

<b>Highlights in this issue:</b>	
Renters' Rebate .....	p 1
Utility Day Dates .....	p1
Good News Garage .....	p 2
Update on Medicaid & SAGA .....	p 3

# CABHN FEVER

## The Renters' Rebate Program For the Elderly & Disabled



What is the Renters' Rebate Program? It is a program for Connecticut renters (tenants) who are elderly or totally disabled and whose incomes do not go over certain limits. If you qualify, the Renters' Rebate Program may give you a rebate check. The amount of the rebate check is based on your income, the amount of your rent and the utility bills that you paid in 2003, (excluding telephone). Rebate amounts can range from \$50 to \$900.

### You may be eligible if ...

- ...you are over 65 years of age; **or**
- ...are the surviving spouse of someone who was eligible at the time of his/her death and over 50 years of age; **or**
- ...if you are permanently and totally disabled and 18 years of age or older;

### In addition, you must...

- ...have lived in Connecticut for one year or more; **and**
- ...have rented an apartment, a room, a mobile home, or be living in cooperative housing; **and**
- ...have an income below \$26,500/year if you are single **or** have a combined income below \$32,300/year if you are married.

### Where to apply...

Apply at your town's Assessor's Office or the town's Social Services Department.

Applications will be accepted from May 17<sup>th</sup> 2004 until September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2004.

There is NO application fee or asset limits.

For more information, please call: Infoline at 2-1-1 or your Town Hall (the number can be found in the Blue Pages of your local telephone book).

Still have questions? Please call Statewide Legal Services at 1-800-453-3320. ❖

## Calling All Clothing Banks & Clothes Closets

Community Crusade for Children (CCC) is a non-profit organization that collects used clothing and items to generate funds for the education of children. In addition, they donate sorted and graded clothing free of charge to those in need in the community. This organization has donated over \$645,000 in money and goods to participating towns. CCC is self-sufficient and receives no outside funding. The services of this non-profit corporation benefit people locally as well as internationally. To learn more about CCC, visit the website [www.communitycrusadeforchildren.org](http://www.communitycrusadeforchildren.org)

If your organization could benefit by participating in the free distribution of goods to those in need, Community Crusade for Children would be happy to help deliver them to your door at no cost. Call Ceci Moffitt at 203-789-1162, ext. 15 or email [cmoffitt@www.communitycrusadeforchildren.org](mailto:cmoffitt@www.communitycrusadeforchildren.org) to place an order. Thank you for helping CCC help others! ❖



## Keep your Utilities On! Winter Moratorium Ends 4/15/04! Statewide Legal Services Sponsors Utility Days

Are you worried about a utility shut off this Spring? Are you facing utility payments that you can't afford? Statewide Legal Services (SLS) may be able to help you. Once again, SLS is offering Utility Day where legal advocates will try to come up with a workable payment plan for both you and the utility company. There are several Utility Days being held around Connecticut. See the schedule below to find the one nearest you.

If you have any questions, please call Bonnie Roswig at SLS, (860) 344-8096 ext. 3002 ❖

<p><b>April 1</b> 10 a.m.- 2 p.m. 185 Main Street - ITB New Britain</p>	<p><b>April 17</b> 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Bridgeport DSS office 752 E. Main St, 2<sup>nd</sup> Fl. Bridgeport</p>	<p><b>April 24</b> 10 am to 2 pm Hall of Records 200 Orange St. New Haven</p>	<p><b>May 1</b> 9 am to 1 p.m. South Congregational Church 277 Main Street Hartford</p>
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## Good News Garage

The Good News Garage (GNG) is an innovative program that provides low-income individuals with a car so that they can get to and from work. There are two Good News Garage(s) in Connecticut, one in Hartford and one in New Haven. Each office has slightly different rules for eligible clients. At the New Haven GNG the participants have to reimburse the GNG for automobile repairs. However, the Hartford GNG pays for all the repairs, the recipient's first 6-months of insurance, as well as car registration at the DMV.

Eligible participants are referred by their Jobs First case manager or their DSS case worker. To qualify, applicants must meet certain criteria set by the GNG and the Department of Social Services. All referrals must be made through a Jobs First case manager or DSS case worker. Each applicant is required to complete a single page application form, employment verification, a household budget, a children/spouse information form and must provide proof of valid Connecticut driver's license.

On receipt of the completed application package, the review process will begin. Eligible applicants are contacted with specific information about their "new" vehicle, such as year, make, model, standard or automatic transmission, number of doors, color, mileage, overall condition. At that time, an appointment will be made for them to come into the GNG office to take a Car Care class and receive their vehicle. GNG staff will also accompany recipients to the insurance company and DMV to register the vehicle. For more information please go to the Good News Garage website: [www.goodnewsgarage.org](http://www.goodnewsgarage.org) or call Hartford GNG at 860 256-3682/3683 or the New Haven GNG at 203-772-3830.

*Automobiles are donated by individuals seeking a tax deduction and wishing to help people in need. Vehicles are inspected by technicians and repairs are made so that the vehicles meet safety standards. Trained technicians throughout the state of Connecticut accomplish the repairs. If you would like to donate a vehicle to this program please call 1-877-Give-Auto (1-877-448-3288). ❖*

## Free Credit Reports Later This Year

One positive outcome of the Fair & Accurate Credit Transactions Act (FACTA) of 2003 is that consumers nationwide can request a free copy of their credit report from all three credit reporting bureaus once a year.

Starting December 1, 2004, free reports should be available. Currently, residents of six states can get free copies: Colorado, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Vermont.

In Connecticut, the fee to obtain a credit report is now around \$5. However, you can get a copy of your report for free if:

- ◆ you have been denied credit, insurance or a job (you must ask for it within 60 days after you get something in writing saying you were denied credit, insurance or the job);
- ◆ you write a letter saying you are on welfare/public benefits; or
- ◆ you are not working and will be applying for a job within the next 60 days, or
- ◆ you believe your report is wrong because of fraud.

*For more information about credit reports, view the LARCC pamphlet Questions & Answers About Credit Reports available online at [www.larcc.org](http://www.larcc.org), or call to get a free copy from your local legal services office. ❖*

## Are Past Convictions Shadowing Your Future?

If you have completed your Sentence, Parole, and Probation and are violation-free for the past 5 years, you may be eligible for a Pardon. Get the facts at a free informational forum on April 14<sup>th</sup>, 6pm to 8 pm, Otis Library, 261 Main St., in downtown Norwich. At this forum you will learn how to apply for a non-inmate pardon for yourself. Space is limited. Please call to reserve your space now: 860-886-2435.

*Disclaimer: This Informational Forum does NOT guarantee your filing will be successful as each individual case is a separate matter. This forum is not a substitute for legal advice. ❖*

## National Hunger Awareness Day

On June 3rd, 2004 communities across the country will unite to focus attention on the problem of domestic hunger. For the third consecutive year, food banks and food-rescue organizations, soup kitchens and food pantries, and countless individuals, faith-based organizations and businesses will donate time, raise funds, and give food to help their neighbors.

Unfortunately even more of our neighbors need help this year. As the number of unemployed people rises, many have reached the end of their savings and are stretching impossibly tight budgets to put food on their tables. A slow economy has only put added stress on what was already a growing problem.

There are many ways for your organization to join with others across the country and show your support for National Hunger Awareness Day. Start by getting more information and a toolkit for your organization at:

<http://www.hungerday.org> ❖



## Update on Medicaid and SAGA repeal:

On February 20, a joint hearing before the Appropriations, Human Services and Public Health Committees on the Medicaid and SAGA changes adopted in August was held at the Legislative Office Building. The large hearing room was packed with about 300 people. Many legislators attended the hearing and stayed to listen to testimony throughout the day.

The hearing started with very compelling testimony from a panel of six people affected by the cuts. They were followed by five experts on Medicaid and SAGA, including Andy Schneider, a consultant from Washington, DC. Schneider outlined alternative means of financing Medicaid and warned the Committees of the dangers of requesting a waiver from the federal government. He indicated that most waivers are approved with a cap on Medicaid reimbursements to the state receiving the waiver.

After these two panels, members of the public spoke for the rest of the afternoon. Since that hearing, the Human Services Committee has approved a bill repealing the changes in HUSKY, SAGA and Medicaid (RB 457). The bill is now awaiting action in the Appropriations Committee. The Public Health Committee is considering a similar bill (RB 5530).

On March 4, the Connecticut Health Foundation released a fourth policy brief, prepared by the Georgetown University Health Policy Institute and Connecticut Voices for Children, which detailed the economic impact of the proposed changes to Medicaid and HUSKY A. The key findings are:

☞ Connecticut can expect to lose over \$96 million in federal funding if the state's Medicaid program is changed as proposed. This reduction in federal funds could cost Connecticut about 1,800 jobs.

☞ The number of uninsured children in Connecticut can be expected to rise by 43 percent if premiums are implemented as planned.

☞ Each year, \$93 million in costs of providing health care to uninsured children and adults will be shifted to providers, to other areas of the federal and state budget and to low-income people.

Key decisions about Medicaid and SAGA will be made by the Appropriations Committee by March 29. After that, the decisions will be in the hands of the House of Representatives, the Senate and the Governor. ❖

## Benefits for Legal Immigrants Supported by Attorney General

Since July 1, 2003, legal immigrants in Connecticut have been unable to apply for state-funded cash, food, medical assistance or home health care benefits. This is the result of CT's 2003 legislature failing to eliminate or extend statutory sunset provisions which, once implemented, resulted in the closure of the application process for these programs. Senate Bill 326 was raised by the Human Services Committee and will reopen the application process for these programs.

Bolstering support for this bill, is the issuance of a legal opinion from the Attorney General finding that the denial of SAGA cash, benefits under the state funded Home Care Program and SAGA medical benefits to legal immigrants while continuing to provide those benefits to citizens, is unconstitutional. The Attorney General testified in front of the Human Services Committee regarding this opinion and went on to say that he had instructed "the Commissioner of Social Services to take immediate steps to accept applications" for these programs. It is not clear however, that DSS has taken action to reopen the application process

for these programs. Legal immigrants who attempt to apply for these programs and are turned away should contact LARCC at 860-278-5688 x11.

The AG's opinion, which was issued on February 24, also found that denial of State Medical Assistance for Aliens (SMANC), TFA and Food Stamp benefits to legal immigrants "was **not** clearly unconstitutional", although similar benefits are provided to citizens. This finding makes action by the legislature to reopen the application process for these programs even more crucial. Please contact your local legislators and let them know how important it is to support SB 326 in order to provide these necessary benefits for needy legal immigrants. ❖

## Bill Proposes to Increase Drug Treatment and Ease Prison Overcrowding

Asserting that it is time for Connecticut to be "smart on crime", Rep. William Dyson and Michael Lawlor are once again proposing a bill (RB 5211, An Act Concerning Prison Overcrowding) which would provide more supervision and support to people leaving prison and increase the treatment options available to people convicted of drug offenses. The idea is to reduce drug use and crime while relieving prison overcrowding and saving the state money.

A Better Way Foundation, which is supporting this bill, notes that:

☞ a 1997 Rand Corporation study found that substance abuse treatment is 7 times more effective than incarceration in reducing drug use.

☞ a 1996 study by the Center for Substance Abuse and Treatment found that substance abuse treatment increased employment by 18.7% after one year.

☞ Connecticut's only longitudinal study of alternatives to incarceration shows that after two years, people

(See Prison Bill p. 4)

## Save the Dates:

### **Immigrant Family Day at the Capitol**

This event on April 7th is part of One CT's "Good Jobs and Economic Security Day". Press event and rally will begin outside the Capitol at 12PM. Need more information or transportation? Contact ACORN at 860-523-1017 or email an inquiry to ctacorn@acorn.org. ❖

### **"UCAN" Training**

The Greater Hartford Central Labor Council and the United Labor Agency have teamed up to sponsor UCAN Training. Highlights of the training include: Workers Rights-FMLA; OSHA in the Workplace; and Social Security/Retirement Benefits. Classes will be held at 77 Huyshope Ave., 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Rm 210, Hartford. This is a 4 week program which will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from April 6th - to May 5<sup>th</sup> (graduation) from 5:30 pm - 9:00pm. The cost is \$45/per

**Legal Assistance Resource Center of CT and  
CABHN (Connecticut Alliance for Basic Human Needs)**  
80 Jefferson Street  
Hartford, CT 06106

person and includes dinner served at 5:30 pm.

For more information and to register, please contact United Labor Agency, Kim Keane or Mary McNeff at 860-727-9301. ❖

### **CT Nat'l Organization For Women Awards**

16th Annual Feminist Awards Dinner will be held on Friday, April 16, 2004, 6PM-9PM at the Omni Hotel in New Haven. Ticket price is \$60.00 per person and scholarships are available.

To find out more about the dinner, call 860-524-5978 or email ctnow@yahoo.com. ❖

### **Prison Bill (cont.)**

sentenced to treatment centers had less than half the recidivism rates of those who had been incarcerated.

☞ Incarceration of an individual for a year costs \$27,000; treatment for a year costs, on average, \$11,000.❖

### **CABHN Meetings held 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of the month**

**9:30 - 11:30 am**

#### **Upcoming Meetings:**

**April 2<sup>nd</sup>**

**May 7<sup>th</sup>**

Community Renewal Team  
(CRT)

555 Windsor St., Hartford

*Topics:*

*30 days left to legislative session!*

*What can we do?*

*The Connecticut Alliance for Basic Human Needs (CABHN) is a statewide network of individuals, community groups and organizations which supports and promotes advocacy on low-income issues. For more information, please call (860) 278-5688.*

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