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CABHN FEVER



Extra Money for Working People: The Earned Income Tax Credit

If you work , but don't earn enough, or if you worked during 2002 and are currently unemployed, you may be eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). The EITC is a special tax credit for low or middle income working individuals that reduces the amount of Federal taxes owed and in many cases, can result in a refund check. Based on your earned income and family size, you may be able to get \$4,140 back just for filing your income tax return!

Who Can Get The EITC?

Single or married people working either full or part time in 2002 can qualify for the EITC, depending on their income and family size. To claim this credit,

- ✓ you must have earned income in 2002.
- ✓ Your earned income and modified adjusted gross income must be less than:
 - \$11,060 if single;
 - \$12, 060 if married filing jointly;
 - \$29,201 if single with one qualifying child
 - \$30,201 if married filing jointly with one qualifying child;
 - \$33,178 if single with two or more qualifying children; or
 - \$34,178 if married filing jointly with two or more qualifying children

There are several more important rules. For more details, please go to the IRS website www.irs.gov and check out Publication 596.

How do you get the EITC?

You can figure out the EITC yourself when you do your taxes, have the IRS figure it out for you, or use a free service such as VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) Site. To find the VITA Site nearest you, please call 1-800-829-1040 or go to the IRS website at www.irs.gov.

To find out more about the EITC, VITA Sites, other tax credits, and ways to help your budget, go to this great website: www.beehive.org/money/money-in-pocket.asp or contact Deborah Noble at 860-278-5688 x12. ❖

Would You Like to Help a Needy Family?

The Holiday season is just around the corner and the Salvation Army's Adopt-A-Family Program needs your help! The Adopt-A-Family Program is currently seeking sponsors interested in making the holiday season a little brighter for low-income families. Sponsors could include groups of people such as co-workers, church groups, companies, or other families who would like to provide gifts such as clothing, food, household goods, or gift certificates to needy families.

Each sponsor will receive a description of their adopted family and their "Wish List". The Adopt-A-Family Program serves families who have been victims of fire or domestic violence, are dealing with a serious illness in their family, have lost their jobs or are otherwise in need.

Last year, 102 families that included 406 individuals benefitted from the generosity of the sponsors in the Adopt-A-Family Program. To become a sponsor or to help your group become a sponsor and bring holiday cheer to a needy family, please call 860-543-8413 x. 113.❖



**Save this Date:
Thursday, January
16th 2003**

Making Women Visible: A symposium on women's issues at the state Capitol. Sponsored by the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) and the Connecticut Women's Agenda (CWA). For more information, call the PCSW at (860) 240-8300 or email pcsw@po.state.ct.us or visit this website: www.cga.state.ct.us/PCSW/

Salvation Army's Toy Program



The Salvation Army Community Services Dept. is once again offering its annual Christmas Toy Program to help low-income working families in the Greater Hartford area. Registration for the Toy Program will be held at

217 Washington Street, Hartford by appointment only and on a first come, first serve basis. Registration will be held Monday through Friday, 9 am - Noon and 1-4 pm. Families must be from the Hartford, County area.

For more information , please call the Salvation Army's Community Services Department at 860-543-8413.



Sign on for Better Child Nutrition



The programs that feed kids in school, during the summer and when they are at shelters, and that help babies and their moms off to a good start nutritionally are up for re-authorization next September as part of **The Child Nutrition Act**. The pieces of the Child Nutrition Act are: the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, National Summer Food Program, Child and Adult Care Feeding Program, and WIC.

A coalition of anti-hunger groups in the northeast has developed recommendations to enhance these programs. The recommendations are to increase access through changes in the administration of the programs, to re-emphasize nutrition, high quality food, and healthy eating habits, and to provide adequate funding for meals, outreach, and equipment.

These nutrition programs are greatly underutilized and do not reach all eligible at-risk children. The coalition plans to send a strong message to Congress to improve these programs. If they are improved, more towns should take advantage of them and more kids will get the food they need for a healthy life.

Please join the Northeast Regional Anti-Hunger Network (NEHRAN) and its Connecticut partners, End Hunger CT! and the Connecticut Association for Human Services. The goal is to have 1,000 organizational supporters by January! Please call EHC! for more information, including the guiding principles and the sign-on form. EHC! can be reached at 860.296.1127 or by email: endhungerct@endhungerct.org.

The 2002 Status of Women: States Ranked Best & Worst

On November 19th, 2002, the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) released its newest report, "*The 2002 Status of Women in the States*". The report finds that women have not achieved equality with men and that there continue to be wide disparities in the status of women in the different states. This is the conclusion reached after chronicling the wide differences in opportunities for, and treatment of, women within the United States.

The report ranks and grades the best and worst states for women, presenting data for each state (and the District of Columbia) on 30 indicators of women's status. The states are ranked according to women's overall status in five areas: political participation, employment and earnings, social and economic autonomy, reproductive rights, and health and well-being. Many important problems and obstacles to women's well-being still remain, including the lack of many of the legal guarantees that would enable women to achieve economic and political equality.

Connecticut's ranking has dropped from first to fourth place, behind Massachusetts and Vermont. Mississippi is ranked last.

For a copy of this report, go to the PDF link: <http://www.iwpr.org/pdf/USRIB.pdf>

The Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR), is a Washington, D.C.-based research organization. The report, edited by IWPR Study Director Dr. Amy Caiazza, is the 4th edition in the States series and presents an updated national overview. ❖



CCA To Honor "Pillars of the Community"

At Gala Ball & Silent Auction in February

Four community leaders and the Connecticut Food Bank will be presented with Christian Community Action's "Pillar of the Community" awards at the agency's Second Annual Gala Ball & Silent Auction, to be held Saturday, February 22, 2003 at the Omni New Haven Hotel at Yale University.

The four honorees are:

Veronica A. Douglas, Director of Special Projects, News Channel 8, for her wise counsel and support on media and community relations matters;

Attorney Bruce Lewellyn of Tyler, Cooper & Alcorn, a 35-year member of CCA's Board of Directors;

Natasha Ray, a former member of CCA's Mothers for Justice group and currently consortium development coordinator for the New Haven Healthy Start Initiative, and

The Most Reverend Peter A. Rosazza, D.D., Bishop and Episcopal Vicar for the Spanish-speaking Catholics within the Archdiocese of Hartford, for his personnel support of CCA and that of the Archdiocese.

CCA will be honoring The Connecticut Food Bank not only for its support for CCA's own food pantry program, but for all of its efforts to alleviate hunger in the greater New Haven region.

"A Winter's Evening in the Caribbean," will be the theme of the evening, with Caribbean-style food and music provided by the Afro-Caribbean / Salsa band, Mikata.

Tickets are \$75 per person.

For tickets, please contact the CCA Development Department at 777-7848 x112 or by email at amay@ccahelping.org.

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A new report by the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) **Families on the Edge: Homeless Young Parents and Their Welfare Experiences. A Survey of Homeless Youth and Service Providers -**

This report also discusses how the TANF living arrangement rule for minors may be operating as a barrier to TANF services. To view the report go to: http://www.clasp.org/Pubs/DMS/Documents/1037307545.54/edge_report.pdf



Election Results and Legislative Leadership

On the state level, not a great deal changed as a result of the 2002 elections. Governor Rowland was re-elected to a third four-year term. Democrats continue to control the Senate with a 21-15 majority, although some incumbents either did not run for re-election or lost, so there will be new faces. Key changes: Thomas Bozek of New Britain switched parties and ran as a Republican. He was defeated by Democrat Donald DeFronzo. Democrat George Jepsen (Stamford) did not run for the Senate. His seat was taken by another Democrat, Andrew MacDonald. Republican Stephen Somma (Southbury) did not run for re-election and will be replaced by Democrat Christopher Murphy, formerly a State Representative. Brian McDermott (Democrat from Wallingford/North Haven area) was defeated by Republican Leonard Fasano.

Kevin Sullivan will remain President Pro Tempore of the Senate. Martin Looney (New Haven) will be the new Senate Majority Leader, replacing George Jepsen. Don Williams will be Senate Democratic Caucus Leader. Louis DeLuca will remain Senate Minority Leader.

In the House of Representative, the Democrats retained a majority but lost some seats. The new House will have 92 Democratic Representatives and 59 Republicans. Moira Lyons will still be Speaker of the House. Jim Amann will be the new House Majority Leader, replacing David Pudlin who did not run for re-election. Robert Ward will remain House Minority Leader.

Committee Chairs for House and Senate have not yet been announced. The new legislative session starts on January 8, 2003. There may be a special session before then to deal with budget issues (see following article).✳

Budget Deficit Negotiations Underway Now

Connecticut, like most states, is facing serious budget deficits for the current fiscal year and the next two years. The deficit projected for this fiscal year, which ends June 30, is \$500 million; for next year, the projected deficit is \$1.5 billion. The Governor and legislative leadership are considering ways to deal with these deficits. At a legislative hearing on the budget deficit, the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management (OPM), Marc Ryan, said that the Governor is looking at closing the \$1.5 billion deficit by adopting \$500 million in additional spending cuts, obtaining \$500 million in concessions from state employees and raising \$500 million in enhanced revenues. Ryan specifically mentioned Medicaid; and the SAGA medical program and benefits to legal immigrants as areas for potential cuts.

The Governor has said that he will call the legislature into special session in December if there is no solution to the budget problems by then. Democratic leaders have said that they would prefer to negotiate with the Governor and adopt a solution early in the legislative session that starts in January.

One Connecticut, a coalition of nearly 100 organizations representing human service, advocacy and labor groups, continues to offer proposals to increase revenues so as to avoid further cuts to human services, including cuts to state employees. The major alternatives are increasing taxes on corporations or high income residents. It is important that constituents contact legislators now and tell them to adopt revenue increases instead of further cuts to human services.

One Connecticut has developed a presentation on these tax and budget issues. To invite a speaker from One Connecticut to your group for a full presentation on this issue, contact Cheri Quickmire, One Connecticut, 203-498-4240.✳

For more information on how you or your group can influence policy makers on budget issues, please contact CABHN at 860-278-5688 x. 12.

Connecticut Family Assets - A New Way to Look at Wealth and Poverty

Financial security is generally measured by family income. Family assets are a new measure of financial security. Assets include savings accounts, equity in a home, a stake in a business, health insurance, or a parent with the education necessary to compete in the new economy. Assets help a family live in the future instead of just making it from day to day and can provide shelter from economic disaster when income is cut off. CT Voices for Children has produced a report on family assets in Connecticut based on the first ever national "report card" on family assets prepared by the Corporation for Enterprise Development. Some key findings about the assets of Connecticut families are listed below. The full report, Connecticut Family Assets: Asset Outcomes, 2002, can be found at the CT Voices web site: www.ctkidslink.org

- The "mean net worth" (total wealth) of CT households is the 6th highest in the nation.

- 22.5% of Connecticut's families are "asset poor", that is, do not have assets to maintain their household for three months at the federal poverty level if family income is stopped.

- Households headed by non-whites in Connecticut are two-thirds more likely to be asset poor than households headed by whites.

Equity in a home ownership is the largest source of family wealth. In Connecticut:

- 72% of white households own homes
- 36% of black households own homes
- 28% of Latino households own homes

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Connecticut NOW 15th Annual Feminist Awards Dinner

-Save the date: Friday April 11, 2003

Nominations sought for:

Alice Paul Award-Effective Advocacy for the Advancement of Women's Equality.

Elizabeth Blackwell Award-Tenacious Commitment to Providing Healthcare for Women and Children

Prudence Crandall Award-Outstanding Achievement in Education and Childcare

Harriet Tubman Award-Achievement in the Pursuit of Social Justice

Eleanor Roosevelt Award-Effective Political Activism for the Advancement of Equality for Women

Sybil Ludington Young Feminist Award

To nominate someone you know for one

of these awards, send a letter that includes their name, address, award, and why you are nominating them for that award. Please include contact information and mail to: CT NOW , 135 Broad Street Hartford, CT 06105 OR email CT_NOW@yahoo.com - Questions? Call 860-524-5978.❖



Sign Up Now!

8th Annual Health Action 2003, January 23-25, 2003, The Mayflower Hotel, Washington, DC. This annual gathering of grassroots advocates, sponsored by Families USA and co-sponsored by CLASP, will focus on expanding health care coverage for all.

For more information: <http://www.familiesusa.org/conference2003.htm>❖

CABHN Meetings
held 2nd Friday of the month

10 - Noon

Upcoming

Friday December 13th

Friday January 10th

Community Renewal Team
555 Windsor St., Hartford

Topics:

Preparing for the upcoming legislative session/budget & revenue enhancements

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.

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

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