

## HSN Agency Announcements

### February, 2009

- **Jane Munson of Key Opportunities** presented a list of transportation grant renewals that will be submitted to MDOT this month:
  - General funds for operating assistance and two replacement vans – basic system that supplies routes throughout Hillsdale County. Open to public for a fare and as long as there is room on the vehicle.
  - JARC (Job Access) funds to transport to work and/or supply gas vouchers for same.
  - New Freedom funds for target populations including disabled, low income, seniors. Requires local match.
- **Dave Braxmaier of the Sheriff Department** announced that the Chili Cook-Off will be held on February 28, 2009, at Hillsdale High School.
- **Dave Wallin** introduced Chopper Ferguson who spoke about a dinner being held on February 17 at the McCall Center to talk about bringing disabled veterans to Hillsdale County to live in the 650 vacant homes in the city limits.
- **Dave Wallin** spoke about the American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program. There is scholarship money available – it's too late for this year, but suggests that students participate next year. There also is an Eagle Scout scholarship available, and funding available for Boys State and Girls State programs.
- **Laura Nye of DHS/Drug Court** announced that CTAC (Child Trauma Assessment Center) will be holding an informational meeting, geared toward social service workers, educators, lawyers, foster parents and parents on Tuesday, Feb. 24, from 8:30am – 4:15pm at the Dow Center at Hillsdale College. Contact Donna McLain at [d.mclain@co.hillsdale.mi.us](mailto:d.mclain@co.hillsdale.mi.us) or 437-4446 to register (flyer attached to email).
- **Sharon Roberts of Early On** announced that Great Parents Great Start is conducting a media campaign aimed at parents – tray liners for fast food restaurants containing parenting information, and radio spots.
- **Cindy Rowe of CAA** announced that the VITA program (assistance with tax preparation) is in full swing – people can call CAA for an appointment. Also, CAA and McDonald's of Hillsdale and Jonesville are conducting the "Heat A Home" campaign – all money raised stays in Hillsdale County to help people pay their utility bills.
- **Karen Lewthwaite of Legal Services** shared information she learned at a training about predatory lending and foreclosures. Legal Services will be working with CAA to assist families with threats of foreclosure.
- **Sharon Bisher of Hillsdale County Community Foundation** announced that the deadline for scholarship applications is March 1<sup>st</sup>. Also, the HCCF is teaming with Barrett Insurance to sponsor a free seminar about adequate insurance coverage for non-profits on March 11, from 9am – 10:30am at the Hillsdale County ISD (flyer attached to email).
- **Terry Vear of Senior Services Center** announced the Women's Breakfast is Wednesday, Feb. 18; a blood drive will be held on Feb. 17 at the Senior Center; the Super Spa fundraiser will be March 8 from 12 noon to 5:00pm – Terry has raffle tickets available.
- **Laurie Brandes of HSN** announced that Hillsdale Community Library is hosting the Hillsdale County Big Read, sponsored by funding from the Hillsdale County Community Foundation and MI Center for the Book. The kick-off event is February 28, from 10am – noon at the library – free copies of "The Glass Castle" will be available to the first 100 people who donate a non-perishable food item. A speaker from Ruby Payne's aha! Process group will be presenting at a community

meeting on Wednesday, March 18, at 7pm, and efforts are being made to also have the speaker offer a session that morning for social service providers and educators (see flyers attached to email). Please see the library's website for more details on the Big Read [www.hillsdale-library.org](http://www.hillsdale-library.org).

## General Announcements

### From Brooke Rains of Child Care Network:

I'm happy to announce that our Building on Behalf of Children Annual Early Childhood Conference is officially open for registration! It will be held on Saturday, April 18<sup>th</sup> at the Eastern Michigan University Student Center in Ypsilanti. You can click on this link to visit our website and view the brochure:

<http://childcarenetwork.org/dnn/ChildCareProfessionals/TrainingSupport/OtherResources/tabid/78/Default.aspx>

All are welcome to join us!

---

### Community effort aims to assist rising number of struggling Jackson County families

**Posted by Holly Klaft | Citizen Patriot February 19, 2009 07:41AM**

A rising number of struggling Jackson County families may receive help soon through a collaborative community effort.

The "Neighbors in Need" program aims to help 500 families avoid homelessness and provide 4,000 residents with help accessing services through assistance with transportation and navigating the social-service system.

It also will help meet an increased demand for food assistance by supporting local pantries and giving them the ability to provide 350,000 meals.

To help make those goals a reality, local social-service officials hope to raise \$650,000 and draw upon the help of 500 volunteers.

"There are emergency needs as a result of the economic downturn," said Lesia Pikaart, a community coordinator for the Michigan Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative, who is involved with the effort.

"That was the impetus behind it."

The program is still in the planning stages, and details — such as where to donate and how to volunteer — are being worked out, said Ken Toll, executive director of the United Way of Jackson County, which also is involved.

He said the program, which is a collaboration of at least 30 local social-service agencies or community groups, was created in response to the crisis that has arisen in the wake of plant closings and home foreclosures.

"We're trying to think outside the box in terms of what this community can do and pull together more than we ever have before," Toll said.

Groups involved include the Community Action Agency, The Salvation Army of Jackson, the American Red Cross of South Central Michigan and Jackson Interfaith Shelter, among others.

Pikaart said the program will focus on three main areas of need: housing, food assistance and access to services.

Maj. John L. Mallett of The Salvation Army said the agency has seen an increase in requests for utility payment and food assistance, especially with recent layoffs at Gerdau Mac Steel and Eaton Corp.

He said he other agencies also are noticing greater demand for services and assistance.

"There are more people in our community that are in need," Mallett said.

"We're just trying to coordinate and streamline things so people can get the help they need at an agency rather than being bounced from here to there."

Those who wish to donate now may contact the United Way, The Salvation Army or other area nonprofits and indicate that the donation is for the "Neighbors in Need" program, said Jim Brian, manager of marketing and communications for the United Way of Jackson County.

---

## From Chapin Hall – University of Chicago

### Chapin Hall Study of Low-Income Families Details Ways to Improve Access to Services for Children

The Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County, Florida, commissioned Chapin Hall to conduct a multiyear evaluation of its system of services designed for families at risk of poverty, teen pregnancy, crime, and child maltreatment and promote their healthy development and school readiness. Chapin Hall's 2009 report presents findings from the third year of the study, and offers recommendations for implementing more flexibly designed services that adapt to families' routines and values, in order to increase program use and provide greater stability to families' lives.

Read the report, [Supporting Low-Income Parents of Young Children: The Palm Beach County Family Study](#) by Julie Spielberger, Lauren Rich, Marcia Gouvêa, Carolyn Winje, Molly Scannell, Kristin Berg, and Allen Harden.