



# 2005 Annual Report

Skagit County Community Action Agency

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### **The Community Action Promise**

*Community Action changes people's lives,  
embodies the spirit of hope,  
improves communities,  
and makes America a better place to live.*

*We care about the entire community and  
we are dedicated to helping people  
help themselves and each other.*

# INTRODUCTION

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Skagit County Community Action Agency (SCCAA) is part of a nationwide network that was established under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 to fight poverty at the local level. There are approximately one thousand other organizations like ours in the nation, and thirty-one here in our state serving every county in Washington. Community Action Partnerships are known for being the preeminent community building, human services delivery and low-income advocacy network in America. These locally-governed bodies are charged with creating, coordinating, and delivering a broad array of community-driven programs and services to low-income persons with the goal of creating self-sufficiency.

SCCAA was established in 1979 and has operated continuously, growing as community needs and resources with which to address those needs are identified. It operates under an eighteen member board of directors, equally comprised of representatives from the private, public, and client sectors. Staffing varies between 80-90 employees, depending on the time of the year and specific projects. SCCAA is an active member of the Community Action Partnership at both the state and national level.

SCCAA provides a broad scope of services, ranging from emergency shelter to legal services. While providing direct services through programming designed in conjunction with our Low-Income Needs Assessment is SCCAA's main activity, networking and coordinating with other providers, government, and various private and public organizations to promote services is equally important. Partnerships with private and public associations such as the local Bar Association, Skagit Valley College, and United Way are key to leveraging additional resources that, in turn, increase the level of services for low-income persons.

Mount Vernon serves as the hub of our activities, with the agency's administrative office and its core services housed in two buildings at the Family Resource Center at 330 Pacific Place. A four-apartment emergency family shelter is also located in Mount Vernon. In Concrete, we share office space with county offices and a community library at the East County Community Resource Center. We host a satellite WIC/MSS office at Whidbey Island Naval Air Station's Fleet and Family Services Center in Oak Harbor. In this report, you will read about our unique service delivery that fans throughout Skagit County – Mobile Dental Van and Food Express services, nearly 50 transitional housing units interspersed in several communities, weekly WIC clinics at an Island Hospital facility, and literacy centers housed in schools and other community settings.



*Skagit County Community Action's Main Office Campus  
at the Family Resource Center in Mount Vernon*



*Our East County Office is housed in the  
Community Resource Center in Concrete*

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## ***President***

**Jim Meyer**, General Manager  
Cascadian Home Farm

## ***Vice-President***

**Ray Trzynka**, Community Relations Manager  
Puget Sound Energy

## ***Treasurer***

**Tim Holloran**, Director  
Skagit County Senior Services

## ***Secretary***

**Jerry Kaufman**, Commissioner  
Port of Skagit County

## ***Members***

Ted Anderson, Commissioner  
Skagit County

Amy Berryman, Director  
Alger Food Bank

Carl Bruner, Superintendent  
Mount Vernon School District

Ken Dahlstedt, Commissioner  
Skagit County

Dan Gould, retired

Nancy Ivarinen, Attorney

Leon John, Councilmember  
Swinomish Tribe

Ted Meamber, Councilmember  
City of Sedro Woolley

Ian Munce, Planning Director  
City of Anacortes

Don Munks, Commissioner  
Skagit County

Bud Norris, Mayor  
City of Mount Vernon

Nancy Wolke, Administrator  
DSHS-CSO

## ***Alternates***

Maile Acoba, Director  
Skagit County Human Services

Peter Browning, Director  
Skagit County Health Dept.

Norma Brummett, Auditor  
Skagit County

John Cheney, Councilmember  
Mount Vernon City Council

Lorry D'Arienzo, Sourcing Assistant  
Small Planet Foods

Sharon Dillon, Mayor  
City of Sedro Woolley

Robert Hart, retired

Steve Hayes, Social Work Supervisor  
DSHS-CSO

Helen Hodgins, retired  
Alger Food Bank

Mark Leander, Assessor  
Skagit County

Donna Mixon, Legal Assistant

Steve Schutt, Attorney

John Stephens, Program Admin.  
Swinomish Tribe

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In 2005, SCCAA continued helping people improve their lives and strengthen their community. Our many services help more than a fifth of our county's population as they work to overcome hunger, poverty, and homelessness, and to develop lasting self-sufficiency. In response to increasing need in our community and shrinking federal and state assistance, we are forming strategic alliances and partnerships with other local agencies, business and governments to maintain much needed services.

The 2005 Low-Income Needs Assessment was published this summer. Topping the list of high priority needs with lower availability was affordable housing, followed by health and dental care. The percentage of low-income households using some type of food assistance programs increased sharply from 56% in 2000 to 85% in 2005. This document provides a clear view of the current status and emerging trends in the needs of low-income people in Skagit County.

Our dedicated Board and staff continue to work toward solutions to these growing needs:

- The Emergency Family Shelter Expansion Project continued to develop and looks toward ground breaking and construction start-up in Summer 2006. The purchase of the adjoining property and dissolution of the boundary line will allow us to expand our existing facilities and enhance service capacity through the planned common area. We have also entered into discussions with state government to acquire the Southfield property in La Conner to expand our transitional housing capacity and offer more affordable housing in the county.
- Basic Food Education and Assistance and our continuing support to local Food Banks gets food to hungry people and provides nutritional literacy. The groundwork was laid for submitting a Community Food Project grant request to the United States Department of Agriculture in Spring 2006. Partnering with County Government, the Economic Development Association of Skagit County, Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland, and local business, we are already helping facilitate food stamp use at farmers markets and in developing plans for a countywide food bank distribution center. Through this program we are working to provide fresh local food to our low-income population and new marketing opportunities to our local farmers.
- The Literacy Program completed its start-up five-year funding cycle by securing a variety of additional funding, including securing significant partnerships with local school districts, allowing us to continue this important program. Our programs, like our clients, need to develop lasting self-sufficiency. Partnering with others, we can overcome obstacles.

I am delighted and honored to be working with such a strong, dedicated Board and the wonderful, professional staff at Skagit County Community Action Agency.

James A. Meyer  
President, SCCAA Board of Directors

# FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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As always, it is a pleasure to present Skagit County Community Action Agency's Annual Report to the community. 2005 has been an exciting time of productive change and growth for SCCAA.

Following several months of hard work, we finally completed and published our 2005 Low-Income Needs Assessment. The information contained in this document should serve our agency and the community-at-large well for the next few years. We also relocated several programs and services into the adjacent Litchman building, which added much-needed space, especially for our vital literacy program which faces increasing demands.

As noted throughout this report, we added new services and expanded many others, most accomplished by strengthening existing partnerships and creating new ones. SCCAA firmly believes that building strong partnerships is a basic strategy for expanding resources with which to better serve low-income families. We will continue to seek new partnerships within and outside of Skagit County, commensurate with our mission of helping families overcome barriers and become self-sufficient.

As one peruses the pages of this report, there appears to be much to celebrate. However, while we accomplished much, there is still so much to do. We at Community Action look forward to the challenge ahead with conviction that the combined efforts of our outstanding staff, our Board of Directors, the many dedicated volunteers and strong community partners, we'll create an even stronger force against poverty in Skagit County in the coming years.

I wish to personally thank staff, our Board of Directors, and all other supporters of SCCAA's work. I especially want to acknowledge our great volunteers. While we have close to 100 paid employees, it is incredible to realize that nearly 900 volunteers logged a total of 130,570 hours on behalf of Community Action. No wonder we can accomplish so much in a year's time. I also wish to note the work of President Jim Meyer and the rest of our remarkable Board of Directors for their hard work and fine leadership this past year. A very warm thank you to all!

William J. Shuler  
Executive Director

# SERVICES SUMMARY

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SCCAA assisted over 25,000 unduplicated individuals from more than 7,000 families.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- **Volunteer Center** generated 33,802 volunteer hours in the community and placed 162 volunteers in various non-profit agencies in the community

## CRISIS INTERVENTION SERVICES

- **Community Voice Mail** enabled 210 households to maintain important links with support systems by providing access to voice mail boxes
- **Critical Needs** helped 8,809 individuals get through emergencies with \$42,761 in assistance
- **East County Services** helped 465 clients with energy assistance, gas vouchers, food and other urgent needs
- **Energy Assistance** helped keep 2,095 households warm with \$739,515.59 in heating assistance
- **Holiday Family Adoptions** provided 14 families with food and gift baskets for the Fall/Winter holidays
- **Homeless Child Care** served 6 families, with 12 children, giving homeless parents time to search for jobs, housing, and go to medical appointments in the fourth quarter start-up
- **Kinship Care Support Services** served 25 grandparents and other relatives with urgent needs such as housing, food, clothing, school supplies, and transportation
- **Mobile Food Express** provided 125 homebound families with regular food deliveries
- **Veterans Assistance** served 266 veteran households (675 individuals) with \$122,115 in assistance
- **Volunteer Chore** volunteers provided 3,817 hours of service to 360 elderly, disabled, or homebound individuals
- **Volunteer Lawyer Program** worked on 314 cases and provided pro bono legal services worth \$128,200. An additional 111 domestic violence victims received services to help them achieve safety and stability

## EDUCATION SERVICES

- **Literacy Programs** helped 77 community volunteers provide 4,049 tutoring hours to 549 adult learners and 193 children to realize their dreams of improved job opportunities, self-sufficient family management, increased success in school, and active citizenship

## HEALTH SERVICES

- **Breastfeeding Support Services** enabled 252 infants to receive optimal nutrition and health benefits from breast milk with the use of electric breast pumps
- **Maternity Support Services** worked with 424 women and 339 infants to help ensure healthy birth outcomes and improved family functioning
- **Medical Assistance** helped 139 individuals with \$4,183.37 in assistance
- **SHIBA Program** volunteers provided 3,110 hours of service, counseled 312 individuals, and processed 670 “quick calls” to help resolve health insurance problems and Part D Medicare enrollments through services of 14 volunteers
- **Skagit Mobile Dental Van** provided 1,018 dental procedures, valued at \$110,332 to 286 unduplicated individuals by 26 volunteer dentists, hygienists, and certified dental assistants
- **WIC Program** provided 6,074 unduplicated women, infants, and children with food vouchers totaling \$2,202,864. \$27,410 worth of farmers market checks were distributed through our program

## HOUSING SERVICES

- **Emergency Family Shelter** provided 7,594 bed nights to 132 families (327 individuals) at our family shelter and at local motels
- **Homeless Prevention** helped 17 households (71 individuals) to secure permanent housing
- **Transitional Housing** enrolled 56 families (158 individuals) in Transitional Housing, 18 of whom “graduated” to permanent housing, and 1 of whom bought their own home



# OUR MISSION

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Skagit County Community Action Agency (SCCAA) fosters economic self-sufficiency among low-income people in Skagit County by facilitating and providing emergency and goal-oriented interventions in a cost-effective manner.

SCCAA will:

- Optimize agency capacity to respond to customers' needs by accessing all available resources and establishing collaborative community partnerships
- Optimize family development through empowerment of families in their effort to overcome existing social and economic barriers
- Optimize a sense of community for families and the community by sharing responsibility, cooperatively solving problems, and recognizing social, cultural, and economic diversity

# A CLIENT SUCCESS

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## *From Homelessness to Hope*

"Sherry" (not her real name), a recovering addict and a single-parent mother of two young sons, entered our housing program 2½ years ago. The family was initially placed in the Emergency Family Shelter, and moved into a transitional apartment a short time later. When Sherry entered our program, she did not have a high school diploma and was working part-time as a bartender. Legal issues barred her from entering Whatcom County. While in Transitional Housing, she completed her GED and was able to enter Skagit Valley College's Carpentry Apprenticeship Program. She recently graduated from that program with honors, and was employed in a full-time carpentry position with a local contractor. Earlier this year, Sherry appeared in court and gained permission to enter Whatcom County. Unable to find an attorney to represent her, she met with Community Action's staff attorney and obtained advice on how to proceed without one. Sherry stood before the prosecuting attorney alone and was able to win back the right to enter Whatcom County. Through it all, she has remained clean and sober, which has prompted other positive outcomes. After "graduating" from our housing program late this past Summer, she and her sons moved to a rental home in Bellingham. Sherry was accepted at Western Washington University, where she began classes this past Fall. Along with Community Action's family development and housing support, our agency's Legal, Financial Literacy, and Community Voice Mail programs all served Sherry, working together to help her move toward achieving the level of self-sufficiency that she has today, and hope for a bright future.

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# WORDS OF THANKS

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"Nearly a year ago, I was staying at a domestic violence shelter. I had entered the shelter for obvious reasons. I had nowhere to go and my future was frightening as I was raising my three beautiful children. My domestic violence advisor gave me the address to Skagit County Community Action. I made contact with a caseworker. The help, concern, and care I received was a miracle. To make a long story short, I was given a beautiful home to raise my three children and a chance to advance in life. With this opportunity, I have gained confidence in myself. I am able to make goals, meet them and above all maintain them. While receiving help with my housing costs, I have been able to pay my bills and take care of past troubles, and most importantly spend quality time with my children. This program has enabled me to live life in so many positive avenues. I now have a job to live up to and a future that allows the luxury to hope. This amazing program [Housing Program] has become a part of my life that I will always cherish."

"I'm going from having nothing to having something to eat tonight. I appreciate it more than I can show."

"Now we don't have to stress so much about how high our power bill is. Thank you."

"I am writing to thank you for helping me in January through the Skagit County Community Action Agency veterans' office. After making contact and arrangements with you, I obtained vouchers for car repair and motel stay. . . . your action of assistance at a crucial point in time returned to me the basics of transportation. I thank you and the veterans' office very much for relieving my personal extremity and putting me back on the road again."

"Thank you so much for the school supplies and backpack for my son. Many thanks also to the people who make this program possible. You'll never know how much each item really adds up when trying to support a family on your own."

"I enjoyed the fact that my husband could be part of the [MSS] program and have his questions answered as well. He does not make it to the doctor appointments, so this was a wonderful way to help him learn and feel involved . . . . No matter what the problem she [MSS RN] had a helpful answer. In the beginning I was shy and unsure about breastfeeding, but now I am recommending it to everyone. I truly believe this program has given me a healthier child. Thank you so much!"

"I think you do a good job at serving my needs, very helpful, thanks! It [Critical Needs] has helped me to get around to look for a job, and a home to live at."

"I was not made to feel embarrassed or degraded. Treated with respect. [Energy Assistance] Reps went out of their way to help me and my kids. Good experience!"

"It was awesome. We were able to get lots of info and lots of vegetables and fruits. I would love to have vouchers again next year." -- WIC client referring to the Farmer's Market

"The man did an excellent job of a lift for a chair. My husband has a hard time getting up and walking, it really helped. I don't have enough words to thank you for this service. Being 86 and living on a fixed income, all helps. Thank you."

"Just a note to express my appreciation and to thank you very much for helping me find a ride home to Everett from the hospital. I was very much impressed by your speedy response to my needs."

# COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION

Poverty is complex, and ending poverty on the community, family, or individual level requires more than just a band-aid approach. Our Community Services Division provides a wide variety of services, delivered holistically, following the principles of family development. Many Community Services staff members are Family Development Specialists, certified through the Washington State Community Action Partnership.

Whether responding to immediate necessities or working more extensively with families to address barriers, set goals, and plan for the future, our programs work together to help clients stabilize their lives and move toward a better future.



## CRISIS INTERVENTION SERVICES

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### COMMUNITY VOICE MAIL

Community Voice Mail provides access to a personal phone messaging system that allows homeless families or low-income people without a phone in their home to establish a vital link to messages that affect their lives, such as job searches, house hunting, and scheduling medical appointments.

SCCAA manages 300 phone numbers that are distributed to 16 agencies throughout Skagit County. These agencies are:

- Catholic Community Services NW
- Compass Health
- Displaced Homemaker Program, SVC
- DSHS, Community Services Division
- Emerson School
- Evergreen AIDS Foundation
- Friendship House
- Head Start, Sedro Woolley
- Oasis Teen Shelter, Skagit Valley YMCA
- OIC
- Salvation Army
- Skagit County Human Services

- Skagit Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Services
- Washington State Employment Security Department
- Work Now Services
- Youthnet

In 2005, our Community Voice Mail program provided crucial messaging services to a total of 210 people.

Of the 210 people who received Community Voice Mail services in 2005,

- 180 obtained contact with a personal support system
- 148 obtained contact with a social service provider
- 120 obtained access or links to services
- 81 obtained contact with a medical service provider
- 43 obtained contact with their child's school or child care
- 26 obtained contact with a legal service provider

## **CRITICAL NEEDS**

A joint effort among community churches, city governments, United Way, and other private donors, our Critical Needs program assists low-income individuals who require immediate services when no resources are available. Emergency help in the form of food, clothing, transportation, and other essential commodities is provided through direct assistance and referrals.

In 2005, our Critical Needs program received 19,466 requests for assistance. Out of those requests, we served 8,809 individuals, in 2,932 households, with \$42,761 in assistance:

- 979 gas vouchers were provided to clients so they could get to work or other scheduled appointments
- 650 food vouchers were provided to people in a time of need
- 156 clothing vouchers were provided so clients could obtain the clothing they needed for work, school, or simply to stay warm
- 288 vouchers for other critical needs – medical supplies, bus tickets, household items – were provided

Among its many seasonal activities, our Critical Needs program partners with the Boeing Corporation each fall to provide low-income families with 300 free backpacks stocked with back-to-school supplies. The Salvation Army provided \$600 for additional school supplies.

## **EAST COUNTY SERVICES**

Our East County satellite office, located in the East County Community Resource Center on Main Street in Concrete, provides basic services including critical needs assistance, legal assistance, and fuel assistance.

Our East County office assisted 465 clients with their needs in 2005:

- 229 families received \$102,634 in direct assistance for their energy bills
- 275 households received Basic Food Education
- 123 households received gasoline vouchers so they could get to work or other scheduled appointments

- 53 households received food in a time of need
- 6 people acquired a SKAT bus pass
- 7 households received help for a variety of other urgent needs

## **ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

### **Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program**

LIHEAP provides funds to help pay heating expenses for low-income households. Benefits are based on household size, income, and housing type. Funds are awarded to provide payments for an eligible household's primary source of heat – electric, gas, wood, propane, oil. Average assistance in 2005 was \$387.16 per household.

Through LIHEAP in 2005:

- 1,366 households received a total of \$486,084.48 to secure and maintain their heating sources and ease the financial burden of winter heating costs on the household budget

### **Puget Sound Energy Program**

The PSE program assists low-income Puget Sound Energy customers with their electric bills. Because this fund can be accessed by families with incomes that are 150% of the federal poverty guidelines, SCCAA can assist more "working poor" families. Average assistance in 2005 was \$368.78 per household.

Through the PSE program in 2005:

- 659 households received a total of \$243,023.91 to assist with their electricity bills

### **Cascade Natural Gas Winter Help Fund**

Funds provided by Cascade Natural Gas assist low-income households with emergency natural gas heating expenses. Average assistance in 2005 was \$154.49 per household.

Through the Winter Help Fund in 2005:

- 35 households received a total of \$5,407.20 to assist with costs of natural gas heating

### **Salvation Army Warm Home Fund**

Funds provided by Salvation Army and Puget Sound Energy assist low-income households

with Puget Sound Energy emergency electricity expenses. Average assistance in 2005 was \$142.86 per household.

Through the Warm Home Fund in 2005:

- 35 households received a total of \$5,000

## FOOD ACCESS

*Washington State is ranked as the 11<sup>th</sup> hungriest and food insecure states in the nation*

## BASIC FOOD EDUCATION

A recent study found 59% of Skagit County's eligible residents are receiving Basic Food Assistance. This is a dramatic increase from previous years. However, 41% of Skagit County residents eligible for Basic Food Assistance have yet to access this important program, which has a significant impact on hunger and nutrition in our county. We continue our efforts to deliver information and assistance to individuals and aid them in the eligibility and application process.

Working closely with DSHS and other partner agencies in 2005,

- 6,022 unduplicated households received Basic Food Education, and 1,673 of these households completed and submitted applications for Basic Food Assistance.

## EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

SCCAA continues to provide support to Skagit County food banks as the lead agency for the state's Emergency Food Assistance Program. Funds are channeled through SCCAA to ten food banks in Skagit County. As the lead agency, SCCAA acts as the liaison between the state and the local food banks, providing food banks with technical assistance and helping to guide local efforts to end hunger.

During the 2004-2005 program year,

- 2,255,442 pounds of food were distributed to 35,608 people in the county, with a total of 236,617 food bank visits

## MOBILE FOOD EXPRESS

The Mobile Food Express Program serves low-income homebound individuals and families throughout Skagit County, including Anacortes, Burlington, the East County community, Mount Vernon, and Sedro Woolley. The program partners with the Anacortes 100 Food Bank, Helping Hands Food Bank, Neighbors in Need Food Bank, Salvation Army Food Bank, and the View Crest Food Pantry to bring nutritious food to the homes of elderly, disabled, and homebound adults and families. This program utilizes the help of many volunteers and we are very appreciative of their commitment to alleviating hunger in Skagit County.



In 2005, Mobile Food Express branched out to serve our clients in a more comprehensive way. In addition to providing clients with food on a regular basis, we also provided an in-home connection to these programs:

- Basic Food: we provided Basic Food outreach to homebound adults to ensure that they could access this important resource
- Basic Food Nutrition Program: we offered in-home educational sessions regarding nutrition, as well as provided creative recipes that utilize the foods that are often included in the Mobile Food Express deliveries
- Energy Assistance: Mobile Food Express made it easier for home-bound adults and seniors to access energy assistance by bringing the services to them in their own homes
- Volunteer Chore: Mobile Food Express volunteers and staff connected our clients with this much-needed program to help

them with their daily chores and transportation needs.

In addition to these services, we helped break the loneliness and isolation that many homebound people experience through acting as a link to a broader community of support.

Through the Mobile Food Express in 2005,

- 33,234 pounds of food were distributed to low-income people throughout Skagit County
- Out of 140 requests for assistance, 125 households, comprised of 176 individuals, received assistance
  - 72% of these households were disabled
  - 47% of these households were elderly
  - 8% of these households were families with children
- 65 volunteers helped with the program, contributing a total of 325 volunteer hours. Some of the volunteer projects included:
  - The Washington Reading Corps team held a food drive in Burlington and Mount Vernon, which brought in nearly 400 pounds of food
  - Washington State's Department of Labor and Industries office in Mount Vernon contributed nearly 200 pounds of food through an office food drive
  - Skippers Restaurant donated clam chowder and cheese cakes
  - Alaskan Ocean / At-Sea Processing donated 4 cases of salmon burgers to the program

### **HOLIDAY FAMILY PROGRAMS**

In an effort to help low-income families celebrate the Fall and Winter holidays, SCCAA coordinates a family adoption program. Local businesses and agencies are given the opportunity to provide food baskets with complete holiday dinners and gifts for members of adopted families.

SCCAA also partnered with Skagit Valley Herald and SeaMar to host and coordinate a Christmas party for low-income families. With numerous community donations, over 1,000 adults and children left the party with Christmas gifts and goodies for each family member.

During the 2005 Thanksgiving Holiday 'Adoption',

- 4 families, comprised of 25 individuals, were provided with food and fixings for a complete Thanksgiving dinner
- Sponsors of the Thanksgiving Holiday 'Adoption' were:
  - Ladies of Harley's
  - Macy's
  - Mount Vernon High School Latin Club
  - Tami Pearce

During the 2005 Winter Holiday 'Adoption':

- 10 families, comprised of 49 individuals, received a holiday dinner and gifts for everyone
- Sponsors of the Winter Holiday 'Adoption' were:
  - Bella Soul
  - Job Corps
  - Knights of Columbus
  - Ladies of Harley's
  - Mount Vernon High School Journalism Class
  - PUD employees
  - Regence Blue Shield employees
  - SCCAA employees
  - Summer Grandview
  - Toys for Tots

### **HOMELESS CHILD CARE**

Our Homeless Child Care Program fills a gap in child care until a family can access "Working Connections" or other child care resources. It provides an opportunity for homeless families to search for employment, find housing, keep medical appointments, and access other services that will help them establish a residence of their own.

Generally, any family lacking a regular adequate nighttime residence qualifies for this program, including those living in a temporary shelter and those living in inconsistent living arrangements in the homes of family members or friends. Transitional housing residents also qualify. The program works closely with Volunteers of America's Child Care Resource & Referral, which helps links families with local child care providers of a family's choosing.

In 2005, the Homeless Child Care Program served 8 families, comprised of 12 children,

expending \$6,159 at licensed child care providers and centers.

### **KINSHIP CARE**

In Skagit County, there exists a large, growing population of grandparents raising grandchildren and other family members raising their relatives' children. Community Action's Kinship Care Support Program has been helping many area grandparents who have accepted the responsibilities of raising their children's children. This program meets the many needs of these families including assistance with housing costs, food, clothing, school and home supplies, legal and counseling services, and transportation costs.

Through our Kinship Care Program in 2005,

- 96 individuals in 25 households received assistance with a variety of needs

### **VETERANS' ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

The Veterans' Assistance Program provides information, advocacy, and help with emergency needs to low-income veterans, their dependents, widows, widowers, and orphans.

Through our Veterans' Assistance Program in 2005:

- 266 veteran households were assisted with \$122,115 in direct assistance for the following needs:
  - 430 food vouchers
  - 488 gas vouchers and SKAT bus passes
  - 43 clothing vouchers
  - 77 rental assistance vouchers
  - 56 medical vouchers for prescriptions, dentures, glasses, etc.
  - 102 households received assistance with utility bills
  - 19 homeless veterans received motel vouchers
  - 72 veterans received help with other needs

### **VOLUNTEER CHORE PROGRAM**

For low-income seniors and disabled people, one of the biggest challenges they face is remaining independent in their own homes.

The Volunteer Chore Program mobilizes and coordinates volunteers to assist frail elderly and

disabled adults, including housekeeping, shopping, meal preparation, yard work, and minor home repairs.

In 2005, our Volunteer Chore Program:

- Enabled 360 elderly and disabled people to continue living independently in their homes by providing volunteers to assist them with essential tasks
- Matched volunteers with clients, providing over 200 volunteers with the opportunity to give 3,817 hours of their time to assist individuals and families in need
- Enabled 280 senior and disabled clients to more easily and safely access and move about their homes through the donation of time and materials in the construction of: 24 wheelchair ramps, 174 grab-bar installations, 34 handrails, 24 chair and couch platforms, plus various other minor home modifications and repairs
- Logged over 9,000 miles driven by program volunteers providing transportation assistance to an average of 10 homebound clients per month so they could attend medical appointments and for other essential trips
- Met scores of other needs for a variety of other services such as yard work, house-keeping, firewood provision, moving assistance, shopping, errands and more

### **VOLUNTEER LAWYER PROGRAM**

Sponsored by SCCAA and the Skagit County Bar Association, the Volunteer Lawyer Program (VLP) offers free legal assistance in civil legal matters to income-eligible residents of Skagit County. The VLP focuses its efforts in three service areas: assistance with *pro se* (self representation) forms, legal advice clinics and *pro bono* representation.

Our typical cases are low-income people in Skagit County who are involved in contested family law matters, such as divorce, child custody and child support. We also offer assistance to clients with housing and consumer legal issues.

The VLP also houses the Domestic Violence Justice Project (DVJP). A full time attorney who



provides representation for victims of domestic violence in family law matters staffs the DVJP.

Of the 314 cases which were opened in 2005:

- 48 were consumer issues
- 250 were family law
- 47 were housing issues

Furthermore,

- 111 victims of domestic violence received advice and/or direct representation
- 145 clients received counsel and advice
- 101 clients received brief services
- 67 clients received pro bono representation from volunteer attorneys
- 86 attorneys from the Skagit County Bar Association reported 641 volunteer hours, or \$128,200 worth of pro bono services

*Legal problems experienced by low-income people are more likely to relate to family safety (including domestic violence), economic security, housing and other basic needs, than those experienced by people with higher incomes.*

*Low-income people have a greater ability to control their own lives when they have accurate information and the skill, ability and opportunity to use that information to advocate on their own behalf.*



## HOUSING SERVICES

*Community Action supports the only shelter in Skagit County that focuses on housing homeless families, with the goal of keeping parents and children together during their period of homelessness, and into safe and stable housing. We are proud that over 85% of families leaving our Emergency Family Shelter go on to safe, appropriate housing.*

### EMERGENCY FAMILY SHELTER

Our Emergency Family Shelter is housed in Mount Vernon, comprised of four individual apartment units, as well as two additional townhouse units we rent, where homeless families may stay for up to 60 days. Additionally, SCCAA rents two more apartments that can house families temporarily. Our staff team works with each family to plan for their future, access resources, create a household budget and savings plan, and take

the necessary steps toward housing stabilization and self-sufficiency. Each unit is provided, free of charge, with essential utilities, furnishings, and household items.

In 2005, our Emergency Family Shelter,

- Sheltered 163 individuals in 44 families, with a total of 7,218 bed nights





*Our Emergency Family Shelter*

### **HOMELESS PREVENTION**

Homeless Prevention funds provide clients leaving an emergency shelter or transitional housing with the first month's rent in order to secure permanent housing. Because funds are limited, clients are eligible for this program only when no other assistance is available, or when a lack of assistance would result in a return to homelessness. Each client must demonstrate adequate income to continue paying the rental amount in the ensuing months.

To expand our shelter's capacity, in May 2005 we purchased the house and property next door, and began sheltering a family in the house in October. We are raising funds locally, and through a major state Housing Trust Fund application, with the goal of expanding our capacity from four to ten units with a common area between the two facilities where we would offer on-site skills building and family development activities. If successful, construction would begin in August 2006.

Through our Homeless Prevention Program in 2005,

- 71 individuals, from 17 households, received more than \$20,400 in rental assistance, representing 3,131 bed nights

### **HOTEL/MOTEL VOUCHER PROGRAM**

The Hotel/Motel Program provides brief, emergency lodging for homeless people. This program helps meet shelter needs when other shelter facilities are full and provides short-term stays for transient clients.

In 2005, the Hotel/Motel Program:

- Spent \$10,296 in hotel/motel vouchers to assist 164 individuals, in 88 households, with 376 bed nights of brief emergency lodging

### **TRANSITIONAL HOUSING**

Lack of affordable housing is one of the largest barriers to self-sufficiency that low-income people in Skagit County face. Our Transitional Housing Program works with working poor, unemployed, and under-educated families to move them from homelessness, unemployment, and lack of marketable skills toward long-term sustainability and self-sufficiency.

SCCAA's Transitional Housing Program helps families achieve stable housing and self-sufficiency through two strong supports – rental subsidies and intensive case management. This program can support families with children for up to two years. The partnership with landlords is critical as many families have recent evictions. Certified Family Development case managers work closely with the family and the landlord to establish a partnership that is beneficial to both. SCCAA is also partnering with several community service providers, including Washington State University Extension, Skagit Valley College Displaced Homemakers, and WorkSource Development, to offer our participants training in basic life skills, parenting, and job readiness.

In 2005, our Transitional Housing Program:

- Enrolled 56 families (158 individuals) in the Transitional Housing Program
- Provided \$184,218 toward monthly rental subsidies and deposits
- Provided 56 families with intensive case management services by Family Development and Literacy staff
  - Of the 56 families, 18 graduated the program and moved into permanent housing (1 of whom purchased their own home)
  - 28 individuals became employed at least 30 hours per week, half with health insurance
  - 7 adults received GEDs
  - 3 adults graduated from Skagit Valley College

- 2 adults received Certified Nursing Assistant certification and are employed in that field full time
- 6 families increased their earnings by at least \$1,000 per month

*The last one-day homeless count in January 2005 found 1,182 homeless people in Skagit County, the highest per capita homeless count in Washington State.*



## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

### COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The Community Relations Project, created in 2004, focuses on increasing the community's awareness of the work that the agency does, and establishing a local annual giving campaign, which will broaden the agency's funding base and allow us to continue to meet the growing needs of the residents of Skagit County.

In 2005, our Community Relations Project:

- Organized the 26<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration for Community Action, which celebrated clients, donors, and our community partnerships
- Greatly increased local community awareness by expanding connections to local media, which resulted in numerous news stories
- Published a quarterly newsletter that highlights various community needs and the agency's efforts to meet them

### VOLUNTEER CENTER

Volunteers are an essential part to every community. Without volunteers in Skagit County, many of the services now provided would not exist.

The Volunteer Center's mission is to build public awareness and understanding of the importance of volunteerism. The program accomplishes this goal by supporting programs through recruiting and matching volunteers of all ages to meet community needs, providing technical assistance in the area of volunteerism to the public, private, and non-profit sectors, and mobilizing community resources and facilitating special projects to respond to local needs or problems.

In 2005, the Volunteer Center:

- Generated 33,802 volunteer hours in the community, including:
  - 2,067 volunteer hours in community-wide events and projects
  - 18,878 volunteer hours through AmeriCorps\*VISTA
  - 12,857 hours through interns and volunteers working with SCCAA programs
- Placed 162 volunteers in various non-profit agencies throughout Skagit County
- Mobilized an additional 228 volunteers for community service projects
- Assisted the community in accomplishing numerous goals through the coordinated development of 29 projects, ranging from food drives for local food banks, to service

learning projects for high school and middle school students

### **Days of Caring**

Days of Caring is a major annual volunteer event consisting of a number of projects focusing on maintenance and repairs at non-profits in our community. This event is part of the Kickoff Campaign of United Way of Skagit County. 2005 Days of Caring Projects:

- **Cascades Job Corps students** completed a Fall clean-up around the W.T. Preston on behalf of the Anacortes Museum, and a major Fall landscaping project for the Anacortes Senior Center
- **Tesoro employees** completed installation of a rock riverbed to handle run-off water at the Anacortes Senior Center
- **Burlington-Edison School District employees and members of the Burlington Kiwanis Club** worked at painting building trim on the Burlington Senior Center
- **Regence Blue Shield employees** spent a day sprucing up the grounds at Compass Health, moving piles of bark and gravel
- **Skagit County Commissioners and Administrative staff** undertook a large landscaping project at the Concrete Senior Center
- **Macy's employees** cleaned up flower beds and trimmed shrubs for the Friendship House at the Women's Shelter
- **Sedro Woolley School District employees and members of the Sedro Woolley Rotary Club** spent the day helping with building maintenance, repairing playground equipment, and washing all the windows for the Open Door Community Kitchen in Sedro Woolley
- **Mount Vernon School District employees and Kathy Williams of United Way Board of Directors** enjoyed time working at the Mount Vernon Community Garden, harvesting vegetables for distribution at the Friendship House
- **Home Depot employees** spent several days prepping and painting the SeaMar Community Homeless Program building
- Seniors receiving Meals on Wheels were surprised to have their deliveries made by **Anacortes Mayor Dean Maxwell; County Commissioners Ted Anderson, Ken Dahlstedt, and Don Munks; Carl Bruner,**

**Superintendent of Mount Vernon School District; Mark Venn, Superintendent of Sedro Woolley School District; Robyn Miller, Sedro Woolley School District Administrator; and Pastor Steve Coleman, Mount Vernon Christian Church**

### **Make A Difference Day**

During Make A Difference Day, an annual National Service Day, the Washington Reading Corps, AmeriCorps, and AmeriCorps\*VISTA volunteers held a food drive to collect and deliver food to homebound seniors and disabled adults as part of Community Action's Mobile Food Express program.

### **Volunteers In Service To America (VISTA)**

Working closely with local non-profit agencies in the community, the VISTA program develops projects that directly impact the needs of the low-income population in Skagit County. VISTA volunteers are placed in non-profit agencies to establish a sustainability program or project that benefits the low-income population long after their service ends.

In 2005, 13 VISTA volunteers were placed with the following sub-sponsors:

- Anacortes School District:
  - Family Connections Program at Whitney and Island View schools
  - Teen Support Project at Anacortes Middle School
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters Northwest School Buddies Project
- Lake McMurray Fire Department Disaster Preparedness Model Project
- Skagit County Community Action Agency:
  - Community Relations Project
  - Family Literacy Project
  - Financial Literacy Project
  - Health Care Access Project
  - Volunteer Center Development
- Skagit County Youth & Family Services:
  - Transitional Vocational & Education Project and Kulshan Creek After-School Project

### **Work Experience and Job Training**

To improve changes for low-income and senior jobseekers, our Volunteer Center provides work experience and job training to clients from Northwest Workforce Development Council,

OIC Farmworker Reinvestment Program, Work Now Services, Work First, and students from Skagit Valley College. Our Volunteer Center matches these people with meaningful work within our agency and oversees the development of their job-readiness.

Through our Work Experience and Job Training efforts in 2005,

- 5 people completed their six-month work experience training
  - Of those, 4 obtained full-time employment with benefits, and 1 is pursuing further education at Skagit Valley College

# HEALTH & EDUCATION SERVICES DIVISION

Our Health and Education Division, along with the rest of the agency, seeks to help families comprehensively, and increasingly across program and division lines as service delivery becomes blended.

For instance, consider the following:

- Literacy, Legal, and Housing staff are conducting joint workshops for Community Action clients on bankruptcy, credit, and home ownership.
- Homebound participants in our Maternity Support Services program receive foods delivered by the Mobile Food Express.
- WIC and Family Literacy clients will be participating in health literacy education classes.
- Staff in Literacy, WIC, MSS, Legal, and Energy departments are enrolling families for Basic Food services.

We look forward to even greater integration of services in 2006, especially in the area of health care access, with all aspects of program services.



## EDUCATION SERVICES

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### LITERACY PROGRAM

2005 represented a year of change in our Literacy Program, as it represented the end of Best PLACE 21<sup>st</sup> Century funding, which left a significant gap in funding. Program staff worked diligently to cultivate program support through a wide variety of outreach and community relations efforts as part of our strategic plan for program sustainability. Facing a 75% reduction in funding, we were able to regain 50% of that amount. While we were forced to scale back some programming, overall we maintained and even expanded some services. We continued to offer a diverse assortment of free educational opportunities throughout Skagit County, all of which were aimed at helping people achieve self-sufficiency and realize their own goals largely made possible by our many dedicated volunteers.



Late in 2005, the unexpected death of **Jerry LaParle**, a five-year literacy volunteer, also left a significant vacuum in programming. Jerry's wealth of expertise from having run his own

law practice in Alaska, coupled with his selfless aspirations to help those in need, made a significant mark on Skagit Literacy. He logged 983 volunteer hours toward creating materials and lessons, and tutoring ESL (English as a Second Language) students. Additionally, he tailored a U.S. citizenship class curriculum to prepare immigrants for obtaining naturalization, greatly expanding the capacity of the initial program. Overall, Jerry helped 33 people obtain their citizenship. He also developed a curriculum and taught driver's license classes to assist people in passing the written exam. One of his latest accomplishments, shortly before his death, was to take over Family Literacy's site coordination at Madison Elementary School. We salute Jerry's dedication to our program, but more importantly, to his expansive contributions of "helping people and changing lives" in Skagit County.

In 2005 the Literacy Program enjoyed continued growth in community support of the program. Local service clubs, concerned citizens, and businesses showed their support of the work of the Literacy Program by making both monetary and in-kind donations. In particular, the generosity of the following organizations was essential to our success:

- AmeriCorps\*VISTA
- Mount Vernon Police Department
- Scott's Bookstore
- Soroptimist International of Anacortes
- Windermere Realty
- Wal-Mart

### **Volunteer Literacy**

Skagit Literacy recruits, trains and supports community volunteers to work one-to-one and in small groups tutoring English as a Second Language and Basic Skills. In 2005, 77 volunteers delivering 4,049 volunteer hours helped 549 adult learners and 193 children in Skagit County to realize their dreams of improved job opportunities, self-sufficient family management, increased success in school and active citizenship. Of the adults served:

- 35 unemployed students became employed as a result of their participation
- 15 transitioned from temporary to long-term employment

- 11 students obtained driver's licenses
- 396 adults improved family functioning skills through increased literacy, language, and life skills
- 223 adults showed a measurable increase in academic skills
- 64 adults participated in community service or other volunteer programs

### **Family Literacy**

2005 represented the culmination of many years of effort in developing a Family Literacy Program. It was the third and final year of the VISTA program cycle, during which the focus has been on program sustainability. To that end, the Family Literacy Program branched into two distinct programs.

In Burlington, we offered the "Juntos Podemos" Family Literacy Program at Westview Elementary School. This program, funded by the Skagit County Readiness to Learn Consortium, the Burlington-Edison School District, and Verizon, provided literacy instruction for the entire families with the aim of breaking the cycle of illiteracy. Services provided integrate adult education that leads to economic self-sufficiency, training to prepare parents as the primary educators of their children, age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school, and parent-child interaction time to build literacy skills and strengthen families.

In Mount Vernon, we offered the Even Start program at Madison Elementary School. This program resulted from a partnership between the Mount Vernon School District, NW ESD 189, Skagit Valley College, and SCCAA. Building on the success of Family Literacy programming offered at Madison Elementary School during the 04-05 school year, Even Start funding allowed us to intensify services and collaborate with local Early Childhood Educators to seamlessly serve the entire family.

Through the efforts of both Family Literacy programs:

- 105 preschoolers developed school readiness skills
- 136 youth demonstrated improved academic performance
- 84 parents increased their parenting skills



- 29 youth showed improved social or emotional development

### **Financial Literacy**

In response to the 2001 Low-Income Needs Assessment, SCCAA has launched a Financial Literacy initiative to help low-income families attain self-sufficiency and gain knowledge necessary to reach their financial goals. The Financial Advancement and Community Empowerment (FACE) Program is an AmeriCorps\*VISTA project that is a combination of financial training, consumer awareness and leadership building. FACE introduces participants to checking and savings accounts, debt elimination, better budgeting, home ownership and leadership training. This program was launched in November 2004 and garnered financial support from the Skagit Community Foundation and Skagit State Bank, as well as volunteer support from Boeing Employees Credit Union.

As a result of FACE programming in 2005:

- 5 low-income families purchased homes in Skagit County
- 3 families created and completed a credit repair plan
- 5 families created and maintained a budget for 90 days

### **Workplace Literacy**

This innovative project, funded by the Bank of America Foundation, was created to meet the diverse needs of local companies and their employees by providing literacy and language classes customized for the company and also for the students.

The goals of this program include increased worker satisfaction and retention, increased productivity, and improved ability to adapt to change. In 2005, Workplace Literacy served four local businesses: Janicki Industries of Sedro Woolley, Washington Alder of Mount Vernon, Sea Bear Smokehouse of Anacortes, and Skagit Gardens Wholesale of Mount Vernon.

51 employees attended programming, and of those 47 made measurable gains in English or Spanish. More importantly, nearly 100% of employees reported that their increased skills fostered better communication in the

workplace, increased safety, and increased employee morale.

### **Teen Literacy**

As result of community need and a serious gap in educational services, the Literacy Program continued to develop services for teens in 2005. In collaboration with Mount Vernon High School, Skagit County Truancy and Probation, and WorkSource Skagit, we developed a Teen Literacy VISTA project that was funded by the Skagit Community Foundation.

During 2005, Teen Literacy served 74 at-risk teens. Of those,

- 41 had reduced involvement with the criminal justice system
- 26 avoided risk-taking behavior
- 23 improved social/emotional development
- 9 obtained their GED, while an additional 11 completed one or more GED tests.



### **Citizenship Class**

This class was offered by volunteer tutor Jerry La Parle, who developed the curriculum and provided free preparation to intermediate and advanced ESL students for the citizenship interview, exam, and accompanying paperwork.

Because of the Citizenship Class in 2005:

- 8 students attended this class and they all received their United States Citizenship

### **COMMUNITY MEDIA**

The Community Media Project is a collaborative endeavor between the City of Mount Vernon and Skagit County Community

Action Agency. Given the significant and growing Spanish-speaking population in Mount Vernon and throughout Skagit County, we are working to develop media outlets to communicate vital information in Spanish.

Since June 2005, our accomplishments include:

- Cable Channel 26 Spanish Language programming, from Noon to 4:00 pm and 8:00 pm to Midnight
- “Bulletin board” TV announcements in Spanish for community resources and events
- Public Service Announcements for educational, health-related, environmental, and assorted local and national resources/campaigns

- Development of the Spanish Media Steering Committee, including community leaders from the Spanish press, radio, and community organizations

We are working with Skagit County, Skagit Valley College, Skagit Valley Hospital, Mount Vernon School District, SeaMar Medical Center, and the City of Mount Vernon to garner financial support from community partners to develop quality programming similar in scope to what is currently available for English speaking citizens, including health topics, educational topics, city business, and countywide issues (such as flooding).



## HEALTH SERVICES

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### DENTAL CARE

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#### **Skagit County Mobile Dental Van**

286 households who otherwise would not have been able to afford dental care received services in 2005 through SCCAA’s Mobile Dental Van services. Northwest Medical Team International partnered with SCCAA to bring its state-of-the-art mobile dental van to Skagit County up to four days per month, with visits at donated community sites in Anacortes, Mount Vernon, and Sedro Woolley.

Potential patients are pre-screened at SCCAA’s

main office prior to being seen on the van. A Community Action staff person assists with patient processing on the van, and also works closely with the dental community to recruit and schedule volunteer dentists and hygienists. These extraordinary volunteer professionals provide restorative care, extractions and other oral surgery, root canals, and “prophy” (healthy mouth) procedures on the van. A denturist accepts referrals on a limited basis to provide dentures at a reduced cost.





Serving individuals at 200% or below the federal poverty level that lack dental insurance or other means to pay for dental care, the program serves predominately adults, many receiving first-time ever dental care. This program has meant the difference to families by restoring general health and well-being, as well as opening opportunities to find a job by

restoring self-confidence and smiles. With pregnant women being the only adults who can access Medicaid assistance for dental care, serious gaps exist in the community for low-income adults, and the dental van continues to fill a vital role.

In 2005, 23.4% of the operating costs were met through low-cost sliding fees and Kiwanis support. Community Service Block Grant funding and other agency subsidy provided the remaining support.

In 2005, the Mobile Dental Van:

- Scheduled 286 unduplicated clients, of 1,144 requests, for dental van appointments
- Conducted 28 dental van visits in the county to service patients
- Enabled 26 dentists, hygienists, and certified dental assistant volunteers to complete 324 volunteer hours while providing 1,018 dental procedures, including 46 “prophy” (healthy mouth) procedures, at a value of \$110,332.

**ABCD (Access to Baby and Child Dentistry)**

A one-year planning grant awarded to SCCAA by the Washington Dental Services Foundation (WDSF) to implement the first ABCD Program in Skagit County, was completed in August 2005. Changes that would have permitted the

agency to access Medicaid match funding to expand the program beyond the initial pilot year project unfortunately did not materialize. The local health department, an entity eligible to access Medicaid match funding, was approved by WDSF to take over the project. A bonus for our community, the health department can access considerably more funding than WDSF’s base grant. This will serve to significantly expand services to Medicaid-eligible families.

In acknowledging Community Action’s role, WDSF stated, “Community Action stepped forward to provide program leadership on behalf of children and families in Skagit County. The program would not have started without that leadership...it has required a significant commitment of time and resources.”

SCCAA’s ABCD Coordinator, hired in November 2004, was successful in expanding infrastructure to promote wider use of ABCD in Skagit County. Through August 2005, nine additional dentists were trained to treat ABCD patients, and joined ten dentists trained the previous year, bringing Skagit’s total to 19 who are now eligible to offer infants and preschoolers the expanded care. Thirty-three organizations became partners in promoting ABCD and in enrolling children for services. Although statistics are not yet available from the state, it is felt that numbers of children receiving oral health services in a first ever local dental “home,” will have grown significantly from pre-ABCD activities.

*Unmet dental needs are a barrier to securing or retaining employment, and can lead to serious health problems and costly financial outlays that can be avoided by early intervention.*

Children enrolled in ABCD receive two thorough dental exams per year, three fluoride applications per year, and the parents receive educational sessions to teach them proper care for the teeth and gums of their babies, toddlers and young children. ABCD dentists are specially trained in working with infants and children, and thus have skills that make dental exams a positive experience. To be eligible for

ABCD services, the child must be age 0-5 years old, have a medical coupon and enroll with a dentist that is a trained ABCD provider.

## **HEALTH CARE ACCESS**

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### **HEALTH CARE ACCESS & EDUCATION**

SCCAA made major headway on our Health Care Access and Education Project in 2005. An AmeriCorps\*VISTA coordinated the project's first year, working closely with our Volunteer Center and SHIBA Program in helping recruit additional volunteers, and in refining referral and tracking systems within the agency that improved clientele's link to SHIBA services. For instance, in response to high numbers of Community Action clients entering the agency for services who do not have health care coverage (51% in 2005), we devised a system to link these clients with a follow-up by a SHIBA health insurance advisor. The goal was to provide assistance in enrolling in, or at least improving the level of, coverage for health care and/or prescription coverage.

The area of "Health Literacy" was addressed through three major tracks. Firstly, the AmeriCorps\*VISTA worked closely with a grant-funded project through Skagit Valley Hospital entitled "Get HELP" (Health Education Library Partnership), which sought to connect young parents and families with local libraries, the public health department, and Community Action. The curriculum's goal was to educate providers as to how to be a better health consumer. Trained instructors became resources to Community Action through their WIC and Transitional Housing classes. These systems are in place, and much of this programming will continue.

Secondly, we identified a highly acclaimed curriculum, "What to do When Your Child Gets Sick?" Targeting reducing healthcare costs through using primary and emergency healthcare more appropriately, the curriculum is available in both English and Spanish. It focuses on caregivers of children eight years old and younger, with participants who complete the class receiving a free handbook. Training was provided to in-house staff for use with existing WIC, Housing, and Family Literacy classes. As well, a pool of community

volunteers was trained in order to teach the classes through their organizations such as hospitals, childcare provider groups, and churches. Textbooks have also been placed in libraries throughout the community, in our literacy program's library, and in three hospital resource rooms. We plan to continue this curriculum with the new VISTA assigned to this project in 2006.

### **STATEWIDE HEALTH INSURANCE BENEFITS ADVISORS (SHIBA)**

Community Action became formally involved in health care access when SHIBA, a program of the Washington State Office of the Insurance Commissioner and a part of a nationwide network, became part of our services in 2001. Through SHIBA, trained volunteer counselors address issues with consumers.

In 2005, our program, serving Mount Vernon and Eastern Skagit County, had 14 volunteers helping people in the community understand, choose, and use their health insurance effectively. As well, they assisted those without health insurance find alternative resources for meeting their health care needs, including prescriptions.

Through the SHIBA program in 2005:

- 14 volunteers spent 906 hours counseling 312 clients
- Volunteers contributed an additional 2,204 hours in training, giving presentations to the public, and researching their clients' needs.
- Volunteers responded to 670 "quick calls" with information on health insurance resources and gave 44 presentations to community groups.
- In addition, volunteers responded to 842 calls regarding the new prescription drug program, Medicare Part D.

In 2005, SHIBA integrated more visibly with existing agency services to address client health care access. Services were expanded to assist the public with information about resources for the Medicare Part D prescription drug plan in response to the Medicare Modernization Act changes.

## MEDICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

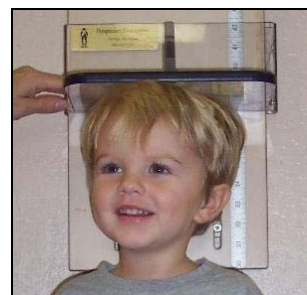
Low-income families lacking other resources are able to obtain assistance to purchase prescriptions, glasses, and other medical supplies. This program also refers eligible clients to volunteer optometrists for eye exams and to resources for breast mammograms. Individuals served run the gamut from homeless individuals to job-seekers and the recently unemployed, and other low-income families that are in a hard place and need help.

Through our Medical Assistance Program in 2005:

- A total of 139 individuals received assistance, out of 721 requests for assistance:

- 110 individuals received \$3,615.37 in prescription purchases
- 29 individuals received \$568.00 in other medical assistance, such as non-prescriptive medicines and supplies, eyeglasses, etc.
- 27 individuals were referred for optometry services, with 5 eye professionals participating

Medical vouchers are also issued through our Veterans Assistance Program.



## YOUTH & FAMILY HEALTH & NUTRITION

### MATERNITY SUPPORT SERVICES (MSS)

#### -Skagit County

Maternity Support Services, a state Medicaid-funded program, is a preventative health service designed to educate, assist and support pregnant and parenting families. Community Action's program is one of six available in Skagit County from which clients may select to enroll.

This program offers a holistic, strength-based approach to empower families to identify needs, establish goals, and learn how to access resources to meet those goals. MSS provides clients with the following during their pregnancy and for two months post-partum:

- Nursing – Six Registered Nurses (RN) perform primary home visits to clients as a way to educate mothers so that they will have a healthy birth outcome. One RN is an International Board-Certified Lactation

Consultant (IBCLC), who provides specialized staff oversight and training to staff, as well as assists clients with breastfeeding issues.

- Counseling – Two Behavioral Health Specialists are available to address a wide range of issues such as family adjustment to the pregnancy, parenting, and domestic violence.
- Nutrition – Three Registered Dietitians provide nutritional information to clients to assist them in making healthy food choices during their pregnancy and to promote and assist with breastfeeding.

### Infant Case Management (ICM)

Infants may qualify for Infant Case Management, offered when MSS ends at two months postpartum, and lasting until the infant's first birthday. Families who display

high-risk factors can qualify for Case Management services to assist them overcoming these obstacles and help them become more self-sufficient. High-risk criteria would include smoking, drug/alcohol abuse, mental health issues, Child Protective Services involvement or inability to access resources due to age or language barriers, to name a few.

### **Maternity Support Services**

#### **-Naval Air Station (NAS) -Whidbey**

SCCAA has provided services to military families at NAS Whidbey since 1991. These young families are often away from home and supports of friends and family. Clients at NAS-Whidbey find MSS services to be crucial support during stressful and often scary time in their lives.

In January 2005, NAS-Whidbey privatized military housing, causing an increase in rental rates. To offset the impact, the Navy gave families a “basic housing allowance” (BHA) that is included when calculating income limits for program eligibility. Unfortunately, this puts most first-time parents over income for MSS and Food Stamps. As a result, 2005 caseload decreased by over half compared to the previous year. A Bill will be introduced into the 2006 legislature in an attempt to exempt BHA as income for military families.

In 2005, our Skagit County Maternity Support Services:

- Assisted 424\* unduplicated women and 339\* unduplicated infants with 4,458 visits:
  - 2,119 nursing visits
  - 128 nutrition visits
  - 376 community health workers visits
  - 612 behavioral health visits
  - 1,223 infant case management visits

NAS-Whidbey Maternity Support Services:

- Assisted 91\* unduplicated women and 128\* unduplicated infants with 1,919 visits:
  - 815 nursing visits
  - 30 nutrition visits
  - 225 community health worker visits
  - 71 behavioral health visits
  - 778 infant case management visits

\*includes 2004 carryovers

### **WIC (Women, Infants & Children) Nutrition Program**



*WIC Staff – Mount Vernon Office*

WIC provides monthly checks for specific nutritious foods critical to growth and development for pre- and post-natal infants and children to age five. Additionally, participants receive nutrition assessment, nutrition education, breastfeeding education and encouragement, and referrals to other services. Services are provided by registered dietitians and certified paraprofessionals.

In 2005, Skagit County was able to participate in the Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program with WIC vouchers. SCCAA distributed \$19,380 worth of farmers’ market checks in Mount Vernon and \$1,720 in Anacortes. At the Oak Harbor Farmers’ Market, \$6,310 was distributed to NAS clients. Checks were for fresh Washington-grown fruits and vegetables to be spent at authorized farmers’ markets from July through September. WIC clients were extremely enthusiastic to have the opportunity to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables and market vendors were equally enthused to see so many new, young faces at the markets.

All three WIC clinics participated in collecting vaccination records for the Child Profile statewide database. 1,311 records were collected, including 851 new or enhanced records that were recorded into the registry as a result of this effort.

Classes provided to WIC clients in Mount Vernon help empower parents with information to improve family functioning. 1,127 clients participated in classes taught by WIC staff and

guest speakers. Ideas for Living volunteers regularly teach classes.

Skagit and Whidbey programs served 6,074 unduplicated participants in 2005. Monthly caseload allocations were 3,035, with 50 additional slots for Skagit County during June through September, peak harvest months when migrant farm worker families impact the caseload.

Striving to meet clients' varied needs, evening hours are offered that facilitate services for working families. A weekly clinic is provided in Anacortes, hosted by the Island Prenatal Care Clinic. Of total Skagit clients served, 46% spoke only Spanish, 2.3% spoke only Ukrainian/Russian, and 2-4% speak Mixteco/Triqui. Women comprised close to quarter of the total served each month, with infants approximately 20%, and children just over 55%.

Service statistics for the 2005 WIC Program:

#### *Mount Vernon Office*

- 3,950 unduplicated clients were served
- 178 unduplicated migrant clients were served
- WIC checks valued at \$1,540,389 were spent in Mount Vernon, Burlington, and Sedro Woolley-area grocery stores

#### *Anacortes Office*

- 337 unduplicated clients were served
- WIC checks valued at \$128,505 were spent in Anacortes-area grocery stores

#### *NAS-Whidbey Office*

- 1,787 unduplicated clients were served
- WIC checks valued at \$533,970 were spent at the Navy Commissary and other Oak Harbor-area grocery stores

In Skagit County, 61% of all infants born were served by WIC with food resources and preventive health information. Although 71% have employment income, 74% of WIC families live in poverty.

### **BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT SERVICES**

Electric and manual breast pumps are made available to WIC clients with medical issues and to those returning to work or school for as

long as necessary. Pumps are provided by the state WIC program and oversight of the program is funded through WIC Breastfeeding Promotion funds. The program maintains 45 electric pumps in the Mount Vernon office, and 11 in the NAS Whidbey office.

For 56 babies at NAS and 196 in Skagit County, the period of optimal infant nutrition through breastfeeding was lengthened by the use of these electric pumps in 2005.

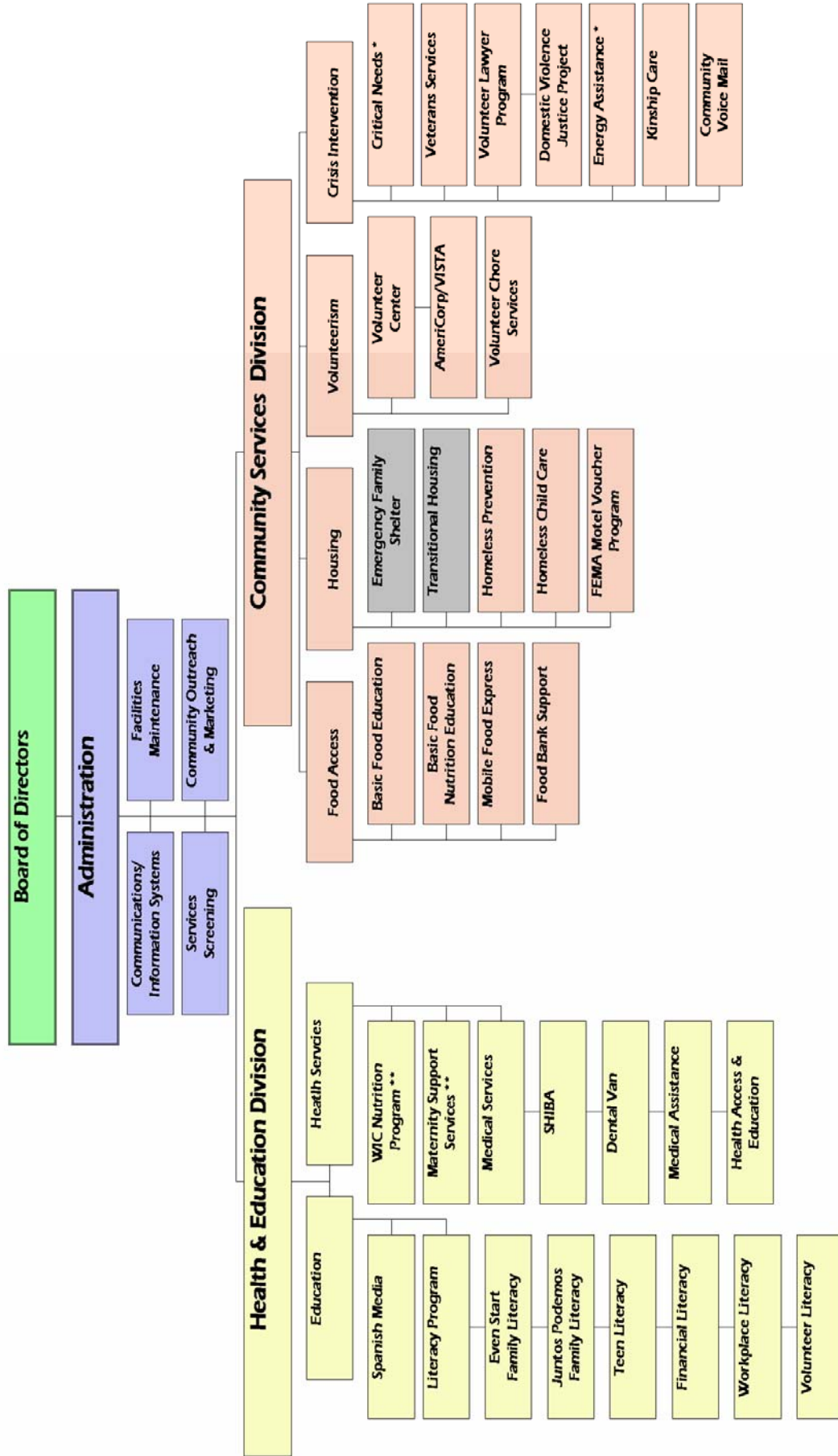
During 2005, 93% of Skagit County WIC mothers and 85% of NAS WIC mothers initiated breastfeeding. 55% of Skagit County mothers and 32% of NAS mothers continue to breastfeed beyond six months. Among Skagit County mothers, the percentage who are breastfeeding more than six months has been steadily increasing over the past four years.

In late 2005, the Mount Vernon office received Basic Food Nutrition Education funds to establish a breastfeeding support group with the goal of lengthening breastfeeding duration among our WIC clients.

*Breastfeeding support and education are key parts of WIC because breastfed children have fewer infections and are less likely to develop chronic conditions such as obesity, diabetes, and asthma later in life.*



**Skagit County Community Action Agency  
Services Organization  
2005**



Gray-shaded boxes indicate off-site programming.

\*Indicates service also available at our East County Office in Concrete.

\*\*Indicates service also available at our Whidbey NAS office in Oak Harbor.

# FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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## Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Assets

December 31, 2005

### ASSETS

Cash and Cash Equivalents	410,742.97
Accounts Receivable	17,715.40
Prepaid Expenses	17,016.34

TOTAL ASSETS	<u>445,474.71</u>
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### LIABILITIES

#### LIABILITIES

Accrued Vacation Pay	52,315.07
Accounts Payable	429.56
Accrued Payroll Taxes	(185.27)
Grants Receivable	30.00
Garnishments	686.99
Employee Deductions	247.47
Indirect Costs	9,839.19

TOTAL LIABILITIES	63,363.01
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#### UNEARNED REVENUE

Unearned Revenue	<u>(264,245.76)</u>
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TOTAL UNEARNED REVENUE	(264,245.76)
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TOTAL LIABILITIES	(200,882.75)
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#### NET ASSETS

Unrestricted	<u>646,357.46</u>
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TOTAL NET ASSETS	<u>646,357.46</u>
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TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	<u>445,474.71</u>
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**Statement of Support, Revenue, Expenses, and Changes in Net Assets**  
For Year Ended December 31, 2005

UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS

Revenue and Support

Federal, State, Local Government Grants	2,614,048.69
United Way	57,200.00
Fees	767,266.26
Foundations, Corporations, and Other Non-profits	363,157.41
In-Kind Revenue	-

TOTAL UNRESTRICTED REVENUE AND SUPPORT

3,801,672.36

EXPENSES

Program Services

Energy Assistance	496,404.69
Community Services	119,748.90
Women, Infants & Children	403,018.05
Maternity Support Services	730,672.87
Volunteer Lawyer Program	205,935.13
Voluntary Action Center/Chore	128,110.38
Emergency Shelter/Housing	692,563.60
Food Access	161,045.69
East County Services	7,856.15
Veterans Assistance	33,193.98
Medical/Dental Assistance	80,496.02
Fundraising	-
Family Development	42,712.53
Literacy	349,569.28
Community Voice Mail	25,253.12
Administration	180,067.77
Other Services	260,253.81

TOTAL EXPENSES

3,916,901.97

Increase in Unrestricted Net Assets

115,229.61

Net Assets at Beginning of Year

590,437.00

Net Assets at End of Year

705,666.61



# STAFF

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Our Directors:



Bill Shuler



Karen Parnell



Bill Henkel



Barbara McDermott

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## Administration

Bill Shuler, Executive Director

Bryan Fossum, Information Systems Coordinator  
Karen Harris, Administrative Services Manager

Barbara McDermott, Financial Director  
Karen Parnell, Deputy Director  
Mary Uldrich, Financial/Office Assistant

---

## Community Services Division

Bill Henkel, Director

### Crisis Intervention

Tommie Yturalde, Program Coordinator  
Vickie Childers

Sarah Hinman  
Carmina Rodriguez  
Jennifer Stark

### Energy Assistance

Marie Stangeland, Program Coordinator  
Juniper Carpenter  
Flora Cruz  
Misty Fayette  
Amy George

Gaylyn Harrington  
Liliya Kirishko  
Michelle Martinez  
Reyna Medina

### Food Access

Nancy Williams, Program Coordinator  
Megan Brown, former Program Coordinator

Shawn Collins  
Justin Keefe

### Housing

Stacy Miller, Program Manager  
Anthony Bachman  
Mary Laureano

Kim Olander  
Joyce Shoop  
Gem Tartaglia

### Legal Assistance

Wendy Wall, Attorney, Interim Program Mgr.  
Rebecca Clark, Attorney, former Program Mgr.

Diana Lopez  
Isabel Medina  
Josefina Ramirez, Attorney

### Volunteer Center / Chore Services

Sandi Everest, Program Coordinator  
Juniper Carpenter

Robert McCracken  
Ana Nieves

## Health & Education Division

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Karen Parnell, Director

### Literacy Program

Klara Everson, Program Mgr.  
Priscilla Ayon  
Carlos Bejar  
Karyl Cooper  
Lyudmila Davidyuk  
Alyssa Fugier  
Melissa Gardner  
Olesia Januszewski  
Talula Kana

Lorena Luna  
Jodi Massingale  
Liz McDonnell  
Alicia Mitchell  
Jackie-Lyn Olson  
Irene Orestad  
Summer Ostlund  
Elizabeth Parsons  
Catherine Perry

Sheila Pillai-Powers  
Tabatha Rook  
Ariana Santacruz  
Elisabeth Satterlee  
Kim See  
Joshua Snodgrass  
Elena Stecca  
Tara Trott  
Krista Von Moos  
Lindsey Young

### Maternity Support Services

Melissa Self, Program Mgr.  
Carmen Alicea  
Iris Carias  
Juanita Cleek, RN  
Lucinda Ewing, RN

Karen Gaither, RN  
Annette McDonald, RN  
Suzanne Paniagua  
Anita Perez  
Karine Terenzi, RN

WNAS MSS:  
Mary Hewitt  
Ceal Kight, RN  
MaryBeth McNamee

### WIC Program

Wende Dolstad, RD, Program Mgr.  
Betty Aguilar  
Betty Jo Anzaldua  
Shelly Brann  
Nina Datskaya  
Maria Gonzalez  
Rachel Jimenez  
Erica Lamson, RD

Anita Meadows  
Patty Regan, RD  
Delores Rubio  
Concepcion Velasquez  
Rosa Villalobos  
Susan Will  
Barbara Williams

WNAS WIC:  
Melody Dwinelle, RN  
Marilyn Miranda, RD  
Shellie Schemmer  
Ann Srdar  
Rebecca Washington, RD  
Catherine Wunderly

Our Managers:



Rebecca Clark



Wende Dolstad



Klara Everson



Melissa Self



Stacy Miller

# VOLUNTEERS

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## Literacy Program

Carmen Anderson Bruner  
Janet Araiza  
Sarai Ayon  
Davida Bent  
Tonya Bieche  
Hazel Blakeslee  
Diane Boisin  
Carol Bourbeau  
Lester Bradford  
Beth Caffrey  
Kevin Campbell  
Beatriz Desarosa  
Jim Dolan  
Susan Easthouse  
Kristen Ekstran  
Mary and Ed Epps  
Maria Fernandez  
Lara Fountain  
Bardo Galloro  
Charlotte Garton  
Greg Geleyense  
Cindy Genter  
Lorraine Gonzalez  
Sonia Gonzalez  
Jeff Grizzel  
Martha Hall

Diane Hargrove  
Bunny Heiner  
Margaret Hewitt  
Cathy Hoffman  
Mary Holmes  
Lorraine and Phil Hurtig  
Peter James  
Valerie Jensen  
Laurie Johnson  
Melissa Johnson  
Kathleen Kaska  
Kate Knowlton  
Julie Kolmos  
Pat Kostinich  
Elaine and Jerry LaParle  
Bryn Leaf  
Chris Link  
Tim Manns  
Jodi Massingale  
Marcia Maulden  
Sandi Meissner  
Ruth Mischke  
Liz O'Hara  
Kennethe Osborne  
Daina Parsons  
Aaron Perlmutter

George Peterson  
Laura Peterson  
William Pickler  
Sheila Pillai-Powers  
Grace Popoff  
Jessie Rees  
Donna Rhodes  
Scott Rhodes  
Brett Sandstrom  
Melissa Schwartz  
Dave Shields  
Sue Sievers  
Ali Skjei  
Trina Skylstad  
Christina Snyder  
Nancy Spielman  
Nicole Garcia Swanson  
Liz Symonds  
Alanna Thelen  
Carmelia Thompson  
Jan Tivel  
Karen Van Natta  
Melissa Verlander  
Narda Welch  
Marjorie Yenter  
Pauline Zollinger

## Medical Assistance – Vision Doctors

Dr. Joseph Bee  
Dr. Raman Gill

Dr. Tod Jones  
Dr. James Murphy

Dr. Joseph Wald

## Mobile Dental Van

### *Dentists:*

Dr. Jeanette Carroll  
Dr. Sharon Feller  
Dr. John Fischer  
Dr. Larry Forsythe  
Dr. Don Hayes  
Dr. Karen Homitz  
Dr. Von Kuehn  
Dr. BJ Larson  
Dr. Tim Marker

Dr. John Mirante  
Dr. Darce Morris  
Dr. Larry Quesnell  
Dr. Dick Raisler  
Dr. Randy Thompson  
Dr. Scott VonBergen  
*Certified Dental Assistants:*  
Linda Gregory  
Darlene Hunsinger  
Danielle Irwin

Jamie Lounie  
Belinda Rogge  
Keith Santos  
Crystal Smith  
Nancy Weaver  
*Hygienists:*  
Dora Dewey  
Sherri Schumacker  
Jennifer Yarnell

## Mobile Food Express

Christina Faires  
Chris Gusta

Justin Romaglia  
Brian Sullivan

Yara Tethys  
Paul and Barb Withrow

**SHIBA**

Wendy Brown  
Delores Curbow  
Barbara Dow  
Lola Ellestad

George Goff  
Sherry Grant  
Tina Heinkel

Cheri Lensen  
Ana Nieves  
Ed Seebers

Viola Sexton  
Noel Smith  
Lou Taylor  
Ruth Vitovec

**Volunteer Chore Program**

Dave Berentson  
Tonya Bieche  
Juniper Carpenter  
Cascades Job Corps  
Bob Christensen  
Rob Crawford  
Tom Day  
Mitch DePriest  
Elaine Dignum  
Margaret Estes  
Theresa Fernandez  
Joe Fuchs

Amy George  
Chris Gusta  
Jeannie Hicks  
Tim Hinman  
Dorothy Holiday  
Ann Johnson  
Jeanne Johnson  
Ray Jorgensen  
Mike and Sue Knoble  
Hal Lee  
Aaron Leslie  
Dora Lynch

Tom McCloud  
Jean McCracken  
Bill McIlraith  
Sharon McKeehan  
Ivy Merrill  
Mount Vernon Rotary Club  
Ana Nieves  
Patrick Nimis  
Dorothy Phillips  
Regence Blue Shield  
Marvin Remillard  
Rick Roetcisoender

Susan Rowe  
Lesa Sheahan  
Dave Shields  
Xola Sielicki  
Small Planet Foods  
Yara Tethys  
Ann Thompson  
Wash. Conservation Corps  
Washington Reading Corps  
Steve Wicks  
Heather Wilder  
Carolynne Wright

**Volunteer Lawyer Program**

Darren Acoba  
Brian Alkire  
James Anderson  
Cawood Bebout  
Eron Berg  
Eileen Butler  
Craig Cammock  
Terence Carroll  
John Christopherson  
Brian Clark  
David Day  
James Dolan  
Cheryl Duffy  
Nancy Durell  
Rachelle Eason  
Pat Eason  
Ken Evans  
Pete Gilbert  
Warren Gilbert  
Dianne Goddard  
Gwen Halliday

Nancy Ivarinen  
Elliott Johnson  
Sloan Johnson  
Gary Jones  
Rosemary Kamb  
John Kamb, Jr.  
John Kamb, Sr.  
Colleen Kenimond  
Kent Kok  
Mark Koslicki  
Rusty Kuntze  
Michelle Lambert  
Michael Lewis  
John Livingston  
Garl Long  
David Lowell  
Stephen Mansfield  
Myriam Marquez  
William McCann  
Mary McIntosh  
Barry Meyers

Janice Mikkelborg  
Lynn Miner  
Shannon Montoure  
Thomas Moser  
Holly Newman  
Stephen Nicol  
Kristjan Ochs  
Gerald Osborn  
Brian Paxton  
Paula Plumer  
Christopher Pollino  
Nancy Preg  
Kathy Prunty  
Aaron Rasmussen  
Claire Reiner  
Sarah Rice  
Stephen Schutt  
Dennis Scott  
Tom Seguine  
Craig Sjostrom

Gail Smith  
Alan Souders  
Brian Stiles  
Brock Stiles  
William Stiles, Jr.  
Richard Sybrandy  
Kate Szurek  
Paul Taylor  
Scott Thomas  
Mervyn Thompson  
Keith Tyne  
Felicia Value  
Corbin Volluz  
David Wall  
Wendy Wall  
Dewey Weddle  
Richard Weyrich  
Vivian White  
Michael Winslow  
Morgan Witt

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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So many individuals and organizations share in the client successes in our 26<sup>th</sup> service year. We offer our deepest gratitude to those who partnered with us – individuals, churches, businesses, volunteer dentists, physicians, and attorneys, service clubs, local governments, schools, and numerous other individuals and organizations that contributed to our efforts of *“helping people, changing lives”*.

We especially want to acknowledge the strong collaborative partnerships between SCCAA and major contributors to Community Action efforts. These relationships greatly enhance SCCAA’s effectiveness as we go about *helping people and changing lives*. We salute:

City of Anacortes  
City of Burlington  
City of Mount Vernon  
City of Sedro Woolley  
Mount Baker Dental Society  
NAS-Whidbey Fleet & Family Support Center  
Northwest Medical Team International  
School Districts throughout Skagit County  
Skagit County  
Skagit County Bar Association  
Skagit Valley College  
Untied Way of Skagit County  
Numerous businesses, individuals, partners, and volunteers

We view our accomplishments as what people do as a result of how we link them with resources and opportunities, thus providing means for them to move positively in their lives toward greater independence and self-sufficiency.

As you read the program reports and “Client Success Story”, along with other client comments integrated throughout this report, please recognize that without you, our partners, these powerful changes would not be happening for thousands of low-income people in our community. We look forward to working with you in the years to come. Thanks so much for your steadfast support!

## **Skagit County Community Action Agency**

*Helping People, Changing Lives*



Skagit County Community Action Agency is a United Way Agency



# ACRONYMS

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ABCD	Access to Baby & Child Dentistry
Best PLACE	Best People & Literacy Achieving Community Enrichment
Best SELF	Best Summer Education & Learning Fun
CVM	Community Voice Mail
DSHS	Department of Social & Health Services, Washington State
DVJP	Domestic Violence Justice Project
EFAP	Emergency Food Assistance Program
ESL	English as a Second Language
GED	General Education Development
HUD	Housing & Urban Development
LIHEAP	Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program
MSS	Maternity Support Services
NAS	Naval Air Station
NWMTI	North West Medical Team International
OIC	Opportunities Industrialization Center
OSPI	Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction
SCCAA	Skagit County Community Action Agency
SHIBA	Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisor
SKAT	Skagit Transit
SVC	Skagit Valley College
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TBRA	Tenant-Based Rental Assistance
THOR	Transitional Housing Operating & Rent
VISTA	Volunteers In Service To America
VLP	Volunteer Lawyer Program
VOCA	Victims Of Crime Act
WDSF	Washington Dental Service Foundation
WIC	Women, Infants & Children

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