



Department of Health  
and Human Services  
Office of Community Affairs  
Montgomery County, Maryland  
[www.montgomerycountymd.gov](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov)

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Montgomery County DHHS  
Community Action Agency  
2424 Reedie Drive, Suite 238  
Wheaton MD 20902  
240.777.1697 MD RELAY: 711  
TTY: 301.251.4850

*Montgomery County, Maryland*  
**Community Action Board**  
**Annual Report**  
**2010-2011**





**Our Mission:**

***To conduct and promote programs that create an awareness of poverty,  
to promote coordination among agencies and better use of resources,  
to develop leadership among low-income residents of the County,  
and to develop community strategies to attack the basic causes of poverty.***



The Montgomery County Community Action Board is the governing body for the Montgomery County Head Start Program and the Community Action Agency. The 2009 Annual Report is printed and funded through the Community Service Block Grant. An annual report on the Head Start program is required by Public Law 110-134 "Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007" reauthorizing the Head Start program, Sec. 644 (a)(2) [42 U.S.C. 9839].



Alternative formats of the Community Action Board Annual Report 2009-2010 are available upon request. To request a copy, or if you need other services or accommodations to participate in the Community Action Board, please call 240-777-1697 (voice); 301-251-4850 (TTY); MD\_RELAY@711; or 240-777-3295 (FAX). To request by email, please contact staff: [Sharon.Strauss@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Sharon.Strauss@montgomerycountymd.gov) Sign language interpreter services will be provided upon request with advance notice of at least 3 full business days prior to the activity. Taking these steps will help us have sufficient time to best meet your needs.

[www.montgomerycountymd.gov/311](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/311)

Call 311 or 240-777-0311

301-251-4850 (TTY); MD\_RELAY 711

**Montgomery County Maryland  
COMMUNITY ACTION BOARD  
2010-2011**

**Chairperson: Steve Galen  
Vice Chairperson: Walter Woods  
Secretary: Melpi Jeffries**

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 Lisa Conlon, *Board of Education*  
 Lillian Durham, *Housing Opportunities Commission*  
 William L. England, Jr., *Human Rights Commission*  
 Steven M. Galen, *Primary Care Coalition*  
 Tekele (Marie) Ghonda Gha, *Representative for Low-Income, MidCounty*  
 Chandra Harris, *Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless*  
 Tonya M. Hughes, *Representative for Low-Income, Rockville*  
*(former Head Start Policy Council member)*  
 Melpi K. Jeffries, *League of Women Voters*  
 Luann Korona, *Department of Housing & Community Affairs*  
 Pamela Luckett, *County Council Designee*  
 Julieta Machado, *Spanish Catholic Center, Catholic Charities*  
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 LaTroy Powell, *Representative for Low-Income, Gaithersburg*  
 Gerald Roper, *Peoples Community Baptist Church*  
 Laurie Anne Sayles, *Representative for Low-Income, Bethesda*  
 Trica Young-Williams, *County Executive Designee (former Head Start Representative)*  
 Walter Woods, *Representative for Low-Income, Takoma Park*  
*(former Head Start Policy Council Representative)*

The Community Action Board (CAB) serves in an advisory capacity to the County Executive and County Council, and as an advocate on behalf of the poor and working poor of the County. Members are appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council.

The Board has four areas of responsibility:

- *Assessing the needs and problems of low-income people in the County;*
- *Recommending programs to meet the needs and solve the problems;*
- *Reviewing the Community Action Agencies' staff implementation of those programs; and*
- *Maintaining County policy and service delivery from the point of view of low-income residents.*

**Want to be involved?**

The Community Action Board meets on the Fourth Tuesday each month at 7 pm, except in July, August and December. Meetings are held at 401 Hungerford Drive, Rockville, in the Tan Conference Room. The Executive Committee meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 4 pm, at 2424 Re-edie Drive Wheaton MD, Suite "238."

*For info, or accommodations, please contact CAB's staff liaison, Sharon Strauss, 240-777-1462, or [Sharon.Strauss@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Sharon.Strauss@montgomerycountymd.gov)  
 Inquiries may also be made through the County Executive's office: 240-777-2528, [CountyExecutiveBoard@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:CountyExecutiveBoard@montgomerycountymd.gov)*

## HISTORY OF COMMUNITY ACTION

On August 20, 1964, President Lyndon Baines Johnson signed into law, Senate Bill 2642, better known as the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, declaring “unconditional war on poverty.” Title II of that law, provided for urban and rural communities to mobilize their resources to combat poverty through Community Action Programs. The most important provision of the Economic Opportunity Act was the requirement that Community Action Programs be developed, conducted, and administered with the maximum participation of area residents.

The following year, Community Action Agencies (CAA) were established, and Head Start programs opened around the country to provide comprehensive services—including health care, social services, and early education—to low-income preschool children. Since then, the Montgomery County CAA and its Board, have been charged with the responsibility of recommending programs to improve the lives of the County’s poor, the development of leaders within low-income communities, and the development of systems to increase their self-sufficiency, self-esteem and gain more control over their own lives. Today, the national Community Action Partnership network remains the largest single provider of Head Start programs.

The Community Action Board (CAB) serves as the governing body for Montgomery County Head Start. CAB shares program governance with the Head Start Policy Council and works closely with Montgomery County Public Schools, the delegate agency providing services, under the auspices of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Community Action Agency, the official grantee, and in collaboration with DHHS’ Early Childhood and School Health Services.

Together, this strong partnership assures that some of Montgomery’s most economically fragile children, including those with disabilities, are receiving the education, health, nutrition, and social services they need to succeed in school. Parents are involved in all aspects of the Head Start Program, with representatives serving on the Head Start Policy Council as well as the Community Action Board.

Originally, a number of Community Action services were delivered directly by County employees. Over time, nonprofit community providers have assumed this work, with the support of volunteers and a blended funding stream that includes, but is not wholly reliant upon, Montgomery County and other public funding. Staff of the CAA provide technical support to strengthen these services and to monitor that public funding is spent as intended.



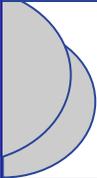
*Montgomery County resident Sargent Shriver (left) worked closely with President Lyndon Johnson (right) as the “architect” for the War on Poverty, establishing Community Action, Head Start, VISTA, Legal Services, the Peace Corps and other programs.*

### **Enabling Legislation: Article IV. Community Action Agency, Sec. 27-40.**

**Statement of policy:** “It is the public policy of the County to promote programs to create an awareness of poverty; promote coordination among private and public agencies concerned with poverty; promote better use of existing resources and develop leadership among poor citizens to solve community problems; and develop broad community strategies to attack the basic causes of poverty.”

*(1976 L.M.C., ch. 1, § 1; 1977 L.M.C., ch. 28, § 10; 1977 L.M.C., ch. 30, § 15; 1997 L.M.C., ch. 25, §1.)*

**In Sec. 27-41** (a), it is further stated that “There is a Community Action Agency within the Executive branch of the County government. The Agency creates and maintains community action programs to encourage the use of public and private resources to enable low-income people to become self-sufficient; to reduce poverty in the County; to involve the low-income population in developing and carrying out anti-poverty programs in the County; and to make government more responsive to the needs of low-income people.”



## The Montgomery County Community Action Board's 2010-2011 Advocacy Priorities & Work

The Montgomery County Community Action Board shared data regarding growing poverty in Montgomery and testified about the impact for the increasing number of County residents relying upon safety net services provided by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and its community partners.

CAB continued dissemination of the Self-Sufficiency Standard as a valuable tool to understand the challenges facing Montgomery's most economically impacted families who, even when working one or more low-wage jobs, struggle to make ends meet in a high-cost region. CAB joined with Maryland Community Action Partnership and Maryland's Department of Housing and Community Development to plan a statewide Self-Sufficiency Standard Report to be released in 2012, expanding CAB's collaboration with the University of Washington's School of Social Work.

To assure the Board's continued effectiveness and to comply with a corrective action related to Board governance required by the federal CSBG, CAB worked with the County Executive to reduce the size of its membership. The Community Action Board continued its advocacy for comprehensive, early childhood education for children and their low-income families. CAB noted that both Prekindergarten and Head Start serve as gateways to kindergarten and are shown to provide academic readiness. The Board communicated concern about the approximately 600 children enrolled in Prekindergarten each year who are from families who meet Head Start's income eligibility requirements, but lack a funded Head Start slot. CAB also communicated its concerns about Prekindergarten families living below the Self-Sufficiency level, as well as for three year olds unable to access Head Start's comprehensive services.

The Board promoted the Earned Income Tax Credit and accessible free tax services through Community Action Agency's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance and financial education partnerships as effective strategies to reduce poverty. Through the 2010-11 Legislative session, The Board provided information and testified to support of financial education, VITA, and the Maryland EITC Information Act, requiring employers to notify their workforce. To make the case, CAB produced a fact sheet describing the economic impact of EITC and free tax help in Montgomery. As ARRA and CSBG funding diminished, CAB advocated for new resources to meet community needs, supporting the agency's collaboration with the Maryland CASH Campaign and Human Resources Development Commission of Allegany County (a Community Action Agency) to secure IRS and foundation funding for VITA. CAB advocated for SNAP and hunger assistance, and in September, presented at Montgomery County's Faith Summit on Child Hunger and Poverty, sharing compelling statistics, including:

- **Montgomery County has a child poverty rate of 8.3%, with 19,456 children, the 3rd highest number in Maryland jurisdictions, after Baltimore City and Prince George's County.** (*KIDSCOUNT Data Center, 2009*).
- **In DC's suburban counties for which there was data in 2009, Montgomery County was home to the largest poor population, -- an estimated 65,285 residents, based on the Federal Poverty Level.** (*Brookings Institute's analysis of ACS data*).
- **Nearly 18,000 children under age six lived in families with low incomes (less than 200% of poverty level) in 2010 – a 38% increase since 2000.**
- **45.6% of Montgomery County single mothers in poverty live with children under 5 years of age.** (*US Census Bureau 2009, ACS data*).
- **In state fiscal year 2011, 25,857 pregnant women, infants and children participated in WIC, a 51% increase since 2007.** (*DHMH – Family Health Administration's Office, MD WIC Program*).
- **In the 2010-2011 school year, 31% of all Montgomery County students – 44,231 children – received Free and Reduced-price Meals, a 24% increase from the 2007-2008 school year.** (*MCPS Div. of Long Range Planning*)
- **Since the recession began, there has been 138% growth in "SNAP," Montgomery County's Food Stamp Program.** (*Monthly Statistical Report from Maryland Department of Human Resources*)
- **17.2% of children under the age of 18 in Montgomery County are "food insecure."** (*Feeding America*)
- **In state fiscal year 2011, 25,857 pregnant women, infants and children participated in WIC, a 51% increase from 2007.** (*DHMH – Family Health Administration's Office, MD WIC Program*)

**Head Start in Montgomery County** is a comprehensive program to prepare young children, ages 3-5, for success in school. Grant funded services are provided for low-income children and families including developmentally appropriate pre-school education, health and social services, services to children with disabilities, as well as a nutrition and parent involvement program. **During the past year, 648 three and four-year-old children were served in 35 classes in 28 schools and 2 private child care centers.** Children in the private child care center sites were able to receive full day services in one location, a boon for working families. The program is measured annually using MSDE definitions of readiness; full readiness is defined as consistently demonstrating skills, behaviors, and abilities needed to meet kindergarten expectations successfully. Demand for the program dramatically exceeds the enrollment capacity.

Head Start Services	Total # Served FY09	Total # Served FY10	Total # Served FY11	Total # Planned FY12
<i>Funded Enrollment</i>	<b>648</b>	<b>648</b>	<b>648</b>	<b>648</b>
MCPS Head Start Enrollment	618	618	618	<b>618</b>
Community-Based Head Start in Child Care Centers	30	30	30	<b>30</b>
Total Actual Enrollment	735	724	693	<b>n/a</b>
Full Day Head Start classes	14	21	21	<b>14</b>

### Parent Involvement with Montgomery County's Head Start Families:

During the 2010-2011 school year, family service workers (FSW's) made a total of 860 home visits and 3,419 phone calls to Head Start families, and had 2,260 direct contacts with Head Start families at school or in the community. **Family Service Workers made 2,359 referrals for community resources, including 1,337 referrals for emergency food and clothing.** Throughout the year, 210 parent center meetings were held. In addition, FSW's continued to take applications for the program throughout the year, including 195 applications for Head Start income eligible 3-year olds and 1,396 applications for Head Start income eligible four-year olds.



Parents, children and Head Start staff join together at "family night" with fun, enriching educational activities.

Services received by Head Start Families SY10-11	
emergency/ crisis intervention (immediate needs for food, clothing or shelter)	100%
housing assistance (subsidies, utilities, repairs)	9%
mental health services	3%
ESL (English as a Second Language)	31%
adult education (including GED)	23%
job training	15%
substance abuse	0.3%
child abuse and neglect	0%
domestic violence	0.4%
child support assistance	3%
health education	5%
assistance to families of incarcerated individuals	1.4%
parenting education	100%
marriage education	0.4%
families receiving at least one service	100%

**Montgomery County’s Head Start Program: TRENDS**

**Percentage of enrolled children that received medical exams in SY 10-11: 98%**

Head Start Health Services	Total # Served FY08	Total # Served FY09	Total # Served FY10	Total # Served FY11
Medical exams	88%	95%	97%	98%
Health insurance at end of HS year	88%	95%	96%	95%
Dental Exams/ preventive care	85%	90%	90%	98%

*In FY 11, if children remaining in the program for 45 days or less had not been counted, 100% would have accessed Medical Exams, 98% health insurance, and 100% for dental exams and preventive care by the end of the HS year.*

**TRENDS**

***Increasing numbers of eligible Head Start applicants***

Services for children who cannot gain Head Start enrollment are currently available for four year olds through the MCPS prekindergarten program. National economic factors are increasing the number of families below the federal poverty level. Over twice as many eligible four year olds registered for Head Start as were able to be served within our funded enrollment. The remainder of the Head Start eligible children were served in MCPS prekindergarten classes.



***Serious shortages in Head Start spaces for eligible three year olds***

With the implementation of the Maryland ***Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act***, that requires pre-kindergarten for all economically disadvantaged and at-risk four-year-old children, there is high demand for services for all four years olds to prepare for kindergarten. There is extreme shortage of spaces for three year olds: while over 300 eligible children have registered for 30 dedicated slots in the past several years, currently we hold the waiting list to 195 since there is little chance of enrollment after the beginning of the school year.

***Numbers of full day classes wane***

MCPS Title I funds have been used for the past three+ years to dramatically increase the number of full-day (6 hour) Head Start seats to 21 of the 35 classrooms or 60%. Unfortunately, in FY12; there will be a reduction in the number of full day Head Start classes to 17.



*Photo, courtesy of MCPS*

## Ready for Kindergarten

**The Montgomery County Head Start Program** offers a quality educational experience to children and families in order to prepare them with the foundational knowledge and skills necessary for success in kindergarten and beyond. The Pre-K/Head Start curriculum is aligned with the *Maryland State Department of Education's Voluntary State Curriculum* and the *Montgomery County Public Schools K-8 Curriculum Framework*. The curriculum provides a strong emphasis on literacy and mathematics foundational concepts and skills, with age-appropriate science, social studies, art, music, movement and technology experiences. Head Start teachers utilize research-based instructional strategies in whole-group, small-group, and one-on-one settings. Information gathered from ongoing assessments and parent contacts are used to individualize instruction to promote optimal learning and development. **Parents** are provided with information and materials to support their children's learning at home and they are encouraged to participate in all school experiences. Before leaving the Head Start program, Head Start staff provides a variety of transition activities to help children and families make successful transitions into kindergarten. As a result, Head Start children enter kindergarten fully ready to succeed in school.

**The Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR)** is a body of standards and an assessment tool that teachers use at the start of each school year to assess and observe the school readiness of entering kindergartners in Maryland public schools. The MMSR measures what each child knows and is able to do in the seven "Domains of Learning."

Head Start Performance Measure	SY01-02	SY06-07	SY09-10	SY10-11	Planned
Percentage of Head Start students who demonstrate "full readiness" upon entering kindergarten	52%	59%	68%	67%	70%
Percentage of Head Start students who are "approaching readiness" upon entering kindergarten	42%	36%	29%	30%	27%
Percentage of Head Start students who are "developing readiness" upon entering kindergarten	6%	5%	3%	3%	3%

## Head Start Enrollment

Enrollment	Total # Served SY 07-08	SY 08-09	SY 09-10	SY 10-11
September		648	645	646
October	648	648	648	647
November		648	648	648
December		648	648	648
January	647	648	648	648
February		648	648	648
March	648	648	648	648
April		646	648	648
May		643	640	646
June		642	637	641
Attendance Rate	90.6%	91.3%	90.8%	*92.51%
Average Enrollment	643.1	646.5	645.8	646.8

*The socio-economic status of the Head Start students and the high cost of housing in Montgomery County combine to create the conditions for a high level of mobility that may negatively affect children's attendance.*

*However, attendance and enrollment figures over the past several years reflect a positive familial attitude toward good attendance.*

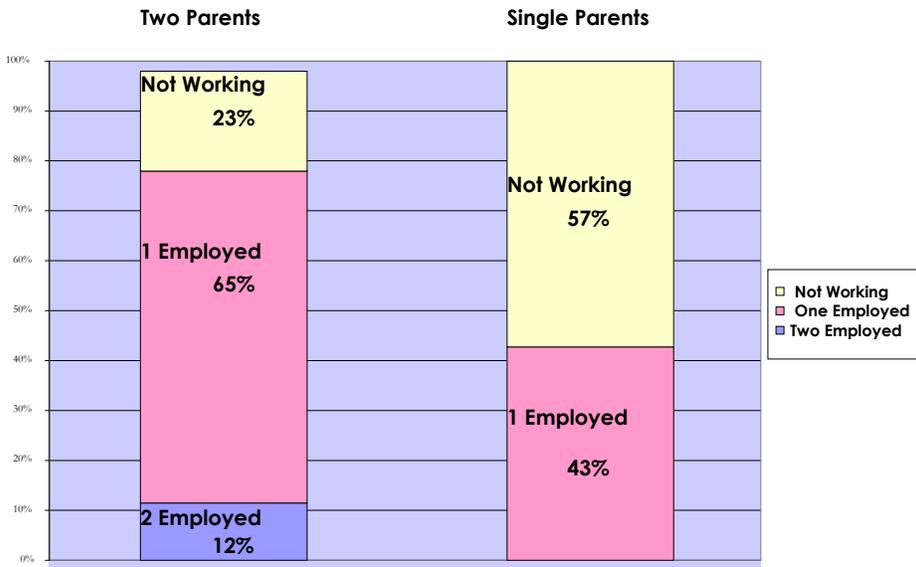
*Teaching teams and family service workers collaborate and increase support for parents, promoting problem-solving strategies to remove barriers that interfere with attendance.*

*\*based on the first week of Feb. 2011*

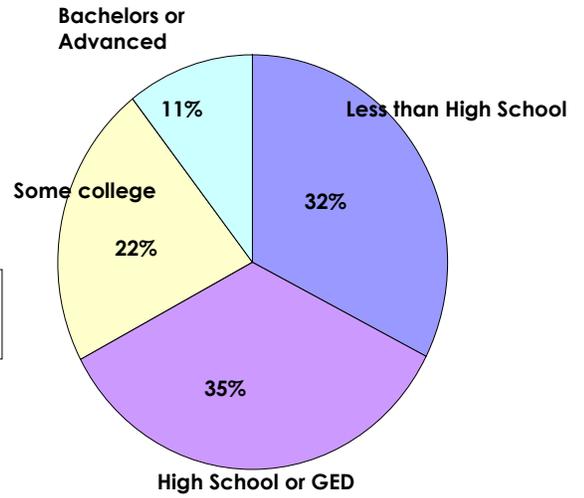
## Facts about Montgomery County Head Start Children and Families

Selected statistics from the 2010-11 Head Start Program Information Report (PIR)

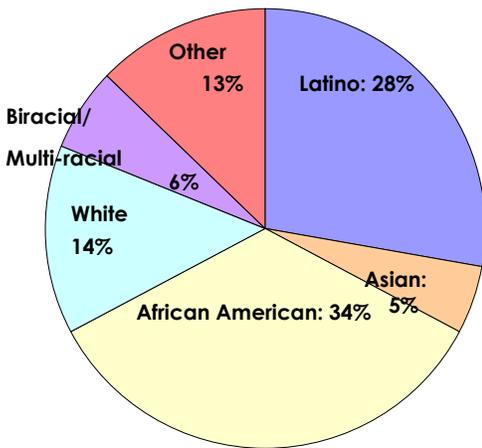
*Employment Status of Parents*



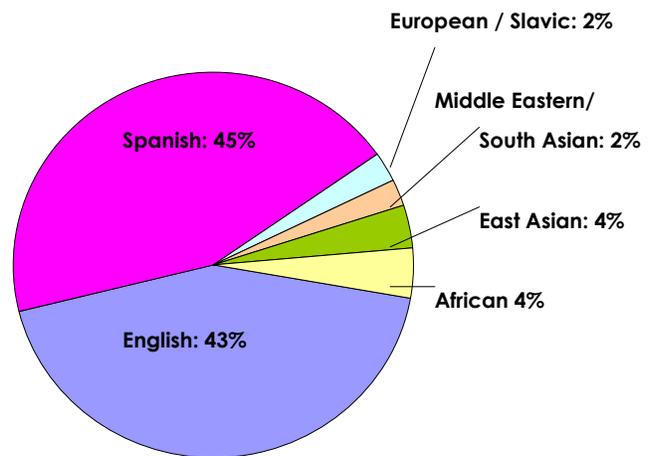
*Highest Level of Education of Head Start Families*



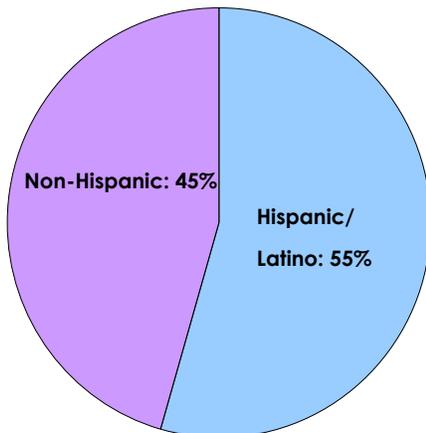
*Head Start Children by Race*



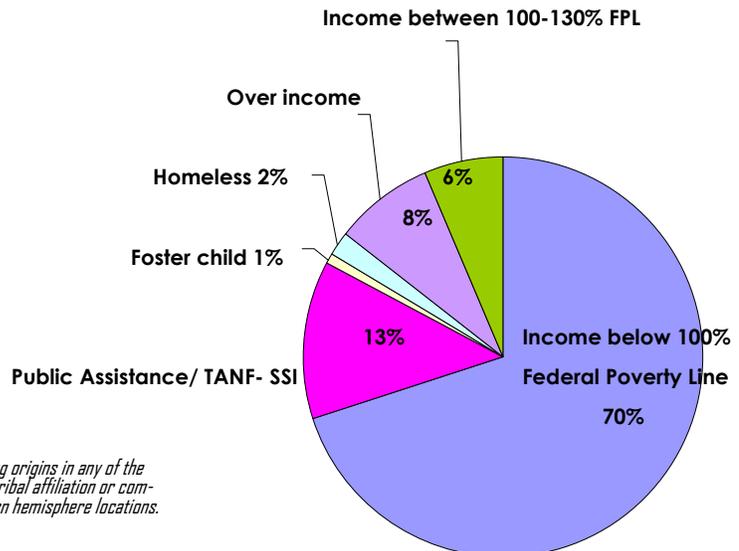
*Head Start Children by Primary Language of the Family at Home*



*Head Start Children by Ethnicity*



*Head Start Enrollment by Type of Eligibility*



*Note: For "Race" – the definition of American Indian or Alaska Native is a person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America or Central America, and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment. This includes many persons who immigrated from various Western hemisphere locations.*

## Head Start Budget Basics:

### Program Year (PY) 45 = School Year (SY) 2010-11 = Fiscal Year (FY) 2011

*Personnel* for FY11 includes teachers, paraeducators, speech pathologists, psychologists, social workers, social service assistants, community health nurses, school health room aides, dental hygienist, nurse administrator, community services aide, program manager, and administrative specialist. *Fringe benefits* are included in the personnel costs category. *Travel* includes all costs associated with reimbursing staff for travel to Head Start sites to provide health and dental services, and for staff and parents to attend trainings and national, regional, and state conferences.

*Contractual services* include delegate costs for the required audit (A133), and training and technical assistance for delegate staff. Contractual health costs include specialty dental treatment providers, not available through insurance or dental clinics, and Mobile Medical Care, Inc. to provide contractual Head Start Nurses. Under Community Action Agency (CAA) contractual services includes funding for Community- Based Head Start child care center sites and for training for the Policy Council and Community Action Board on shared governance and methods to achieve board goals within a government structure.

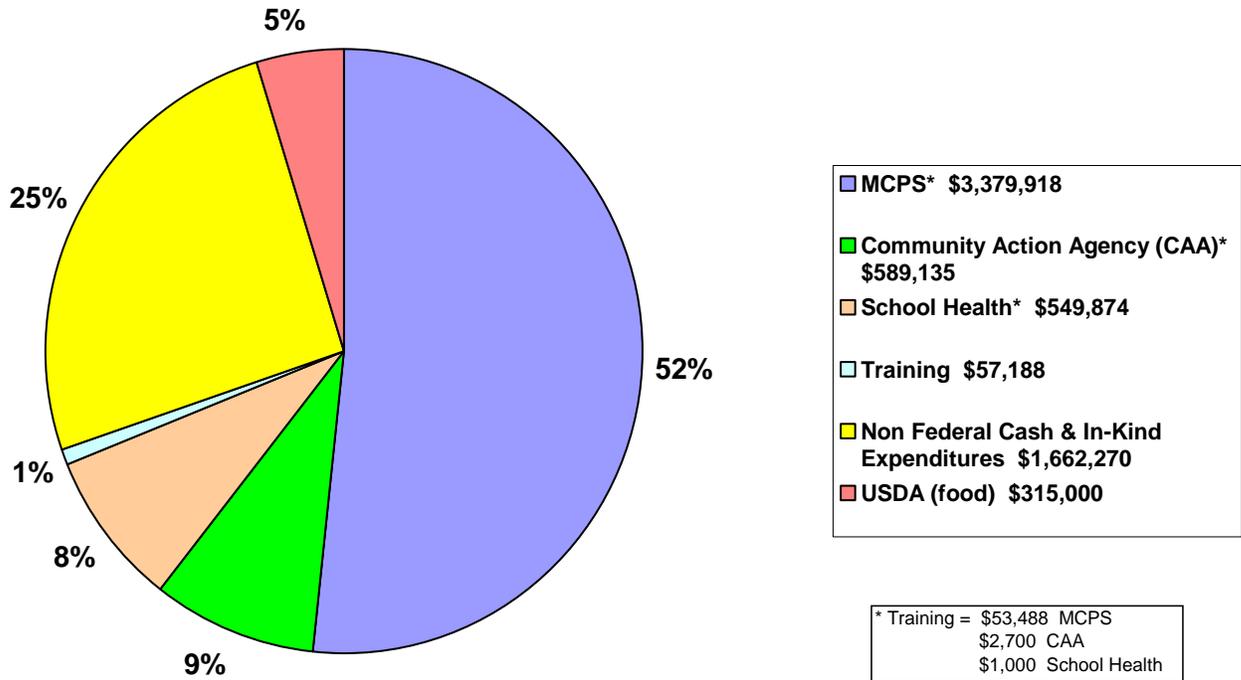
*Other funding within MCPS* covers a variety of expenses including training & staff development, child liability insurance, parent services such as training, parent/child mathematics and literacy activities, bus transportation for classes to attend field trips, reimbursement of mileage for home visits and parent meetings for teachers, paraeducators, special needs teacher, and social service assistants. Other funding for CAA provides assistance with costs for family related activities, program recruitment and registration materials such as printing advertising posters for local buses, and supplies necessary to conduct various meetings. These funds provide a range of administrative supports to the Montgomery County, MD, Head Start Program such as local travel costs for contract monitoring and other grant monitoring. Other funding for School Health includes costs associated with continuing education and performance standard training for Head Start School Health Room nurses, technicians and hygienists and providing educational training experiences and materials for parents, students and non professional staff.

In the FY12/ PY46 budget, all MCPS costs are considered contractual services under the federal award because the funds are granted as a "pass-through" with MCPS as the subrecipient, or delegate agency.

### PY 45 COMPARISON OF BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES FOR HEAD START & PY 46 PROPOSED

CATEGORY	FY11 BUDGET	EXPENDITURES	FY12 AWARD
Personnel	\$3,913,013	\$3,883,188	\$587,270
Travel	\$0	\$164	\$6,000
Duplicating	13585.89	\$15,995	
Equipment	74750	\$59,703	
Supplies	\$0	\$21,011	\$12,214
Contractual	\$498,358	\$493,284	\$3,925,581
Other	\$76,408	\$64,984	\$45,050
<b>Subtotal Federal Head Start</b>	<b>\$4,576,115</b>	<b>\$4,538,328</b>	<b>\$4,576,115</b>
Non Federal	\$1,144,029	\$1,662,270	\$1,144,029
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,720,144</b>	<b>\$6,200,598</b>	<b>\$5,720,144</b>

**Head Start Budget FY11 - Program Year 45**



**Results of the most recent review by the Secretary and the Financial Audit**

Through its **2010 Triennial Federal Monitoring Review**, the Administration for Children and Families conducted an on-site monitoring review in November 09, with a follow-up in June 10 to determine whether an identified finding from the 2010 triennial review had been corrected. The on-site follow-up Head Start review identified that the program was in compliance with federal Head Start regulations and that the review was closed with no corrective action required. In summary, the review report concluded that *“Montgomery County Head Start provided outstanding Early Childhood Development services and included a strong partnership with the delegate, Montgomery County Public Schools; high-quality, supportive classrooms; and highly qualified staff providing a sound foundation for Head Start children's future academic, social, and physical endeavors.”* The next triennial Head Start review will be in FY13.

**Financial Audit:** Montgomery County has an annual Independent Auditor’s Report on Internal Control, Over Financial Reporting and on Compliance and Other Matters, Based on an Audit of Financial Statements Performed in Accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*. A copy of the Audit for the year ending June 30, 2011, is available at the County’s website:

[http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/finance/data/financial/FY11\\_Single\\_Audit.pdf](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/finance/data/financial/FY11_Single_Audit.pdf)

*The Montgomery County MD Report on Expenditures of Federal Awards for Fiscal Year 2011 was performed for the County Council and County Executive by CliftonLarsonAllen LLP, Certified Public Accountants and Consultants.*

## VITA and Financial Education Partnership

**Montgomery County Community Action Board believes addressing the basic causes of poverty helps low-income people become more economically self sufficient. Among its strategies, the Agency seeks to improve the lives of poor and low-income residents by linking them to free services like the Voluntary Income Tax Assistance (VITA) partnership, which maximizes their financial assets.**

The IRS' supported VITA free tax program serves low to moderate income residents, including those with disabilities, limited-English proficiency and older taxpayers. Community Action's IRS certified volunteers work with staff and partners to assure tax-payers access refundable credits, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit. The VITA partnership promotes asset building and financial education, linking participants to banks and credit unions through direct deposit and Gaithersburg's "Bank-On." VITA generates revenue back to the community as residents use their hard-earned refunds and savings from free-filing to meet their families' basic needs, take care of overdue bills, and invest in major household purchases.

In 2010-2011 Community Action Agency VITA continued its partnership with the City of Gaithersburg at Family Services, Inc., the City of Rockville at Courthouse Square, and delivered services at its offices at the Takoma East Silver Spring "TESS" Center and MidCounty Services Center in Wheaton. **Staffing and resources were constrained considerably in FY11 (TaxYear 2010), following the conclusion of Community Action's ARRA funding, resulting in a reduction of services,** (p. 13). Despite the loss of VITA's three part-time seasonal staff, reduced hours of the coordinator and part-time assistant, the elimination of the full-time and part-time financial educators, all four VITA sites and partnerships were maintained. With the partnership's strong collaboration, volunteer participation expanded, with 48 volunteers, including interpreters for speakers with limited English proficiency. Two Maryland Community Fellows associated with University of Maryland's (graduate) School of Social Work's Community Outreach Services (SWCOS) supported VITA and service delivery at TESS. The Fellows, who received a CSBG-funded stipend, were placed through a partnership



*EITC and VITA outreach activities included "Bunny Money" and "A Chair for My Mother," children's books about savings.*

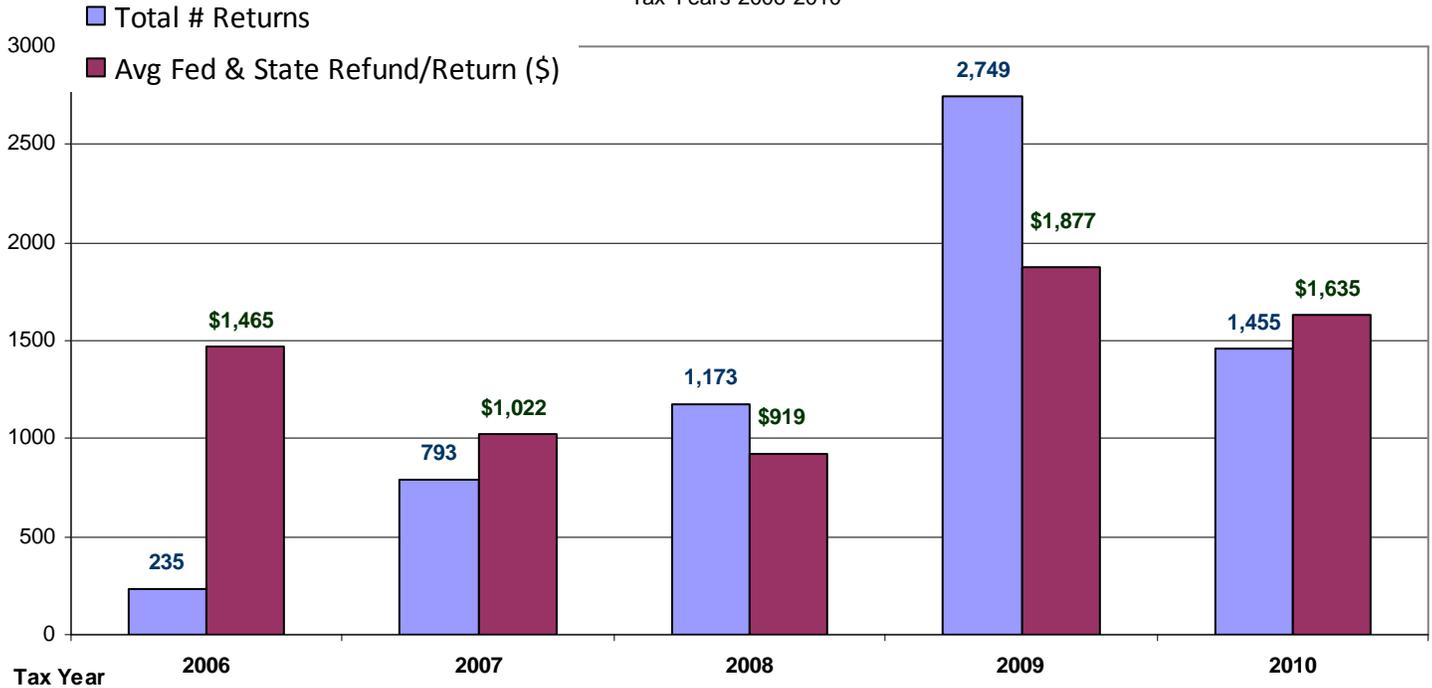
among SWCOS, Maryland Dept. of Housing and Community Development, Community Action and Maryland CASH Campaign. Besides meeting case management needs of customers, the Fellows promoted the EITC and delivered free tax help. Community Action's EITC/VITA outreach campaign, which included the coordination of community free tax information through "311," was supported by staff and partners who educated residents about the economic impact of accessing free tax help and various credits, while promoting the benefits of establishing banking to safely deposit refunds and earnings. In January 2011, the VITA partnership held its EITC Kick-off at Family Services, Inc. with the Coalition for the Advancement of Financial Education Montgomery (CAFE Montgomery), Maryland CASH, and First Book, with free financial education activities, access to tax appointments and children's books. VITA continued to be available post season for "back taxes," one of the only free tax providers in the Metro area, and staff worked with case managers to address their customer's significant barriers.

Following the December 2010 conclusion of the ARRA funded financial education pilot, with its 69 free, staff-led workshops and individual counseling for customers referred by public and non-profit providers, Community Action joined with leaders of DHHS' Special Needs Housing, the County's Office of Human Resources, Maryland CASH and the University of Maryland's School of Public Health's Family Sciences' Cooperative Extension Service to initiate financial education training for DHHS' case managers. The goal was to increase the financial educational knowledge and capability of the DHHS Workforce to better integrate financial education concepts within their case management work. The first series of training was held in the fall of 2011.

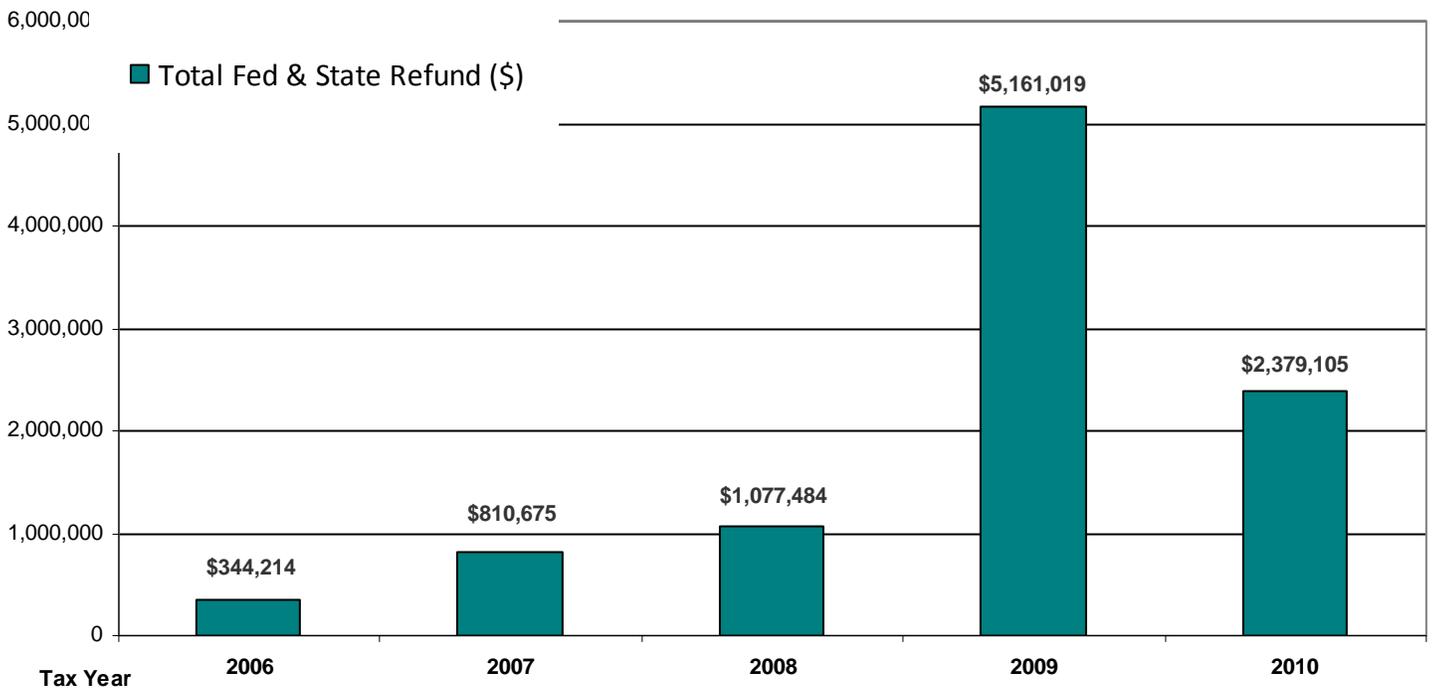
During Tax Year 2010, VITA returned over \$3.2 million in state and federal refunds and local, state and federal credits to 1,455\* households, serving approximately half of the customers from Tax Year 2009. VITA taxpayers owed a total of \$497,017 to the state and federal governments.

\*This includes taxpayers who filed for previous year returns post-season.

Montgomery County (MD) DHHS Community Action Agency # Total Returns & Average Federal & State Refund per Return  
Tax Years 2006-2010



Montgomery County (MD) DHHS Community Action Agency # Total Returns & Total Fed & State Refund  
Tax Years 2006-2010



## A Salute to Community Partners

The Montgomery County Department of Health & Human Services' Community Action Agency provides direct services for low income county residents through partnerships with non-profit agencies as well as through its direct services. Each year, partners join to share resources and to address the challenges they face in serving the most vulnerable in the county.



**Staff and partners at the DHHS Community Action Agency Contractors' Annual Meeting** (left to right): Charles Beard, vice-president, Silver Spring Team for Children & Families; Lizzie James, executive director, DHHS' Community Action Agency; Judith Clark, executive director, Women Who Cares Ministries; Clarice Ewing, program coordinator, Montgomery County Bar Foundation's Pro Bono Program; Sabrina Wilson, director, Interfaith Works' Interfaith Clothing Closet; Beverly Ellis, contract & grants manager, Catholic Charities' of the Archdioceses of Washington, Inc.; Aizat Oladapo, program manager, DHHS' Community Action Agency.

### Community Action Agency's Partners, FY11:

- **C-4 Clothes Closet** ♥ Provides clothing, school backpacks and holiday-giving for low income residents in the East County.
- **Caribbean Help Center** ♥ Provides ESOL classes, emergency services and other human services to referred Caribbean immigrant residents.
- **CASA De Maryland** ♥ Provides employment, training and supportive services to multicultural, low-income residents with limited English proficiency in the Silver Spring, Wheaton and Shady Grove areas. CASA also provides social services, case management, information, and referral services.
- **Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington, Inc.** ♥ Provides supportive and emergency services, outreach, and case management to low income residents in the County and in collaboration with the Department of Health & Human Services, is part of the Neighborhood Opportunity Network in Wheaton.
- **Cultural and Diversity Enrichment Services - USA, Inc.** ♥ Provides support services to the Cameroonian immigrant population and a youth after school program in Silver Spring.
- **Circle of Rights, Inc.** ♥ In collaboration with Healthcare partners, provides increased public awareness and outreach about stroke to low income minority populations, working with elderly groups, schools, and community organizations.
- **East Montgomery Emergency Assistance Program ( EMEAN)** ♥ Provides emergency services and is a single point of entry for referred residents in from zip codes 20866, 20868, 20903, 20904, and 20905.
- **Family Services, Inc.** ♥ Provides case management and referral services and in collaboration with the Department of Health & Human Services and City of Gaithersburg, is part of the Neighborhood Opportunity Network in Gaithersburg.
- **Gandhi Brigade, Inc.** ♥ Provides a youth focused community media project in the Silver Spring area. Supports at-risk teens to develop and create digital media that explore critical issues of community and positive development to assist them to become leaders of community change.

## Community Action Agency's Partners, FY11:

- **IMPACT Silver Spring – (Networking Program)** ♥ Provides community involvement and leadership development programs for Silver Spring residents. In collaboration with the Department of Health & Human Services, Community Action's Takoma East Silver Spring ("TESS") Center and Mary Center, is part of the community's Neighborhood Opportunity Network.
- **Interfaith Works' Interfaith Clothing Closet** ♥ Operates a clothing center in Rockville area which distributes donated clothing and housewares to referred residents of the County.
- **Korean Association of the State of Maryland Metro Area Inc.** ♥ Provides social services for Korean immigrants in the County. Services include translation, transportation, advocacy and referrals.
- **Korean Community Service Center of Greater Washington, Inc.** ♥ Provides outreach and services for Asian immigrant residents in the County. Services include health fairs, benefit information, housing information, citizenship assistance and referrals.
- **Manna Food Center** ♥ Distributes food to hungry and low income residents of the county, including individuals, families, pantries, shelters, soup kitchens, emergency organizations, and group homes. Its "Smart Sacks" program provides weekend food to low-income school children. Manna is the County's designee for the federal Temporary Emergency Food Assistance (TEFAP) Program.
- **Montgomery County Bar Foundation** ♥ Provides Pro Bono Legal Services Program to low-income residents in the county without the financial means to hire an attorney at four regional sites: Upcounty Services Center (Germantown), Midcounty Services Center (Wheaton), Community Action's Takoma East Silver Spring ("TESS") Center, and East County Services Center (Burtonsville).
- **Silver Spring Team for Children and Families, Inc. - "Benchmarks Program" Silver Spring** ♥ Provides after school programs for middle and elementary school youth in the Rosemary Hills community through its subcontractor, the YMCA.
- **The Community Foundation for the National Capital Region** ♥ The Nonprofit Advancement Fund provides financial and technical support to nonprofits in the County.
- **Women Who Care Ministries, Inc.** ♥ Provides a food pantry and school backpack program in the UpCounty area, through its "Helping Kids Eat Backpack Weekend Food Program."

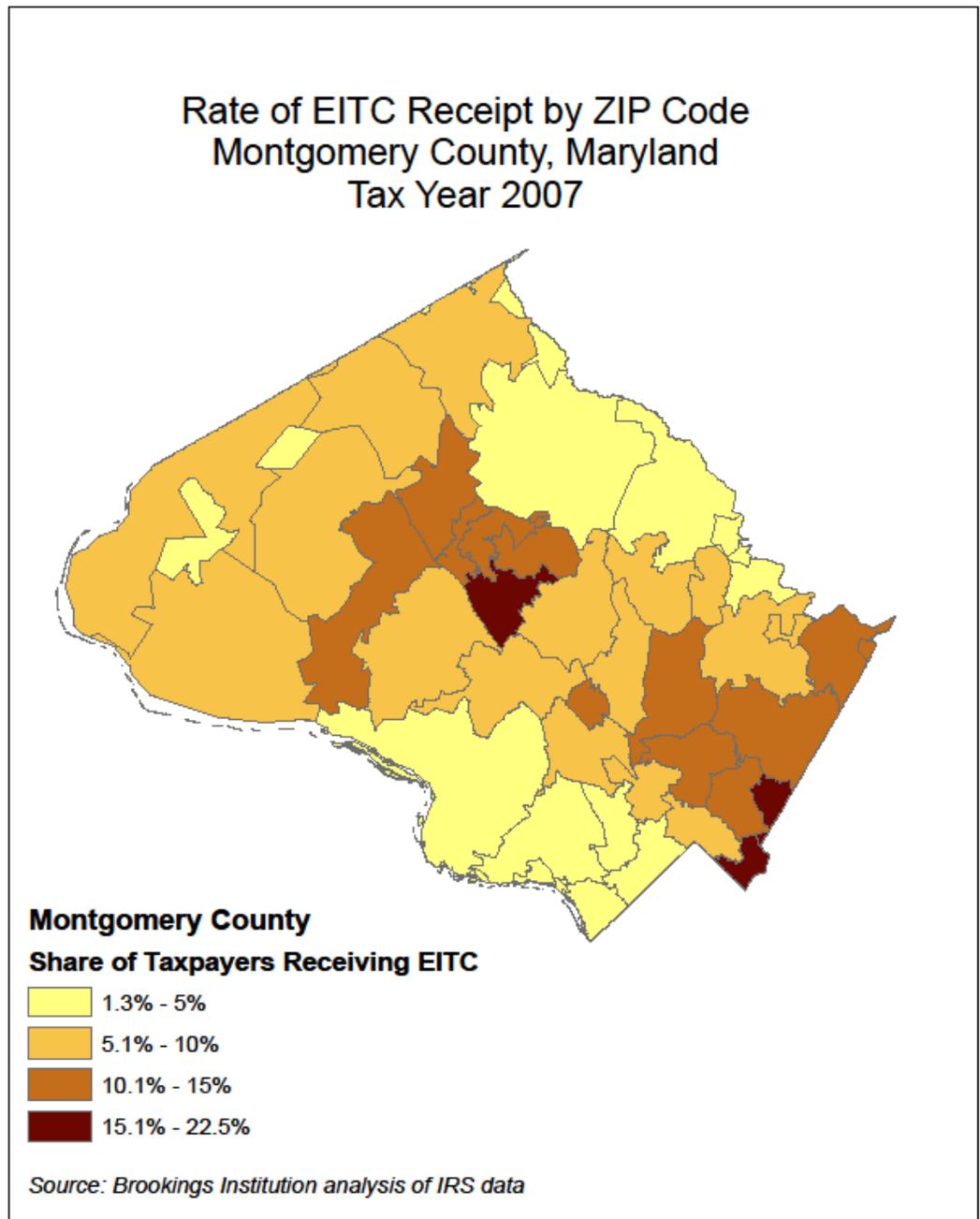
**Making a Difference:** After his family experienced tragic losses, Carlos Iglesias and his family fled to the US and were granted political asylum. With limited English, finding work and adjustment to American life was challenging. Carlos was referred by Arbor E&T to Community Action's TESS site for work experience through the VITA partnership. Soon after, he was using his fluency in Spanish to help other immigrants to learn about VITA and community resources. Carlos continued serving as a VITA volunteer, allowing him to grow in his confidence, knowledge and English-skills, Carlos' volunteer-efforts led to employment with Community Action's nonprofit partner, IMPACT. A "community-organizer" supporting case management and "door-knocking," Carlos now shares resources, engages partners and empowers residents through Impacts' Neighbors Exchange, improving community health and wellbeing, while continuing helping at TESS and with VITA as a volunteer.

## Making the Case for EITC and Free Tax Preparation

Community Action Board directed the Agency to study the extent of EITC under-utilization and the reliance of the County's poor in using paid tax preparers, since the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) (and Child Tax Credits) are the most effective anti-poverty program in the nation, especially for child poverty. An analysis of IRS 2009 federal tax data was conducted to calculate the economic impact of low-income residents failing to file, and of using paid tax preparers.

The Board learned:

- **50,373** (approximately 12%) of 425,134 tax returns filed by Montgomery County residents in 2009 received the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).
- The average EITC refund in Montgomery County was **\$2,044**, with an economic impact estimated at **\$155 million in 2009**.
- **32,108** (or 64%) of county residents receiving EITC used a paid preparer in 2009.
- Based on an average fee of \$189, low-income residents paid almost **\$6 million** to have their returns prepared.
- 20% to 25% of Montgomery taxpayers, or **11,000 households**, failed to claim the federal EITC in 2009, resulting in the loss of a potential \$20 million in lost economic activity.
- The impact is magnified because it does not reflect the economic loss of failure to claim the Child Care Credit, nor does it calculate the impact of the Maryland EITC (25% match of federal EITC), nor Montgomery's Working Families Income Supplement, among the nation's first local EITC, which is funded as a percentage match of the Maryland EITC.





*Clockwise: CAB Member Corky McCorkle with Anthony Donaldson, Family Services Inc.'s Thom Harr, CAB Chair Steve Galen, and Wendy Enderson, FSI. Alfred Thompson and Carlos Aparacio, City of Rockville. Shani Gibson, Maryland CASH with Joel Goldberg, CAFE. Devon Hyde, Community Fellow UMD's SWCOS, City of Gaithersburg, Spanish Catholic Center and VITA & community volunteers. TESS volunteers Elsa Strohecker and Sara Harris; Jill Glixon and Cheryl Geske of Hughes United Methodist Baptist Church, and community supporters Sharon Donahoe and Judy Gross. Juan Washington, Mayra Moran and Kathryn McDonough, TESS Pro Bono volunteers.*



## Community Action Board and Partners Celebrate Community Action Month!

In May, following remarks from County Executive Isiah Leggett, DHHS director Uma Ahluwalia, and chief of Community Affairs Betty Lam, leaders from the Community Action Board ("CAB") presented the Marcia Plater Community Action Award for Individual Achievement to East County high school student Anthony Donaldson and Board member Corky McCorkle as part of its annual National Community Action Month celebration.

Both were recognized for their contributions to youth participating in the County's Recreation Department, and for their leadership in the Rite of Passage mentoring program at Immanuel Church, a training ministry to develop character.

Corky McCorkle, CAB's Department of Recreation's representative, nominated Anthony for giving back to youth through his volunteer work with the Recreation Department in the Briggs Chaney area. Anthony was involved with Rite of Passage since 5th grade. When Board members learned of McCorkle's mentorship for the program, and of his efforts to engage Anthony and East County youth in volunteering through the Recreation Department, the Board honored him with the Plater award in the "adult" category.

Numerous volunteers and partners were recognized for their work supporting low-income people in the community, including the Pro Bono and TESS Community partners, and 48 volunteers who gave 3,000 hours to support Community Action's free "VITA" tax partnership. CAB presented its VITA and financial education partners with the Henry L. Dixon Community Action Award for Organizational Achievement. The City of Rockville, the City of Gaithersburg's Bank On Initiative and Family Services were recognized for their role in hosting the VITA partnership and delivering financial education. The Maryland CASH Campaign, its CASH Academy and the Coalition for the Advancement of Financial Education of Montgomery County were acknowledged for expanding capacity and financial wellness in conjunction with Community Action's successful ARRA funded pilot. The IRS, Spanish Catholic Center and the University of Maryland School of Social Work's Community Outreach Service were recognized for their participation in the VITA partnership. The Board also recognized CAB member Keith Melbourne for his service as its representative on behalf of Maryland Child Services.

## Department of Health and Human Services– TESS Center

Community Action Agency (CAA) oversees and staffs the Department of Health and Human Services "TESS Center" (Takoma East Silver Spring Community Service Center). Established in the late 1960's as the County's first "multicultural" outreach center to address emerging needs in the Long Branch neighborhood, TESS supports access to applications for Food Stamps, Medicaid, health, rental/housing and utility help, and other forms of public and private assistance.

TESS continues engaging a predominately low income, immigrant population, bringing culturally-friendly information, assessment and direct services through its many community partnerships. The program helps customers to prepare documentation to address a range of health and human needs, provid-

ing resources and referrals about public and community services. Customers seek the hands-on support of trusted TESS Bilingual professionals as they address landlord-tenant and housing problems, consumer issues and in completing social security forms and job applications.

TESS provides free notary public services, corrects birth certificates records, provides paternity affidavits, and provides certified translation (Spanish/English) of vital documents, such as birth, baptismal, marriage and death certificates. Customers may receive eligibility screening for Dental and Eye Clinics, receive referrals to Clothing Closets, Manna or other food banks, or participate in holiday giving and school supply drives with neighborhood and faith groups.



Besides providing direct services, TESS offers a variety of community health, prevention and early intervention partnerships and is a site for Pro-Bono Legal Services, the Silver Spring Judy Center, the VITA partnership and nutrition initiatives. TESS provides leadership and continues serving as a hub for the Long Branch Neighborhood Opportunity Network (formerly known as the Safety Net), working with partners from IMPACT and Mary's Center. In FY11, TESS received over 10,000 visits from area residents.

### *Community Action: Helping People, Changing Lives!*



#### COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY

Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services

Main Office: 2424 Reedie Drive, Room 238  
Wheaton, MD 20902

MAIN: 240-777-1697 TTY: 301-251-4850 MD RELAY: 711

TESS Center: 8513 Piney Branch Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20901  
MAIN: 301-565-7675

Lizzie James, Executive Director

Sharon Strauss, Program Manager; Assistant Executive Director, Community Action Board

Gopal Bista, Program Aide

Diana Day, Office Services Coordinator

Patsy Evans, Program Manager, Head Start

Karen Fisher, Community Services Aide

Denall Fowler, Administrative Specialist

Gladys Hernandez, Community Services Aide, TESS Center

Taunya Johnson, VITA Coordinator

Maureen Larenas, Program Specialist, TESS Center Manager

Aizat Oladapo, Program Manager, Contract Monitor

Janet Lee, Head Start Consultant

Sue Levine, VITA Consultant

Devon Hyde and Matthew Tanner, 2010-2011 Community Fellows



#### 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.



