

Foster Grandparents Giving Lots of Love and Attention

December was a big month for the Foster Grandparent Program. Throughout the month, Foster Grandparents collected children's socks, underwear, hats and mittens. The Foster Grandparents celebrated Martin Luther King, Jr. Day by distributing these much needed items to the infants, toddlers and school age children they serve.

Also in December, Foster Grandparents received a huge compliment from Syracuse City School District Superintendent Sharon Contreras. The Post-Standard asked community leaders "what they most hoped to see in 2014" and Superintendent Contreras said, "I wish we had 140 volunteers to serve as Foster Grandparents in our first and second grade classrooms. Foster Grandparents provide teachers with an extra set of hands and eyes and young students with lots of hugs and love." See One Wish (2013, December 29) Post-Standard, Syracuse, p. E-1.

Foster Grandparents is a program of PEACE, Inc. which gives senior citizens the opportunity to share their lifetime of skills, talents and abilities with special needs children and young adults. A Foster Grandparent spends at least 20 hours each week giving one-to-one attention, encouragement and support to children needing assistance in overcoming physical, mental, social and emotional obstacles.



Pictured left to right: Bernice Thomas (PEACE, Inc. Rockwell Head Start), Lois Delaney (Meachem Elementary), Ike Williams and Mercedes Cruz (both from Seymour Elementary)

Generous Donors Provide Holiday Gifts to 125 Families

One hundred and twenty five low income families, who participate in PEACE, Inc. programming, were matched with extremely generous donors for a truly special holiday exchange. Case workers helped the parent or grandparent prepare a wish list and then donors (individuals, families and businesses) did the shopping for the family. It is heartwarming to see the generosity of our community as the gifts come in. It is even more heartwarming to see the relief and joy of the families who are able to provide holiday gifts for their families when they thought there would be no gifts this year.

We are grateful to all of our Adopt-A-Family donors. Each of you made the holidays very special for someone in need. Thank you.



Below: Joseph O'Hara accepts a \$1,000 donation for PEACE, Inc. from SEFCU's Robert Tackman and Tina Diamond.



Below: Margaret Lawrence and Emma Johnston show off a quilt made by the seniors at the PEACE, Inc. Southside Senior Program located at 124 Martin Luther King West, Syracuse.



Beatrice "Bea" Cook Saying Goodbye is Never Easy



A dear friend of PEACE, Inc., Beatrice "Bea" Cook, passed away on Wednesday, February 19, 2014.

Bea was a valued member of the PEACE, Inc. Board and the Neighborhood Advisory Council for our Eastside Family Resource Center. Volunteering at PEACE, Inc. allowed her to do what she enjoyed most: assisting many families.

Executive Director Joseph O'Hara said, "Beatrice was a dedicated board member who had a passion for education and was a timeless advocate for Head Start."

Please keep Bea and her family in your thoughts and prayers.

Free Income Tax Preparation & E-Filing

PEACE, Inc. is proud to be offering free tax preparation services again this year. Individuals and couples with a household income of \$51,567 or less can get their taxes filed correctly and on time by using PEACE, Inc. free tax preparation services. EITC You've Earned It! Income Tax Preparation is located at the ShoppingTown Mall. Call 634-3756 to make an appointment to have your taxes e-filed and get the biggest possible refund.

We are grateful to our sponsors United Way, Citizens Bank, Key Bank and ShoppingTown Mall for their generous support.



Haylor, Freyer & Coon Donates \$40,000

Our good friends at Haylor Freyer & Coon (HFC) donated \$40,000 to PEACE, Inc. The money was won by four employees: Bruce Wichmann, Robert Rayo, Jim Stoddard and Kent Schmidt who took third place in the annual Chubb Charity Golf Challenge which allows insurance agents from all over the country to compete in a golf tournament on behalf of a charity of their choice. We are so grateful to Haylor, Freyer & Coon for selecting PEACE, Inc. The funds will be used to provide low income children with a summer camp experience.

The Chubb Group of Insurance Companies provides property and casualty insurance products and services to businesses and individuals around the world. Haylor Freyer & Coon provides state-of-the-art, customized insurance products to its clients.



Pictured left to right: Kent Schmidt of HFC, Kevin Guinan, Chubb Branch Manager, Joseph O'Hara of PEACE, Inc., Bruce Wichmann of HFC, Robert Rayo of HFC and Jim Freyer of HFC.

Not pictured: Jim Stoddard of HFC, the fourth golfer

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Dear Friends,

As you may have heard, 2014 is the 50th anniversary of the war on poverty and the birth of community action. On January 8, 1964, President Johnson announced “[t]his nation here and now declares unconditional war on poverty.” In the fifty years since then, community action has made great strides toward improving the quality of life for all people. There is more work to be done and Community Action Agencies will continue the work of empowering people to overcome the obstacles of poverty.

This month Congress passed a \$1.1 trillion funding bill which includes reversal of the sequestration cuts to Head Start funding and the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG). Head Start will be funded at \$8.598 billion for 2014 (2013 budget: \$8.1 billion); CSBG will be funded at \$674 million with \$35.9 million discretionary (2013 budget: \$635 million with \$33 million discretionary) and Weatherization at \$174 million (2013 budget: \$137.9 million). Comparing the final budget to the presidential budget request, Head Start funding, while restored to its pre-sequester level, is almost a billion dollars lower than the president requested. CSBG funding conversely is more than doubling the amount requested by the president’s budget. I am optimistic about the ramifications of this budget for PEACE, Inc. and other similarly situated Community Action Agencies.

Finally, I want to recognize the many people in our community, who act with justice, help their neighbors and work to make their community stronger every day without being noticed. Many of those people volunteer at PEACE, Inc. and we could not do what we do without their help.

Every Kind Wish,

Joe

Joseph E. O’Hara
Executive Director



English as a Second Language Initiative at Head Start

PEACE, Inc. Head Start/Early Head Start launched a new initiative at the St. Daniel’s site. Partnering with the Newland Center and JOBSplus!, PEACE, Inc. is helping parents to become employable by teaching them English and basic job skills. Dedicated volunteers, Amy Bonnillo, Jack Mannion, and Richard Olanoff along with Sara McCarthy, a PEACE, Inc. employee completing her internship, are working with a small group of highly motivated families on this exciting new endeavor.

The initiative takes a whole family approach in which the younger children come along and are part of the program. Adult students spend part of the day in job placement and the other part working on their language skills. Head Start/Early Head Start is committed to advancing ongoing learning and development for parents in order to effect positive change for families and children.

Early Head Start (EHS) promotes the physical, cognitive, social and emotional growth of infants, and toddlers, and provides prenatal education and support services to pregnant women. Head Start (HS) helps children, ages 3 to 5 years of age, achieve their full potential by providing early childhood development, health, family services and other support to participants and their families.



Pictured left to right: Jack Mannion, volunteer, Linda Green of the Newland Center, and Maria Taddeo of PEACE, Inc.

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HEALTH PLAN ENROLLMENT

PEACE, Inc. has received funding, through a grant from the New York State Health Foundation, to educate the community about the Affordable Care Act and to assist people to enroll in health insurance. Our new health insurance enroller, Aziza Mohamed, joined the agency in November. Since then she has been reaching out to low-wage workers and their families to educate them about health reform and the new Marketplace, answer their questions and enroll uninsured individuals in health insurance.

Please feel free to contact Aziza at 634-3752 or getinsured@peace-caa.org if you are interested in learning more about health insurance options through the New York State Health Marketplace.



A photo of our Health Plan Enrollment billboards