



Roofs Over Our Families Fall Newsletter

Roofs Over Our Families (ROOF) has been the Local Housing Options Team (LHOT) for Somerset County for over five years. This innovative group of individuals consists of housing and supportive service providers, across Somerset County. ROOF was established as a network coalition in 2007 to address the local housing needs in our county through collaborative housing projects, planned activities, and educating community members.

As housing needs across our county increase, cross-sector collaboration is a necessary component to effectively assessing the needs of our community and to establish a strong Continuum of Care. ROOF has been on the forefront of promoting cross-sector collaboration amongst key stakeholders and improving access to safe, affordable, and accessible housing in our area.

Rural homelessness is a growing problem within Somerset County. Many individuals assume we do not have a homeless problem in our area because the homeless are not visible. The homeless within Somerset County can be found couch surfing, hiding in the woods, staying in overcrowded homes with family members, sleeping in tents, constructing make-shift units, sleeping in their cars, spending a few nights at different friend's homes, and constantly at-risk of losing their housing stability. An estimated 7% of the homeless population resides in rural areas (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2012). The rural homeless population can be challenged with a multitude of barriers including the lack of access to transportation, affordable and safe housing, and employment opportunities.

ROOF has been a catalyst for promoting change by educating the community on the growing and diverse needs of our homeless population. In addition, this comprehensive group of partners has been identifying specific housing needs for Somerset County, establishing innovative strategies and solutions to ending homelessness in our area, and promoting a strong collaboration amongst community partners. ROOF, has been organizing and developing creative programs and events to break down barriers for those homeless in our community. A few examples include the Prepared Renter's Educational Program (PREP), 2010 Housing Fair, Annual Landlord Meetings, 2012 Human Services Fair, Sheltered/Unsheltered Point in Time Count, Annual National Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week, ongoing speaking engagements for homeless panels, and much more. ROOF continues to be on the forefront of the housing needs within our community and hopes to be a vital part of ending homelessness in Somerset County in the near future. Keep an eye out for upcoming future events!

Key Stakeholders: Beal's Counseling and Consulting, Next Step Center, Community Action Partnership for Somerset County, Children and Youth Independent Living, Habitat for Humanity, Bedford/Somerset MHMR, Southwestern PA Legal Services, Community Connections, Somerset Trust, Salvation Army, Somerset Hospital, St. Paul's UCC Church, Somerset County Homeless Liaisons. OVR, Salisbury Family Center, Family Behavioral Center, Somerset County Redevelopment Authority, Somerset County Commissioners, Homeless Consumers, and many more.

Take Action & Support Somerset County Efforts: National Hunger & Homeless Awareness Week

By: Amanda Allen

The Local Housing Options Team, ROOF, has their plate full this year with a full week of events in honor of National Hunger & Homeless Awareness Week. The events will be held on November 12th-16th, 2012. ROOF members have designed several activities and events throughout the week that will showcase educational awareness and outreach efforts to support the homeless programs and participants in Somerset County.

Monday—Next Step Center Progressive Dinner Fundraiser. Tickets are available at the Chamber of Commerce at 814-445-6431.

Tuesday—ROOF members reading to daycares/Pre-K/Head Start Classes across Somerset County

Wednesday—Poverty Simulation at The Friedens Lutheran Church. Call 814-445-9628 ext 255 for more details

Thursday—Spaghetti Luncheon Fundraiser. Call 814-445-9628 ext 232 to place an order.

Friday—Cardboard City at St Paul’s UCC Church from 6pm until 6am

Local schools throughout the district have also organized a county wide initiative to show their support. Food & hygiene drives are being planned to accommodate the local food pantries in their school districts. Another continuing event is the homeless speaker panel that will be rotating throughout several schools this year. This year’s panel encompasses two prior homeless participants that have gained self-sufficiency and Justin Beal, who is a ROOF member and owns and operates Beal Counseling & Consulting. This unique group of individuals will discuss the barriers facing many homeless participants in Somerset County such as identifying stable income, employment, housing, substance abuse issues, and mental health barriers. Local students will be able to ask questions to the speakers and be challenged to take action.

We look forward to another exciting year of events and would like to thank the local community for their dedication and support to ending homelessness in Somerset County.

COMPASS

In need of food stamps, cash assistance, or medical? Call Danielle Wismer-Bowers at 814-445-9628 ext 232 to set up an appointment to register online for welfare assistance .

ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES

Are you thinking of going back for your GED or going back to college but need education assistance. Call Danielle Wismer-Bowers at 814-445-9628 ext 232 to discuss your future.

Red Cross Blood Drive

Date: Wednesday, October 24, 2012

Time: 9am-3pm

Location: Tableland Services

535 East Main Street

Somerset, PA 15501

Contact: Danielle Wismer-Bowers at 814-445-9628 ext 232 to schedule a time

Substance Abuse, Mental Illness and Homelessness

A common stereotype of the homeless population is that they are all alcoholics or drug abusers. The truth is that a high percentage of homeless people do struggle with substance abuse and mental health issues, but these conditions should be viewed as illnesses and require a great deal of treatment, counseling, and support to overcome. Substance abuse is both a cause and a result of homelessness, often arising after people lose their housing.

Beal Counseling & Consulting (BCC) has partnered with CAPFSC/Tableland Services Inc to provide an integrated

approach in helping those who are homeless with substance abuse and/or mental health issues.

BCC is the areas only facility licensed to provide both outpatient Drug and Alcohol and Mental Health treatment. BCC believes in treating the whole person and collaborates with CAPFSC and other service providers to insure that those in need are linked with the resources that are available in the area.

Substance abuse is often a cause of homelessness. Addictive disorders disrupt relationships with family and friends and often cause people to lose their jobs. For people who are already struggling to pay their bills, the onset or exacerbation of an addiction may cause them to lose their housing. A 2008 survey by the United States Conference of Mayors asked 25 cities for their top three causes of homelessness. Substance abuse was the single largest cause of homelessness for single adults (reported by 68% of cities). Substance abuse was also mentioned by 12% of cities as one of the top three causes of homelessness for families. According to Didenko and Pankratz (2007), two-thirds of homeless people report that drugs and/or alcohol were a major reason for their becoming homeless.

In many situations, however, substance abuse is a result of homelessness rather than a cause. People who are homeless often turn to drugs and alcohol to cope with their situations. They use substances in an attempt to attain temporary relief from their problems. In reality, however, substance dependence only exacerbates their problems and decreases their ability to achieve employment stability and get off the streets. Additionally, some people may view drug and alcohol use as necessary to be accepted among the homeless community (Didenko and Pankratz, 2007).

For many homeless people, substance abuse co-occurs with mental illness. Often, people with untreated mental illnesses use street drugs as an inappropriate form of self-medication. Homeless people with both substance disorders and mental illness experience additional obstacles to recovery, such as increased risk for violence and victimization and frequent cycling between the streets, jails, and emergency rooms. Sadly, these people are often unable to find treatment facilities that will help them. Many programs for homeless people with mental illnesses do not

Substance Abuse, Mental Illness and Homeless Article continued from page 3:

accept people with substance abuse disorders, and many programs for homeless substance abusers do not treat people with mental illnesses. Breaking an addiction is difficult for anyone, especially for substance abusers who are homeless.

To begin with, motivation to stop using substances may be poor. For many homeless people, survival is more important than personal growth and development, and finding food and shelter take a higher priority than drug counseling. Many homeless people have also become estranged from their families and friends. Without a social support network, recovering from a substance addiction is very difficult. Even if they do break their addictions, homeless people may have difficulty remaining sober while living on the streets where substances are so widely used (Fisher and Roget, 2009). Unfortunately, many treatment programs focus on abstinence only programming, which is less effective than harm-reduction strategies and does not address the

Tapestry of Health

A tapestry is a fabric with colorful woven threads that create an overall design (“tapestry”). Due to the word, “tapestry,” used in its name, the Somerset Tapestry of Health might make some think of sewing. When really analyzed, that might not be too far off-course. While the staff members at the Tapestry are certainly not seamstresses, the diverse populations they serve are all woven together by one main strand: poverty.

The Somerset Tapestry of Health is a non-profit organization that provides several programs to help families in need. The WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) program serves pregnant women and families with children under the age of five. The program provides nutrition education, health screenings, and healthy groceries for eligible families.

Additionally, WIC provides breastfeeding support to new mothers. Breast pumps are available as well as a Lactation Consultant and Breastfeeding Peer Counselor who provide support and answers for participants. In addition to breastfeeding support, the Happy Baby Initiative program provides a DVD training to WIC parents to help calm fussy babies.

Throughout the summer months, WIC participants are also able to buy fresh, locally-grown produce through the Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program. In fact, all foods provided by the WIC program are designed to be healthy and nutritious for families.

If transportation is an issue, the WIC staff is able to provide services at off-site locations after the initial appointment is conducted at the Somerset office. These locations include the following areas: Confluence, Jennerstown, Davidsville, Meyersdale, and Windber. For more information on the WIC program, contact the WIC office at 814-443-1901 or 1-800-WIC-WINS.

Another nutrition program that the Tapestry assists in providing is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Formerly known as the Food Stamp program, SNAP serves people of all ages. The Tapestry provides application aid for interested individuals and families. For more information on the program or to schedule an appointment, contact Rachael Leister at 814-443-1901, Ext. 1106.

Many Somerset County residents are unaware of these programs or think they may not be eligible and, therefore, remain impoverished. Please spread the word by telling a friend, neighbor, co-worker, relative, or anyone who could benefit from these resources, so that all eligible residents can be apart of the Tapestry’s beautifully-designed outcome: a world with less poverty and more opportunities.

Prepared Renter's Education Program (PREP)

Join us every Friday at 9:00 am in the CAPFSC/Tableland Services, Inc. Conference Room.



Prep is an interactive and innovative class that teaches:

Renter's Rights & Responsibilities
Fair Housing
Housing Search
Lease Requirements
Housing History
Landlord/Tenant Laws
Conflict Resolution
Communication with Landlord
Repairs
Eviction Process

This class provides a safe and open forum to ask questions. If you are interested, please feel free to contact Amanda at (814) 445-9628 ext. 211 to reserve your seat!

ROOF Members

Art & Marlene Gotjen—Habitat for Humanity/Somerset Hospital
Sherry Kreger—Southwestern Pennsylvania Legal Aide
Attorney Lisa Bardnt-- Southwestern Pennsylvania Legal Aide
Howard Ermin—Self-Determination Housing Project of Pennsylvania, Inc.
Holly Beckner—Salvation Army
Danielle Bowers—CAPFSC/Tableland Services Inc/ Employment & Training
Somerset Borough Inspections
Joanna Demming—Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania
Lisa Troha—CAPFSC/Tableland Services, Inc./RHAB (Central Harrisburg RHAB)
Local Housing Options Team (Self-Determination Housing Project of PA, Inc.)
Kim Logan—Center for Independent Living/CYS
Luann Thomas—Bedford/Somerset MHMR
Renee Gindlesperger—CAPFSC/Tableland Services, Inc./Next Step Center
Pamela Tokar-Ickes - County Commissioners
Ray Grant—Department of Labor & Industry (Commonwealth of PA)
Steve Spochart—Somerset Redevelopment Authority
Susan Forman—Southwestern Pennsylvania Legal Services
Justin Beal—Beal Counseling & Consulting, LLC
Pastor Matt Deal—St. Paul's United Church of Christ
Tracy Schultz—HealthChoices
Rachael Leister—Somerset Tapestry of Health
Bill McKinney—United Way
Paula Gojmevac—United Way
Mark Pollini—Active Community Member
Tom Bender—Bedford/Somerset MHMR Crisis Intervention
Jeff Mullen—Somerset County Probation
Margie Zorn—Berlin School District Homeless Liaison
Nicole Thomas-- Southwestern PA Food Security Partnership
Sally McClintock-Meadowview Nursing Home
Adam Hemminger—Somerset Trust Company
Amanda Allen-CAPFSC/Tableland Services, Inc.—Housing
Travis Hutzell-Salisbury Family Center
Scott Zarefoss—CAPFSC/Tableland Services, Inc.—Weatherization
Wendy Johnson—CAPFSC/Tableland Services, Inc.- Community Services
Melissa Lenart—Bedford/Somerset MHMR
Somerset County School District Homeless Liaisons
Michael Gregory-- Motivational Speaker



Support the Next Step Center

November 12th, 2012

Purchase tickets for our annual fundraising dinner. This progressive-style dinner features delicious food choices generously donated by area businesses. We will transport you from **Green Gables** to **Lamonica's** then on to **Coal Miners Cafe** and finally back to **Green Gables** for this unique, contemporary dining experience.

All proceeds benefit the Next Step Center.

Tickets are available for purchase.

Please contact:

Somerset Co. Chamber of Commerce

814-445-6431

Adult: \$15 Child: \$5 Veteran: \$10

*Transportation will be provided by **Griffith Transportation**.

**Dinner times are staged and ticket times are first come-first serve.

Ticket times are 4:30, 5:00, 5:30, 6:00

PA WORKWEAR AND

CLOTHING WORKS FOR A FRESH START:

In need of clothes for a job interview or employment? Call Danielle Wismer-Boewrs at Tableland Services, Inc at 814-445-9628 ext 232 to get more information.

- 🕒 Want to learn more about addiction and recovery?
- 🕒 Are you in need of additional support?
- 🕒 Support for all aspects of Recovery

Living In Balance

When: Thursdays at 6 p.m.

Starting August 2nd

Where: Friedens Lutheran Church

131 S. Main St.

Friedens PA 15541

(around back in the lower level)

Free Support for those with Substance Abuse concerns

**Provided by Beal Counseling & Consulting
For more information please call 814-444-9696**

Funded By



Somerset County **Mental Health Support Groups**

If you or a loved one are struggling with depression, anxiety, or other mental health issues, the Mental Health Support Groups offer a confidential and safe place for you to talk about your concerns. These *free* support groups are run by trained facilitators who are personally experienced at living well with mental illness. The support groups will provide individuals with mental illness and their family members the opportunity to meet together informally and support each other through their recovery journey.

Both support groups are free and will be held at the same time every Third Tuesday and at the same location, but in separate rooms on these dates:

July 24, 2012	Free	Sept. 18, 2012
August 21, 2012	Refreshments!	Oct. 16, 2012

5:30 to 7:30 p.m. - Somerset Hospital (Cafeteria, 1st Floor)
225 South Center Ave., Somerset, PA

These support groups will include A Peer Support Group and a Family Support Group. These support groups are for individuals who are or have been consumers of mental health services, and their families. They provide an opportunity to talk to others who have experienced the same types of issues, and to learn more about mental health diagnoses, resources available to you in the community, and to share your concerns, successes, treatment and goals.

For more information and to RSVP, please contact
Melissa McHugh at: (814) 317-7886 or Toll-free at (888) 733-7781

Proud to partner with



FOOD PANTRIES OF SOMERSET COUNTY

PANTRY	LOCATION	HOURS OF OPERATION	SERVICE AREA/ SCHOOL DISTRICT
BERLIN	Trinity United Church of Christ 600 Main St Berlin, PA 15530	9:00am - 11:00am Every Wednesday	Berlin and Shanksville
BOSWELL Helping Hands	301 Center Street Boswell, PA 15531	9:00am - 12:00 Noon Every Thursday	North Star Area
CONFLUENCE	711 Logan Place Confluence, PA 15424	9:00am - 12:00 Noon Last Friday	Turkeyfoot Valley
HOLLSOPPLE St. Francis Sharing & Caring	Whistler St. (Old Bank Building) Hollsopple, PA 15935	9:00am - 3:00pm 1st Monday & 1st Wednesday	Conemaugh Township Area
MEYERSDALE Casselman Valley Helpers	Zion Lutheran Church 355 Center Street Meyersdale, PA 15552	9:00am - 11:00 am Every Friday 4:30pm - 6:00 pm 2nd Tuesday of Month	Meyersdale, Garrett, & Salisbury Area
SHADE/ CENTRAL CITY	785 Lohr St Missionary Church Central City, PA 15926	9:00am – 11:00am 2nd Saturday	Shade - Central City
SOMERSET	Trinity Lutheran Church 918 Tayman Avenue Somerset, PA 15501	8:00am - 11:00am Every Wednesday	Rockwood & Somerset
WINDBER	2010 Somerset, Ave. Windber, PA 15963 (Compassion House)	9:00am - 11:30am 1st & 3rd Tuesday	Windber Area

NATIONAL HUNGER & HOMELESS AWARENESS WEEK



2012 CARDBOARD CITY

SPONSORED BY: ROOFS OVER OUR FAMILIES

NOVEMBER 16-17TH, 2012

ST. PAUL'S UCC CHURCH
202 WEST UNION STREET
SOMERSET, PA 15501
6:00 PM-6:00 AM

ROOF members and community volunteers will be participating in a Cardboard City to raise awareness and support for the homeless programs and participants in Somerset County. Volunteers will be faced with the reality of sleeping in a cardboard box for one night in inclement weather. Join us at St. Paul's UCC Church for an eye opening experience!

All participants will be issued a cardboard box donated by Lowes & Sears. Participants are allowed to bring the following items:

- **Sleeping Bag/Blankets**
 - **Pillow**
 - **Extra Clothes**

If you need further information, please feel free to contact Amanda at:

Telephone: (814) 445-9628 ext. 211
Email: aallen@capfsc.org

IF YOU WANT TO REGISTER, PLEASE TURN OVER THIS FLYER AND COMPLETE THE INFORMATION AND RETURN TO AMANDA AT:

**535 EAST MAIN STREET
SOMERSET, PA 15501
FAX: (814) 443-3690
EMAIL: AALLEN@CAPFSC.ORG**

Cardboard City 2012

Sponsored by: Roofs over Our Families

St. Paul's UCC Church

November 16th, 2012 from 6:00 PM-6:00 AM

The Local Housing Options Team, ROOF, is sponsoring an innovative event on the night of November 16th, 2012. ROOF members and community volunteers will be participating in a Cardboard City to raise awareness and support for the homeless programs and participants in Somerset County. Volunteers will be faced with the reality of sleeping in a cardboard box for one night in inclement weather. Join us at St. Paul's UCC Church for an eye opening experience!

Participant Information (registration forms must be received by November 2nd, 2012).

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Emergency Contact: _____ Emergency Contact Phone Number:

Emergency Contact Relationship to You: _____

Age (at time of event): _____

Single Participant

Group Participant

If part of group or agency, please indicate the name: _____

Liability Waiver: I understand that there are certain risks associated with participating in the Cardboard City hosted by Roofs Over Our Families at the St. Paul's UCC Church. I, hereby, waive and release any and all rights and claims for damages that I may have against ROOF, CAPFSC, St. Paul's UCC Church and all of its agents, employees, and volunteers, that may accrue to the minor or myself in the event of any and all injuries that may be suffered in connection with the participation in the event. I also understand that any minor child will be under the constant supervision of a chaperone from the church, organization, or parent that they are affiliated with during the event.

For immediate release

CONTACT: Bill McKinney,
President, United Way of the Laurel Highlands

Office: 814-535-2563

Date: September 18, 2012

PA 2-1-1 Central Region is Live

2-1-1 is an easy to remember three-digit telephone number, designated by the Federal Communications Commission, that provides assistance to consumers who are looking for human service providers in their communities. From the single parent needing food for her children to the senior trying to locate in-home care, Information and Referral brings community members and community resources together.

2-1-1 is now available in the Central Region of Pennsylvania which includes: Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Centre, Clinton, Columbia, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lycoming, Mifflin, Montour, Northumberland, Snyder, Somerset, and Union counties.

By dialing 2-1-1, residents access a live Information and Referral (I&R) Specialist who provides contact information specific to the caller's local community. Community Help Centre, located in State College, is the Regional Call Center. CONTACT Altoona (Blair County), Linkage Lycoming (Lycoming County) and Union-Snyder Community Action Agency (Snyder County) also provide PA 2-1-1 services to this sixteen county region.

The PA 2-1-1 network would like to advise businesses that have internal extensions and do not dial an access digit for an outside line, that 2-1-1 may not work on their phone system unless the phone system is reprogrammed. Reprogramming is usually as easy as getting in touch with the company that made or supports the businesses' phone system and asking them for instructions to program the phone so that the 2-1-1 call can be completed.

As a broad partnership of United Way agencies, Information and Referral providers, local government and other philanthropic organizations, PA 2-1-1 plays an important role in effectively coordinating information about services, and provides a single telephone number individuals can call when they are seeking information about assistance.

The long-term goal of the network is to reduce costs to private and governmental human support services by moving those in need into service support prior to the development of full-blown and costly crisis situations.

The result is a regional, technologically advanced system capable of:

- ✦ sharing data among local providers
- ✦ rolling calls to other agencies in times of natural disaster

meeting current licensing standards for information and referral providers across the country

"We greatly appreciate and extend our sincere thanks to the hard work and dedication of the many volunteers in the PA 2-1-1 Central Region, and those who contributed with the needed start-up funding to make this 2-1-1 system a reality in Cambria and Somerset Counties, including Community Foundation for the Alleghenies, Cambria County Alliance, Lee Initiatives, and the United Way of the Laurel Highlands," said Bill McKinney, President, of the United Way of the Laurel Highlands.

Al Jones, Executive Director of the Centre Foundation, a key funding partner via a matching grant from the John S and James L Knight Foundation, lauded the hard work that has gone into securing and creating the data platform that will assure people are connected to services, "Moving people into programs that support their needs will reduce costs by preventing problems from growing into crisis."

The PA 2-1-1 system is built around seven interconnected regional service systems utilizing established guidelines to ensure consistent, high quality service for everyone in the state. The result is a service that is available by telephone and on-line database, 24 hours daily, every day of the year. As the PA 2-1-1 system expands throughout the Commonwealth it will have the capacity to partner with 9-1-1 in times of natural or manmade disaster so that 9-1-1 can dedicate itself to First Responders, leaving 2-1-1 to provide answers to urgent, but not emergency calls.

Information about PA 2-1-1 Central Region is available at www.pa211central.org. Information about

2-1-1 nationally is available at www.211us.org

For information regarding PA 2-1-1 Central Region service, contact Bonnie Tatterson, PA 2-1-1 Central Region LLC at 814-237-1542.

For information regarding the PA 2-1-1 Central Region support and sustainability network, contact Bill McKinney at the United Way of the Laurel Highlands at 814-535-2563 or email at bmckinney.uwlh@atlanticbnn.net.

COMMUNITY ACTION POVERTY SIMULATION



CAN YOU SURVIVE A MONTH IN POVERTY?

R.O.O.F.
(a housing coalition for Somerset County)

Come join ROOF (Roofs Over Our Families) as we bring awareness of poverty in Somerset County with the Community Action Poverty Simulation (CAPS).

This simulation is NOT a game. It is designed to help participants begin to understand what it might be like to live in a typical low-income family trying to survive from month to month. The object is to sensitize participants to the realities faced by low-income people.

This experience will last for 2 1/2—3 hours. It includes an introduction and briefing, the actual simulation exercise, and a debriefing period in which participants and volunteer staffers share their feelings and experiences and talk about what they have learned about the lives of people in poverty.

FRIEDENS LUTHERAN CHURCH

131 S. Main Street, Friedens, PA 15541

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2012

1:00 pm — 5:00 pm

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED REGISTER TODAY ~ SPACE IS LIMITED

Name: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

Phone #: _____ Email: _____

If you have any questions, please contact: Renee Gindlesperger at: 814-445-9628 x 255.

Please return form by October 31, 2012, via:

Mail	Fax	E-mail	Online
CAPFSC/Tableland Services, Inc. 535 E Main Street Somerset, PA 15501	(814) 443-3690	rgindlesperger@capfsc.org	www.capfsc.org

Southwestern PA Food Security Partnership

With rising grocery costs and gas prices higher than they have been in years it is easy to believe that many Americans are beginning to struggle. For some, they are having an even harder time keeping their heads above water. In a small town comprised of even smaller outlying areas it is easy to not be aware of just how bad some peoples situations are. Somerset County is certainly no exception to the rule. Out of 379 households recently surveyed, 27.4% have an annual income of \$10,000-\$15,000. One can imagine that for a single person that income would make it difficult to secure even just the necessities in a given year..

There are undoubtedly many households in similar situations in our County; which bill do we not pay this month? What store has the cheapest grocery prices? Do we have the gas to get there? Can we afford my prescription this month? Families are making choices between food, bills, and prescriptions, making for a stressful situation no matter who you are. It is no longer an issue of the non working population, or those collecting benefits. These are issues affecting our neighbors with college educations, our elderly parents, the hardworking man now on disability. The issue of hunger is everywhere.

What are these households supposed to do? Where can they go for help? As hunger is in our own backyard, conveniently so are some of the answers. Certain programs helping people to afford food and feed their families have been around a long time, others are up in coming. In addition to federally funded programming, the people of Somerset County have come together for the good of the cause and are working together to help their neighbors.

A prime example of new things coming is the launch of the Somerset County Mobile Food Bank, which will be making its debut on September 26th and 27th taking food to all of the areas surrounding Somerset County (details available upon request). The Somerset Tapestry of Health offers SNAP application assistance and has a staff person that will complete the application with interested individuals right on site. The Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank has introduced Produce to People to our County, which has been a HUGE success. Distributing upwards to 25,000lbs each month and serving over 500 of our local families.

There is a large gap between the number of eligible participants and those actually utilizing the programs available. Some examples of this are; an estimated 11,806 people are eligible to receive SNAP benefits but are not in Somerset County. 83% of those eligible for the Farmer's Market Nutrition Program are not receiving. An estimated 1,164 residents are eligible to receive WIC for themselves and or their children and are not. WIC now will only check income annually rather than on a 6 month basis to make it easier on participants.

Many of the federally funded programs available are not being used by those who are eligible and need it, especially now more than ever. Education and awareness of available resources is crucial, especially when concerning hunger. These programs are designed to help those in need. As programs go unused, they are at risk for a decrease in funding with the potential to be cut entirely.

If you or your organization would like more information on any of these programs, please feel free to contact Nicole Thomas at 814-443-1901 ext 1112 or if you are interested in submitting a SNAP application you can contact Rachael Leister at 814-443-1901 ext 1106.

*All statistics included in this article were obtained from credible sources. Please contact Nicole Thomas if you have questions or are interested in discussing the details.

Community Connections

Are you looking for the perfect holiday gift to give this holiday season?

Are you tired of giving the same type of gift over and over each year?

The Community Connections Team located at CAP-FSC/Tableland Services has just what you are looking for. Chose from a variety of good quality handcrafted merchandise.

Handmade Quilts \$10-\$25

Handmade Quilted Purses and Diaper Bags \$10-\$20

Scrapbooks \$10

Wreaths \$10

Children's Take-a-long Play Houses \$7

Jewelry \$3-\$10

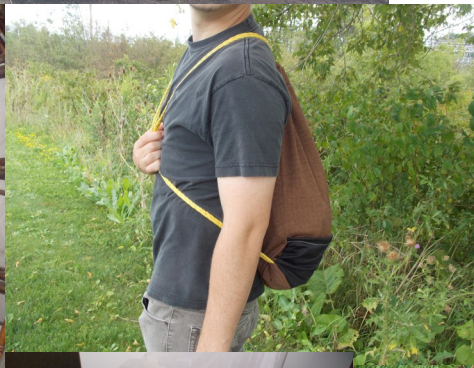
Cook Books \$5

And Much More

Contact: Danielle 814-445-9628 ext 232 or Elaina at 814-445-9628 ext 246 to set up a time to shop our store.

Custom orders are available.

2012 Point In Time Unsheltered Homeless Count



2012 Somerset County Human Services Fair

