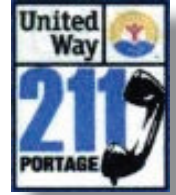




Emergency Assistance Network



Year in Review, 2009

About the Network

Participants

Food



The **Emergency Assistance (EA) Network** began as a collaborative effort to provide caseworkers with information about emergency assistance services that might be available to the individuals and families they were working with.

Clothing



Since March of 1992, the **EA Network** has produced the *EA Network Update* newsletter quarterly, which provides pertinent information on services that may be available to individuals and families in Portage County.

Housing



Agencies and organizations receiving the newsletter are encouraged to make copies to distribute to their staff, as well as the individuals and families that they serve.

Legal



Medical



The **EA Network** also produces an annual *Year in Review*, which details the services provided by the members of the network during the previous year. This is distributed to those organizations who receive the *EA Network Update*, as well as public officials and funders at the local, county, and state level. For more information about this publication, contact United Way **211 Portage** at 211; 330.297.4636; or 800.961.0191.

Utilities



Veterans' Services



- American Red Cross of Portage County
- Catholic Charities of Portage County
- Change Hunger
- The Children's Advocacy Center of Portage County
- Community Action Council of Portage County
- Community Legal Aid Services
- Fair Housing Contact Service
- Family & Community Services
 - Center of Hope, County Clothing Center
 - Housing & Emergency Support Services (HESS),
 - Freedom House, Kent Social Services,
 - M. Marie Miller Community House,
 - Medication Access Program,
 - Portage Area Transitional Housing,
 - Safer Futures
- Goodwill Industries
- Help Me Grow
- Portage County Community Health Center
- Portage County Department of Job & Family Services
- Residential Resources for the Developmentally Challenged, Inc.
- The Salvation Army Center for Worship & Service
- Townhall II
- United Way **211 Portage**
- Veterans' Service Commission of Portage County
- Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

2009 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

GOALS FOR 2010

- Coordinated Emergency Assistance service delivery among public and private agencies.
- Published quarterly newsletter, *EA Network Update*, for caseworkers and other interested individuals.
- Provided speakers on topics of interest to the members of the EA Network.

- Continue to coordinate emergency assistance service delivery among public and private agencies, including community giving programs.
- Continue to publish and expand circulation of quarterly newsletter, *EA Network Update* and the annual publication of *Year in Review*.
- Continue to provide speakers on topics of interest to the members of the EA Network.

AMERICAN RED CROSS OF PORTAGE COUNTY

The American Red Cross of Portage County has two emergency assistance programs: Armed Forces Emergency Services and Disaster Services.

The Armed Forces Emergency Services provides an emergency communications link between members of the United States Armed Forces and their family members that reside in Portage County. In 2009, seventy-eight (78) emergency messages were delivered.

The American Red Cross Disaster Services responds to a wide variety of disasters each year. In each situation, volunteers assess the immediate emergency needs of the persons affected by the disaster(s). Disasters can range from single-family house fires to community-wide weather events. In 2009, Disaster Services responded to 38 single family emergencies and 4 multiple-family emergencies which involved assisting 39 individuals.

In addition, the American Red Cross of Portage County responded to several mass care incidents providing canteen services to 724 individuals, mostly emergency personnel and first responders. These events included a murder/suicide in Windham, the Mill fire in Kent, and a fire in Shalersville that lasted nearly 24 hours.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF PORTAGE COUNTY

In 2009, Catholic Charities of Portage County provided utility assistance to 454 individuals; emergency shelter assistance to 21 individuals; prescription assistance to 62 individuals and 1,085 individuals were assisted during the holiday season.

In addition, 544 individuals were assisted with food and 514 households with paper products and household items.

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The **First Step Pregnancy & Family Support Center** provided material assistance (baby furniture, diapers, clothing, etc.) and case management services to 2,630 pregnant women and families. In addition, 57 child safety kits were distributed to low-income families.

CHANGE HUNGER, Inc.

In 2009, the 8 food pantries, 5 hot meal programs, and 2 emergency shelters that make up Change Hunger, Inc. provided emergency food orders and hot meals throughout Portage County.

154,228 meals were served at hot meal programs and emergency shelters located at various sites throughout Portage County. In addition, 15,989 households (40,826 individuals) received emergency food from food cupboards or shelters located throughout Portage County.

THE CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER OF PORTAGE COUNTY

The mission of the Children's Advocacy Center of Portage County is to improve the community's response to child abuse and neglect and to lessen the negative impact of abuse on children.

For children referred to the Center for sexual abuse, the program offers a centralized, neutral, child-friendly site where the child is invited to tell his/her story in a non-threatening atmosphere. It further assists in the response by allowing all parties involved in the investigation to convene simultaneously as the details of the story unfold.

Trained interviewers provide neutral, developmentally appropriate, fact-finding, and non-leading, interviews that are captured on DVD. Additional services include: specialized medical exams, testing, treatment, and follow-up; crisis intervention; victim and family advocacy, including on-going advocacy

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throughout the court process; victim/family referrals to other critical services; facilitation of monthly case review meetings with a multi-disciplinary team of individuals involved in the investigations; and community education about all types of child abuse and neglect provided through a variety of awareness and prevention programs.

During 2009: 126 child victims and 138 non-offending caregivers were interviewed and received victim advocacy support; 82 pediatric sexual assault exams were conducted; 264 individuals received victim advocacy services; another 31 families had services carried forward from 2008.

The Center coordinated the Pinwheels for Prevention Project during Child Abuse Prevention Month (April): 290 volunteers planted 1,157 pinwheels at 8 sites (1,157 is the # of children involved in reported cases of child abuse in Portage County in 2007). The pinwheel conveys the message that every child deserves the chance to be raised in a safe environment.

Throughout the year, program staff provided 24 trainings/presentations for 418 adults and 45 children. Thirty-four (34) newspaper/newsletter articles further supported the Center's goal of community education and involvement, as the program continued its quest to improve the community's response to child abuse and neglect.

COMMUNITY ACTION COUNCIL OF PORTAGE COUNTY, INC.

During 2009, the Community Action Council of Portage County, Inc. (CAC) assisted 16,892 families in Portage County, encompassing 42,028 individuals through the operations of 32 total programs. A total of \$2,023,576 was distributed to Portage County residents for various emergency and utility assistance services throughout the year, including nearly \$900,000 in direct cash payments.

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The **Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)** helped 8,167 households avoid interruption of utility service or reconnection of services. Of those households, 2,148 families were assisted through the **Winter Emergency HEAP Program**, 392 through the **Summer Crisis Program**, and 6,751 families were enrolled on the **Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP)** and the **Regular HEAP Program**.

A total of 784 families received emergency utility assistance under other programs, including 263 under the **Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP)**, and 490 under the **PRC Program (Prevention, Retention, Contingency)**. 31 families received assistance from other sources including **Title XX**.

In 2009, the **Energy Efficiency and Housing Services Department** provided energy conservation to 1,214 persons; 227 households/dwellings received insulation and other energy conservation installations; 18 Kent families received new furnaces; and 88 families received assistance under the agency's utility funded weatherization programs. A total of 183 families received energy audits and electric efficiency improvements through the **Universal Services Fund / Electric Partnership Program**; and 128 families received free refrigerators, freezers, or stoves.

Emergency Home Repair services were provided to 120 families in 2009, including 88 families under the **HOPE Mobile Home Program** and 23 families under **PRC**.

A total of 39,133 meals were provided to an average of 752 children under the **Summer Food Service Program for Children** between June 2009 and August 2009. Meals were provided at 13 sites located throughout Portage County; including parks, schools, churches, housing complexes, and other social service agencies.

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In 2009, the Agency also collaborated with **Toys for Tots**, and assisted in the provision of toys and gifts to 821 children during the holiday season.

Youth services were provided to 76 youth during the calendar year through WIA funded activities, including the **WIA Voyage Youth Program**, and the **WIA ARRA Summer Youth Program**. These programs provided a variety of services to participating youth, including paid work experience, youth leadership development, GED assistance, certified computer training in both core and advanced areas, and other academic enrichment services. A total of 4 youth obtained their GED, while 20 attained at least one (1) globally recognized computer certification.

In April, 2009, CAC opened the **CAC Youth and Family Center** (formerly the Ravenna Boys and Girls Club) and provided after school services to 176 total youth ages 6 to 17.

Additional employment and training services were provided to 59 adults through the **Community Technology Learning Center** and the **Kent TRADE Program**.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, Inc.

The **Amelia DiGirolamo Center of Hope*** provides emergency food orders and hot meals to help families and individuals meet their basic need for nutritious food. In 2009, the Center of Hope provided 6,294 pantry food orders, plus personal care and taxable orders. In addition, the Center of Hope served 68,061 meals during 2009.

The **Phyllis Zumkehr County Clothing Center** provides, free of charge, gently used clothing and other personal and household items, as available, to families and individuals in need, while reducing the waste stream and promoting a positive experience for volunteers. In 2009, the Center collected

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and redistributed 491,664 pounds of clothing. As a result, 48,320 customers received much needed assistance with clothing. In addition, the Center collected and redistributed durable goods (furniture) to individuals and families in need. Many individuals were assisted with the Center's *Santa's Closet*, the *Black Cat Attire*, and the *Something Special Shop*. The Center has a volunteer force of 450 dedicated individuals who volunteered more than 19,236 hours in 2009.

Freedom House is a shelter for single, adult males who are homeless and are veterans. During 2009, Freedom House received 130 calls for shelter. Freedom House was able to serve 59 homeless veterans for a total of 5,015 days. Freedom House provides residents with case management and substance abuse counseling on an as needed basis. Freedom House is staffed 24 hours a day and a potential resident only needs to call and complete a phone assessment to begin to determine eligibility. Freedom House saw 85% of those veterans who exited the program establish housing. Freedom House had to turn away 73% of its callers due to lack of space in 2009.

In 2009, **Housing & Emergency Support Services (HESS)** provided financial assistance to 550 households in Portage County. The program helped 445 households financially resolve a housing crisis. Of those, 47 received assistance with emergency hotel stays when shelter space was unavailable. In addition, 57 households were assisted to prevent disconnection on a utility, and 48 households were assisted with prescription costs.

In 2009, the **Housing & Emergency Support Services** and the **Phyllis Zumkehr County Clothing Center** worked together to provide school supplies to 860 children.

Kent Social Services* provides emergency food orders and hot meals to help families and individuals meet their

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basic need for nutritious food. In 2009, Kent Social Services provided 5,649 pantry orders, plus personal care and taxable items. In addition, Kent Social Services served 33,816 meals.

During the holidays, the **Center of Hope** and **Kent Social Services** provided 3,825 holiday food baskets to households. In addition, over 2,688 children received toys.

The **M. Marie Miller Community House** provided 135 individuals (105 adults and 30 children) with 6,446 nights of shelter. During 2009, there were 915 requests for shelter.

During 2009, the **Medication Access Program (MAP)** program assisted more than 5,359 individuals. The program obtained a total of 9,925 free and low-cost prescriptions for 3,144 individuals through the compassionate care programs sponsored by the pharmaceutical companies. In addition, 3,571 individuals were assisted through the OSHIIP (*Ohio Senior Health Insurance Information Program*) program which provides free health insurance information to people covered by Medicare. Other services provided include the *File of Life* which is a file that an individual personalizes with their medical information so that emergency personnel can find pertinent medical information; the *My Medicare Matters Navigator Program* which is designed to empower seniors to learn about Medicare by navigating reliable web sites; and *A Matter of Balance: Managing Concerns About Falls* which teaches older adults positive coping methods to reduce fear of falling and remain active and independent.

Portage Area Transitional Housing (PATH) supports single adults and homeless families with children in their efforts to secure and maintain permanent housing. The PATH program provides transitional housing and supportive services for up to twenty-four months to assist participants with achieving education/training goals, gaining

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* Denotes membership in *Change Hunger*.

employment, and addressing personal barriers that impact stability and self-sufficiency. In 2009, PATH provided services for 75 families (including 129 children) and 28 single adults.

Safe Path, initiated in partnership with **Safer Futures** provides 11 units of transitional housing and on-site service support to survivors of domestic violence and their children for up to 24 months. This program was initiated in October, 2009 through a federal grant from the Office on Violence Against Women.

In 2009, **Safer Futures** provided 37 women and 34 children with 3,623 nights of shelter. During this period, 370 requests for shelter were received. The outreach advocacy program provided case management to 521 victims of domestic violence and responded to 50 police reports.

GOODWILL INDUSTRIES

In 2009, Goodwill Industries provided 200 Portage County households (500 individuals) with Elizabeth Clark vouchers at a total value of \$17,700. The Elizabeth Clark Emergency fund is a general emergency fund to help address the needs of individuals and families. The fund provides assistance with clothing, furniture or household items at any of the area Goodwill Industries retail stores in Summit, Portage, Medina, Ashland and Richland counties. Elizabeth Clark is funded by grants, foundations and the generous support of individuals from the community. Casemanagers and other agency personnel can access this program through United Way **211 Portage**.

HELP ME GROW

During the 2009 program year, the Help Me Grow program provided the following services to Portage County residents who were pregnant or families who had a child under the age of three.

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Service coordinators provided home-based services to a monthly average of 220 children. Based on interest and need, families received all or some of the following services: home visiting; parenting education; developmental screening; parent-to-parent support; linkage to community resources; service coordination; and transition to other services when the child exited the program.

The program staff hosted 9 educational parent meetings in Ravenna. At these gatherings, parents came together for a presentation on a parenting topic, shared parent/child circle time, plus enjoyed a social time over lunch. Parent support staff hosted the bi-monthly parent/child playgroup at which parents and their children enjoyed playtime, a snack, and time to socialize with other parents. In addition the program provided three family field trips, a family picnic, and two parent workshops during the year. A total of 325 parents and 360 children participated in these family support events.

PORTAGE COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

Portage County Community Health Center is a federally qualified health center that opened in November 2008 and provides primary health care and dental health services to the medically needy throughout Portage county and neighboring communities.

The Portage County Community Health Center provided care to approximately 857 patients in 2009 with 33.05% of the patients being uninsured; 40.53% were on Medicaid; 4.58% were on Medicare; and 21.83% had commercial insurance.

In 2009, three dental rooms were added to the clinic to provide full time dental care that includes all age exams, cleanings, x-rays, fluoride treatments, sealants, and extractions.

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In order to maintain open access the Portage County Community Health Center has newly extended hours Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., and Saturday from 7:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Appointments are accepted as well as walk-ins.

PORTAGE CO. DEPT. OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES

During 2009, the **Prevention, Retention, and Contingency (PRC)** program received over 2,813 applications with requests for services.

The PRC program spent approximately \$184,200 to help families avoid a crisis with a utility; \$278,032 to help families maintain or secure housing; \$11,886 to help families with transportation costs; including gas cards and bus tokens for families who were employed or had a guaranteed job at a minimum of thirty (30) hours per week.

Families also received assistance with children's car seats; safety kits; emergency clothing, cribs; emergency home repairs limited to electric, plumbing, heat and accessibility problems; legal assistance for driver's license suspension, loss of housing issues, foreclosures, filing bankruptcy, obtaining guardianship or custody for Kinship Care only, criminal record expungement, and consumer debt; emergency shelter services; homeless shelter services; domestic violence shelter services; academic support services limited to required vocational fees, tools, and uniforms for youth in grades 9 through 12; and education proficiency for youth ages 14-19 in need of extra schooling/tutoring. In addition, families received assistance with uniforms, job-support tools/equipment or supplies, and licenses that are required by employer or prospective employer; plus work experience and training for youth and short-term training and education for adults.

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In addition, during 2009, the **Food Assistance Program** (formerly Food Stamps) served 20,493 individuals for a total of \$21,868,378. **Ohio Works First (OWF)** served 2,607 with cash assistance for a total of \$2,484,59; and 34,935 individuals were assisted with medical through the **Medicaid** Program for a total of \$136,015,856.

PO. CO. VETERANS' SERVICE COMMISSION

In 2009, the Portage County Veterans' Service Commission provided over \$225,000 in temporary financial assistance to Portage County veterans and their families. Assistance included food, rent, mortgages, and utilities.

Counselors filed 203 new claims for benefits with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The VA now sends over \$13.9 million to Portage County's veterans, their dependents, and survivors.

The commission provided free transportation to 977 veterans to local VA medical facilities.

PORTAGE WORKFORCE CONNECTION - One Stop

The Portage Workforce Connection is the one-stop place for employers, job seekers, and service providers.

Over 8,050 individuals came to the One-Stop in 2009, accessing 22,142 services including funding for education and training; resume writing and interviewing skills development; job readiness training and career counseling; staff assisted or self-directed internet job searches; Rapid Response team for companies experiencing layoffs or relocations; and Hiring Fairs.

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Adult & Dislocated Worker Programs assisted approximately 200 individuals with training and equipment in various programs including, but not limited to

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Nursing, Radiology, Medical Assisting, Veterinarian Assistant, Business Office Administration, Computers, Police Academy, Criminal Justice, Social Worker, Truck Driving, and Welding.

RESIDENTIAL RESOURCES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY CHALLENGED, INC.

Residential Resources for the Developmentally Challenged, Inc. (RRDC) serves the developmentally challenged citizens of Portage County in their pursuit of housing. In 2009, they financially assisted 31 households consisting of a total of 60 individuals. In addition, RRDC provides housing for 4 women in the "Lohr Home" located in Atwater.

THE SALVATION ARMY CENTER FOR WORSHIP AND SERVICE

In 2009, The Salvation Army provided emergency financial assistance with utilities, prescriptions, and food to 3,965 individuals. In addition, seasonal distributions including Back to School Supplies, Thanksgiving, and Christmas were provided to 2,075 individuals.

Shoes vouchers were provided to 344 school-age children through the **Shoes On My Feet** program.

27,540 articles of clothing, coats, hats, gloves, blankets, and household items were provided to people in need of them. The majority of these items were given out through The Salvation Army's Northeast Portage Food Shelf's new clothing room, which opened in 2009.

The Salvation Army's **Learning Center, Evening Youth programs and Camp Neosa** (*overnight camp*) provided valuable learning and character experiences to 55 children.

The **Salvation Army Northeast Portage Food Shelf***, which serves the Windham/Garrettsville area, provided emergency food and taxables to 2,221 individuals.

STREETSBORO COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS

Streetsboro Community Christmas serves families in Streetsboro who are economically challenged and find it difficult to provide gifts for their children. In 2009, 325 children from 124 families were provided with presents. Streetsboro Community Christmas is supported by businesses, organizations and volunteers from the community.

TOWNHALL II

Townhall II **Helpline** provides 24 hour crisis intervention to persons in situational distress. Services are available by telephone through the **Helpline** 24 hours/7 days, and in person on a walk-in basis, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. In 2009, the **Helpline** received 4,645 contacts which included calls, walk-ins, and follow up calls. This was a significant increase from the previous years (3,965 in 2008, and 2,972 in 2007).

The Townhall II **Medical Clinic** offers free, easily accessible, and culturally sensitive primary and specialty health care services to low-income, uninsured adult residents of Portage County. The clinic is set in an office type atmosphere. Referrals to outreach services to link patients to appropriate resources for specialized care that may not be offered in the clinic are sometimes necessary. In these instances, the clinic arranges these services at free to low cost to the patient. In addition the **Medical Clinic** practices preventative medicine through annual health screenings, patient education, and immunizations. Services include laboratory testing, access to pharmaceutical programs for free medications, and access to free diabetic supplies. Due to the rising cost of gasoline, visits are combined as much as possible to include medication access and laboratory testing with the office visit.

In 2009, a combination of over 2,167 total patient visits was provided to Portage County residents. Over \$1,106,471 worth of free medications and diabetic supplies were obtained for patients.

UNITED WAY 211 Portage

In 2009, United Way **211 Portage**, the centralized information, referral and resource center, assisted more than 20,544 individuals and families in locating over 23,000 services to meet their health and human service needs. This represents an increase of 3,339 requests, or 19.4% over those received during 2008. Of the services requested, 53.3% were for assistance with basic needs: food, shelter, material goods, temporary financial aid, and transportation.

United Way **211 Portage** provided screening and referral to four (4) of the nine (9) emergency food cupboards in Portage County and served as the clearinghouse for school supplies and holiday assistance programs throughout the county.

United Way **211 Portage** produced the quarterly newsletter, the EA Update, and the EA Year in Review in collaboration with the Emergency Assistance network of Portage County. The EA Update provides caseworkers, social service personnel, as well as individuals and families with information about services that are available throughout the county.

United Way **211 Portage**, in collaboration with AARP, coordinated the Tax-Aide Program in Portage County, which provided free federal and state tax filing assistance to older adults and low-income individuals at various locations throughout Portage County. During the 2009 tax season, the Tax-Aide volunteers filed 904 tax returns.

WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN (WIC)

The Women, Infants and Children program (WIC) provides nutritious foods; individualized nutrition counseling and education by a dietitian; breastfeeding education and support; immunization screening, and referrals for health care.

In Fiscal Year 2009, the average monthly caseload was 3,220 individuals. Of those 742 were women, 771 were infants, and 1,707 were children.

Each month, WIC dietitians provided 30 group nutrition education sessions. Fourteen grocery vendors participated in the program by redeeming an average of 9,300 WIC coupons each month, worth over \$152,000. The average food package provided each participant with at least \$35.00 worth of groceries per month.

During the summer months, 600 booklets of Farmers' Market coupons were distributed, totaling \$9,000 in profit for eleven Portage County farmers.

Receive the EA Network Update Electronically

*This newsletter is produced by **United Way 211 Portage** in conjunction with the EA (Emergency Assistance) Network for the benefit of social service providers throughout the county.*

Copies of this newsletter may be reproduced and distributed.

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