

m subsidizing heating oil prices to caring for senior citizens to sheltering the homeless....Action is at the hub of Gloucester's social service network

**Boston Globe. . . helping young**

ers tutoring, counseling and skills training to people from ages 14 to 21 who face setbacks in their lives.

Gloucester Daily Times . . .plans for a free legal clinic have taken shape over t

d to the creation of the Mass Low-Income Energy Affordability Network...to design energy-efficient programs

**North Weekly...in all, the agency provided services to 5,2**

are fortunate to have it (Action) here.

Gloucester Daily Times...Action

McPherson Park resident is thankful to have Action Inc.'s Homemaker Services to help her.

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# ACTION, INC.

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## ANNUAL REPORT 2002



Action, Inc. is a private, non-profit community organization serving Gloucester, Ipswich, Manchester-by-the-Sea, Essex, and Rockport.

Good News for Cape Ann and Ipswich Residents Since 1965

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# ACTION, INC.

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## Our Mission

Since 1965, Action, Inc. has been Cape Ann's first and only designated anti-poverty agency. Action, Inc. helps individuals and families in poverty achieve economic and family stability.

Action, Inc. provides access to opportunities through advocacy, education and training, and a wide range of resources to assist people in the process of self-help.

Our approach to service is comprehensive, addressing all aspects of a person's well-being. In addition, services are coordinated with colleague agencies to be cost-effective, avoid duplication, and enhance benefits. They are delivered with respect and dignity to promote self-esteem, empowerment, and confidence in those who seek our help.

Action, Inc. is a major Cape Ann employer, with a staff of over one hundred trained professionals, who are dedicated to providing the services described in this Annual Report.



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The Action, Inc. Annual Report / 2002

Editor: Ed'Veeje Fairchild      Designer: Michael Ronan Graphics

Our thanks to The Gloucester Daily Times, Mike Dean, Daniel Listwa, and Bart A. Piscitello for the use of their photos in this report.

**Boston Globe. . . a single mother knows exactly what she wants to do ...thanks to a**  
**ce of hope, and the only remaining safety net.**

**Gloucester Daily Times. . . New program provides ass**  
**opped out of Gloucester High in 1999...but now I'm going to graduate in June."**

**Gloucester Daily Time...helping hundreds of elders each year to remain in their**  
**on's energy affordability programs assisted more than 1500 Cape Ann families in 2001.**

**be. . . nearly one out of every ten Cape Ann residents turned to (Action) for help with rent, utility bills, or other services last year, Action planner Chand**

**y Times...Action speaks for those who have no voice.**

**Gloucester Daily Times...The initiative is intended to help seniors maintain their indepe**

**Good News ... for those who need it most**

The concept of self-sufficiency has been on my mind a lot lately, but ironically, it cannot be achieved alone. It sometimes takes a team effort to guide people toward economic and family stability. As a community action agency, it's our job to unite local, state, private, and federal resources in that effort. That's what Action, Inc. is all about.



Bill Rochford  
*Executive Director, Action, Inc.*

We provide a direct and immediate response to the needs of Cape Ann's low-income residents. Our approach is comprehensive, but our goal is simple: to make a measurable dent in poverty on Cape Ann.

And in that regard, we have some good news to report. I'm glad to say that the local media continues to take notice of our programs. In fact, Action, Inc.'s efforts to bring good news to those who need it most have generated quite a few headlines in the past year. We draw on some of that positive press as a theme in this year's Annual Report.

As a private 501(c)3 charitable and educational organization, we are committed to the promise of a community action program. We care about Cape Ann, and we are dedicated to helping its residents help themselves and each other.

Our newest programs -- *Family Law Assistance*, *Adult Foster Care*, and *English for Speakers of Another Language* -- demonstrate Action, Inc.'s continuing mission to create and promote innovative programs to help those who need assistance. It is through this kind of community involvement and cooperation that people eventually become self-sufficient.

With the help of a generous community and a dedicated staff, we intend to be the source of much more good news in the year to come.

*William Rochford*  
 William Rochford



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## Low-income find a friend in court

"A year ago, legal help was hard to come by for Gloucester residents with little money. Hiring an experienced lawyer was out of the question. Lawyers willing to work for free were hard to find. And the only free legal service in town had closed the year before. The situation was, as one local non-profit worker called it, *devastating* . . . But Peter Anastas (director of advocacy for Action, Inc.) and other non-profit workers said they have solved that problem. Plans for a free legal service have taken shape over the past year and counseling for residents with low-to-moderate incomes is now available."

-- Gloucester Daily Times January 26, 2002

Action, Inc. coordinates the new Family Law Assistance Project, which combines Action employees, Lynn-based Neighborhood Legal Services, and volunteers, providing free legal assistance and court representation to low-income families who cannot afford private legal assistance.

The program provides direct representation in contested family law matters, and offers 'Helpline Assistance' that doesn't require direct representation. In 2001, 30 people completed intake and assessment. Local Gloucester lawyers and Neighborhood Legal Services offered 3 self-representation divorce clinics. A full-time Americorp\*VISTA attorney began work in December.



## Housing aid is on rise in Gloucester

"Recipients of housing aid from Gloucester's Action, Inc. more than doubled between 2000 and 2001, and nearly one of every 10 Cape Ann residents turned to the antipoverty agency for help with rent, utility bills, or other services last year, Action planner Chanda Millet said. An Action, Inc. survey showed that 511 people received housing assistance in 2001 in the form of emergency rent payments, budget counseling, and legal aid for those facing evictions. Millet said that the number jumped from 227 in 2000."

-- Boston Sunday Globe April 21, 2002

Action, Inc.'s Housing and Advocacy program assists homeless individuals in moving into permanent or transitional housing. The program also helps low-income families maintain their current housing through advocacy services and emergency assistance. Participants become more self-sufficient through case management, budget counseling, and home loans.

In 2001, 284 households received landlord/tenant advocacy and/or legal services. One hundred forty-one low-income families at risk of homelessness maintained their housing through advocacy services and 69 households received budget and financial counseling to become economically self-sufficient.

Through advocacy and case management services, 242 households increased their self-sufficiency. Twenty-four households received assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for utility arrearages, and 42 households received FEMA aid to prevent evictions and foreclosures. Thirty-five households participated in first-time buyer seminars and 12 low-income households secured loans for home rehabilitation or purchase.

## Compass Youth Program

### Dropouts get a second chance

"Gloucester - Grace Lafond, 20, a single mother, knows exactly what she wants to do in the near future, thanks to a new youth program here and in Lynn and Salem. 'I dropped out of Gloucester High School in 1999. Now I'm going to graduate in June, brush up on computer skills, and in six months, I'm going to be working in some capacity in the medical field,' Lafond said."

-- **Boston Sunday Globe** February 18, 2001

Action Inc.'s Compass Youth Program is designed to teach personal and professional life-skills to at-risk young people on Cape Ann. Participants are encouraged to earn their high school diplomas, develop career interests, and pursue higher education.

Seventy-eight young people applied for admission to the Compass Youth Program in 2001, with the program's official enrollment rising to 43. The program enabled four participants to return to high school, while another 22 were involved in classes that helped them work toward their GED. Ten of those in the Compass Program obtained summer employment, and 35 improved their computer literacy and employment skills.

The program has recently expanded its services to include a satellite class of Gloucester High School and a Wellness & Nutrition class that teaches principles of health and well-being. Compass continues to provide off-campus high school credit classes, GED preparation, case management, and computer and life-skills training.



## Employment & Training

### Speaking for the voiceless

"When the Hard Disc Café closed in 1999 after years of both success and struggle, many feared that those of modest means would be cut off from internet access and computer training just as those services were becoming essential. But Action Inc., an anti-poverty agency with a branch on Cape Ann, stepped into the breach. With substantial help from Varian Semiconductors, Action opened a new computer training center at Brown's Mall."

-- **Gloucester Daily Times** February 20, 2001

Action, Inc.'s Employment and Training program provides computer training, job development, and career placement skills to unemployed, underemployed, homeless, and disabled individuals, as well as to Cape Ann fishing families in transition. In addition to computer training and job development, the program also offers adult high school diplomas and basic education classes.

In 2001, 273 clients completed various training programs and 99 participants obtained employment. Twenty-five people received their adult high school diploma and 9 participants received \$1,000 college scholarships.



Boston Sunday Globe | ...the goal is to prevent students at risk of dropping out of high school from doing so and to help those who have dropped out to get their diplomas or a GED while also providing them with life and job skills.

## Homecare

### McPherson Park: Open 24/7

"Two years ago, a severe stroke paralyzed 74-year-old Angelina Ciaramitaro's left hand and leg, making it difficult for her to do the simple things in life, such as putting her shoes on and moving from her wheelchair into bed. Yet Ciaramitaro hasn't let that or her pacemaker and artificial heart valve stop her from enjoying life."

-- Gloucester Daily Times December 16, 2000



Action, Inc.'s Homecare program assists elderly and disabled people in household management and personal care, allowing them to continue to live in their own homes. In 2001, the program provided more than 70,000 hours of homecare service. Thanks to Homecare, 523 individuals continued to live independently.

With the help of dedicated homemakers, Action, Inc. continues to assist individuals with personal care, meal preparation, laundry, housekeeping, shopping, and errands. The program provides medication reminders, companionship, and caregiver respite in order to ensure that individuals continue to enjoy their independence and freedom.

## Action Shelter

### Action Shelter offers home, hope

"Dave Russell said he's constantly looking for a job, filling out applications and handing out resumes left and right. 'Smash,' as most know him, is homeless. The twenty-seven year old has been in Action, Inc.'s emergency homeless shelter on 370 Main St. for six months now. He sleeps in one of the shelter's 20 available beds after a shower and an occasional meal of beans and hot dogs."

-- Gloucester Daily Times Friday, April 5, 2002

Action, Inc.'s homeless shelter provides those in need with beds, meals, on-site mental health and substance abuse counseling, medical referrals, housing advocacy, and crisis counseling.

In 2001, the Action Shelter provided emergency shelter for 245 individuals, a 22% increase compared to the previous year. All guests participated in Project Achievement, with 11 people successfully completing job training classes.

The program assisted 48 individuals in moving into permanent or transitional housing. Five families were assisted with overdue rent payments in order to retain their present homes.

Those who stay at the shelter are provided two meals daily, a warm and safe respite, and access to support services. The goal is to stabilize the lives of those in need. Clients include both men and women, all over 18 years of age.



## English in new demand

“Gloucester - In a semi-circle, Moises Silva sits attentively, his cowboy boots tapping to the sound of syllables that are still so new to him. He follows the voice of his teacher, Elizabeth Williams, standing before the first English for Speakers of Other Languages program sponsored by Action Inc.”

-- **Boston Sunday Globe** April 14, 2002

Action, Inc.'s new language program -- *English for Speakers of Other Languages* -- emphasizes the fundamentals of comprehending, speaking, reading, and writing English. The vision for this two level program, however, reaches beyond these basics. Participants focus on community and workplace literacy. With their new skills, students are instructed to advocate for themselves in health, legal, and housing issues.



## Opening their homes, and hearts

“Steve Fox, a slightly mentally disabled man, lived on his own, until recently when he became ill with a chronic disease and he found himself in a state institution for the mentally retarded. Richard Grogan, 72, also slightly disabled, was living in a nursing home though his needs were few. But now, these two men are living in local homes as part of a new Adult Foster Care program that places disabled adults in private homes.”

-- **Gloucester Daily Times** March 18, 2002

Adult foster caregivers participating in Action, Inc.'s Adult Foster Care program provide room, board and personal care for individuals with certain disabilities. Most importantly, the program allows those receiving foster care to function within the community and remain independent from institutionalized care.

This new program demonstrates once again Action Inc.'s belief that self-sufficiency cannot be achieved alone. It is a product of people helping themselves and one another. Through programs like this, Action Inc. continues to help people and change lives.



### Energy director plugs into needy

“Elliott Jacobson of Gloucester, the Cape Ann energy director for Action, Inc. since 1977, was one of the 10 people nationwide given an award recently by the US Department of Energy for demonstrating a commitment to low-income weatherization programs. As the weatherization agent for New England Grid and Keyspan Co., Jacobson’s agency subcontracts with 15 other community action agencies to help needy people save on energy bills.”

-- **Boston Sunday Globe** January 13, 2002

Action, Inc.’s Energy Affordability programs provide fuel assistance, weatherization, and conservation programs to low-income homeowners and renters, helping them conserve energy and lower the cost of their energy bills.

These programs enabled 1,586 Cape Ann & Ipswich households to receive fuel assistance and weatherization. Ten thousand Massachusetts’ residents lowered their energy bills through weatherization programs managed by Action, Inc. while another 159 households received sewer/water bill assistance.

Action, Inc. is the administrative agency that contracts with KEYSPAN Energy Delivery and National Grid to provide conservation services and education to customers throughout the utilities’ service territories. Action, Inc. contracts with 17 community action agencies to provide programs to low-income customers. Customers may receive insulation, heating system replacements, refrigerator replacements, energy-saving light bulbs, suggestions of how to conserve energy to lower monthly costs, and testing for carbon monoxide levels. The energy department strives to provide the best possible services to protect vulnerable residents from utility shut-offs, no-heat emergencies, and energy debt arrearages.

