





Annual Report

2011 Growing a Healthy Community



Executive Director Tim Riley

### Dear Friends of Action inc.,

ACTION INC. has been helping people on Cape Ann for more than 45 years. Our goal is not only to assist people with any current difficulties but also to help create opportunities for them to become more self-sufficient and to improve the quality of their lives. Personal growth is difficult when basic needs like food, shelter and warmth are not met.

Along with the support of our many community partners—from businesses and government to healthcare and social agencies and our generous donors—ACTION INC. helps to keep people safe and warm and meet those needs. Only then can they take the next steps toward growing stronger and more independent.

In 2011, Action Inc. directly helped more than 7,000 people through our wide array of programs and services. Our HomeCare program helped seniors to stay in their homes and our Benefits and Support Services staff helped fire victims to get back on their feet and into new homes. Our Energy Services programs kept people safe and warm and our COMPASS Youth Program helped to keep kids in school. Our Job Training and Education programs prepared people for new jobs. Our Emergency Homeless Shelter faced the challenge of housing a record number of homeless individuals but an outpouring of community support allowed us to meet that challenge.

Action cares about the entire community. And we are proud to be part of a caring community where people are encouraged to help themselves and to help each other. We know that by working together, we can not only help people in need, we can help to grow a healthier, more vibrant community that is a better place for everyone to live.

Sincerely.

Tim Riley, Executive Director

The mission of ACTION INC. is to improve the quality of life for disadvantaged residents of Cape Ann and beyond by minimizing the effects of poverty, promoting economic security, and advocating for social change.



Board of Directors Chair Gretchen Wood

# Growing a Healthy Community

### Creating a healthy community by understanding local needs

During 2011, ACTION INC. conducted a large-scale Community Needs Assessment in order to *understand* the needs and challenges faced by Greater Cape Ann's disadvantaged residents. The assessment included surveys of the general public, interviews of key community members, focus groups of clients and community partners, and other methods in order to paint as comprehensive a picture of our community as possible. Over the next three years, ACTION staff and partners will work hard to ensure that our programs and services meet the needs of our service area as effectively and efficiently as possible. To learn more, read our 2012-2014 Community Action Plan at www.actioninc.org.

### Creating a healthy community by acting quickly in the face of tragedy



The Gloucester Fire Department donates \$250 to ACTION to help fire victims.

Tragedy struck in the fall of 2011 when a fire consumed a large building at the corner of Gloucester's Washington and Mansfield Streets. While the victims escaped physical injury, they found themselves suddenly homeless and their possessions reduced to the shirts on their backs. Action social service advocates worked with the displaced individuals to help them access food, clothing, and new housing situations. A benefit event was held at the Gloucester Elks Club with proceeds going to Action INC. in order to help the victims of this tragic event get their lives back on track. Community members also responded quickly through donations and kind words. When life takes a terrible turn, Action strives to be the place where the people of Greater Cape Ann can turn. We are able to be that place thanks to the support of a wonderful community.

### Creating a healthy community by addressing difficult challenges

Following years of economic downturn and rampant home foreclosures, addressing homelessness has become an even greater challenge for the nation, the State of Massachusetts, and here at home. During 2011, Action Inc. tackled local homelessness in a number of innovative ways. We lay the groundwork for a new building project that will **create four units of affordable housing specifically for homeless families**. As part of our Community Needs Assessment, we held a focus group of local homeless individuals and learned about the biggest challenges they face. We co-developed the new Healthcare for the Homeless program to provide **free**, accessible health services and medical **referrals** to guests at the Action Emergency Shelter, in partnership with the Salem State University nursing program. We also co-founded the High Risk Task Force alongside the Gloucester Fire, Health, and Police Departments, Addison Gilbert Hospital, Northeast Behavioral Health Systems, and the faith community in order to **better assist homeless individuals with the greatest barriers to improving their lives**. And with more people showing up at the Shelter than ever before, we worked with the City of Gloucester to raise bed limits and **bring more homeless individuals in from the cold**.





## Benefits & Support Services

During 2011 Action's social service advocates worked with hundreds of people to improve their lives, like Jane, who was trying to free herself and her son from an abusive relationship. Her boyfriend controlled their finances and made it very difficult for Jane to get by on her own, but Action helped her access emergency shelter and later family housing, and connected her with the resources she needed to finally break free.

Number of people assisted by Benefits and Support Services staff in 2011: 904

Number of referrals provided: 3,292

Number of families aided with applying for food assistance: 136

Number of community partners who work with Benefits and Support Services staff: 29

Number of households with safe and affordable housing situations thanks to Action's housing advocacy services: 295

Many consider Action's Benefits and Support Services department to be the heart of our organization, connecting people with the resources and services they need to improve their lives.

This could include support with securing more stable housing situations, assistance with public benefits applications, referrals to other ACTION programs and outside agencies, help with income management and tax filing, and a range of other services based on the individual needs of our clients.

Often, the most important service we can provide is an open ear and an encouraging word. Our expert social service advocates are here to listen and provide case management, whatever a client's needs may be.

■ Learn more: http://actioninc.org/advocacy.html



A savings program operated in partnership with the First National Bank of Ipswich helped Benefits and Support Services clients open Gloucester's new Happy Taco food truck in 2011. ACTION and bank staff are pictured with one of the new business owners.



COMPASS science class at the Gloucester Maritime Heritage Center.

### COMPASS

During 2011, ACTION INC. secured funding to start the new Re-engaging All Youth to School program, or RAYS, in order to prevent younger at-risk teens from dropping out of Gloucester High School.

Number of students who earned a high school diploma through COMPASS: 16

Number of young adults who took and passed the GED exam: 11

Number of COMPASS evening and GED students that found employment: 13

Number of students participating in paid internships: 5

ACTION INC.'s COMPASS Youth Program is the perfect alternative for many students who have lost their way in the traditional education system. COMPASS staff don't believe that one size fits all when it comes to education, and they work with students to identify their individual struggles and build a plan for future success.

Students in the COMPASS day program are juniors and seniors who had been at risk of dropping out of the public school system due to factors such as low attendance, insufficient credits, and issues at home. With its small class sizes, individualized attention, and supportive services, the COMPASS high school gets these students back on track toward earning their diplomas and either enrolling in post-secondary education or finding rewarding employment.

For others who were close to graduating but left high school before they had enough credits, COMPASS evening classes are the right fit. And for those who have dropped out of school and are struggling to move on without a high school education, COMPASS offers a GED preparation program to help these young adults study for and take the GED exam while setting goals and addressing personal challenges. Learn more: http://actioninc.org/compass.html





## **Energy Services**

In 2011, Energy Services negotiated a four-year conservation services contract with National Grid, which will provide needed heating and energy conservation services to thousands of low-income National Grid customers throughout MA.

Number of households able to heat their homes in 2011 thanks to Action's Fuel Assistance program: 3.968

Number of homes improved by energy conservation services directly through Action Energy Services: 2,233

Number of additional conservation jobs throughout the state overseen by Action Inc.: 6,273

Number of local contractors who received work directly through Action Energy Services: 48

Without Action Energy Services, thousands of families would struggle to heat their homes. Thousands more would continue to pay unnecessarily high fuel bills and waste limited natural resources. Energy Services offers a range of programs that help people save their hard-earned money while also saving energy.

The Fuel Assistance program provides financial assistance with home heating and utility bills. This assistance is critical to keeping so many families warm during the winter months and enabling them to stay on top of other expenses like rent and childcare.

ACTION'S Weatherization department works with local contractors to assess homes and undertake measures that cut energy costs and consumption. These measures include replacing electricityguzzling appliances and dangerous heating systems, adding insulation, installing weather-stripping around doors and windows, and replacing lights with more efficient

Services also oversees conservation projects all over MA and parts of NH.

fluorescent bulbs. As a lead agency, Energy ■ Learn more: http://actioninc.org/ energy main.html



A local contractor works on the home of an Action Energy Services client.



ACTION HomeCare employees participate in a Walk for Heart Disease.

### HomeCare

Number of seniors and disabled adults who were able to continue living in their homes: 550

Number of new employees hired in 2011: 27

Number of employees who received training to enhance their skills: 94

Action HomeCare employs a team of 90-plus care workers dedicated to helping senior citizens and disabled adults continue living at home for as long as possible.

HomeCare offers a range of services designed to meet the unique needs of each client, from personal care such as helping with baths and running errands, to Home Health Aide services, caregiver respite, and hospice care. The latter was newly added to HomeCare's services in order to extend the continuum of care available to our clients.

For many seniors, the daily services provided by an Action HomeCare worker are the only thing standing between the comfort and independence of home life and the often frightening move to an assisted living facility.

ACTION HomeCare employees participate in regular trainings in order to continue their education and enhance their skills. They are rewarded for this hard work by the feeling that comes with significantly improving the quality of life for others.

■ Learn more: http://actioninc.org/homecare.html





## Job Training & Education

During 2011 the Job Training and Education department launched its Home Health Aide Training Program, in response to an increase in the elderly population that resulted in a drastic rise in demand for home care workers.

Number of individuals seen by Job Training and Education staff in 2011 for services such as training programs, resume writing, interview skills, job searches, computer skills, etc.: 600

Number of unemployed individuals who found jobs: 103

Number of students enrolled in Action's Clinical Medical Assistant Training Program in 2011: 18

Number enrolled in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes: 67

Number who received computer skills training: 97

ACTION INC.'S Job Training and Education program is a vital resource for Greater Cape Ann's unemployed and underemployed. So many people have experienced job loss, cuts to working hours, and wage reductions. Job Training and Education staff work with clients who have recently lost their jobs, who find themselves needing to work for the first time, or who are looking to develop new skills in order to expand their opportunities.

Job Training and Education staff are experts in the current employment market and work to develop training programs in careers where jobs actually exist. In recent years, that has meant training for careers in the fast-growing and high-demand healthcare field.

In addition to Home Health Aide, Certified Nursing Assistant, and Clinical Medical Assistant training programs. Job Training and Education also offers general iob development services such as counseling and resume assistance and basic computer skills classes.

Learn more: http://actioninc.org/ jobtraining.html



A student in Action's English for Speakers of Other Languages class, taught at Gloucester High School.



Produce grown by ACTION Shelter guests and staff during summer 2011.

## Shelter Services

During 2011 the Action Shelter increased its bed limit from 26 to 34, recognizing an increase in local homelessness. We also added two new housing sites to our Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS program.

Number of men and women who received emergency food and shelter in 2011: 315

Number of homeless and transitionally homeless individuals who received case management: 390

Number of affordable housing units owned and operated by Action INC.: 19

Number in development: 4

The ACTION Emergency
Homeless Shelter, located at
370 Main Street in Gloucester,
offers a place to stay and hot
meals for those with nowhere
else to go. But ACTION INC.'S
Shelter Services program offers

so much more. Shelter Services staff are devoted to working with homeless and transitionally homeless individuals in order to address their unique challenges and create a sustainable plan to get them off the streets—and keep them off.

Services include substance abuse and mental health counseling, financial literacy and computer courses, access to Action's job training programs and social service advocates, crisis management, healthcare services, and opportunities for homeless men and women to give back to the community.

In addition to the Shelter, Action Inc. owns and operates 19 units of affordable housing, helping individuals transition out of homelessness through low-rent living and supportive services. During 2011, Action began work on four brand new affordable housing units just for homeless families.

Also part of Shelter Services is the Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS program, a resource that helps individuals facing this life-changing disease secure stable housing situations. Learn more: http://actioninc.org/shelter.html







Participants in ACTION's healthcare training courses are often referred by the Career Center, an important community partner.

### Featured Partner: North Shore Career Center

The Gloucester branch of the North Shore Career Center has been a valued community partner for many years, sharing with ACTION INC. the common goal of assisting unemployed and underemployed individuals.

During 2011, the Career Center was faced with a funding shortage that would have closed its Gloucester office, forcing Cape Ann residents to find their way to Salem to access this type of assistance. The partnership grew even stronger when, instead of closing its doors on Cape Ann's jobless, the Center relocated to Action INC.'s headquarters at 180 Main Street with a strong showing of support from the City of Gloucester.

Now that we're neighbors, it's even easier for ACTION INC. and the Career Center to work together—placing job seekers into ACTION-run career training programs and combining resources to address local unemployment. Many of the training courses offered by ACTION'S Job Training and Education department would not be able to run without the backbone support of Career Center-funded participants. Career Center workers also play a vital role in helping course participants through the paperwork process.

ACTION INC., the City of Gloucester, and all of us here on Cape Ann are fortunate to have access to such an important and needed resource.

## Featured Donor: Ralph Bates

"How can I help?" It's a question we at ACTION INC. love to hear. We see so many people from throughout the Greater Cape Ann area who need our assistance—single parents who need help finding a job after being laid off, senior citizens who need help paying their heating bills on a limited fixed income, teens who need help getting back on track toward earning their diplomas, homeless individuals whose lives have been turned upside down and need help re-righting them. The list goes on.

At ACTION INC., it's our job to help, and it's a job we take very seriously. So it is with the greatest appreciation and respect that we answer a donor who asks, "How can I help?"

During the past year, Manchester-by-the-Sea resident Ralph Bates asked that very question when he wrote us a check for \$26,000, the largest single donation by an individual donor ever received by the organization.

Ralph's incredibly generous donation will be used to help operate the ACTION Emergency Shelter, which has been serving increasing numbers of homeless men and women while funding and staffing resources have stayed the same.

A heartfelt thank-you goes out to Ralph Bates and to all of our compassionate supporters, without whom ACTION INC. could not exist.



ACTION staff accept a generous donation to the Emergency Homeless Shelter from Manchester-by-the-Sea resident Ralph Bates.



# 10,000 homes weatherized



Pictured left to right: ACTION Executive Director Tim Riley, Stephanie East, Senator Bruce Tarr, MA Dept. of Housing and Community Development Chief of Staff
Steve Carvalho, Congressman John Tierney, Secretary Jay Gonzales, Gloucester City Councilor Greg Verga, Mayor Carolyn Kirk, Commissioner Mark Sylvia, Dept. of
Housing and Community Development Energy Conservation Unit Director Ken Rauseo, ACTION Vice President for Energy Services Elliott Jacobson.

# Featured Client: Stephanie East

During 2011, Action Inc. was honored to be chosen to host an event celebrating the 10,000<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts home weatherized using American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding.

ACTION Energy Services worked with local contractor John Call to weatherize the home of single mother Stephanie East in front of an audience that included state and local officials.

Stephanie lost her job shortly after buying an older home in Gloucester. When the winter arrived and her oil bills started coming, she realized that keeping her family warm would be a serious struggle. Stephanie called Energy Services and qualified for assistance with her heating bills, but she knew the real problem was the house itself. She asked to be put on the waiting list for Action's Weatherization Program.

That summer, Stephanie's cry for help was answered when her home was selected as the 10,000<sup>th</sup> in the state to be weatherized with Stimulus funds. Attendees of the August 16<sup>th</sup> event included Massachusetts Recovery and Reinvestment Office Director Jeffrey Simon, Congressman John Tierney, Secretary of Administration and Finance Jay Gonzales, Senator Bruce Tarr, and Gloucester Mayor Carolyn Kirk.

ACTION INC. was awarded \$8.5 million in Recovery Act Weatherization Assistance Program funding and has helped thousands of low-income households save on heating costs and conserve energy. See page 5 to learn more about Energy Services.



### Sources of Funding

Utility Companies (funding for statewide energy conservation projects overseen by ACTION Energy Services): 61.8%

Federal Grants: 27.2%

State Grants: 8.0%

Private Grants, Donations & Other: 3.0%

### In 2011:

7,553 individuals accessed our services.

1,974 seniors got help.

1,106 clients were disabled.

754 had no health insurance.

264 classified themselves as homeless.

3,842 families were assisted.

1,330 were single-parent households.

1,174 were receiving food assistance.

Total Expenses: \$26,474,472

### Expenses by Program

Administration: 3.5%

Benefits & Support Services: I.0%

COMPASS Youth Program: 0.7%

Energy Services: 82.1%

HomeCare: 7.2%

Job Training & Education: 1.0%

Shelter Services: 4.5%

2011: The Numbers





2011 Partners

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• \$10,000-14,999

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First National Bank of Ipswich

Garden City Pediatric Associates Gloucester Department of Public Gloucester District Court

Gloucester Family Health Center Gloucester High School Gloucester Housing Authority Gloucester Maritime Heritage Center

Good Friday Walk Grace Center Greater Lawrence Community

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St. John's Episcopal Church

## Remembering Carol Ryan



Friends, staff. and the Board of Directors of Action inc. were deeply saddened by long-time Board member Carol

Carol was a lover of nature and of her

had a special place in her heart for the natural beauty and unique people of Cape

Carol's long career in school psychology and social work made her a knowledgeable and compassionate Action inc. Board member. COMPASS Program for disadvantaged youth and was always standing by to cheer students

Cape Ann and Action inc. were better for having a community member as caring and devoted as Carol. Her memory will serve as a reminder to all of us here at Action to always keep our hearts open to those in need.

St. Paul Lutheran Church St. Vincent DePaul Strongest Link - Cornerstone Team Coordinating Agency Low Income Peer Exchange Medical Group Menotomy Weatherization Tri-City Community Action Program Tri-City Mental Health Agency US Dept. of Energy US Dept. of Energy Resources US Dept. of Health & Human

Services

US Dept. of Housing & Urban Development US Dept. of Labor Valley Opportunity Council Veteran's Office **VNA Network & Hospice** VonWeiss Dermatology Wellspring House WIC Willowdale Medical Center Worcester Community Action Council YMCA

## **Board of Directors**

As a Community Action Agency. ACTION INC. is governed by a tripartite Board of Directors made up of one-third public sector representatives, one-third private sector representatives, and one-third community sector representatives.

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Community Action Agencies (CAAs) are local non-profit organizations that offer programs to help disadvantaged individuals and families become more self-sufficient and improve their lives. CAAs got their start with President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty and the signing of the 1964 Economic Opportunity Act. Today, most CAAs are funded primarily through the federal Community Services Block Grant, which is currently at risk of cuts that would devastate this network for those in need.

## Staff

#### **ADMINISTRATION**

Timothy L. Riley, Executive Director Pegav Heaarty-Steck, Deputy Director Ken Kudym, Chief Financial Officer Jessica Benedetto-Unger, Director of Marketing & Planning Judy Manchester, Director of Human Resources Ronald Pierre-Louis, Senior Accountant Patricia Foster, Bookkeeper Tracey Aitken, Billing Clerk Jennifer Wright, Marketing & Planning Coordinator Shannon Cronin, Client Services Coordinator Marie Day, Facilities & Purchasing Assistant

### BENEFITS & SUPPORT SERVICES

Maggie Howard, Director of Client & Housing Services Ashley Speicher, Advocate Fatima Gomes, Advocate Lauren Rockoff, Advocate Laura Hart, Financial Literacy Coordinator Stella Mae Seamans, Rental Assistance Coordinator Mike McNair, Homeless Services Case Manager Debbie Stansfield, Moore's Way Case Manager

#### COMPASS YOUTH PROGRAM

Elizabeth Moran, Program Coordinator Kelly Karvelas, Academic & Vocational Coach Amy Kamm, LICSW, Counselor Lauren Riley, TALKS/Health & Wellness Instructor Darlene Story, Classroom Instructor Darcy Culverwell, Classroom Instructor

#### ENERGY SERVICES

Elliott Jacobson, Vice President for Energy Services Rita Carvalho, Energy Director Craig Brown, Conservation Services Director Louis Silveira, Associate Conservation Director Marie Sanviti, Assistant Energy Director Jackie Lovasco, Fuel Assistance Supervisor Cindy Schimanski, Office Manager Cristine Sears, Conservation Information Coordinator Jean Pomeroy, Utility Program Data Coordinator George DesRoches, HeartWap Coordinator Joe Hachey, Senior Building Performance Specialist Barry Moir, Energy Resources Program Coordinator Brian Beote, Building Performance Specialist Brendan Delaney, Building Performance Specialist Cory Peterson, Building Performance Specialist Jennifer Schmorrow, Utilities Advocate Linda Brayton, On Track Advocate Diane Elefson, Administrative Assistant Valerie Scola, Receptionist Elizabeth Gillis, Seasonal Fuel Assistance Certifier Natalia Carollo, Seasonal Intake Alexandra Stabler, Seasonal Intake

#### JOB TRAINING & EDUCATION

Ronna Resnick, Director Patty Bongiorno, Career Development Coordinator Patricia Sullivan, Adult Basic Education Instructor Michele Ameno, Head ESOL Instructor Kathleen Santo, ESOL Instructor Joan Fitzpatrick, Home Health Aide Instructor



## Staff Continued

#### HOMECARE

GerryAnne Brown, Director Lisa Murrin, Operations Manager Doreen Ahearn, Administrative Assistant Thelma McDermott, RN Supervisor Elizabeth Bosselman, RN Supervisor Candy Natti, LPN Supervisor

Personal Care Providers / Home Health Aides:

Deborah Aiello Mary Jane Aiello Maria Amaral Holly Amaral Jennifer Baptiste Jaime Barry Patricia Barry Edna Beaudoin Alyse Bedard Nina Bennett Caron Bernier Danette Bruni Andrea Burnham **Judith Carey** Wendy Chipperi Rebecca Cousins Jerome Curcuru Theresa Doucette Jillian Dunn Cheryl Duwart Karen Favazza Sandra Fincel Amv Gallagher Esther Garlick Virginia Gibney Cherie Gilliss-Cote Jane Gleason Pamela Gledhill Debra Hawes Christine Heard Geraldine Hilton Roxanne Holscher Dana Huffman Robin Jacobs Sharon Jordan Melissa Kippen Carole Krech Wendi Lattof

Marvanne Michel James Milone Roberta Milone Catherine Moore Robert Moore Virginia Morey Paula Morse Kelly Moses Rhonda Murray Deborah Nicastro Patsy Nicastro Patricia Joyce Norris Lisa O'Brien Holly O'Connor Margo Madruga Olds Joan Oliver Rachel Oneil Christa Orlando Amy Paige Marie Paquiot Donna Pike Amanda Richard Doris Rivera Jackeline Rivera Grace Romeo **Emily Ruest** Marry Russo Francine Ruta Lois Santos Megan Savoie Rose Sawver Barbara Sawvers Shannon Seigas Jane Selia Sarah Spoon Paula Stanton Maureen Surrette Barbara Todd Carrie Tucker

Deb Vanhbouaravong

Riva Wilson

Mary Wonson

Leslie Zamansky

# 37 Years of Service

A fond farewell to HomeCare Director GerryAnne Brown

2011 marked the final full year of service by ACTION INC. HomeCare Director GerryAnne Brown, who will retire in the summer of 2012. It will be a hard-earned rest following 37 years leading the way for in-home care services on the North Shore.

ACTION INC. began focusing on services for seniors in the 1960s. By the early 1970s the HomeCare program employed 16 trained care workers. Today, thanks to GerryAnne's hard work and leadership, Action HomeCare is an expansive and impressive operation employing 90-plus workers and providing

care to 600 clients.

ACTION INC.'s Board of Directors and staff join the entire community of Cape Ann in thanking GerryAnne and wishing her a fond farewell.



#### SHELTER SERVICES

Ralph Johnson, Director Jim Noble, Shelter Manager Janel McCue, HOPWA Case Manager Molly Derr, Substance Abuse Counselor

Shelter Staff:

Michael Barry John Cordner William Crowley Melody Fidler

Michele Gaynor Winston Joefield Katherine Peruzzi John Thackeray

Main Office:

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t: 978.282.1000 f: 978.283.0523

#### Satellite Offices

15 Market Street, Suite 4 Birth to Three Center Ipswich, MA 01938 978.356.5829

Rockport Community House 58 Broadway Rockport, MA 01966 978.879.3487

#### **Energy Services**

47 Washington Street Gloucester, MA 01930 978.283.2131

**Emergency Shelter** 370 Main Street Gloucester, MA 01930 978.283.4125





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