



Front Line News

“People Helping People Build Community.”

2011-2012
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The Promise of Community Action

“Community Action changes people’s lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.”

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Spring – Summer 2011



Bernice Edwards

Bernice Edwards has been in existence for nearly 46 years, helping individuals, families, and communities in Delaware improve their lives and become self-sufficient. There are stories of many who have fallen in the pits of unemployment, threat of foreclosure and homelessness, abuse, and lack of basic necessities, oftentimes due to a tragic event or circumstance beyond their control. The advent of our national recession and slow economic recovery has resulted in an enormous increase of people turning

Greetings to Friends & Family of First State. First State has

Help Tell the Community Action Story

been in existence for nearly 46 years, helping individuals, and countless others, who’ve found hope and a helping-hand through First State.

If you or someone you know has been helped by this agency, we want to hear from you. The reality is that there are many people—Delawareans in need and our elected officials—who are unaware of the effectiveness and life-changing impact of community action programs. Your story, when told, will make them a believer.

TELL US YOUR STORY

Describe the conditions at which you faced prior to coming our agency. Include details of the service or pro-

gram provided by First State and how it helped change your life or rebuild your community. And please, Photos are welcome!

You can submit your story and photos to First State Community Action Agency, Public Relations Department, P.O. Box 877, Georgetown, DE 19947.

Your story will only be used for promotional purposes and may be featured in First State’s newsletters and print/electronic publications. Your private information will not be shared.

Thank you for helping us tell the Community Action Story.

Sussex County Council Supports Renovations

In June 2011, First State Community Action Agency received support from the Sussex County Council to support renovations to its Sussex County Headquarters in Georgetown. The Sussex County Council pledged support to First State with a bountiful \$100,000 commitment—\$25,000 over the next four years—towards the project.

Funding from the Sussex County Council will assist with essential energy efficient upgrades to transform the 70-year old facility into a 21st century “green” facility that is safe for workers, clients, and the community. These critical renovations will enable the development of a state-of-the-art Community Resource and Training Center which allows First State to expand services and programs to more individuals, families and communities in Sussex County and throughout Delaware.

“These renovations will have a significant impact on the communities of Delaware,” Executive Director Bernice Edwards said. “The renovations will support new job training initiatives (Choices), foreclosure prevention workshops, and community programs that will translate into many opportunities for people in Sussex County. We are confident our supporters see this as a worthy investment into the lives of people.”

First State is very grateful to the Sussex County Council for their generous support of this important project.

You Too Can Support Our Capital Campaign!

We’re in the last stretch of the Capital Campaign race! Your support will help us reach the finish line. Join us with your gift today!

Mail your tax-deductible donation to: First State Community Action Agency, Capital Campaign, P.O. Box 877, Georgetown, DE 19947

Or **Donate online:** It’s fast, easy, and secure! We accept Visa, Mastercard, and Discovercard!



**Something good at First State!
The agency's Community-Based Afterschool Programs have been stirring up some major attention which is why it has been chosen as this quarter's **Most Successful Program!****

About the Afterschool Programs

First State's Afterschool programs provide tutoring assistance and mentoring to youth in Sussex and Kent Counties. The program helps students improve their academic performance and provides a safe, positive place for learning and skill building activities to typically disadvantaged youth.

As part of the program, students participate in various group activities, recreational sports, and learning curriculums to foster positive social and emotional development. One of the curriculums taught in the afterschool programs is "All Stars," a program designed to prevent Alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use among kids. Summer Enrichment Camps are also offered as an extension of the ten-month program.

Overall, First State oversees more than 10 community-based afterschool programs serving over 300 youths ages 6-15 years old.



KICK BUTTS 2011: Over 200 youth in Sussex County participated in a community event promoting anti-tobacco and drug-free kids! Youth participated in a community cleanup followed by drug prevention workshops at Boy & Girls Club. Pictured with First State volunteers/coordinator Sandi Hagans (left) and Wade Jones (right) is a group of children holding a bag filled with over 3,000 cigarette butts collected during the cleanup.



A SPLASH OF FUN! A group of students from First State's community-based afterschool programs learn life-saving swimming techniques from YMCA instructors during 2011 Water Safety Week. First State transported over 40 kids from our La Casita, Richard Allen, and Coverdale Crossroads afterschool programs to receive free swimming and water safety lessons.



Parents, Neighbors, and Volunteers come together in the community to help raise money for the La Casita Homework Assistance Program. The parking lot transformed into a mini flea market with stands filled with clothes, furniture, household items, fruit, and delicious BBQ.



Afterschool Program Coordinator Martina Duffy receives the Obama Service Award for making a difference in youth lives at the 2011 Teens In Perspective (T.I.P) Girls Empowerment Conference in Wilmington.



7 year old Broderick Donoway III holds up anti-tobacco flash cards naming the 5 deadly diseases caused by smoking. Broderick was one of more than 40 youth who participated in the Kick Butts Tobacco Cessation/Youth Summit hosted by Polly branch Extended McCabe Court Civic Association in Selbyville.



About 100 Parents and youth attended a Community Town Hall Meeting back in May entitled "Who's Serving our Kids Alcohol?" Pictured is the panel made up of professionals, medical experts, law enforcement, community leaders, parents, and youth. The panel discussed the realities of underage drinking and help proposed strategies for prevention.



All-Stars Graduation: 12 youth from the Richard Allen Afterschool Program in Georgetown received certificates of completion and gift cards for their participation in the All-Stars Program. Pictured above are the youth graduates along with program manager Sandi Hagans (far left), and teachers Dennis Minus and Wanda Hopkins (far right).

First State Provides FREE Tax Prep



First State's Briseida Cadenas-Dominguez (right) works with tax client at the Central Sussex Tax site in Georgetown.

First State's Mobile Tax Team worked hard in 2011, filing

returns and surpassing their goal with record numbers. This year, First State's Mobile Tax Team prepared 870 returns, bringing in over \$1.5 million in federal refunds and more than \$116,000 in state refunds. About 40% (360) of the clients qualified for Earned Income Tax Credit which has brought in more than \$600,000 to low-income households and families.

"The EITC free tax preparation is a valuable service to the community," says Executive Director Bernice Edwards. It brings monies back into the homes of taxpayers, giving that much needed boost in their personal finances as well as our local economy. We look forward to continuing this vital service and help give low-income individuals and families a hand-up in their finances."

Kudos to First State's Mobile tax team for a job well done!

First State Celebrates Community Action Month!



During the month of May, First State celebrated Community Action Month with tri-county Open House events. Community members were greeted by our friendly staff and had the opportunity to tour the agency offices as well as learn more about First State's programs and services helping those in need. Over seventy-five individuals representing more than twenty organizations and communities throughout state took part in the events. Special Thanks to all those that came to support.

What's Happening This Summer!!!



2011 Summer Cooling Program: **BEAT THE HEAT!**

Sussex and Kent County households may qualify for a FREE WINDOW AIR CONDITIONER!!

Applications will be accepted Mon-Fri, 9:00am - 12:00pm & 2:00pm - 3:00pm from June 27—September 30 at First State's Georgetown office located at 308 North Railroad Ave.

Program Guidelines:

- Elderly (60 years of age and older) / Disabled
- Households with Small Children
- Qualified Households who haven't received AC from the program in the last 3 years.

**ALL Households must meet Income eligibility to qualify.

Contact First State Community Action Agency, Inc. at 302-856-7761 for more information.

Summer Enrichment Camp

June 27th—July 28th, 8am—2:45pm

Parents can enroll their children (ages 6– 15) in First State's Summer Camp for a one-time fee of just \$50. Kids will enjoy field trips, sports, art & crafts, learning activities, meeting new people and making new friends. Breakfast & Lunch provided. Camp held at Georgetown Elementary School.

Summer Youth Employment Program July 5th—August 19th.

15 youth are getting a taste of the real working world through this program. Youth gain on-the-job training, professional skills and experience, as well as income. Program funded by the Department of Labor.

DPNA TEEN SUMMIT & Celebrity Softball Game

Saturday August 6th at the Doubletree in Wilmington, DE. Summit features Celebrity Speaker, Educational workshops, door prizes and more! Event is followed by a Celebrity softball with some of the nation's top Hollywood stars. Summit is free and open to all DE teens. Game cost \$15 per person in advance. Visit www.hollywoodinvadesdelaware.org

For more information on these events, Contact Martina Duffy at 302-856-1001.



Housing Workshops—for existing and potential homeowners

Offered every month in Sussex, Kent & New Castle Counties

Visit our website or call 302-674-1355 for dates and more information.



**FIRST STATE
COMMUNITY
ACTION AGENCY**

GEORGETOWN OFFICE

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WILMINGTON OFFICE

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Fax: (302) 575-1409

**Donate to
First State!**

Help support our programs
& services helping individu-
als and families in need.

Mail donations to:

P.O. Box 877
Georgetown, DE 19947

We accept credit cards!



United Way of Delaware

First State is proud to be a
part of United Way. Our
book number is **9147**

**Summer Cooling
Program**

**BEAT the HEAT with
a FREE AC!!!**

Details inside p. 3

People Helping People Build Community.



SAVE THE DATE!



*Join us for
First State Community Action Agency's*

ANNUAL DINNER & Recognition Ceremony

*"Working for Opportunity & Economic
Security in Delaware"*

Keynote Speaker • Live Entertainment

Silent & Live Auctions

Monday, November 21, 2011

*5:30 p.m. at the
Modern Maturity Center
1121 Forrest Avenue
Dover, Delaware*

*For further information, call
302-856-7761 ext. 118*