CAASTLC Launches Housing Resource Project to Aid Current, Potential and Distressed Homeowners

- By Doug Eller

Berkeley, Missouri – CAASTLC will coordinate over half a million dollars from a variety of federal funding and will bring private resources from partners to Berkeley residents. Funds will support homeowners with home repair through forgivable and low interest loans, assist renters to become homebuyers with special financial incentives, and will help homeowners meet building codes. CAASTLC’s Weatherization Assistance Program will spend an average of $5,333 per qualified home to improve air quality and save energy costs. Some new resources are available for all Berkeley residents and some resources must meet income and other qualifying guidelines.

Resources Include: Home Repair Forgivable Loans from Federal Home Loan Bank Des Moines and will improve homes and qualify homeowners to participate in the Weatherization Assistance Program. Examples of home repairs include mold remediation, roof repair, and removal of hazardous materials such as asbestos and lead. Additionally, Midwest Bank is offering Home Repair Loans up to $5,000 at 1.99% to all qualifying homeowners regardless of income. Funds are to bring homes up to building code standards through St. Louis County administered HUD HOME funds. Homeowners within 200% of federal poverty guidelines living adjacent to the recent Rubicon housing development of new homes may be eligible. The Weatherization Assistance Program will improve energy efficiency and air quality for homeowners and renters with incomes 200% of federal poverty guidelines or below. Weatherization saves average energy costs of $410/yr.

Indoor air quality is the fourth most serious environmental threat facing our nation according to The EPA. Examples of improvements include insulation and reduction of air infiltration of malfunctioning furnaces, and with a doctor’s statement, repair or replacement of air conditioning including central air systems. For more information contact Doug Eller @ (314) 258-6532, deller@caastlc.org.

Doug Eller is the CAASTLC Resource Development Coordinator. Mr. Eller has recently helped obtain funding from USDA for $300,000 to support CAASTLC’s two urban farms. He is also coordinating state-wide for CAASTLC to become a site assisting low-income households to obtain health insurance as part of the Affordable Care Act. Mr. Eller holds his Masters of Social Work and is a field practicum supervisor for graduate students who contribute to CAASTLC’s programs.
Community Gardens Grow Communities  
By Randy Tempel

CAASTLC’s community gardens are some busy places these days. Many gardeners are getting outside to enjoy the nice spring weather. Overland’s Roots to Shoots community garden is growing grapes and beginning a shiitake mushroom group project. Our Bel-Ridge garden club is drawing up plans for a community chicken coop and maybe even a duck hut. Volunteers who help take care of the birds will bring home fresh eggs. Helping Hands garden in Spanish Lake is cleaning up its perennial garden, a pretty centerpiece for the vegetable beds. Castle Point gardeners love fruit. Little blueberries are still purple on the bushes, and melon vines have been nestled into the soil, soon to sprawl out of their beds. Some gardeners are trellising raspberry brambles and heirloom tomatoes. Out west at Manchester’s Mid-east Area Agency on Aging, senior gardeners are occupied using herbs to make chamomile tea and fresh-scented lavender wands. Down south at our Lemay community garden, new gardeners are welcomed amidst a debate about cilantro, onions are walking, and spinach, lettuce, and radishes are going home for fresh salads.

With so much going on, it is important to remember that all this cooperation, and exercise, and constructive focus on tending plants that nourish our families, is creating healthier communities in every sense of the word. When neighborhoods come together to support community gardens, more people have access to fresh nutritious food, more can interact with their neighbors and learn about each other, and more can feel the empowerment that comes with directly creating something real and useful, like dinner for the ones you love.

Randy Tempel
Is CAASTLC’s Community Gardener

For the last several years, Randy has been involved in local organic agriculture, and he works closely with Our Farm Manager Gabriel in piloting the Seeds of Hope Farm Project.
Join one of our community gardens today!

Spanish Lake
Bethany-Peace UCC Children’s Garden, 11952 Bellefontaine Rd.
Helping Hands, St. Peter’s Lutheran Church, 1120 Trampe Ave.
RainTree Apartments, 11143 Starshire Ct.

Castle Point Community Garden, 2465 Baroness Rd.

Hazelwood
Battery Park Memorial Garden, 6041 N. Lindbergh Blvd.

Lemay
Lemay Community Garden, 301 Kayser Ave.
Mid-east Area Agency on Aging, 225 Lemay Ferry Rd.

Bel-Ridge Community Garden, 8612 Wales Rd.

Overland:
Roots to Shoots Community Garden, 2830 W. Milton Ave.

Manchester
Mid-east Area Agency on Aging, 14535 Manchester Rd.

Wellston
More Than Carpentry Community Garden, 1259 Stephen Jones Ave.

CAASTLC’s first annual Food Desert Open, a golf fundraiser held at Innsbrook Resort, was successfully held on Saturday, May 4th! Many thanks to Tom Herbig of Webster Groves for organizing such a fun and impacting event. Thanks also to Whole Foods Market-Town & Country, and Schlafly Beer for their sponsorship. $1500 was raised to build our first community chicken coops in Bel-Ridge and beyond! Be sure to follow our success, and get involved, by visiting our website www.seedsofhopefarm.org.
Could you survive a month in poverty?

32.9 million Americans, 11.7 million of whom are children under the age of 18, live in poverty every day.

Many more have incomes above the poverty line, but their incomes are still low enough to qualify for programs like Food Stamps and Medicaid.

It is difficult for those of us who have enough to truly understand the situations that families living in poverty experience every day. That is why we are inviting you to walk a mile in their shoes.

We invite you to participate in a poverty simulation to be held:

**Tuesday, July 9, 2013**
6:30 pm – 9:30 pm

Harvester Christian Church
2950 Kings Crossing
St. Charles, MO 63303

If you would like to participate in our poverty simulation please RSVP to:

The Sparrow’s Nest Maternity Home
636.336-2534

**Saturday, August 3, 2013**

Caroline Mission
2828 Caroline St.
St. Louis, MO 63104

If you would like to participate in our poverty simulation please RSVP to:

Neighborhood Houses
314.773.1107
Summer is a time to shed the winter blues and get outdoors and play around in the sunshine. Thoughts turn to picnics in the park and backyard barbecues. Even the tastes of summer in terms of food selection are usually different than what we think of when Old Man winter is sitting on the front porch.

During winter months we tend to eat more and make less healthy food choices, so it stands to reason that in the summer we tend to eat less, and on average, decide on healthier food options. A greater abundance and better selection of fresh fruits and vegetables also accompany a warm summer. Most people are unaware the body craves nutrients more so than calories, which means if you consume foods high in nutrients (protein, vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates, water) you won’t be as hungry.

The good news is that making better food choices in the summer leads to less weight gain in general, and positive strides toward curbing obesity. There is a downside to summer food consumption, unfortunately. Running out and picking up fast food for lunch or dinner is a lot more convenient when you don’t have the harsh winter elements to contend with. And who wants to do a lot of cooking in the summer, when having a bob (bag of burgers) for dinner is a lot simpler, and cheaper.

Fast food chains have done an effective job marketing fast food as a suitable family meal planning alternative. It’s fast, cheap, delicious, and you get plenty of it. Order one large pizza get a second pizza of equal value free; the dollar menu, where everything’s hot off the grill or out of the grease for a buck; the Monster Thick-burger, with enough beef, bacon, and cheese hanging off the sides to conquer any appetite; the Crave Case, with stacks of tasty miniature burgers to feed half a city block, well, a slight exaggeration, but you get the point.

These sort of marketing campaigns have been geared toward low-income households, where feeding a family on a tight budget is the primary selling point. What these menu items may lack in nutritional value is a concern few in low income communities can afford to worry about.

The shift in the past couple of decades to the consumption of relatively inexpensive to-go meals, delivered without the hassle of having to actually stand in front of a stove, has contributed to the steady rise in obesity, particularly among teenagers.

Since we all know the burger and pizza joints who hock their menu items will never admit publically they’re doing a disservice to an increasingly overweight society, maybe these same food chains, rather than simply touting how affordably mouth watering and filling their food is, could throw in a public service announcement.

In their commercials, right after they finish telling us about the gargantuan proportions of delectable food we can get for pocket change, it wouldn’t hurt to mention something about the importance of exercise to work off those hearty meals.

Sure, since the likelihood of that happening is perhaps not in any marketing plan, the summertime would be a good time to make time for healthier meal time.
It’s Never Too Late For Education

By Keith Robinson

It began when our coordinator of Family Case Management, Chris Boyd, asked to speak with me about the new programs we have in our youth case management department. Ms. Boyd inquired about any programs we may have that can help a client’s son, who is a 17 year old drop-out student with some legal issues. I immediately contacted the mother and asked for a meeting with her and her son to discuss his issues and possible ways that CAASTLC could assist him. After meeting with Ms. Turner and her son, Antoine, I referred their family to legal services. I also referred them to a private attorney because of the nature of the crimes he committed and possible jail time he was facing. While talking to Antoine, I discovered that he was not a bad young man or a lost cause, but has had a lack of positive male guidance while transitioning from a boy to a young man. While Antoine was going through his criminal court case, I advised Antoine to enroll in our Ritenours’ “Pathways to the Future” GED program. Antoine enrolled in “Pathways” in October to begin his new lease on life. In the program, Antoine attended a weekly “Life Skills” class in which he was able to improve on his communication skills, peer pressure, and conflict resolution. Antoine also attended a weekly job readiness class where he created a resume’, developed interviewing skills, and completed online job searches. Antoine also met with a Case Manager and Counselor, weekly, to discuss issues or barriers that may hinder him from accomplishing his goals. On April 5, 2013, Antoine passed the GED test and received his GED (high school equivalence certificate). Antoine is now in the process of enrolling in the Nelly’s Extreme Institute, at Vatterott, to pursue a degree in Recording Engineering and Media. Antoine was such a good student who displayed change and perseverance, he was voted by the “Pathways” staff to be the guest speaker, representing “Pathway to the Future” program at the Ritenour Adult Education and Literacy graduation. In closing, Antoine stated that, “This program was a Wonderful experience for me; it gave me a chance to meet new people and helped me develop skills that I will use in the work force. This program is great for people who have trouble, staying out of trouble; the staff here makes it hard to lose track of your goals.”

GED Graduate Antoine Turner receiving his Diploma from Superintendent of Ritenour School District.

Keith Robinson
He is a graduate of Lincoln Univ.
He is a Youth Case Manager, serving Schools in St. Louis County, he sits on The Head Start Policy Council for The YWCA, Manager/Head Baseball Coach- Florissant Valley American Legion Post 44, Umpire/ Volunteer Football & Baseball Coach Matthews-Dickey Boys & Girls Club.

CAASTLC Case Manager Keith Robinson with his GED Graduate Antoine Turner.
CAASTLC in Action
A few months ago, CAASTLC personnel embarked upon a fitness journey; we called it the “CAASTLC Fitness Challenge”. Surprisingly, a large amount of the employee population participated— including me. We were split into two teams and two of our most fit and healthy lifestyle connoisseurs were our team captains. Kathi Lucas-Johnson was captain of the Red Team, and David Barnes was captain of the blue team. Some of us wanted to gain weight, some of us had goals of losing weight, others of us just wanted to maintain our current weight and BMI’s. We all were engaged; we even picked up new teammates along the way. During the challenge, each team met with captains once a week and discussed goals and got on the scales. We checked our weight and progress consistently. The Wellness Committee even gave out healthy snacks and posted healthy initiatives periodically.

By the end of the challenge, everyone had in some way improved and made steps toward given goals. The “CAASTLC Fitness Challenge” was a success. The individuals that wanted to lose weight, lost; those that wanted to gain— gained, and those that wanted to maintain had in fact maintained. As a result, all personnel at the agency are more geared toward healthy initiatives and eating. We are still making and conquering our healthy lifestyle goals. Some of us may slip occasionally and fall for that cupcake— but overall we remember and get back to our Initiatives.

Chelcey is a Graduate of Lincoln University of Missouri (L.U.). She works in Human Resources, Public Relations, and also assists with Marketing the Community Supported Agriculture. She sits on various Committees and is a very active member in her community & her Faith-Based Organization. She is currently an MA Candidate at Webster University.
STAND DOWN/STAND-UP
What’s Up, What’s Down  By Rich Kreuger

STAND DOWN?  In times of war, exhausted combat units requiring time to rest and recover were removed from the battlefields to a place of Relative security and safety. At secure base camp areas, troops were able to take care of personal hygiene, get clean uniforms, enjoy warm meals, receive medical and dental care, mail and receive letters and enjoy the camaraderie of friends in a safe environment.

Today, Stand Down refers to a grassroots, community based intervention program designed to help the nation’s estimated 107,000 homeless veterans on any given night “combat” life on the streets. Homeless veterans are brought together in a single location for one to three days and are provided access to the community resources needed to begin addressing their individual problems and rebuilding their lives. In the military, Stand Down afforded battle weary soldiers the opportunity to renew their spirit, health and overall sense of well-being.

Today’s Stand Down affords the same opportunity to homeless our veterans. This fiscal year two Stand Down events have been held in the St. Louis Area. The first was held on November third, at the Soldiers Memorial complex. More than two hundred homeless veterans were assisted with various services ranging from legal help to dental checkups and follow up on all programs. Volunteers from more than twenty area service agencies were involved in providing and caring for the homeless.

The second Stand Down was held recently on April twentieth at the Soldiers Memorial complex where 236 veterans were assisted with legal, medical, dental, mental and employment issues. In addition haircuts were available for veterans and a hot meal was provided for veterans and volunteers. Thirty four military and civilian agencies provided more than eighty volunteers for the project.

STAND UP for Women Veterans:  The purpose if this event is to focus the St. Louis community’s efforts on women-specific veterans needs in the St. Louis Metropolitan area. There are three mail goals of this event: 1. Outreach to female veterans in the community.  2. Public awareness of female of female veterans’ needs.  3. Conduct a needs-assessment to help VA and the community agencies better focus on services to meet the needs of this underserved community.

Stand Up for Women Veterans Community and participants included a variety of representatives including, Catholic Charities Veterans Advocacy Project, St. Louis City and County DHS, CAASTLC, St. Louis University Law Clinic, Windsor Transitional Housing, St. Louis Vets Center, St. Patrick’s Center. Dress for Success, Paul Mitchell School, Scott AFB, Veteran Representatives from Missouri, Representatives of Congressman Clay and Representatives for Senator McCaskill and veterans. More than 90 female veterans participated in the event and the survey.

Rich Krueger; Energy Conservation/Education Outreach Coordinator CAASTLC Rich is a Viet Nam Era Air Force Veteran. He attended the University of Michigan, Central Missouri State and the University of Missouri, Kansas City, MO. He has worked for CAASTLC serving in many energy and food insecurity prevention capacities.
Why Millennials Flunk Interviews

“Smart Phones and Dumb Mistakes Equals No Job” By James Ingram

Are you concerned that the overly casual, social media-driven and text messaging-obsessed behavior of our youth and young adults will ultimately limit their employability in today’s ever-competitive job market? You may have good reason for concern, if employment experts’ observations are to be believed. According to a recent article, by Paul Davidson in USA Today, human resource professionals are complaining about bizarre behavior on the part of many millennial college grads who, despite their degrees and academic expertise, are flunking their job interviews because of generational quirks which have become commonplace. These millennials or “Generation Y” (ages 18 to 34), while tech savvy and with smart phones literally velcroed to their hands, are blowing golden job opportunities because they lack what was once thought to be common sense, with respect to interviewing etiquette. As Mara Swan, executive vice president of staffing for Manpower, says: “Life has gotten more casual (but) they don’t realize (the interview) is a sales event.” Jaime Fall, vice president of the HR Policy Association, echoes Swan’s sentiments and further adds that about one in five recent college grads are guilty of exhibiting self-sabotaging behavior at job interviews. Some of those “quirky” behaviors consist of receiving phone calls and sending text messages during interviews, dressing inappropriately (flip flops, casual attire, etc.) and even bringing their parents (with them) to their interview. These unthinkable behaviors may actually be the fault of their “Baby Boomer” parents, who have coddled their millennial offspring, told them that they are “Perfect just the way they are” or “Do whatever you are comfortable doing”, according to Fall. These “helicopter parents” have, to an extent, bred a generation of job seekers who, because of their incessant tweets, texts and detached interpersonal relationships, have limited social and communication skills. It has become so bad that approximately 50% of HR executives, according to a recent survey by the Center for Professional Excellence at York College of Pennsylvania, say that most college grads are not professional during their first year on the job. Employment expert Darnell Clarke, author of “Employmentology”, suggests that if something isn’t done, given the dominance of the baby boom generation in the workplace (who are prolonging retirement for another 10-15 years) the millennial generation could soon become the “unemployed generation”. Parents, educators and universities must begin to re-emphasize the soft skills and social skills that have become as passé as an old VCR in a DVD world. Otherwise, children will continue to move, en masse, from their college dorm rooms back to the safety and security of their parent’s nests.
Living within your means is definitely possible. Often, it's just a matter of making different choices. Most of us spend a significant amount of money on everyday items. Here are some suggested ways to save money on food, clothing, and transportation costs. Soon, you'll discover your own solutions, and living within your means will become a habit.

This program is funded 100% at $1,051,546.00 with federal funds received from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) provided by the Missouri Department of Social Services, Family Support Division.

---

**Summer Job Fair**

Thursday, July 25, 2013
11:00 am-2:00pm
St. Louis Community College
Florissant Valley
Multipurpose Room
3400 Pershall Rd. 63135

For More Information Contact:
James Ingram (314)446-4431 or e-mail:jingram@caastlc.org
13 Tips to Beat the Heat

- Stay indoors and, if at all possible, stay in an air-conditioned place.
- Don't leave babies, children, or pets in cars. Not even for a short time. Heat can kill quickly.
- Drink more fluids. If your doctor has limited your fluid intake or if you're taking "water pills" (diuretics), check with your doctor first.
- Don't drink liquids containing alcohol or lots of sugar. Those drinks may make you lose more body fluid.
- Avoid very cold drinks, which can cause stomach cramps.
- If you sweat heavily, you may need to replace salt and minerals. A sports beverage may help, but if you're on a low-salt diet, talk with your doctor before drinking sports drinks or taking salt tablets.
- When you're at home, wear as little clothing as possible. Choose lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing.
- If you have to be outside, try to limit your outdoor activity to morning and evening hours, and try to rest in shady areas.
- If you must go outside, wear sunscreen, a wide-brimmed hat, and eyeglasses.
- Pace yourself. Stop all activity if your heart pounds or you gasp for breath in the heat.
- Use a buddy system if you're working in the heat. Look out for your co-workers and have someone do the same for you.
- Check up on high-risk people, including kids, senior citizens, and people who are ill. Visit at-risk adults at least twice daily. Babies and kids need much more frequent checks.
- Provide your pets with plenty of fresh water in a shady area.