



VITA Benefits Outstanding Local Student

Kathy Scott, Resource Development/
VITA Coordinator

The mission of LCCH, of course, is to provide housing advocacy and resources to low-income residents of Licking County. However, one LCCH program that served over 900 households in 2015 was actually tax related. Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) is an IRS sponsored program that uses certified community volunteers to prepare and file income tax returns for income-eligible taxpayers, for free. And the IRS definition of low-income is much higher than you may realize - \$52,000 per year, per return.

There is no such thing as a “typical” VITA client. Our tax sites serve singles and families, students and seniors, with income from a few hundred dollars to the IRS maximum. We see familiar faces who return every year and also brand new clients who can’t believe we offer the high quality service for free.

One of our VITA clients is Ryan, a 27 year-old OSU student who has been coming to our tax site since 2009. (That’s before any of us currently working with the program were here!)

Ryan has been a student for 5 ½ years, and will graduate in the spring of 2016 with two Bachelor’s degrees (Security and Intelligence and Middle East Studies) and also a minor in Arabic. In addition to English and Arabic, he also speaks some Somali and Swahili. He has been steadily employed and works to support himself and pay for his schooling. After graduation, Ryan plans to join the Navy and pursue a career as an officer in Special Operations and Intelligence, retiring as a four-star with central command in about 35 years. I can absolutely picture it.

Ryan has always impressed me with his motivation and ambition. He is active in Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church, and believes it is important to mentor kids, spread the message of the Lord, and help the less fortunate re-enter society. And he is smart enough to take advantage of a free community service and the tax credits available to students!

Is there someone you know who may be eligible for VITA services? Tax preparation usually begins the last week in January at multiple Licking County locations. For more information, visit our website www.lcchousing.org or call Kathy Scott at 740-345-1970 ext. 229.

Our Mission

Our mission is to provide a community forum, to assess housing resources, to identify problems and to create solutions through collaboration.

Find Us on Social Media



Contact Us

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Contact
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VITA Volunteers Needed!

We are looking for volunteers to help with our Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. Through VITA, LCCH helps low-income taxpayers prepare and file their federal, state and school district income tax returns for free. If you have experience in tax preparation or accounting and would like to help others in the community, this may be the opportunity you are looking for. Training is provided,

on line or in-person, to achieve IRS certification. Various locations, days and hours are available, but a commitment of approximately 4 hours per week from January through April is expected. Last year, LCCH/VITA helped more than 900 local taxpayers collect over one million dollars in federal and state refunds. For more information, contact Kathy Scott at 740-345-1970 ext. 229 or kscott@lcchousing.org.



Several Denison University students volunteered with VITA in 2015, including Gissel Segovia, Sasha Rupchandeo and Rosi Guzman.

Executive Director's Corner

Deb Tegtmeyer



Recently, Linda Beard, SSVF Case Manager and I had an opportunity to appear on "Joy in Our Town," a local news program hosted by the Trinity Broadcasting Network.

The program host asked me to respond to the following statement: "A lot of people believe that if you have a full-time job, there's no way you can become homeless."

This is a myth, unfortunately, for a whole variety of reasons. Housing is only one piece of many. Is your full-time job sufficient in its pay to be able to afford the type of housing available in Licking County? Will your hours be reduced? Will you run into a health issue that may cause you to lose your

job? If you are budgeting properly, you shouldn't be spending any more than 30-40% of your total budget on housing. But honestly, we see a lot of people working full-time (or multiple part-time jobs) who are spending 50, 60, 70% or more of their take-home pay to find suitable housing. That is just not sustainable over the long run. When you've got a family and you're spending 60-70% on housing, with additional costs for child care and food and maybe a car payment or any number of other necessities, one unexpected bill can bring the whole precarious financial situation tumbling down.

In Licking County, we really need some additional housing that is affordable to people who are making minimum wage or just above - \$10, \$12, or even \$15 per hour. Right now, there is a huge disconnect between the supply of good quality housing available at a rent that folks making lower wages can afford, and the number of people who need it.

At the same time, we need to expand and strengthen other key local resources. While we have a very dedicated and highly skilled case

management staff at LCCH, I wish our community had more in the way of mental health and substance abuse services. These are probably the two greatest needs if we're going to reduce (end?) homelessness in Licking County. On the positive side, access to health care is improving. It was extremely important that Governor Kasich expanded Medicaid – and I know that was not without controversy – but it has definitely helped the folks we're working with.

Get involved. Get educated about the Community Blueprint efforts underway now – courtesy of United Way of Licking County and its partners. Let's get past the mistaken notion of "just get a job" and build a local system of services – and employment – that can truly help our homeless neighbors succeed.



Board Members Cyndi Schmitt, Mary Ann McLaughlin and Ginger Varner accompanied the LCCH float at the Granville Kiwanis Fourth of July parade. The garden building behind them was won by Steve Little, when his winning ticket was drawn on September 5th.

Overcoming Barriers Through Transitional Housing

With a criminal record and no job, Ben had many barriers in front of him when he entered the LCCH Transitional Housing (TH) program in October 2013. In fact, he described himself as a "homeless drug addict who had lost all hope." Less than two years later, he has worked hard to overcome most of those barriers. Ben is clean and sober, with a full-time job. He has paid off all of his past fines, has purchased a vehicle, and has over \$1,000 in his savings account.

He is working on his Associate's degree at OSU-Newark, with a major in Electrical Engineering Technology. And most importantly, he has full-custody of his daughter. Ben is looking for a new apartment and will have moved into permanent housing by the time this newsletter is published.

His biggest challenge currently is finding decent housing with a felony record. He has a positive attitude, though, and has been a pleasure to know. We wish him well.

Did You Know?

The LCCH Transitional Housing (TH) program continues to be one of the largest housing programs for homeless individuals and families within our community. On the day of the January 2015 Point-In-Time count, our TH program housed 47% of the Licking County community's known homeless persons. We have an occupancy rate in our 44 units of 95-100% consistently, while maintaining a wait list of 25 or more households.

Staff Profiles

Jim Durant James L. Durant, LSW returned to LCCH in March of this year as our Returning Home Ohio (RHO) Case Manager. The RHO program provides opportunities for independent housing, easy access to voluntary services and support that fits the need of the individual. The ultimate goal of RHO is successful reintegration into the community by adults with a severe mental illness leaving the state prison system. The program is currently serving 5 active clients with approximately 5 in the process of being enrolled.

After experiencing some tragedies in his life, Jim decided that Social Work was his calling.

He had a deep desire to assist others obtain the freedom that he gained through his experiences. He obtained his Associates Degree in Mental Health from Zane State and continued on to earn his Bachelor's in Social Work in 2004 from Capital University. Prior to receiving his degree, Jim worked in a factory for 30 years after service in the United State Marine Corps. Through all of his work experience, Jim has always felt "value in what he was doing and continues to do."

Jim was born in Zanesville, raised in Muskingum County, and now currently resides with his girlfriend in Newark.

When not assisting clients, Jim enjoys motorcycling, spending time with his two daughters and granddaughter, reading, and listening to various genres of music.

Jim truly believes that the best outcome in his position is to not be needed as a Case Manager. The point is "not to make the client dependent on you, but to assist them with becoming independent."

All of us at LCCH are pleased to welcome Jim to our staff, just as Jim is "thrilled to be back."

SSVF and Partners Help Paralyzed Veteran Into Accessible Housing

Frank, a 35-year old Army veteran, contacted LCCH in search of housing options. Frank had been told his mother was selling the house they were living in and would be moving out of state. Frank had been living in his childhood home since his release from long term care, after suffering a gunshot wound which left him paralyzed. Frank contacted LCCH and was directed to Candace Elkins, Homeless Prevention Specialist. When Candace discovered Frank had served in the military, she referred him to LCCH's Supportive Service for Veterans Families (SSVF) program. Tim Binckley, an SSVF Case Manager, scheduled an intake appointment with him for later that week.

The SSVF intake was completed at Frank's home, since Frank was unable to get to the office on his own. Frank talked with Tim about wanting to remain in his current home. But as Frank would be unable to keep up with housing costs and, given the fact that the well had stopped working, this was not a viable plan. After further discussions, they came up with an alternate housing plan which would meet Frank's basic housing and security needs.

Frank's SSVF Case Manager helped him locate adequate, one floor, handicap accessible housing which was immediately available. SSVF collaborated with a key partner, Licking County Veterans Services Office (LCVSO) and together, each program was able to provide assistance for rent and deposit to get Frank moved in quickly.

Since being enrolled in the SSVF program, Frank was able to receive a certified copy of his DD214 through the assistance his Case Manager provided. In addition, Frank took advantage of the legal check-up services available through the partnership SSVF has with Southeast Ohio Legal Services (SEOLS). Frank continues to be connected to services that he is interested in receiving.

Frank likes being in his own place and says, "It's still a struggle every day, but I set goals and knock them out and keep telling myself, little by little, I can make it. Right now, I'm working on getting a vehicle so I can take myself to appointments and such. Down the road, I would like to look at possibly going to school or getting a job."

SSVF Update

The second year of our Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program has been even more successful than the first.

Three quarters of the way through the program year, **LCCH has served 81 veteran families (165 people)** through the SSVF program.

From October 1, 2014 through July 3, 2015

LCCH/SSVF has helped 44 homeless households with Rapid Re-Housing and has prevented 37 households from entering homelessness with Homelessness Prevention.

Good Advice from Project Homeline

Kelly Winstead, Project Homeline Coordinator

Project Homeline (PH) staff respond to requests for assistance and meet with clients who are looking for housing or struggling to stay in their homes. Unfortunately, LCCH can't provide financial help to everyone who needs it. Here are some tips that may help you maintain housing:

- Be open and honest when you first start having issues with rent or utility bills. Contact the power companies and try to make payment arrangements. Tell your landlord that you are struggling. Communication is key!
- Seek assistance before the amount owed gets so high that you can't get caught up. You will be more likely to find assistance for one month's rent than for six.
- Don't wait until you have the shut-off notice or eviction notice to start asking for help. No agency can respond to a request for assistance that quickly. Some utilities and landlords accept pledges, but others do not.
- When you begin contacting agencies for help, have all your important information ready: amount owed, monthly income, the number of people in the household and any public benefits received.
- Go into this knowing that it will take some work on your part. Funding is limited and you may need help from more than one agency to raise the required amount. You will need to make a lot of phone calls and follow-up. Keep good notes about your calls, verify who you speak with.
- Ask for referrals. It is not possible to help everyone, every time they ask. All the agencies and faith-based organizations have eligibility and funding requirements. If someone can't help financially, ask what other services or options they are aware of.
- If you apply for Subsidized Housing, be sure to keep the name and phone number of the apartments you applied for, and the date you applied. Call them periodically to see where you are on their waiting lists.
- Make PIPP a priority. When you sign up for the Percent of Income Payment Plan, a large portion of your utility bills will be written off if you abide by the agreement and pay your required percentage on time each month. If you don't, the entire amount of all your bills will be due, not just your percentage. Make sure you understand your obligation and stick to it.
- Be courteous.



Collection Effort Led by Local Scout

Will Rigsby, a Life Scout from Boy Scout troop 151 in Hebron, is organizing a supply drive to help LCCH clients. LCCH is pleased to be the beneficiary of his community service project, a requirement for advancement to the rank of Eagle Scout. From September 21st until October 19th, Rigsby is collecting **household items, furniture, personal care products and cleaning supplies** to be used in LCCH housing units and by our clients. If you can contribute, please call **Will at 740-323-4308** for pick-up information and drop-off locations.

Most Needed Items

- New:**
- Pillows
 - Sheet sets (Twin and Full)
- Gently used:**
- Kitchen Tables/Chairs
 - Sofas/Chairs
 - Coffee tables
 - Pots and Pans

Thanksgiving Market Set for November 21

Fall is the perfect time to visit the Granville Farmers Market. There are still several weekends left to enjoy the nice weather before the market moves inside for the winter. So stop by on Saturday morning, get a hot cup of coffee from River Road Coffeehouse served by the LCCH staff and/or board members, and take advantage of the fall produce, harvest decorations and specialty foods (it's tailgate time!). And don't forget the Thanksgiving Market,

scheduled for November 21st this year. Perfect for pumpkins, winter squash, Thanksgiving supplies (dessert!), wreaths and evergreen roping. There is truly something for everyone. We hope to see you there. (The Granville Farmers Market is located in the last block of North Main Street, between Broadway and the Denison University entrance gate, every Saturday between 8:30 and noon, through October 31st.)



TrueCore Takes First Place at 11th Annual Golf Outing

Twenty six golfers took to the beautifully manicured course at the Trout Club, located in Newark, on August 14, 2015 for Licking County Coalition for Housing's 11th Annual Golf Outing. The team from TrueCore Federal Credit Union, comprised of Tyler Crall, Jeff Christensen, Mick Dunlap, and Jason Hall came in first place with an impressive score of 13 under par. Roger Lossing, Robert Davis, Chuck Kemerer, and Curt Bostwick, representing Delaware County Bank and Trust, were not far behind with a final score of 11 under par. Third place was awarded to the Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS) team.

Shaw Mechanical came in fourth. The longest drive was crushed by Sharad Thakkar (LMHS), followed by the longest putt from Larry Palur (Coaliton of Care). Dave Sholtis (Clouse Clan) was the closest golfer to the pin.

We wish to extend our deepest thanks to all of our golfers, sponsors, prize donors, Board Members, and the Trout Club. Without all of the support that was received, this event would not have been possible.

Mark your calendars early for our 12th Annual Golf Outing scheduled for Saturday June 18, 2016...same time and place.



The winning team of Jason Hall, Jeff Christensen, Tyler Crall and Mick Dunlap from TrueCore Federal Credit Union enjoy lunch after the outing.



Larry Palur, Coaliton of Care Executive Director, selects a brand new driver, courtesy of Tour golf.

11th Annual Golf Outing

LCCH would like to thank all of the sponsors and prize donors for making this such a fun and successful event.

Platinum Sponsor:
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The GolfWorks
The Links at Echo Springs
Tour Golf Products
Superior Beverage
Whitetail Ridge Golf Course

The Facts of Life for Renters

Most of the people that we assist through Project Homeline are in, or are looking for, rental housing. Many landlord/tenant problems could be avoided through a better understanding of the rental process. Here is some basic information about rental agreements and landlord tenant issues that may be helpful to you or someone you know. It is important to remember that many problems can be avoided by reading the lease completely and understanding it thoroughly before signing on the dotted line. And like most things in life, whether a landlord or a tenant, there are responsibilities that come with rights.

Definitions:

Generally speaking, anyone who occupies or possesses the residential property of another under a rental agreement is a tenant. One who owns rental property and permits another to use, occupy or possess the residential premises for a period of time in return for money or something of value, is a landlord. A lease or rental agreement is a written or oral contract between persons. A properly written agreement will eliminate many misunderstandings and problems that commonly arise between a landlord and a tenant.

The rights of a tenant:

Include the right: to complain to a government agency about your landlord's violation of housing laws that affect health and safety; to join with other tenants; to know the name and address of your landlord; to privacy; to have repairs made in a timely manner. If a landlord fails to make repairs in a timely manner (30 days for non-emergency repairs) a tenant may escrow rent with the Clerk

of Courts, get a Court Order for repairs, ask the court to reduce the rent, and/ or terminate the rental agreement and move out.

The rights of a landlord:

Include the right: to set the rent amount and to increase it upon giving adequate notice (unless you have a lease that provides for a fixed rent for a specific term); to rent or refuse to rent to anyone you wish, provided you do not discriminate because of race, color, religion, sex, military status, disability, family status, ancestry or national origin; to enter the unit to inspect, repair, make improvements or show the property, provided 24 hours' notice is given; to evict the tenant for nonpayment of rent or for breaking significant conditions of the agreement, provided proper procedure is followed; to have the property returned in as good a condition as it was when the tenant took possession, except for ordinary wear and tear.

The obligations of a tenant:

To comply with health and safety codes; to refrain from, and prevent guests from damaging the property; to keep the premises safe and sanitary; to keep plumbing fixtures clean; to dispose of all garbage; to operate fixtures properly; to keep landlord supplied appliances clean and use them properly; to cause no disturbance to neighbors; to allow your landlord reasonable access; to insure that controlled substances are not used on the property.

The obligations of a landlord:

To comply with the standards of housing and health codes; make all repairs and keep the rental premises

in a livable condition, keep all common areas of the premises in a safe and sanitary condition, maintain all electrical plumbing, heating and air conditioning systems, fixtures and appliances that have been supplied or are required to be supplied; provide trash receptacles and remove trash when you own 4 or more units in the same building; supply running water, reasonable amounts of hot water and reasonable heat at all times (the tenant may be required to pay utilities); to terminate the lease of a tenant illegally using controlled substances on the property; not to abuse the right to enter the property; not to change the locks, terminate utility service or remove the belongings of a tenant in an attempt to evict a tenant without a court order; register with the auditor of the county.

This information was taken from the Ohio State Bar Association. For more complete information please refer to their website.

Get More Facts:

For more information about tenant and landlord issues, you may contact:

COHHIO tenant info line:
888-485-7999

Newark Fair Housing:
800-850-0467

Licking County Fair Housing:
740-670-5187

Southeastern OH Legal Services:
740-345-0850

Ohio Bar Association:
www.ohiobar.org

Good-bye and Many Thanks to...

Linda Little, who left LCCH in July after a tenure of 7 years with the Transitional Housing program to assist her parents in transition. A tremendously hard worker who always put her clients first, we will miss her dedication and quiet "get the job done" attitude. We wish her and her family the very best!

Say Hello to..

Carrie Adkins-Hunt, who joined LCCH in August as a Human Services Coordinator with the Transitional Housing program. A former staff member with Behavioral Healthcare Partners and Licking County Juvenile Court, Carrie served as an Adult Probation Officer in Franklin County for five years. We are glad to have her on the team!

Community Supports Veteran House

Thanks to a great response from the community, we are making progress on the renovations of our 7th Street Veterans House. Licking County residents, local businesses and national companies have all contributed to the work that we are doing in the home. Volunteers have stepped up also. Loyal LCCH volunteers ripped up old vinyl flooring and prepped for the painters, Trillium Farms provided a painting crew and two additional events are being

coordinated by United Way of Licking County (United Way Week of Caring) and Park National Bank (PNB Cares) for this fall. Work is under contract for other items on our wish list, and we are on track to have a veteran in the home by the end of the year. You can follow the progress of the project on our Facebook page. And of course, we will have a few "After" photos in our December Home Pages.



Casey Shaffer, LCCH Property Manager, with Anna Garcia and Matthew McKenna on an August 8th work day.



Thanks to the crew from Trillium Farms, who painted interior walls and ceilings.



The living room, bedroom, laundry and bath all have fresh paint. The woodwork and moldings are original. The floors will be refinished.



The 1930s home has unique details in good condition.

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Thanks for Making it Possible!

Sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed to the project:

- The Patricia R. and Herbert J. Murphy Foundation
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I know it's only September, but I suspect that some of you have started your Christmas shopping already. (And you most certainly will have before our December newsletter arrives!) If you are an Amazon shopper, please consider using Amazon Smile for your purchases.

LCCH is a registered beneficiary of the program, which donates a portion of all sales to charity. Simply go to smile.amazon.com and shop as normal. The first time, you will be asked to designate a recipient for the donation. Just select Licking County Coalition for Housing.

It's that simple. After that, LCCH will receive 0.5% of every Amazon Smile purchase you make. And feel free to use it for things other than Christmas gifts, too!

Save
The
Date

November 7, 2015

Our 2015 Home Run 5K is coming soon. See the inside of this newsletter for the registration form or go to www.lcchousing.org/news-releases for an electronic copy. Runners and walkers of all ages are welcome at this family-friendly event.

November 20, 2015

The LCCH 2015 Annual Meeting and Luncheon will be held November 20th at 12:00 PM, at the Double Tree by Hilton in downtown Newark. We hope that you will be able to join us for this yearly celebration. Please follow our website for more information: www.lcchousing.org.

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