



Dear Friends,

Whether it is helping community members enter or advance in the workplace, providing comprehensive early care and education services for children and families, working to keep County people warm and safe in their homes, striving to keep people across the lifespan healthy through education and prevention, or helping those experiencing housing insecurity have a roof over their heads and basic necessities, it seems both the urgency and the need for all of what we do at ACAP have never been greater.

At a time when there aren't enough qualified people to do the work, available slots for children to get the care families need, not the available resources to meet the escalating cost of energy or the vast needs to provide the care for people to be healthy and thrive, and not the available and affordable housing to meet this very basic human need, it can be altogether too convenient and easy to say there is nothing we can do. Thankfully, that is anything but the case with the ACAP Team. ACAP is working diligently on each of these fronts to meet the needs of our region, and it is to the credit of the people – our staff and volunteers – that a positive difference is being made.

In the coming year we will officially open Norman L. Fournier Place – a first-of-its-kind supportive housing facility that will provide not only a home for some of the most vulnerable residents of our community, but key services to support them and many more experiencing housing insecurity. The facility, aptly named after a humble public servant who has dedicated his professional and volunteer work to living out ACAP's vision to "Make Life Better" for the people of Aroostook is a step in the right direction.

As the work to help those who turn to us be more economically and socially mobile continues to advance, we share with you this Impact Report which provides a glimpse into how, working collaboratively with others, we are helping advance our community in ways that are helping to meet the challenges that can seem most insurmountable.

With Gratitude, Vrudy Normault

Trudy Gorneault

ACAP Board Chairperson

Jason Parent

ACAP Executive Director/CEO

Welcome Home!

In a state facing severe housing shortages, Parys Ciuksza and Melissa Wilcox weren't sure they would ever find an affordable place to call home. But now they have, thanks to the gift of a Limestone man they never met. Duncan MacKenzie, a Vietnam War veteran, lived at his small, two-story home on Albert Road. Before he died in October, he bequeathed the house to Aroostook County Action Program hoping that it would know a family searching for a forever home.

MacKenzie's gift led to a first for the nonprofit. Though Aroostook County Action Program has helped connect numerous families with affordable housing, it had never been a homeowner itself, which it did briefly, then used state funds to renovate the house with specific new owners in mind.

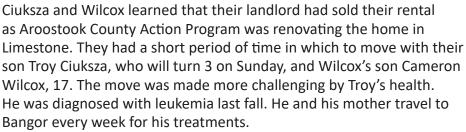
The house came just in time. Ciuksza and Wilcox had nowhere to go when their landlord sold the house they were renting in Presque Isle and gave them notice to vacate, an example of how the affordable housing shortage in Maine can turn something as simple as a real estate transaction into a crisis for families.

A \$39,900 Community Development Block Grant from U.S. Housing and Urban Development paid for the organization's extensive renovations in the 1950s-era



home, including new bathrooms, kitchen appliances and cabinets, bathrooms, floorboards, interior doors,

electrical wiring and four coats of indoor paint.



Now, the major renovations are finished and the family is settling in, all the more grateful for MacKenzie's generosity and the organization's assistance. "We never would have owned a home without them," Melissa Wilcox said. "We were looking since 2021, but the housing market has exploded since then. There was nothing affordable for us to buy." Though Ciuksza works full time, Wilcox stopped working after

Troy's cancer diagnosis. That left the family even more financially unable to purchase a home on their own. But their connections with Aroostook County Action Program helped the family become ideal candidates for MacKenzie's former house. Troy had been attending Early Head Start, which helped Ciuksza and Wilcox meet family coaches in the nonprofit's housing, wellness and heating assistance programs and the first-time homebuyer's course.

Already the old house feels like the home that Ciuksza and Wilcox always wanted. That feeling became even more powerful after seeing Troy's reaction. "Within a couple hours of being here, he was taking a nap. And he never likes to nap," Ciuksza said. "We're beyond grateful. It really is a dream come true for us."

Excerpt Melissa Lizotte/Bangor Daily News











WORKFORCE & COACHING

2023 ACAP IMPACT REPORT

New programs allow new opportunities! With a renewed partnership with the Aroostook County Jail, ACAP is sending staff members into the jail biweekly to meet with inmates up to 12 months before their release date with the support of the QUEST (Quality jobs, Equity, Strategy and Training) grant received from

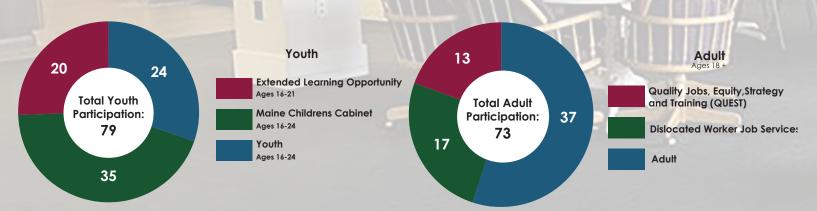


the US Department of Labor Disaster Relief funds. This funding is set to target long-term unemployed individuals and historically marginalized and under-served populations to have equitable access to safe, well-paying jobs, and addresses workforce shortages due to the pandemic.

Workforce Development Participants

Coaches served a total of 152 customers.

124 participants recieved a credential or employment



After a trucking company in the Madawaska area laid Joshua off, he participated in ACAP Workforce Innovation and Oppotunity Act(WIAO) programs through the Dislocated Worker Program. Joshua was determined to return to school and decided on the Electrical Construction Degree Program through Northern Maine Community College (NMCC).

Although Joshua received Veterans Educational Assistance for tuition, living allowance, and textbooks, he needed additional assistance with transportation expenses as the NMCC campus was located 60 miles from his home. Thankfully, ACAP was able to provide travel assistance which allowed Joshua to focus on his studies, not his empty gas tank.

Joshua's grade point average for his career at NMCC was an impressive 3.55. Joshua graduated, receiving his associate degree in electrical construction in May 2023 which enabled him to obtain employment with a company in St. Agatha. Joshua has reached his goal of receiving education/training, working locally, and providing for his family. The company he now works for provides services throughout the Aroostook County area.

Tru was a high school graduate who did not want to further her education at the time she met with an ACAP Career Counselor. Her goal was to find employment. Tru, with the assistance of her counselor, used available career decision-making tools to help her decide what career path she wanted to follow. Tru loved working with children and felt that is where she would start. Through the Workforce Innovation and Oppotunity Act Youth Program, Tru was placed in a work experience with ACAP Head Start. Tru learned excellent work habits, a positive attitude and gained skills that would assist her to find unsubsidized employment. At the end of Tru's work experience, Tru was offered a full time position as a Teacher's Aide with ACAP Early Care and Education Program. Tru is hopeful that she will take classes to allow her to become an Educational Techician and allow her to increase her skills and abilities and continue to grow her employment at the Agency.

783
Participants
2,549
Services Provided

Navigation

3,690
Participants
10,333
Services Provided

Navigation

1,776
Households
Services Provided

Hope & Prosperity Resource Center







or employment

applications

147
Individuals
used the center









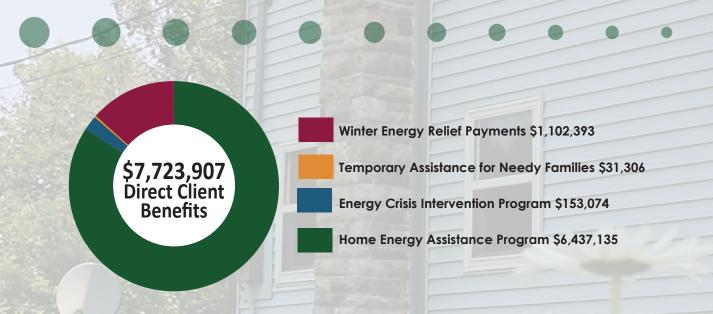
ENERGY & HOUSING

2023 ACAP IMPACT REPORT

Aroostook County residents who are struggling to pay their electric bills and don't otherwise qualify for federal and state assistance programs, are getting some help through a unique partnership between the County of Aroostook, Versant Power and Aroostook County Action Program. A \$75,000 grant awarded to ACAP through American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding administered by the County of Aroostook will be



matched dollar for dollar by Versant Power. The funding comes through Power Match, a charitable program created by Versant Power in late 2022 in partnership with Community Action Agencies in its service area. Officials representing all three partners underscored that the goal is to support those who have sought assistance through traditional avenues, but are outside of eligibility requirements. Through this new partnership support, ACAP is hoping to support nearly 200 vulnerable households avoid electrical disconnection.

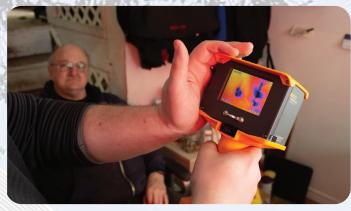


"In the real world, people are not entitled to anything, and people should remember that and be kind." -Ian, HEAP Recipient

Ian and his fiancé Megan live in Washburn with their son Brian. Ian is a stay-at-home dad caring for Brian who has autism and is nonverbal. Megan works at Northeast Packaging. This family, like so many in the County, are struggling financially. Caring for a disabled child heightens that struggle and the emotions associated with it. Ian reached out to ACAP for assistance inquiring about emergency fuel as their tank was completely empty. The Home Energy Assistance Team processed the family's request and were able to provide the emergency fuel needed to keep the family warm. Ian and his family expressed their gratitude, indicating they didn't know what they would of done without the help from ACAP.

Weatherization Programs Make County Homes Warmer, Drier, Less Costly to Operate, Comfortable and More Energy Efficient.

Weatherization Audits, a key piece of ACAP Weatherization Programs, not only measure if homes are energy efficient, but also assess potential health and safety hazards. Once the audit is complete, weatherization measures may include air sealing, wall and attic insulation, basement wall insulation, weather stripping and caulking. Improvements may also include moisture controls and health and safety measures. Because of the Department of Energy Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, ACAP received enough funding from the Department of Energy through MaineHousing to weatherize over 200 Aroostook County homes. Weatherization programs help save our customers money by: reducing the amount of fuel needed to heat their home, improving air quality, improving performance of HVAC systems, and helping to protect the home from damaging ice dams.





Images Courtesy of TAnnie Ropeik for The Maine Monitor/MIT Environmental Solutions Initiative

Weatherization
Projects
Completed

Repairs or Replacements of Heating Systems Completed

Heat Pumps
Installed

18 Home Heating Tanks Replaced

Home Accessibility
and Repair Projects
Completed

Development Block
Grant Projects
Completed

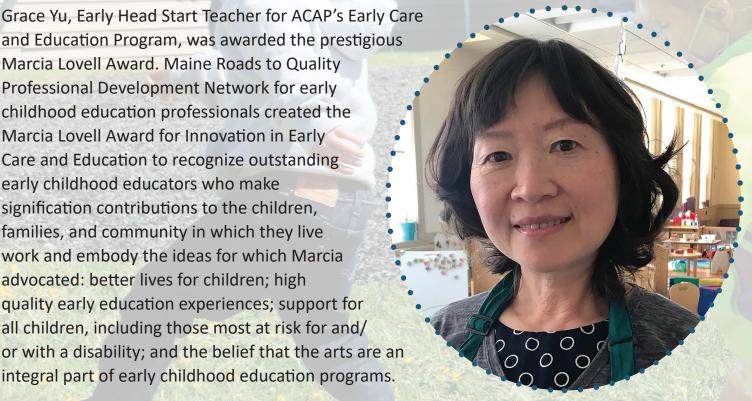
Community Aging in Place Projects
Completed

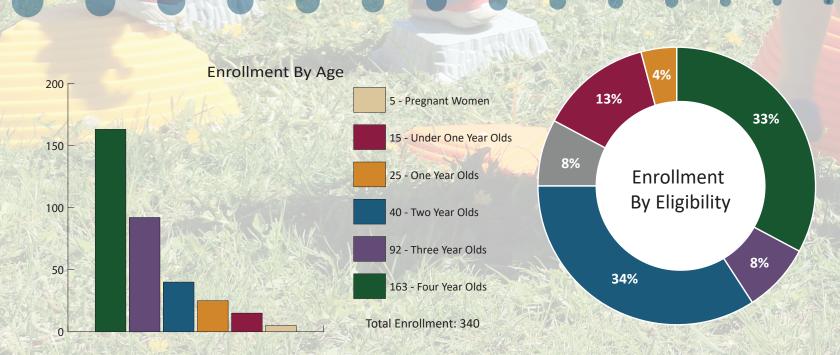


EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

2023 ACAP IMPACT REPORT

Grace Yu, Early Head Start Teacher for ACAP's Early Care and Education Program, was awarded the prestigious Marcia Lovell Award. Maine Roads to Quality Professional Development Network for early childhood education professionals created the Marcia Lovell Award for Innovation in Early Care and Education to recognize outstanding early childhood educators who make signification contributions to the children, families, and community in which they live work and embody the ideas for which Marcia advocated: better lives for children; high quality early education experiences; support for





Families served through Head Start Programs

156

Single Parent Households

141

Two Parent Households

11

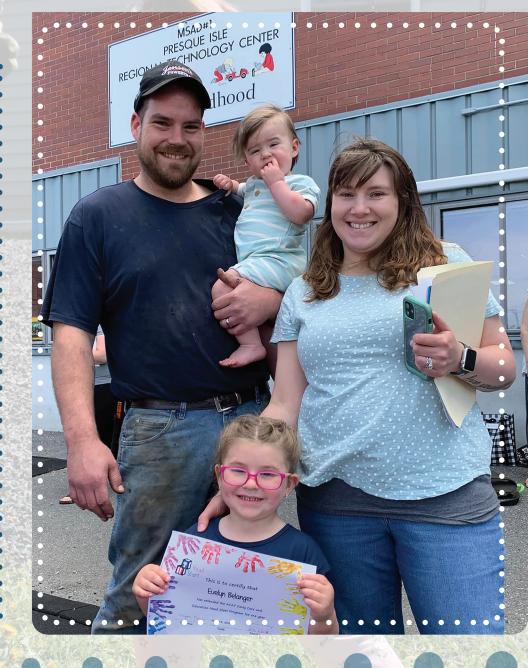
Families Experiencing Homelessness

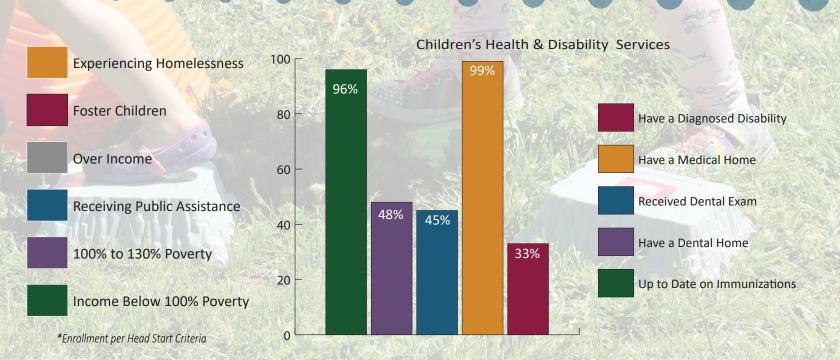
11

Children Experiencing Homelessness

91

Families found housing during the program year







EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

2023 ACAP IMPACT REPORT

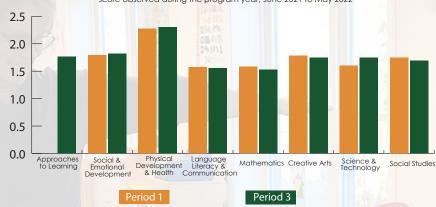
Early Head Start Assessment Data

The Assessment describes the growth as the average of the highest score observed during the program year, June 2021 to May 2022

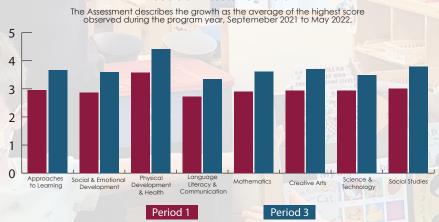


Federal
Early
Head Start
Children

Federal
Head Start
Preschool
Children



Head Start Assessment Data





ACAP Caribou is a truly amazing center, actually ACAP in all. Charlotte started in the infant/toddler room almost a year ago now. She hardly spoke; when she did, it was mostly gibberish. She relied more on basic sign language, pointing and a series of grunts. We enrolled her in speech therapy about 2 months after she started. Speech therapy along with help from the staff she began speaking more and more basic words. Shortly after her 3rd birthday, she transitioned into the Pre-K room; this change for her was a huge step in the right direction. It has been about 3 months now; she can say most basic words and quite a lot of multiple syllable words, even short sentences. I believe speech therapy, being around kids closer to her age and the steady structure in Pre-K have played a huge part in her growth in speech, potty training, behavior, & attentiveness! She even wears her glasses and allows me to brush and do her hair, these were two big obstacles we have made strides in overcoming with the help of ACAP staff, ALL of the staff!! We truly appreciate that the staff takes the same amount of care, time, & love at ACAP as we do at home which is necessary for children to grow.

Thank you to EVERYONE at ACAP, we are eternally grateful.

Love, Stephanie M.





Gracie has started attending the all-day session for kindergarten at Easton Elementary School. Gracie is very proud that she is able to write her whole name and has memorized the Pledge of Allegiance. Jamie, her parent, credits Gracie's preparation for kindergarten to ACAP's Head Start program. Gracie is one of the advanced students in the class.

This is Gracie's first day of kindergarten at Easton Elementary School! A wonderful bittersweet day for me as mommy, but as true to form my little Gracie was strong, brave, and confident. Gracie is my brightest twinkling star everyday. I can't wait to see the woman she will become and all the goals that she'll achieve and the dreams she'll make come true."

Thank you ACAP staff, teachers, and my biggest cheerleader my family coach Sandra London. It does take a village to raise a child and in my darkest days you lit the path for me to be the best mommy to my Gracie.

Fondly and with true regard and respect,

Jamíe Avery

Head Start Financial Statement 2022-2023

Head Start Revenues			Head Start Expenses		
Category	Budget	Actual	Category	Budget	Actual
Federal	\$4,195,490.00	\$4,195,490.00	Personnel	\$2,883,734	\$2,954,321
State	\$245,464.00	\$245,464.00	In-Kind	\$0	\$92,660
Other	\$174,313.00	\$136,306.75	Travel	\$40,891	\$53,158
In-Kind	\$0.00	\$93,263.48	Occupancy	\$381,413	\$455,776
			Supplies	\$142,372	\$90,864
Total Revenue	\$4,615,267.00	\$4,670,524.23	Food for Children	\$64,364	\$49,527
Chester M. Kearney audited the financial statements of Aroostook County Action Program which comprise the statements of financial position as of Sept. 30, 2022 and 2021, and the related statements of activities, functional expenses and cash flows for the years then ended and the related notes to the financial statements. In their opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Aroostook County Action Program as of Sept. 30 2022 and 2021 and the changes in net its asset and its cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.			Bus Service	\$86,000	\$91,940
			Training for Staff	\$38,955	\$34,947
			Administration	\$907,238	\$821,900
			Client Services	\$9,500	\$77
			Contractual	\$23,000	\$5,836
			Other	\$37,800	\$19,505
			Total Expenses	\$4,615,267	\$4,670,513

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PREVENTION & WELLNESS

2023 ACAP IMPACT REPORT



The Child and Adult Care Food Program ensures that eligible children have access to healthy, nutritious food by providing aide to families and center based child care faciliities.

- 33 Family child care sites participated in the Child and Adult Care Food Program impacting 463 children.
- 6 Child care centers participated in the Child and Adult Care Food Program impacting 353 children.



The past year ushered in a new tradition at ACAP; we celebrated new and expecting families by throwing Community Baby Showers. Showers were held at the Presque Isle and Houlton ACAP locations with the help of local businesses through donations of prizes and refreshments. Partnering organizations were on hand to provide valuable information, resources and training. Each family received a Welcome Baby Bag from WIC and also had the opportunity to pick up homemade baby blankets and gently used baby clothing.

Promoting and Protecting Healthy Smiles

SO LONG TO CH 21

Schools Served

2,155 Fluoride Varnish Applications

497 Urgent Care Referrals

through the Maine Dental Connection

2,700+ Miles Traveled

Sealants completed on 182 kids



30.3% of pregnant enrollees who reported smoking at enrollment reported quitting before child was born or immediately after.

47.1% of infant/child participants exposed to secondhand household smoke.

86.5% of total fruit & vegetable benefits issued were redeemed totaling \$189,041.

\$925,064 total spent in 16 Aroostook WIC approved grocery stores.

\$6,907 spent at 9 WIC approved local farmers through the Farmers Market Nutrition Program.

6 Farmer Days held to provide low-key market environment.



Of 76.5% of Pregnant enrollees that initiated breastfeeding after delivery:

25% were still breastfeeding at 3 months 21.3% were still breastfeeding at 6 months

Moms utilized the **241** Breastfeeding Peer
Counselor Program

26 Electric breast pumps loaned to participants



9,000 Outreach Miles Traveled



WIC Team of Experts*

- 3 Certified Lactation Counselors
- 4 Nutritionist & Nutrition Educators
- 1 Registered Dietitian
- International Board Certified Lactation Counselor
- 1 Breastfeeding Peer Counselor

WIC Clinic Locations Caribou Fort Kent Houlton Madawaska Presque Isle Van Buren

WIC Staff may occupy more than 1 role
ACAP WIC Annual Report dates are 7.1.2022 to 7.1.2023
Health data unavailable due to COVID Remote Clinics & Emergency Declaration Waivers



PREVENTION & WELLNESS

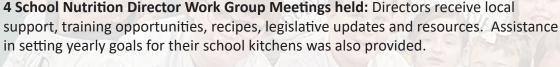
2023 ACAP IMPACT REPORT



SNAP-Ed (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) helps people learn easy ways to shop, cook, and eat healthy food on a budget. SNAP- Ed resources and information was distributed to the community in a variety of ways including local news stories, educational classes, attendance at local trade shows, and through community collaborative projects like the Memory Kits Project. In partnership with Cary Library in Houlton, the Memory Kits project was launched to interact with vulnerable seniors in the early stages of dementia at home or nursing care facilities, library patrons are now able to borrow customized, Southern Aroostook-themed Memory Kits.



\$5,000 in Mini Grants Provided: Grants provided 670 families with healthy eating or active living opportunities within communities or schools.





4 Town Libraries Provided Seed Libraries: Free vegetable seeds and education made available for patrons to begin their own garden.

6 Summer Feeding Sessions attended: Provided free meals, container gardening opportunities, physical activities and increased awareness and promotion of ACAP Programs and Services impacting 170 families.



1,200 Water Bottles Distributed: Water promotions done through social media and on site, water bottles and water provided at 15 sites.

4 Municipalities Provided Programming: In partnership with Northern Light AR Gould, Age Friendly education and resources regarding age friendly healthy eating and physical activity provided to 55 individuals.

Through grant funding from Full Plates, Full Potential, ACAP, in partnership with several County school districts, offered special free school lunch days for parents to enjoy a meal with their children, at no cost, and learn about community programs and services available to them. ACAP Team members were on-site at several locations County-wide to connect with families about programs that range from energy and housing assistance to food security, workforce and education connections, and more.





Assisted 17 local businesses with implementing smoke-free policies and provided \$3,000 in mini grants to support those businesses in their smoke-free efforts.



Provided CATCH My Breath
Vaping, and Sidekicks Motivational
Interviewing education impacting
140 students at 4 schools. Social
Emotional Learning Education—Lions
Quest curriculum implemented in 2
schools to 48 students.



Trainings for Making Connections to the Maine QuitLink and Catch My Breath were completed with 29 and 5 participants respectively.



The Prevention team attended 14 community outreach events and visited 16 middle/high schools. They delivered wellness and prevention outreach resources for a variety of ACAP programs and services including: the MaineQuit Link, My Life, My Quit and Smoking Pause Kits. At these events they impacted over 2,300 individuals.

County Restorative Practices provides alternatives to detention and suspension for youth involved with conflicts at school and in the community. Restorative Circles promotes accountability and repair relationships.

Youth diverted through the Department of Corrections

Youth diverted from local police departments

Youth diverted from local school districts

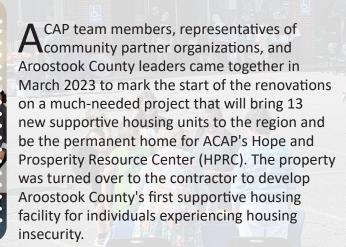


A CAP's 2023 Back to School Bash and Job Fair was the biggest and most successful to date. We had over a dozen community partners join us for the Back to School Bash and Career Fair and collectively met with hundreds of students and their families, all preparing for back to school. The United Way of Aroostook helped distribute the over 700 backpacks that they filled and provided for students County-wide while other organizations shared back to school items and helpful resources about the services they provide.





igh-speed internet helps connect community members to the things that matter — like work, school, health care, and more. Over 7,000 households in Aroostook County have access to internet savings thanks to the FCC's Affordable Connectivity Program. The program provides eligible households with a discount on broadband services and connected devices.



The project, located in Presque Isle is advancing because of the support of community partners who have committed funding toward the \$4.3 million dollar building re-purposing. ACAP has been awarded a \$2.4 million supportive housing grant from MaineHousing for the apartment units. Other grants and funding from the Rodney and Mary Barton Smith Family Foundation and a Community Development Block Grant, secured by the City of Presque Isle, have been designated to support the renovations to the HPRC and other building amenities that will include shower, laundry and kitchen facilities, as well as a multimedia learning center.









The Aroostook CA\$H Coalition served 1,130 Aroostook County households during the tax season, helping to return \$1,220,466. The partnership, including ACAP, New Ventures Maine and United Way of Aroostook, provided in-person service to income eligible households Countywide. In addition to the free tax preparation, the Coalition provided an opportunity to meet with a navigator from ACAP to connect to necessary programs and services as well as a representative from The County Federal Credit Union to talk about financial services and saving for the future.



The Cinderella Project of Maine Comes to Aroostook is a partnership with the Cinderella Project of Maine and Waldo County Action Program. The project helps make dreams come true by providing free new and gently used formal dresses, suits and jackets to any Aroostook County student in need. In the 2023 season, the Cinderella Project of Maine Comes to Aroostook gave away 295 formal dresses, suits and jackets.



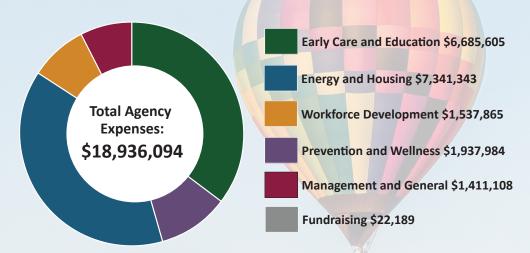
The Helping Hands Telethon is a collaborative effort of ACAP, WAGM and United Way of Aroostook to raise funds to keep families warm and safe in their homes. Because of the generosity of Aroostook County residents, organizations, and businesses, the 2022 telethon raised \$112,040. This funding helps our friends and neighbors in Northern Maine facing a fuel emergency put fuel in their tanks, wood in their sheds or pellets in their hoppers.



Individuals from the Central Aroostook
Association Day Program have been providing very valuable assistance for ACAP's Community Closet since December 2022. Over 250 hours have been devoted to sorting and hanging gently used clothing to be placed in our exterior Community Clothing Closet at ACAP's Presque Isle 771 Main Street Customer Service Center. Along with providing ACAP with much need help, the hours devoted to our program provides this group experience in a work environment. The partnership that has developed is a true win for the employees and volunteers of both organizations. ACAP had a total of 2,458 volunteer hours agency wide.







Based on ACAP's September 2022 unaudited/preliminary Revenue and Expense Report.

Our most recent audited financials can be found at www.acap-me.org.

Aroostook County Action Program is among the first Community Action Agencies in the country to be recognized for its commitment to excellence by the National Community Action Partnership (NCAP) under a new program designed to highlight best practices. ACAP was honored for earning Bronze Tier status in NCAP's Pathways to Excellence Program at the Management and Leadership Training Conference, a gathering of more than 400 Community Action Program leaders held in New Orleans. The voluntary program empowers agencies nationally in their pursuit of excellence through an intentional process of assessment, planning, and capacity building based on known best-in-class practices from the Community Action network and outlined in 35 Standards of Excellence.





Brenda L. Hersey, who worked for ACAP for over 25 years, and who passed away at age 64 in October 2022, was remembered by her family, colleagues, friends and local community on Friday, June 16, 2023. More than 40 people gathered outside the Southern Aroostook Community School in Dyer Brook to plant a tree in Brenda's honor, alongside her husband of 45 years, Keith Hersey; daughter, Shannon and granddaughters Harper and Lennon.

Brenda most recently worked as ACAP's teacher in the partnership classroom with RSU 50 in Dyer Brook. Brenda openly shared that her "heart was geared for kids who need a little extra help." The hundreds of children, and their families, whose lives she touched over the years are certainly the beneficiaries of her wonderfully caring and compassionate heart. Her legacy will live on through all of them.

In loving memory of dedicated ACAP Team Members who left us too soon.

Brenda L. Hersey
Donald E. Whipkey
Daniel H. Raymond



Thank you to our volunteer community leaders!



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