

Working to end poverty where we live

June 2009



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CAAS Head Start Helps Parents Learn English

Some of the women already spoke English; others, not a word. Some had graduated college speaking Haitian Creole, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, or Chinese, and some could not read or write in any language. All of them wanted to learn, and all were willing to help one another.

In 2008, CAAS Head Start offered a class in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). About eighteen students met twice a week from October through May at the Parent Resource Center at Roosevelt...



CAAS Head Start parents learning English at the Parent Resource Center at Roosevelt Towers in Cambridge.

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A Pro - Democracy Movement in Public Housing

For years, tenants at Clarendon Hill Development in West Somerville have needed a strong and active tenant association. The CAAS Advocacy Program has worked with tenants for over a year to help them create just that. A full-time community organizer, supported in part by the Jewish Organizing Initiative, has been meeting regularly with tenants...

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2009, A Year for High Expectations

a message from
Executive Director
Kimberly Smith - Cofield



As 2009 rolled in, I was eager to arrive in Somerville as the Community Action Agency of Somerville's new Executive Director. I realized that I had entered during the most challenging time in our community to attempt to meet the needs of those in poverty. Today, individuals and families in poverty do not look the same as they did just a year or two ago. The faces that we see sheepishly approaching the doorways of emergency shelters, who are humiliated because they need groceries from the local food pantry, and who can't defend themselves in housing court after getting behind in their rent, are our neighbors, friends and family members. No longer can any of us in Somerville get away with saying we don't know them and therefore distance helps us to be apathetic. Though the efforts of CAAS and our fellow organizations have not waned, the demand has been overwhelming.

"This year CAAS faces the crossroad of an opportunity."

It is time for re-vitalizing strategic planning processes, to seek creative means for building organizational resources, to challenge and question past methods for their continued usefulness in today's environment and to reach beyond our connections and relationships that we have been comfortable in for years. No longer can we operate in the same way that we used to in order to ensure that we provide the best most effective services to our clients every day. CAAS' Head Start programs and supportive family services, as well as the homelessness prevention, community organizing, and other Advocacy programs, are critical to the Somerville community. They must see development for sustainability.

The stimulus funds that the Obama administration sends into our community will definitely enliven the agency. The infusion of new funds will serve to bolster ongoing programs, provide new jobs in this tight economy, ensure that we have seed funds for services that have been longed for by our clients but which CAAS has been unable to provide until now, and broaden our service delivery to include more individuals and families, especially additional bi-lingual and special needs capacity.

2009 has begun with a pace that has been indescribable, yet exciting for CAAS. This year CAAS stands at a crossroads. The organization is positioned to take on the next steps in the anti-poverty movement and to assume a leadership role in the community.

The expectations from our clients, funders, staff, board of directors and other critical stakeholders are high. I look forward to working closely with all of CAAS' supporters in the months and years to come to be certain that we continue to bring life to our mission:

To reduce poverty among local families and individuals while working to counteract, and whenever possible eliminate, the societal conditions that cause and perpetuate poverty.

Thank you for your continued **commitment to CAAS' mission.** Together, we can look to a brighter future where we live, work and play.

Warmest Regards! ♦



2008, A Historic Year at CAAS

*a message from CAAS
Board President, Paul DiPasquale*

This past year has been a historic year for CAAS. We celebrated the twenty-five years of dedicated service of our Executive Director, Jack Hamilton, first by naming the Head Start school on Allen Street in Somerville the “Jack Hamilton Center.” When he decided to retire at the end of the year, we held a big party that invited the whole community to celebrate his service.

In 2007, CAAS had applied for and won the contract to also run the Head Start Program for Cambridge. It was a major task to integrate most of the Cambridge staff and Head Start children into the combined system. By 2008, this integration was accomplished as smooth as silk. Donna Cabral, the Director of the Head Start Program, did a fantastic job in achieving this integration, which doubled our Head Start Staff and number of children being serviced. CAAS recently had a federal review of our Head Start Program and, thanks to Donna, we received a 100% evaluation.

The retirement of Jack Hamilton required an extensive search for a new Executive Director.

The Search Committee concentrated a great deal of time interviewing and evaluating a large number of candidates. We narrowed the choices down to three finalists. The committee presented the candidate and her credentials to the full board, and she was approved unanimously.

Our new Executive Director is Kimberly Smith-Cofield. Her previous experience and her passion to support the clients served by this agency were major considerations in her choice. She wasted no time in getting involved in the community and making contact, both politically and with the service partners that help deliver our services to our entitled, deserving clients. Along with Advocacy Director Melissa McWhinney, Kim has concentrated on reorganizing and expanding our Advocacy Program. She is now engaged in the application for stimulus money and grants to allow CAAS to provide more and better services.

Yes, this has been a historic year for CAAS, and it speaks well to the future for serving our customers, the individuals and families striving to escape poverty here in Somerville. ♦

Not Just for Children: CAAS Head Start Helps Parents Learn English

(continued from page 1)

Towers in Cambridge. As the year went on, Head Start staff heard the women in the class using more and more English, in parent-teacher meetings and in the crafts and cooking classes offered at the Center. By spring, the class had mastered enough English to accept the Museum of Fine Arts’ invitation to visit. They learned about democracy with a trip to the State House, including the Hall of Flags and the office of Senator Patricia Jehlen.

All in all, thirty-six students, all women, took part in the class at some time this year. They bonded across the lines of language and culture. They offered advice to a pregnant woman trying to eat healthy food, sympathy to a mother whose child suddenly became ill, and support to a classmate during her struggle with cancer. “We became a family,” the students said.

After visiting the classroom, a Boston businessman wrote to the students, “As a future father, I can only hope that my daughter shows the same motivation to become a strong, educated woman as each of you showed me. You are an inspiration.” Teacher Charlotte Knox says, “I loved teaching this class. I would do it forever.” ♦

CAAS FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2008

Community Action Agency of Somerville, Inc. Statement of Financial Position, November 30, 2008

Exhibit A

Assets		
Current Assets:		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$	295,535
Grants and contracts receivable		476,267
Prepaid expenses		83,608
		<u>855,410</u>
Assets restricted to investment in		
Building and equipment:		
Land		409,749
Building		2,382,341
Furniture and Equipment		126,886
Motor vehicles		102,160
		<u>3,021,136</u>
Less: Accumulated depreciation		<u>375,404</u>
Net Assets restricted to investment in		
Buildings and equipment		
Deferred charges		<u>2,645,732</u>
		<u>5,780</u>
Total Assets	\$	3,506,922
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts payable	\$	259,108
Accrued expenses		175,283
Notes payable		68,600
Current portion of long-term debt		21,609
Deferred revenue		7,201
		<u>531,801</u>
Long-term debt, less current portion		<u>1,532,005</u>
Net assets		
Unrestricted		<u>1,443,116</u>
Total Net Assets		1,443,116
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$	3,506,922

Statement of Activities for the Year Ended November 30, 2008

Exhibit B

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total
Revenue:				
Grants and contracts	\$5,344,873	\$ -	\$ -	\$5,344,873
Other income	131,030	-	-	131,030
In-Kind Contributions	590,981	-	-	590,981
Net assets released from restrictions	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total Revenue	<u>6,066,884</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>6,066,884</u>
Expenses:				
HeadStart	4,814,547	-	-	4,814,547
Community Organizing	457,623	-	-	457,623
Management and General	522,948	-	-	522,948
Total Expenses	<u>5,795,118</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>5,795,118</u>
Change in net assets	271,766	-	-	271,766
Net assets at beginning of year	1,373,055	-	-	1,373,055
Prior period adjustment	(47,418)	-	-	(47,418)
Return of funds	<u>(154,287)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(154,287)</u>
Net assets at end of year	<u>\$1,443,116</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>\$1,443,116</u>

A full copy of CAAS' audited financial statements is available upon request

FISCAL YEAR 2008

Community Action Agency of Somerville, Inc. Statement of Cash Flows for the Year Ended November 30, 2008

	<u>Exhibit C</u>
Cash Flows from Operating Activities:	
Change in net assets	\$ 271,766
Adjustment to reconcile changes in net assets to net cash	
Used by operating activities:	
Depreciation	67,434
Increase in grants and contracts receivable	(158,314)
Increase in prepaid expenses	(5,337)
Increase in account payable	182,292
Increase in accrued expenses	9,469
Return of funds	(154,287)
Prior period adjustment	(47,418)
Net cash used by operating activities	<u>165,605</u>
Cash flows from financing activities:	
Payments on long-term debt	(25,716)
Net cash used by financing activities	<u>(25,716)</u>
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents	139,889
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	<u>155,646</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	\$ <u>295,535</u>
Supplemental information:	
Interest paid	\$ <u>112,684</u>

Statement of Functional Expenses for the Year Ended November 30, 2008

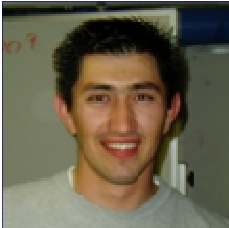
	<u>Exhibit D</u>			
	<u>HeadStart</u>	<u>Community Organizing</u>	<u>Administration</u>	<u>Total</u>
Expenses:				
Personnel Expenses	2,175,940	\$224,724	\$271,434	\$2,672,098
Fringe benefits	988,644	162,129	100,398	1,251,171
Consultants	93,949	12,756	53,819	160,524
Travel	21,520	1,338	552	23,410
Space	472,654	34,612	58,275	565,541
Consumable supplies	76,999	2,266	6,986	86,251
In-Kind Expenses	590,981	-	-	590,981
Other Direct Expenses	<u>333,169</u>	<u>15,078</u>	<u>29,461</u>	<u>377,708</u>
Total Expenses				
Before Depreciation	4,753,856	452,903	520,925	5,727,684
Depreciation of Equipment	<u>60,691</u>	<u>4,720</u>	<u>2,023</u>	<u>67,434</u>
Total Expenses	<u>4,814,547</u>	<u>457,623</u>	<u>522,948</u>	<u>5,795,118</u>

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A Pro - Democracy Movement in Public Housing

(continued from page 1)

to talk about how they can have a voice. Finally, after months of planning and organizing, tenants are about to elect their own representatives. Over 25 residents and service providers gathered June 4th to nominate candidates for the Clarendon Hill Tenant Association Executive Board. Thirteen residents contended for five positions in elections June 18-19. Below are snapshots of a handful of the candidates.



Jose Rivera

José is 25 years old and has been living at Clarendon Hill for about a year with his wife and two kids. He wants to help fix the conditions inside of the units. He also supports the creation of more programs for kids and adults.

Isabel says that she gets along with everyone and that people here call her “Ma” as a sign of love and respect. She has been living at Clarendon Hill for 20 years. She is willing to listen to everyone’s ideas, and is especially interested in building unity among Latinos.



Isabel Alvarez



Justice Divine

Justice Divine (right) is 27 years old and has been living at Clarendon for about 10 years. He is currently working on organizing a Vegetarian Cookout because he believes that eating well is vital and that obesity is a big problem. He also wants to focus on ways to empower youth.

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ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHTS

The Eviction Prevention Program helped prevent 238 households from being evicted from their homes in 2008. Residents could also apply for fuel and food assistance right here at CAAS.

CAAS offered community workshops in four languages on how to weatherize your home.

CAAS became part of the Metro Boston Regional Network to End Homelessness. In 2009, CAAS will reach out to residents at large housing developments in the city about landlord-tenant issues. Only CAAS does outreach in Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, AND English.

The Jovenes Latinos youth program co-sponsored a regional conference on occupational safety and health for young workers.

The Jovenes helped pass changes in the state Child Labor Law. Here in Somerville, they hosted meetings with the police about the concerns of immigrants.

CAAS wishes farewell to its longtime Housing & Benefits Advocates, **Thomas St. Louis** and **Sylvia Cardim**. New Haitian Creole and Portuguese-speaking Advocates will join us soon! ♦

60th Annual All-America City Awards

Somerville, Massachusetts is 2009's All American City!!

CAAS Executive Director, **Kim Smith-Cofield** joined the Somerville Mayor Joseph Curtatone and 37 other members of the Somerville Community.



Kim Smith-Cofield, CAAS Executive Director and Somerville Mayor, Joseph Curtatone at the All America City Awards in Tampa, Florida.



HEAD START HIGHLIGHTS

CAAS Head Start began its second year of serving both Somerville and Cambridge. With 19 classrooms, the program enrolled over 360 students ages 3 to 5 from low-income families. Parents from both cities served on the Head Start Policy Council and the CAAS Board.

The high quality of the Head Start program at CAAS is the reason it was invited to take over the classrooms in Cambridge in the first place. A recent federal review of CAAS Head Start gave it a perfect score—100% in every category!

Nineteen Head Start teachers and staff matriculated at local colleges this past year, and four achieved their degrees by graduation time in Spring 2009. ♦

Community Action Agency
of Somerville, Inc.

66-70 Union Square
Somerville, MA 02143

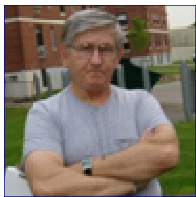
For more information
email: dfischman@caasomerville.org



*Working to End Poverty
Where We Live*

A Pro - Democracy Movement in Public Housing

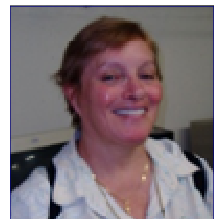
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Cliff Pitts

Cliff is a Vietnam War Veteran and has been living at Clarendon with his mother for over 9 years. In the late 60's, his mother was active in organizing a city-wide Tenants' Union in Somerville. Cliff began getting involved with the tenant association because he was "[angry] that nothing was getting done."

Jocelyn has lived at Clarendon for 4.5 years. She wants to improve communication, so that tenants have access to the necessities. Jocelyn says that she will be active in the tenant association whether she gets elected to the board or not. She wants to help create a community garden at Clarendon.



Jocelyn Scott



Joseph Pierre has been living at Clarendon for 5 years. He is running for the Board because there needs to be change. He wants to help get better services for everyone: Haitians, Spanish-speaking people, people from every country. ♦

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