

Ozark Opportunities Inc. **Governing Board Report**

July 2013

I. Executive Director's Notes:

A Commitment to Excellence- On August 7, 2013 we held our annual "***OOI Commitment to Excellence Event***" with all staff in attendance. The all-agency programming began at 11:00 a.m. with a catered lunch and entertainment by "Todd Oliver and Friends"- it was a funny and light-hearted hour that included several of the staff as participants, and tears of laughter were seen throughout the room with the final act (which included puppeteering of Rick Pennington and Pam Klunk...hilarious!) Afterward, everyone heard an extensive explanation from DHS about Child Maltreatment, Mandated Reporting, and Carseat Safety from Sally Burleson.

I then took the opportunity to explain to the staff the history of the agency, what ROMA is about, and our new Strategic Direction(s). Jane Bueg followed up with an explanation about necessary employee paperwork, and Shirley Richesin gave an overview of OOI Finance. Finally, there was an open session of "Computers 101" hosted by RaganPro (our new technology vendor) to help anyone needing tutoring in how to use Google email and other programs we use on a daily basis. The day was a success, as there were many remarks about how staff enjoyed the food, entertainment, and training.

Thanks to all who worked hard to help plan and make the event a success, and those Board Members that were able to attend, as you are always welcome to stop by an event (or location) to see what is new, volunteer, or eat a meal with Head Start children (they LOVE guests!) If you let us know in advance we will make sure to be prepared, and will have a special plate of food or activity arranged for your visit.

RTA

II. Head Start

We held our Head Start Pre-Service training this year over 4 days, and had a lot of good learning and dialogue with the staff. On August 7, 2013 Head Start staff each attended three tracks; Tablet training (handheld Androids for their classrooms), Basic Computer Training, and Education Training (i.e. "Fun with Ryan").

On August 8, the Teacher Assistants has "Mental Health First Aid" training while Mr. Clayborn held a *Lesson Planning Class* to get the Teachers up to speed and ready for the new year. On August 9th, we held a "CLASS Boot Camp" for all teaching staff and substitutes- they were invited to dress in camouflage, and prizes were awarded for "best camo." The guest CLASS Trainer, Cathy McCauliffe, was very thrilled to speak to the group, and has mentioned many times that she feels OOI has a great program and are doing great work with the children and families. Each teaching staff member received a CLASS Manual and were updated on how the CLASS system can help them to run a more effective classroom to meet the regulations that are now tied to our continued operation of the program.

On Monday-Wednesday (the week of Aug. 12th) the Coordinators and I attended "Round Robin" gatherings in the three regions (south, central, and north.) I explained the upcoming Triennial Review, and each Coordinator explained their components. We have taken a lot of effort to insure everyone is ready for the upcoming school year; and we are looking forward meeting the new children and their families.

THANKS to the county judges in Searcy and Marion counties (Judge Hinchey and Judge Ott) for their help with getting our driveways ready for the new year- we truly appreciate your help!!!

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Terri Beard: ERSEA & Family and Community Partnerships:

- **ENROLLMENT UPDATE:** As of 8/19/2013 (the first day of school) we had **439** (471 is now our funded enrollment.) We are still having families contacting us so the numbers should increase. We have heard various reasons for this; including concerns about further cuts of slots in the Head Start program, and loss of population in some areas we serve. We have spent a considerable amount of resources on recruitment this year, and are continuing efforts to find children and families in need to participate in our Head Start program.
 - Areas still in need of children: Norfolk, Harrison, Clinton, Jasper, Shirley, and Bruno-Pyatt.
- Training has been going on for all staff regarding all areas of ERSEA and the PFCE frameworks this month.
- Parent Orientations were held Thursday, August 15th by Center Staff starting the relationship-building process with our new families for the 2013-14 School Term.

Tricia Murray- Disabilities and Center Staff Supervision:

- Disabilities I.E.P. Report is the same as July since the students are out for the summer.
- We sent Mental Health Contracts to DaySpring Behavior Health Services and Dr. Charles Nichols PsyD. to provide us with classroom observations.
- All Interagency Agreements with the Co-op's and Pre- Schools to screen and provide services for our classrooms have been signed and mailed.
- Training for staff on Disabilities has been provided prior to the new school year.

Ryan Clayborn- Education and Training & Technical Assistance:

- We now have two Coordinators who are CLASS trained and reliable observers (myself and Patricia Murray). I have also created a new CLASS Implementation Plan which includes seven steps that will bring our program to where it needs to be in all three CLASS Domains. The teachers will not only be assessed this year, but there will also be written summaries given to each classroom after each evaluation to help them to make necessary changes.
- Also, I have restructured the education forms that will be used in each classroom. The forms have been updated and ordered by number an "Education Portfolio" and emailed to center to save money on paper and so the teachers will have easier access to them throughout the year. I have also created indoor and outdoor play curricula to insure teachers have a template.
- I have been working on the Education Policies and Procedures and currently have several of them completed.
- I have also created (MOU's) or memorandums of understanding for each school district we have centers in- they are school readiness agreements between us and the district to work together on school readiness topics. I will be going to each district to have them signed the last two weeks of August.
- Also, we worked diligently on our Pre-Service training this year. Each teacher and teacher assistant received a total of 32 hours of training or professional development over the 4 days of training.

Wanda Nelson- Licensing, Safety/Facilities, and Nutrition:

- Rain has delayed several of our planned outdoor improvements to the centers but Rick Pennington, our Maintenance person, has managed to complete several projects along with keeping the lawns and playgrounds mowed at several of our centers. He also was able to fix the Harrison playground after someone took 9 tiles that were needed to insure the fall zone meets licensing standards by retrieving leftover tiles from Clinton.
- **Special thanks** to Hon. Johnny Hinchey, Searcy County Judge for his help in helping to install a culvert and adding gravel to our parking lot at the Marshall Head Start.
- **Special thanks** to Hon. Terry Ott, Marion County Judge for adding gravel to our driveway at the Yellville-Summit Head Start in preparation for the new school year.

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Tawnya Hutcheson: Health/Mental Health:

- I also been working on Health/Mental Health Policies and Procedures and currently have several of them completed.
- Week of August 1-6 worked on preparation for the Pre-Service training.
- Week of August 7-14 Training with the Teaching staff.
- The rest of August working on getting contracts signed; and preparations for Lead Testing for each center and checking to make sure all deadlines are being met to insure compliance with Performance Standards.

III. Community Services

Rebecca Hanlin; Community Services Director

A Success from SUCCESS: Every month Jessica and Tammy (Family Development Workers) create a newsletter to share with SUCCESS participants, community partners, and staff. It includes a section that acknowledges participants who have accomplished goals. We have received such positive feedback from participants seeing their names in the newsletter we have decided to try something new. We invited participants to write an article about themselves and what SUCCESS has meant to them with the option of it being printed in our monthly newsletter. September's newsletter will be the first one where we spotlight a "Super-Achiever". Donna Swangel has received needed services from *Ozark Opportunities, Inc.* in the past; including food and utility assistance. She is currently a participant in the SUCCESS program and has accomplished several goals of which she is very proud. Below is Donna's article [FYI, participants and/or clients sign permission for pictures, articles, or names to be used.]

We are very proud of Donna (and all of our other SUCCESS participants) for their hard work toward their goals and not giving up even though they are struggling.

My name is Donna Swangel and I am a 37 year old single mother of four, one of which has Down Syndrome. My



childhood was rough growing up not having much money and at times becoming homeless, and then I became a mom at the age of 16. Following the pregnancy was my drug addiction, which took over my life. I have now been clean for 13 years and yes I am still fighting the addiction but have started a new life for myself and kids with the help of Ozark Opportunities, Inc. The SUCCESS Program with Ozark Opportunities, Inc. has gotten me on track to accomplishing a dream of mine to own my own ranch. Without the help of Jessica my Family Development Worker I would still be in the same place I was several months ago. Instead Jessica pointed me in the direction to obtain my GED and start college courses. Within four months I have obtained my GED and have enrolled in courses at North Arkansas College. Once I have completed college I plan on starting a horse therapy ranch for special needs children and adults.

People have told me several times that I do not need a college education to start my own ranch, but I say I do because I can take an education with me wherever I need it. When I signed up for the SUCCESS Program I was ready for a change and did not want my kids to grow up the way I did.

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My greatest accomplishment with the program would be finding the courage, faith and knowledge to move on with my dream. All I needed was the extra encouragement I received from Jessica and Ozark Opportunities, Inc. Thank You!

Donna Swangel

- A. SUCCESS Seminar:** September’s seminar topic is “Financial Literacy” with guest speaker Troy Clark with Northwest Regional Housing Authority. There will be no seminars in October, as that is when staff review the program year; successes, update forms and review, revise and create strategies for the new year, and re-certify SUCCESS participants.
- B. Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) Summer Cooling:** The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), Summer Regular Program began July 8, 2013. Pre-Eligible (“P.E.”) Applications were mailed June 21, 2013 (P.E. applicants are individuals/families the State has determined are income eligible because they are elderly and/or disabled and are receiving food stamps.)
- The Regular Program payment amount is determined by number in the household and gross monthly income, and the Summer Program is for electric only. This program will end when funds are depleted or September 30, 2013.

HEAP Regular Program, Summer. Beginning thru August 9, 2013:

County	Applied	Approved	Pending	Denied	\$ Spent
Baxter	696	646	10	40	83,420.00
Boone	615	533	18	64	69,404.00
Marion	343	325	1	17	42,079.00
Newton	267	232	13	22	30,044.00
Searcy	255	223	7	25	28,504.00
Van Buren	317	286	1	30	36,668.00

- C. The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP):** USDA surplus foods. Next delivery is scheduled for August 8, 2013 and will consist of: Applesauce, Cranberry Sauce, Spaghetti Sauce, Rotini Pasta, Beef Stew and Grapefruit Juice. First day of distribution will be:

County	Address	Date
Baxter	213 East 6 th Street, Suite 101 Mtn. Home	August 13 th
Boone	406 Hwy 43 East in Harrison	August 14 th
Marion	354 Hwy 62 East in Yellville	August 12 th
Newton	506 West Court in Jasper	August 15 th
Searcy	110 Ruff Street in Marshall	August 14 th
Van Buren	100 Success Drive in Clinton	August 15 th

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D. Grants:

We are looking into The Aspen Institute Ascend Fund- the Request for Inquiry is due August 19, 2013. They have grant amounts for \$25,000-\$50,000 and the grant cycle can be 12 or 18 months. Their focus is *“Two Generations, One Future; Moving Parents and Children Beyond Poverty Together.”*

It seems to be a good fit for OOI’s SUCCESS and Head Start programs. Income guidelines are up the 200% of the Federal Poverty Levels which is higher than the programs that we are currently operating and is the area where we lose tracking our families since we are no longer able to work with them. This is also the income range where skills they’ve learned and developed are tested and measures established to handle emergencies without returning to poverty.

E. Training/Meetings:

Community Services staff attended *Commitment to Excellence Event* held at the Durand Center in Harrison August 7, 2013.

F. Monitoring:

- a. Beverly Buchanan monitored CSBG FY 2012 August 1, 2013.
- b. Lottie Akins reviewed CSBG/Agency records for FY 2013 first quarter August 5-8, 2013.
- c. J.Y. Williams will be monitoring 2013 Winter HEAP records August 19-22, 2013. (Original review dates were August 13-15, 2013.)

IV. Community Development Update:

Linda White- Community Development Specialist

Community Development - Monthly Update - July 10, 2013		
Active, Closed, Inactive, Observer, Supporter	Project	Activities
A	ACCESS	ACCESS has a strategic planning session scheduled with a professional facilitator.
A	Business Incubation	<i>Entrepreneurs Club Breakfast</i> started Monday, Aug 12. I have a volunteer helping me. She's also the first business, and it is close to opening.
A	CHDO Designation	Pending; we talked to Mr. Riddle; will be late October 2013 before he takes action to approve our designation.
A	WX issue	We have a plan in place, drafting letter to Mr. C, which I will mail to him.
S	CORE	N/A.
A	Fuller Center for Housing	N/A.
A	HOME Homeowner Rehab.	Collecting applications.
I	IDA/AFI Match Grant	On back burner for now.
A	Minority and Women owned Enterprise (MBE)	Brochure is designed. Meeting with Patty Methvin Aug 14, will set up meetings with all the other Chambers next week. Push is to get minority businesses, small businesses, and disadvantaged businesses all registered with the state.

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A	Race Relations, Committee on	Attended one meeting, personally removed all "persons of interest" who promote white supremacy from the Harrison, AR Wikipedia web page.
A	Nonprofit Startup and Support	GBI is having board issues, Mac's is doing well. SCRHC - we're planning strategic planning, gave Donna statistics to use in a funding application and did a write-up for her, created a monthly newsletter, and discussing use of a common intake form. Searcy Vets - trying to help them get a new computer
A	Searcy Chamber of Commerce	I did not attend the July meeting due to a scheduling conflict.
A	Strategic Planning/Needs Assessment	Ongoing...
A	Tenant Advocacy	I designed a brochure. I'd like to hold meetings here starting at the end of August.
A	USDA Child Care Grant	Have not heard back yet from Mr. James on application.
A	VITA	Plan is to have VITA sites in Baxter and Searcy Counties next year in partnership with ACCESS. Much will depend on whether we get a VISTA Volunteer who could help with site planning and recruitment.
A	VISTA	Will have the concept paper done by Friday, August 16.
A	WX File Review	Target date to have the files in order is Friday, August 23. Lots of pictures to print and file.
A	Yellville Chamber of Commerce	Have not been able to attend a meeting yet due to scheduling conflicts.
I	Yellville Community Center	Have not heard of any meetings lately.

V. Corporate Services (& Human Resources)

Jane Bueg, Corporate Services Director- June 2013

Hires	Education	Housing	Community Services	Administration	Total
2	1	0	1	0	2
All Terminations	Education	Housing	Community Services	Administration	Total
4	4	0	0	0	4

Involuntary Terminations

(Lay-offs, non-renewal of contract, termination for cause, unsuccessful prob. period, Reduction in Force)

	Education	Housing	Community Services	Administration	Total
July 2013	0	0	0	0	0

Transfers July 2013

Employee & Position	Location	Transferred to	Position
Ryan Clayborn, Teacher	Harrison	Central Office	Education/T&TA Coordinator

Current Employment Opportunities at OOI unfilled as of 08/15/2013

Position	Location	Program
Family Service Worker	Flippin, Yellville, Bruno, Harrison	Head Start

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Corporate Services continued:

Other/Training

Human Resource/Management Training: Webinars: ACA – Wellness Program Integration and Plan Eligibility Limits; Role of Leadership: Strategies for Implementing & Sustaining Change
Governance Meetings: OOI Executive Committee Meeting Meeting
GoogleApps in-kind report: \$370.00
Workforce Services: Initial Unemployment Claims: 2; Unemployment Claims Audit: 4
FLMA Request Processing: 1
COBRA Notices: 4
403(b) Terminations: 4
Weatherization Program: warehouse clean-up & organization; pack and relocate all weatherization client files; relocate computers
Head Start: empty outside storage units and relocate contents
Distribute and complete employee Health Insurance Information surveys for group policy pricing
New employee orientation: 1
Technology: prepare computers for new staff: 2 workstations
Complete US Census Health Insurance Survey (telephone version)
Employment Ads and postings for vacancies
Schedule Employment Interviews; notify all applicants of disposition

VI. Finance- see “Finance Packet” & “Retirement Report” sent separately.

Shirley Richesin; Fiscal Officer