MISSION

The Community Action Agency of Western Connecticut, Inc. provides social services and programs to low-income individuals and families in the western area of Connecticut to help them stabilize and improve their lives.

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A MESSAGE FROM CAAWC

It would be hard to erase from memory the year 2020. The year started off normal, then the pandemic hit and presented a crisis for our communities on a scale many of us have never before experienced. On March 16th, most of the country shut down but CAAWC did not. We were considered essential workers providing important and needed services to the 25 communities we serve.

Individuals and families began looking for services that they had never needed previously. The demand for energy assistance grew and our phones rang with residents looking for help and information during the pandemic. The demand for food assistance also escalated, not only at our food pantry, but at pantries all over town.

With the need increasing, we saw an opportunity to assist these pantries. Through the Danbury Food Collaborative, it was decided to restart rescuing food. CAAWC established the Community Food Rescue Program. With a generous donation, we were able to acquire a refrigerated truck and began rescuing produce and other staples from local grocers and big box stores throughout the community. We deliver these rescued food items to the pantry that is open on that day, Monday through Friday. This offers us the opportunity to help individuals and families have access to healthy food.

It truly was a challenging year. AELC had to close for ten weeks at the recommendation of the health department. We needed to ensure that the students and staff were kept safe during these difficult times. The childcare center reopened with reduced enrollment. Families needed a safe and secure environment for their children so that they could return to work.

As the end of the year rolled around, a vaccine was being introduced. We looked forward to helping promote COVID-19 safety precautions and encourage vaccinations to those eligible. We look forward to continuing to provide assistance to the communities we serve with information and access to programs and services to help those economically challenged become self-sufficient and thrive.

Creighton W. Lee Sr.
Board Chair

Michelle H. James
Executive Director
**JENNIFER SMITH**

Our client, “Jennifer Smith”, a single mother of three, 31, came to CAAWC seeking assistance for a barrage of challenges. Jennifer had recently relocated back to Connecticut after fleeing a domestic violence incident. Since she fled in haste, she was unprepared for the undertaking of starting over. The client had very limited resources and was in need of assistance to reclaim her independence.

After a short stay with a friend, Jennifer found herself and her children in a women’s shelter and her time at the shelter was limited. Through the collaboration of the client and her Community Support Specialist, a service plan was created to address her barriers in addition to identifying steps and services to help her accomplish her goals. Shortly after the plan was developed, Jennifer began accomplishing her goals, one at a time. Even when faced with challenges, she remained committed to creating a safe place for her family.

During the time spent assisting the client, she was helped with securing SNAP benefits and health insurance for her family. Additionally, Jennifer was able to secure a full-time job and secured a section 8 voucher to cover her housing cost. Additional CAAWC services utilized by the client included the Food Pantry, Energy Assistance, VITA, and household budgeting. Jennifer provided great feedback regarding services received and is now functioning self-sufficiently in the community.

**ROGER KING**

“Roger King” a 45 year old, legally blind, male came to CAAWC’s Stamford office in June 2020, seeking help for cash assistance and housing; he was already receiving SNAP and HUSKY benefits. Roger was living with his aunt and uncle but was having many difficulties. His mother, who was his caregiver, also needed housing. The Community Services Specialist (CSS) assisted Roger with his cash assistance application, which was approved and created a service plan to address his needs.

In August 2020, Roger was asked to leave his Aunt’s house so 211 was contacted, but no rooms were available and due to COVID-19, all shelters were full. Unfortunately, Roger experienced homelessness and the pandemic made it more difficult to find a new home. Roger was referred to Family Centers, who provided a case worker and Community Care Team for additional resources.

Through Pacific House, an intake was done and shelter was obtained. Also a referral was made to Person-to-Person for clothing. Clothes and gift cards were provided and hygiene products, food, and snacks were purchased. Even though Roger was residing in the shelter, our CSS kept trying to help him find housing. Finally, the Family Centers’ case worker in connection with Stamford Manor was able to obtain permanent housing for Roger and his mother. They were approved for a two-bedroom apartment and Family Centers also donated furniture. Through the SSBG Housing Support Fund, CAAWC assisted Roger with part of the security deposit. Roger is doing well, is very happy now, and is back with his mother who is able to care for him.
The Danbury Food Collaborative consists of members of the City’s food pantries and programs who meet to discuss the food needs of the community. The CT Food Bank’s “Man with a Van” food rescue program came to an end in June 2020.

The Collaborative saw a need to continue rescuing food on a weekly basis from local grocery stores, BJs and Costco. CAAWC stepped in to host the Community Food Rescue Program.

Through an anonymous donor, CAAWC received $50,000 to purchase a refrigerated truck to provide this weekly service to the participating food pantries in the greater Danbury area. With the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, now more than ever, it is crucial that we pull together our resources, skills, and volunteers to continue to help those who are in need.

2020 HIGHLIGHTS

14,291
Individuals connected to state and community services supports

99,000
baby diapers distributed to 275 Families

66,393
Meals provided through our Food Pantry

200
Households received a Thanksgiving Food Basket

1,219
Volunteer hours served through the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)

2020 Highlights
Food & Other Assistance

14,291 Individuals connected to state and community services supports

99,000 baby diapers distributed to 275 Families

66,393 Meals provided through our Food Pantry

200 Households received a Thanksgiving Food Basket

1,219 Volunteer hours served through the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)

ACTION EARLY LEARNING CENTER (AELC)

Action Early Learning Center received supplies from the Office of Early Childhood for distribution to child care providers in our area. These PPE resources were offered to providers that were open during the pandemic. They are Connecticut’s essential and frontline child care workers.

ACTION EARLY LEARNING CENTER

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The Community Action Agency of Western Connecticut
Statement of December 31, 2020

CHANGES IN NET ASSETS WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS 2020

Revenues, gains and other support
Federal and state grants $7,803,471
Childcare program income 389,378
Local grants and contributions 253,606
Bond debt service funding 25,523
Other income 7,203
Net assets released from restriction 10,784
Total revenues, gains and other support 8,489,965

EXPENSES
Specific assistance 4,618,742
Salaries and benefits 2,872,706
Materials, supplies, and other consumables 108,433
Professional and contracted services 223,094
Occupancy 196,486
Repairs and maintenance 39,820
Depreciation 65,485
Other 44,845
Conferences and training 7,827
Interest 12,167
Total expenses 8,189,605
Changes in net assets without donor restrictions 300,360

CHANGES IN NET ASSETS WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS
Support and revenue
Contributions 46,618
Net assets released from restrictions (10,784)
Changes in net assets with donor restrictions 35,834

CHANGES IN NET ASSETS 336,194

NET ASSETS—BEGINNING OF YEAR 659,049

NET ASSETS—END OF YEAR $995,243

FINANCIALS

2020 HIGHLIGHTS

34
Individuals provided with resources to help them budget, save, and improve their financial well-being.

295
Tax Returns were filed through our VITA Program, returning over $447,732 to CT’s economy, including $94,276 in Earned Income Tax Credits (EITC).
On behalf of The Community Action Agency of Western Connecticut, we would like to say thank you for your financial support in 2020. With your partnership, we were able to grow through the year and come out ahead. We are so thankful for the board members, staff members, donors, and volunteers who have come together to support our mission.
CAAWC SERVICES

Action Early Learning Center (AELC)
Case Management Services
Diaper Program
Elderly Fuel Program
Employment & Education Services
Energy Assistance
Food Pantry
Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)
Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)

COMMUNITIES WE SERVE

Bethel       New Fairfield       Salisbury
Bridgewater  New Milford        Sharon
Brookfield   New Canaan         Sherman
Canaan       Newtown            Stamford
Cornwall     North Canaan        Warren
Danbury      Norwalk            Washington
Darien       Redding            Weston
Greenwich    Roxbury            Wilton
Kent         Ridgefield

OUR OFFICES

CENTRAL
78 Triangle St.
Danbury, CT 06810
203.744.4700

STAMFORD
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Stamford, CT 06902
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AELC
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NORWALK
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