

Faith Based and Community Initiatives



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Agriculture

West Haven Community House Food Stamp Program

A Story of Success.

“I had been out of work for about a year. My husband was working but we didn’t have enough money for all the bills,” said Kathleen Brundidge of West Haven, Connecticut.

“We had about \$40 a month to stretch for food. That was clearly not enough.”

The Brundidge family now participates in the Food Stamp Program. “Now I’m able to stretch the dollars further and last month I actually had 89 cents left on my EBT card.”

Brundidge acknowledges the assistance of West Haven Head Start parent worker Pat Trenchard for helping the family connect with the Food Stamp Program. The Brundidge’s youngest son, age 4, participates in the community center school and eats breakfast at the center.

“I know for some people it is a matter of pride and they won’t accept help from anyone,” said Brundidge. “But if you can’t provide for your family, you should accept the help. Don’t think of it as charity think of it as the way you are able to provide for your family until you can find something else.”

How the Initiative is Helping.

The Northeast Regional Office encourages states to partner with faith-based and community organizations to provide Food Stamp Program outreach services. The Connecticut Department of Social Services contracts with two community-based agencies that work closely with faith and community-based organizations to reach underserved populations.

In January 2004 the Connecticut Association for Human Services (CAHS) held a workshop at which Northeast Regional Administrator Frances Zorn spoke about the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. (CAHS works under contract with the Connecticut Department of Social Services to provide community outreach.) Also attending the workshop was Pat Trenchard, a parent coordinator/family outreach worker for the West Haven (Connecticut) Head Start. Trenchard was interested in learning more about the Food Stamp Program.

As a result of the meeting Trenchard maintained frequent contact with CAHS and was able to provide her clients with information about the Food Stamp Program.

The Northeast Region sees the success of this collaboration in the positive impact that food stamps make in the lives of people like the Brundidge family. They participate in the Food Stamp Program now, thanks to the efforts of organizations like the West Haven Head Start and individuals like Pat Trenchard.

Mission.

To facilitate satisfying, healthy, productive, independent and meaningful lives for the people of West Haven.

The Organization.

West Haven Community House is a private, not-for-profit organization that exists to facilitate satisfying, healthy, productive, independent and meaningful lives for the people of West Haven. Programs include Head Start, school age childcare, teen programs, training and employment for

adults with developmental disabilities and residential services for adults with mental retardation.

The cornerstone social service agency of West Haven, the Community House provides services to 1,000 area residents each year.

A social worker founded the West Haven Community House in 1941 to address unmet community needs. Since then, the agency has pioneered many services in West Haven, including Head Start, school age child care programs, training and employment services for adults with developmental disabilities, and services for pregnant and parenting teenagers. The Community House has also established several community-wide coalitions to address West Haven's social needs.

The Community House's Head Start Program provides preschool children from disadvantaged families with the foundation they need to go on to successful experiences in school and life. But it is not just the children who benefit; the organization reaches out to ensure that all family members receive the support and services they need, according to Trenchard.

The Brundidge family is participating in the Food Stamp Program and eating better thanks to Trenchard's personal commitment to food stamp outreach.

Stats.

Year Founded: 1941

Head Start Director:
Linda Michaels

Current Annual Budget:
Approximately \$1.5 million

Number of Clients:
Between 101-300 annually

Contact.

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