 pounds until age 4 and 40 pounds
Booster seat/ until age 8 and 4’9”
Children under the age of 13 should always ride in the back seat.
NEVER leave your child unattended in the car, even for a minute; their life depends on it.

A child’s life is too precious to put in harm’s way. Please keep them safe.

Stephanie Neal
LACCA Transportation Manager

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Stephanie Neal
LACCA Transportation Manager
Cheezy Chicken Bagel Pizza!

**Ingredients**

2 (4 1/2-inch, 2 1/4-ounce) plain bagels, sliced in half
1/2 cup lower-sodium marinara Sauce
1 cup shredded rotisserie chicken breast
1 cup preshredded part-skim mozzarella cheese

**What To Do:**

1. Preheat broiler.
2. Place bagel halves, cut sides up, on a baking sheet. Broil 2 minutes or until lightly toasted.
3. Spread 2 tablespoons marinara on cut side of each bagel half. Top each half with 1/4 cup chicken, and sprinkle with 1/4 cup cheese. Broil bagel halves an additional 2 minutes or until cheese melts.
Jamie Brenner

Dream Vacation: Cayman Islands
Favorite Restaurant: The Cheesecake Factory
Favorite Actor/Actress: Ryan Gosling
Favorite Movie: Almost Famous
Favorite Sport: Volleyball

Number of Years working for LACCA: This is my first year

What you do for LACCA: Family Service Worker at Shawnee Weekday, Kingdom, and The Children’s Place

First thing you do when you get to work: Drink my coffee
Family: I have a little boy that is 5 years old named Ryder and he is my pride and joy!
Hobbies: Baking, walking, napping, family game night