



Member of
Action Partnership

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It's Community Action Month *Come join the celebration!*

The first Community Action Month was observed in 1998. It was a learning experience, to say the least. We in community action were in agreement that our works are vital to the health and well-being of a large, too large, portion of America's citizenry.

We further believe that our story needs to be told. Thousands of staff members and volunteers in hundreds of agencies across the nation work hard to provide an opportunity for the low-income in their communities.

Whether it's providing a safe haven for children in Head Start, helping someone own their first home, or bringing the elderly together to socialize, the validity of the programs residing beneath the community action umbrella can not be denied.

Throughout the month of May, special events will be occurring in communities across America and community action staffers will be on hand to spread the word. Sure, it's a chance to toot our own horns, but more importantly, it's an opportunity to spread the word.

At Crowley's Ridge Development Council, we offer services geared to the needs of our "customers." And customers they are. We are here to provide those who seek us out with products we believe will make their lives more comfortable, healthier and safer.

At a Head Start center, children will find themselves in a sheltered environment where learning is important, but not the only attraction. Nourishing meals will give the young

bodies a boost while nurturing teachers and assistants will provide love and compassion to those future leaders who will pass these lessons and attitudes on to others. Too, the entire family becomes a part of the learning experience as parents and siblings are involved in the process.

Human Services is ready to provide families with necessary assistance, as well.

Family service centers in each of the eight counties served by CRDC are set to provide assistance in such programs as LIHEAP (energy assistance), family enrichment, rental housing, housing counseling, home ownership, weatherization, and many others.

"Poverty is not an illness," says Robert Wilford, executive director of CRDC, "but the way we often see our low-income treated, you might think it's a communicable disease. We treat people with the dignity they deserve. We don't believe anyone just woke up one morning and said to themselves, 'I think I'm gonna be poor from now on.' Too often, these folks are victims of circumstances beyond their control."

Pointing to the many services offered by CRDC to assist those in need, Wilford emphasizes that poverty strikes all ages.

"At a time when so many should be relaxing and enjoying their golden years, too many of our elderly find themselves scrambling just to survive," Wilford says. "It shouldn't be this way, but it is. And it is up to CRDC and other community action agencies to lead the charge in the war on poverty.

Whether it is for youngsters, elderly or those in between, we will fight to keep programs alive that benefit our fellow Americans in need."

He explains that CRDC also has services for those who have fallen prey to drug addiction, and another program that is specifically designed to involve teens to avoid this worldwide plague of drug abuse.

"I can't begin to express the feelings I have as an integral part of the community action program," Wilford says. "I am probably one of the luckiest people in the world and I know a lot in this business who feel the same way. I get paid to help people who need it. I get to see the faces of those who have been given a hand up, not a hand out, and are on their way to self-sufficiency and the pride that goes with that. I get to touch the faces of young and old who find a warm, safe haven with us – even if only for a short time each day. Many times, they find us just when they thought there was nobody who cared or was willing to help. Sometimes I wonder who gets the most from this, them or me."

Wilford urges area residents to take the time to visit a CRDC facility during National Community Action Month in May.

"We're here helping people ... changing lives! Come be a part of our effort to stamp out the causes of poverty in America."

CRDC will participate in community events as well as stage numerous activities to provide opportunities to learn more about this agency.