

Issue: January 2015

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In This Edition...

KVCAP Turns 50!
Keep Me Warm
SETC Driving Safety

KVCAP Celebrates 50 Years Helping Central Mainers Overcome Poverty

The year was 1965. The average annual income was \$6,450. The average house cost \$13,600 and gas was 31 cents a gallon. On the national front, America was heavily involved in Vietnam and the anti-war movement was gaining support. The Voting Rights Act became law, guaranteeing African-Americans the right to vote. "The Sound of Music" was released on the big screen and The Grateful Dead played their first concert with Jerry Garcia in San Francisco.

Something pivotal was also happening in Central Maine. Fueled by President Johnson's War on Poverty and the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, a Board of Directors was organized and the Northern Kennebec Valley Community Action Council was born. Under the leadership of Executive Director Ray Richard, this new, local Community Action Agency began addressing the needs of low-income people.

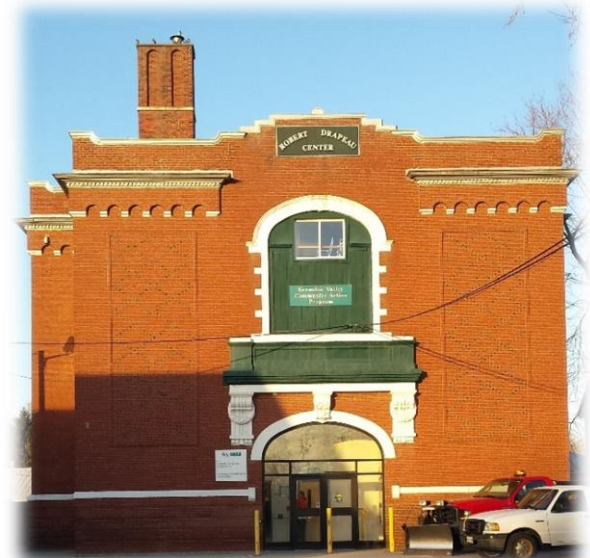
Within the first 15 years we expanded services to Somerset and southern Kennebec counties and our name was changed to the Kennebec Valley Community Action Program, reflecting our new, larger service area. Members of the board convened a statewide meeting to study the needs of low-income families. Senior centers were created, teen centers opened, the first Family Planning clinic was established, day care programs and Head Start were up and running, WIC was in operation, and transportation services were rolling.

Over the next 35 years we saw our programming grow and change to meet the current needs of residents, and funding sources came and went, but our mission never changed. Our primary goal has always been, and always will be, to help people overcome poverty.

Fast forward to 2015. We serve nearly 25,000 people annually in Kennebec and Somerset counties, and also provide heating and weatherization services to residents in Lincoln and Sagadahoc counties. We employ more than 240 staff members and have an annual budget of 16.2 million dollars.

But we didn't get here alone! KVCAP's success is in part the result of the strong local, state, and national partnerships that were built and nurtured over the years. It is also because of the energy and compassion of KVCAP staff and leadership and the generosity of community members, who have given their money, their time, and their hearts for five decades. But mostly, it is because our services are trusted, needed, and accessed by so many throughout Central Maine.

For 50 years we have helped hundreds of thousands of residents in their struggle to overcome the barriers of poverty. Whether they are accessing transportation services, homeowner and financial education and support, heating assistance, child development programs, teen-related services, employment assistance, or any other KVCAP program, *our* purpose remains unchanged. We are committed to helping people become and remain economically and socially self-sufficient. And we invite you to join our efforts in 2015. Together we CAN make a difference.



Keeping People Warm

KVCAP is helping people stay warm this winter through three heating assistance programs in Kennebec, Somerset, Sagadahoc, and Lincoln counties.

Our primary heating assistance program uses federal funding to provide the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), which follows strict, preset program regulations. This one-time benefit helps qualifying individuals and families offset heating costs for oil, wood, propane, pellets, and kerosene. Income guidelines require a household to be living at or below 150% of poverty for non-seniors and 170% of poverty for seniors and in homes with a child under 24 months old.

Through federal funding we also oversee the Emergency Crisis Intervention Program (ECIP), helping LIHEAP clients who are very low on or out of fuel by providing up to an additional \$400 of emergency fuel once per season.

Keep Me Warm has helped to fill a gap in services.

Lastly, many years ago KVCAP identified a portion of LIHEAP applicants who, for various reasons, did not qualify for assistance. As a result, we created our Keep Me Warm initiative, providing one-time emergency heating assistance to households within our service area. The Keep Me Warm program is funded through public and private donations and allows more flexibility in how the funds are used.

Keep Me Warm has helped to fill a gap in services. For example, last year a young man contacted us, asking for help with heat. He had a job but was on unpaid Family Medical Leave to care for his wife

who was terminally ill with cancer. He was out of oil and didn't have any money to buy more. Because LIHEAP applications are based on wages earned in the past three months, he did not qualify, even though he temporarily had no income. Through Keep Me Warm, we were able to deliver 100 gallons of oil to his home. He returned to work after his wife passed away. This one-time assistance allowed him to stay in his home during a very difficult time.

If you or someone you know is facing the cold and in need of heating assistance, please contact us at 859-1500. We want to help.

If you would like to make a donation to support our Keep Me Warm initiative, please call Andrea Pasco today at 859-1630 or visit us online at www.kvcap.org. It feels good to help others!

KVCAP's South End Teen Center Partners with Local Donors to Increase Youth Driving Safety

The cost of driving school has soared beyond the means of many families in our community. As a result, many teen center members cannot afford to enroll in a driving course. Their only option has been to wait until they are 18 years old, take the permit test on their own, and practice driving with friends or family with no professional instruction.

Now, thanks to an anonymous donation from a community member, the J&J SETC Driver's Education Scholarship Program was developed in partnership with KMD Driving School. South End Teen Center members are chosen through an application process and must agree to pay \$50 toward the class to demonstrate their commitment to developing this lifelong skill.

Two scholarships were recently awarded to members who both attend the SETC regularly, participate in community service projects, are involved in activities at school, and help their families with part time jobs. Both teens earned their driver's permit and in December, Nick Bragg became the first teen center member to get his license through this initiative.



"I'm 17 and have been coming to the teen center since the 6th grade. It is a great environment. Everyone is nice, respectful, and supportive," shared Bragg, who added, "It is great to have my license. It is a privilege and a freedom."

Three scholarships will be awarded to members each year.

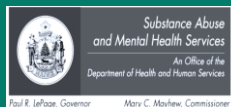
The South End Teen Center offers a safe afterschool environment for

teens in grades 6-12, including meals/snacks, a computer lab, recreational activities, field trips and much more. We work in collaboration with and as a unit of the Waterville Boys and Girls Club. During the summer months, the SETC offers its Summer Blast series of field trips and serves as a site for the Waterville Public School's free summer lunch program.

The South End Teen Center is proud to assist youth in building the skills needed to be productive, successful adults. If you would like to learn more about the teen center or want to support this effort, please contact Steve Soule at 873-5621.

Kennebec Valley Community Action Program
97 Water Street, Waterville
28 Mary Street, Skowhegan
22 Armory Street, Augusta

Phone: 207-859-1500 • Toll-Free: 1-800-542-8227
www.kvcap.org



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