

Working to end poverty where we live

March 2010



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It's hard to live in Somerville on a low income—but it's even harder if you have to pay somebody else's electric bill.

Daniela has a child in CAAS Head Start. She came to CAAS for help when she noticed that her family's monthly electric bill had shot through the roof. Daniela suspected she was getting billed for an illegal apartment her landlord had created in the basement. Her Head Start family service worker, Jean Faulkner, brought Daniela to the CAAS Advocacy Program for help.

CAAS Housing & Benefit Advocate Daniel Dessin called NStar to make sure the bill was correct. His colleague Glennys Acosta asked the City of Somerville...

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CAAS Contributes to Haiti's Earthquake Relief Effort

By Margarita Ashton

On January 12, an unfathomable earthquake hit near Port au Prince, Haiti. The next morning, CAAS spread the word in Somerville about how our Haitian neighbors could seek information about their families, and how all of us could contribute to disaster relief efforts. Teachers in the CAAS Head Start program looked for ways to help their preschool students relieve the stress brought on by "being...



*CAAS Head Start Children help families in
Haiti.*

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Imagine Ending Poverty, Together

a message from
Executive Director
Kimberly Smith - Cofield



I have been impressed with the citizens of the United States as I look around at how we have so readily responded to the recent disaster in Haiti. We gathered up millions of dollars in less than a week. Many who may not ordinarily give in this manner came to the aid of Haiti, similarly to the response to the Katrina disaster in New Orleans.

These are indeed grand natural disasters that leave a specific population practically decimated and helpless. The dreadful pictures and upsetting news that came into our living rooms every night brought many of us to tears. Total strangers were discussing the plight of the injured, the impoverished, and the devastated, in the office, at the bus stop, at church, in stores, in the laundromat, because we were consumed with trying to figure out a way to end the pain for a people. Their circumstances appealed to our charitable instincts and our immediate sense of responsibility. Without a thought, we wanted to do something to help.

One of the CAAS staff who works with local families every day was discussing with me her great sadness regarding the turmoil in Haiti. She paused and said, "What's unfortunate is that many people here, in this country, don't realize that we have serious devastation and poverty as well. But it's not on the daily news...it's not talked about, except with those of us who work in the field. It's like a hidden secret. I have clients who don't know where they are going to get their next meal to feed their children, or how they'll heat their home in freezing temperatures."

*In Haiti and in Somerville,
families need your concern.*

If only the U.S. families and children who are suffering from not enough to eat, inability to heat their homes, living on the street, lack of healthcare, inability to take part in the minimum educational requirements, and violent discriminatory practices were able to be considered by everyone in this country on a day-to-day basis! I could imagine what our citizens would be capable of doing if they perceived the tragedy that's right here amongst all of us as equally disastrous--and if they didn't erroneously believe that there is a safety net ready to catch those folks in the U.S without their help.

Those of us at CAAS see the faces of poverty, and hear the stories, every day. I hope you will trust that right here in Somerville, there are families who need your concern. Please believe that things can be different for them if you, too, could imagine those in desperate need.

In 2000 world leaders and governments made a commitment to halve poverty by 2015. Since then, other economists and leaders have announced that not only is it possible to halve poverty by 2015, but that we can end extreme poverty by 2025 altogether. As we move into a new decade, we have an opportunity to put some energy and resources towards these objectives. We have seen this community do unimaginable things when we put our minds, talents and assets together. I look forward to a new decade where the greatest of possibilities become the greatest of realities. ♦

CAAS In The Community

Mass. Recovery in Allston February-2010



CAAS Executive Kimberly Smith-Cofield told the governor that we need to publicize the ways that economic stimulus money is helping poor people survive the Great Recession.



Advocacy Director Melissa McWhinney (center) introduced the staff CAAS has hired to help with Recovery, including Case Managers Claudia Arrecis and Julio Braga. ♦

Somerville Rotary Meeting



Executive Director Kimberly Smith-Cofield was a guest speaker at a meeting of the Somerville Rotary. She is shown with School Superintendent Anthony Pierantozzi and a Rotary Club president visiting from India. ♦



Martin Luther King, Jr. Event in Somerville, MA

Advocacy Director Melissa McWhinney (center) receives an award for her community work from State Senator Pat Jehlen and CAAS Executive Director Kim Smith-Cofield during the Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration at the Somerville High School Auditorium on Monday, January 18, 2010. ♦

CAAS thanks all the generous donors who supported our work in the past year

Special thanks to the most magnanimous donors of \$500 or more:

Paul Bockelman
Clarendon Hill Towers Tenant Association

Macy Coffey
William M. Connolly

Donors since January 1, 2009

<i>Chris Abouzeid</i>	<i>Pat Daly</i>	<i>Joshua Meltzer & Joanne Holdridge</i>
<i>Vincent Anastas</i>	<i>Adam Dash</i>	<i>Charlotte & Peter Merrell</i>
<i>Alma Antoniotti & Gail Jennes</i>	<i>Lou Ann David</i>	<i>Dr. James Meyers</i>
<i>Margarita Ashton</i>	<i>Ellen Davidson</i>	<i>Nimo Ali Mohamed</i>
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<i>Paul Bockelman & Cathy Barber</i>	<i>Dennis & Rona Fischman</i>	<i>Anthony & Joyce Pierantozzi</i>
<i>Boston Winery</i>	<i>James Gagne</i>	<i>June Pietrantonio</i>
<i>Bostonian Florist</i>	<i>Dorothy Kelly Gay</i>	<i>Prescott & Sons Insurance</i>
<i>Brian J. Brady</i>	<i>Gentle Giant Moving Company</i>	<i>Jim Propp & Sandi Gubin</i>
<i>Barbara Brandt</i>	<i>Marcy & Warren Goldstein Gelb</i>	<i>Cathy Quense & Sandy Ahlstrom</i>
<i>Suzanne Bremer & Jane Peyrouse</i>	<i>Mimi Graney</i>	<i>Elisabeth Raleigh</i>
<i>Ronald Bridges</i>	<i>Roy Gray</i>	<i>Susanna Reichart</i>
<i>Lisa Brukilacchio</i>	<i>Brian Green</i>	<i>Joseph Richmond</i>
<i>Eugene Brune</i>	<i>Grossman Marketing Group</i>	<i>Nancy Roach & William Sullivan</i>
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<i>Ann Couch</i>	<i>Anne Lawson</i>	<i>Bob Stark & Megan Kierstead</i>
<i>Mayor Joseph Curtatone</i>	<i>Lois Levinsky & David Willey</i>	<i>David & Debbie Stoloff</i>
<i>Mary Louise Daly</i>	<i>Lochstead Photography</i>	<i>Stop & Shop</i>
	<i>Elizabeth Loveland</i>	<i>Cornelia & Joe Tierney</i>
	<i>Janine Mahoney</i>	<i>Timothy Toomey, Jr.</i>
	<i>Market Basket</i>	<i>Erica & Mikol Voolich</i>
	<i>James McGinnis & Kristi Chase</i>	<i>Donald Warner</i>
	<i>Tammy & Daniel McKanan</i>	<i>Karl & Karen Weiland</i>
	<i>John & Marjorie McKenzie</i>	<i>Roslyn Weiner</i>
	<i>Lynn McWhood</i>	<i>Winter Hill Federal Savings Bank</i>
	<i>Alice Mello Cavallo</i>	<i>Timur Yontar & Lois Kaznicki</i>

Bringing It All Home for One Somerville Family

(Continued from page 1)



CAAS helped Daniela and her family to move into their new home.

to inspect the building. They found the unregistered apartment, all right. They also discovered an alarming assortment of cockroaches, bedbugs, and mice. None of the vermin was paying for electricity, either!

Clearly, Daniela and her family needed a new landlord—and a new home. Glennys helped Daniela to search and find a new apartment she could afford. At the old apartment, all of the family’s furniture had been infested with bedbugs. When they moved, they had to throw it all away. Glennys found them new furnishings, for free: children’s furniture donated by Bob’s Discount Store, and adult-size furniture from a furniture bank in Reading.

One more piece had to fall into place for Daniela and her family to move into their new home. With no savings, they needed help to come up with a security deposit for their new landlord. Glennys helped

Daniela obtain funds from the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program (HPRP). HPRP is a part of the federal

economic stimulus program. It allows agencies like CAAS to give people like Daniela small sums of money to get and keep the housing that they need. With the security deposit in hand, Daniela’s family was home free.

With help from CAAS, Daniela’s family was home free.

Coping with landlords and getting rid of infestations, finding places to live and discovering the means to live there: it’s all part of ending poverty where we live. Thanks to your generous support, CAAS will continue helping families like Daniela’s to advance from poverty to self-sufficiency. Thank you for supporting CAAS! ♦

CAAS Contributes to Haiti’s Earthquake Relief Effort

(Continued from page 1)

unable to communicate and being unable to do anything to help right now,” as the Somerville Community Partnerships for Children described it. The teachers came up with a concrete way to help children feel effectual: offering children a chance to give “Pennies for Haiti.”

Teachers began the penny collection by very carefully giving children a heavily edited version of the catastrophe. “There was a very strong earthquake in a country called Haiti that left many children without homes, water and food, and a lot of people got hurt.” Teachers went on to sate the children’s curiosity about the meaning of “earthquake” and to reassure the children, “It cannot happen here in Somerville.” After that, for many children, putting the pennies into a collection box worked magic.



For children, giving Pennies for Haiti feels like working magic.

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*Working to End Poverty
Where We Live*

CAAS Contributes to Haiti's Earthquake Relief Effort

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Putting a penny into a jar feels very satisfying to a child, but thanks to the efforts of Francoise Magloire, Jean Boyer, and Doreen Lopes, teachers have been able to make more grown-up contributions to the relief effort. They have sent voluntary money donations to the "Haiti Disaster Funds" at the Evangelical Haitian Church of Somerville, raising a total of \$250 so far.

CAAS is circulating collection boxes around all our sites to be filled with donations of first aid supplies such as bandages, gauze pads, alcohol, disinfectants, etc., to deliver to the Haitian Coalition of Somerville. CAAS is proud to be able contribute, even if only in a small way, to the global effort to help those who are not just needy, but have literally nothing. We urge you to do the same. ♦



Teachers give generously to help Haiti disaster relief.

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