Helping People. Changing Lives.

Main Offices

Satellite Offices

Energy Services

Shelter

www.actioninc.org in



Who are we?

ACTION INC. is part of a network of approximately 1,000 Community Action Agencies across the nation fighting together to eliminate poverty through local, community-based programs and services. ACTION is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that has been part of the Greater Cape Ann community since 1965.

What do we do?

Client & Housing Services

COMPASS Youth Program

Energy Services

Homecare

Job Training & Education

Project uplift Holiday Toy & Clothing Drive

Bailee's Backpacks Back-to-School Supply Drive

Who do we serve?

Residents of Gloucester, Essex, Ipswich, Manchester-by-the-Sea, and Rockport, Massachusetts ACTION also oversees energy conservation programs throughout the state

What do we believe?

The mission of ACTION INC. is to improve the lives of economically disadvantaged individuals and families on Cape Ann and beyond by minimizing the effects of poverty, promoting economic security, and advocating for social change.

Dear Friends,

It is my great pleasure to present ACTION INC.'s 2013 Annual Report to all of you. Working together over the past year (our 49th in operation), despite challenging economic times we have achieved some very significant and impressive results — all with the help of our Board of Directors, valued funders, partners, and generous donors. The Board and dedicated staff of ACTION INC. and I are proud of the work we do. In a recent confidential staff survey conducted as part of our triennial Community Needs Assessment, 98% of staff said they feel "very proud" to work at ACTION INC.! The positive response comes from the wonderful satisfaction of knowing that our work makes an important difference in the lives of the people we serve.



Some highlights from the past year include:

- 7,190 Cape Ann individuals and families were served by ACTION INC.'s programs.
- More than 3,500 local households had their homes weatherized or their heating systems repaired or replaced.
- 533 senior citizens received care from our 96 compassionate HomeCare employees.
- 680 kids received gifts and clothing during the holidays and more than 100 received back-to-school supplies.
- Our staff assisted nearly 500 families with housing issues to help prevent homelessness and stabilize their lives.
- And more than 200 homeless individuals sought refuge at the ACTION Shelter.

Beyond the numbers are the individual stories of people overcoming hardships to make progress on the road to a more stable and successful life. As you read through the pages of this Annual Report, I believe you will get a taste of who we are and how our programs and services are making a real impact on our clients and our community. As ACTION INC. enters its 50th year, we know there is much more to be done and that many more families need and deserve renewed hope and better access to opportunities in order to succeed. I sincerely thank you for your past help and support, and I ask for your continued partnership in furthering our important mission.

Sincerely,

Tim Riley

Executive Director, ACTION INC.

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Who are we: Board of Directors

Officials

CHAIR • Linda Giamanco • Public Sector, City of Gloucester

VICE CHAIR • Tone Kenney • Community Sector, Ipswich Housing

SECOND VICE CHAIR • Roger Lesch • Public Sector, Town of Rockport

SECRETARY • Linda Murphy • Community Sector, Ipswich Caring

TREASURER • Dennis Acker • Private Sector, Santander Bank, Gloucester

Community Sector

Marcia Hahn • Millbrook Park, Rockport

Kyrstin Lavelle • Client & Housing Services, Gloucester

Mary Neofotistos • Housing Services, Gloucester

Loretta Peres • Riverdale Park, Gloucester

Kathy Stewart • Riverdale Park, Gloucester

Public Sector

Charlotte Dodge • Town of Ipswich

Courtney Lane • Town of Essex

Marcy Pregent • Office of State Representative Ann-Margaret Ferrante

Richard Rafuse • City of Gloucester

Gretchen Wood • Town of Manchester

Private Sector

Gavin Keenan • Ipswich Police Association

Brieana Militello • Seacoast Nursing & Rehabilitation Center, Gloucester

John Prybot • Sawyer Free Library, Gloucester

Shelly Luckenbill Sevinor • Attorney

Rebecca Sumner • First Ipswich Bank

Reverend Karin Wade • St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Rockport

Getting to know our Board

A balanced approach

ACTION INC. is governed by a tripartite Board of Directors, with a balance of representatives from the *community*, *public*, and *private* sectors. Our members come from a broad range of backgrounds and bring a diversity of interests and experiences to the Board, from financial experts to former police officers, members of the faith community, and past clients with a deep connection to our mission.

A long-term commitment

ACTION INC. is lucky to have many long-time members serving on our Board. For decades, these caring individuals have been wholeheartedly committed to understanding our community's struggles and strengths, and working to make it a better place for people from all walks of life.

Recognizing years of service

5+ years: Linda Murphy, Kathy Stewart

10+ years: Marcia Hahn, Gavin Keenan, John Prybot, Richard Rafuse, Rev. KarinWade

15+ years: Charlotte Dodge, Roger Lesch, Loretta

Peres, Gretchen Wood

30+ years: Linda Giamanco, Tone Kenney

A look toward the future

Over the last five years, ACTION INC. has welcomed eight new members to our Board, including professionals with banking, real estate, law, and health care backgrounds; community members who have experienced ACTION's programs first-hand; and concerned mothers who want Cape Ann to be a great place to live for their children. With such a mix of experience and energy between our long-time and newest members, we're looking ahead to a productive and exciting future.



Long-time members Richard Rafuse, Tone Kenney, Linda Giamanco, Roger Lesch, and Gretchen Wood

Get to know one of our newest Board members: Dennis Acker

Living in Gloucester since 1988 and working here since 2000, I realized how fortunate I am to be able to live and work on Cape Ann. The community has been very supportive of me while working formerly at Citizens Bank and now at Santander. In 2011, I was asked to spend a couple hours discussing financial planning with the students in ACTION's COMPASS Youth Program. That led to three years of meeting with students weekly and helping them prepare for the future. During this time, I fully realized that everything ACTION supports is something I want to be a part of.



I feel it is important to give back to my community. Being ACTION's Treasurer, I hope my financial background adds some value to the Board and to the overall health of ACTION INC. and Cape Ann.

Program Outcomes

Client & Housing Services

Who we are: Our advocates, case managers, and counselors work with people to identify their individual needs and barriers to self-sufficiency, and connect them with resources and services, whether that's a meal at our shelter, a permanent place to call home, or a number to call for help

Programs and services: Case management, counseling, access to public benefits, referrals and information, housing advocacy, rent/mortgage assistance, emergency food and shelter, and affordable housing development and management.

Programs and services
that address the
underlying causes
of poverty and
homelessness, helping
people to identify needs,
address barriers, and
find stability

What are people saying?

"I came to ACTION sure I was about to lose my home and not knowing where to turn. An Advocate helped me figure out what steps I could take to gain control over my life again."

 $\sim Anne$

2013 Outcomes

ACTION INC. provided:

- 1,313 referrals
- 484 households with services that helped them maintain their housing
- 244 people with emergency food and 89 with food assistance
- 221 homeless men and women with emergency shelter
- 196 homeless men and women with case management services
- 62 homeless people with healthcare services
- 30 households with foreclosure services
- 82 individuals with HIV/AIDS with support services and 26 with housing
- 19 units of affordable housing

Project uplift

Our 2013 annual toy and clothing drive served 680 children from 358 Cape Ann families



COMPASS Youth Program

Who we are: COMPASS staff and teachers care about every student who walks through our door. We take the time to learn about their struggles and inspire them to do their best, whether that's graduating and going on to college, earning a GED and finding full-time employment, or discovering the doors education can open.

Programs and services: Daytime high school for juniors and seniors, part-time day school for second-year freshmen, evening credit recovery program, GED preparation, academic and career coaching, art classes at Cape Ann Art Haven, science at Maritime Gloucester, community service and internship opportunities, case management, and counseling.

What are people saying?

"Not only am I graduating with National High Honors, my school is also awarding me for having the highest GPA in my degree. I can't think of a better way to finish college!"

 \sim Bethany, graduate of COMPASS

2013 Outcomes

- 18 seniors earned high school diplomas
- 9 underclassmen advanced a grade
- 5 students earned GEDs
- 37 students improved social/emotional development

Alternative education

programs and support

services for teens and

young adults experiencing

barriers to learning in the

public school system

- 33 students avoided risk-taking behavior
- 37 students gained skills to help with employment

Programs that reduce

energy use and costs

through financial help, home

improvements, and education

Energy Services

Who we are: Our award-winning Energy team works to save people money while saving the environment. Fuel Assistance staff help households with their home heating bills, and Energy

Conservation staff bring those bills down through energy-saving improvements on homes throughout the state.

Programs and services: Help with heating and utility bills, home energy assessments, weatherization, heating system repairs, replacement of light bulbs and some appliances, and national energy affordability advocacy.

what are people saying?

"I can't believe how much warmer the house felt and how much less we spent last winter. We're retirees living on Social Security, so it's really a huge help." ~ Salvatore

2013 Outcomes

- 14,467 households received home improvements overseen by ACTION and 3,553 performed directly by ACTION
- 3,714 households received help paying home heating bills
- 49 weatherization and heating system contractors and 36 fuel vendors received work

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Program Outcomes

Homecare

Who we are: ACTION HomeCare is a team of health care professionals that includes in-house nurses as well as a staff of more than 90 to care for seniors and disabled adults within their homes, keeping them out of hospitals and assisted living facilities.

Programs and services: Personal care, medication reminders, light housekeeping, laundry, shopping, transportation to medical appointments, caregiver respite, Home Health Aide services, and hospice care.

what are people saying?

"My mom needed more help than we could give, but she would have been brokenhearted to leave her house. ACTION was a life-saver.

~ Robert

2013 Outcomes

• 533 senior citizens and 10 disabled adults received services that allowed them to stay at home

Personal care, companíon,

Home Health Aide and

other care services to help

people continue to live in the

comfort of their own homes

for as long as possible

Education, training, and support to help unemployed and

underemployed adults

gain new skills and

better employment

opportunities

- 656 staff hours were spent in trainings to increase credentials and better serve our clients
- New Hoarding Task Force implemented

Job Training & Education



Who we are: Our educators, coordinators, and counselors help adults identify career interests, improve basic job and life skills, and seek new opportunities. We stay on top of the latest job market trends to design progams that result in real jobs and wage increases.

Programs and services: Adult Basic Education classes, GED preparation, health care industry training programs, job counseling, and placement services.

What are people saying?

"Graduating from the HHA program was my first step toward a real career. Now I'm preparing for nursing school - I can't wait!

 $\sim I_{e1}$

2013 Outcomes

- 123 adults gained skills to help with employment
- 55 obtained jobs
- 53 completed the Home Health Aide Training Program
- 48 enrolled in Adult Basic Education classes
- ullet 35 ABE students increased their ability by a grade level

Program Highlights

"If it wasn't for RAYS I don't know where I would be. I went into the program pregnant. I had so much support from my fellow students and teacher. I enjoyed coming to school and I gained a lot of confidence." $\sim Gia, 2014 \ COMPASS \ graduate$

RAYS Re-engaging All Youth to School Initiative

Offered through ACTION'S COMPASS Day Program for high school juniors and seniors, RAYS allows younger students (ages 14-15) who are in danger of dropping out of public school to attend COMPASS part-time and get back on track. At COMPASS, RAYS students have the support of caring adults and benefit from an integrated approach that includes academics, civic learning, art classes, and counseling. We partner with the Cape AnnYMCA to connect RAYS students with community service opportunities at local non-profits that have included an animal shelter, food pantry, and senior center. The goal at the end of the year is for students to re-engage in school either full-time at COMPASS or at Gloucester High School. Six students participated in RAYS in 2013, with three increasing their attendance rate by 20% or more, and five earning enough credits to advance a grade level.



Bailee's Backpacks Back-to-School Drive



IN September 2013, 109 Gloucester elementary and middle school students showed up on the first day of school with brand new packs and supplies thanks to ACTION's first annual Bailee's Backpacks drive.

The drive was made possible with the help of local seven-year-old Bailee Militello and her mom, Brieana, along with North Shore 104.9 Radio, the Office of State Senator Bruce Tarr, and generous individuals, groups, and businesses throughout Cape Ann who chose to donate supplies for kids in need.

The goal of Bailee's Backpacks is to help struggling families with the considerable expense of sending their children back to school each Fall. As school budgets tighten, families must find room in their own to tackle the long supply lists their children bring home. Through Bailee's Backpacks, 65 families felt that burden lifted in 2013.

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Innovative Solutions

Welcome Home, Cape Ann's Housing First Program

Chronically homeless individuals with co-occurring disabilities are often the hardest to serve, requiring individualized behavioral and physical health services, which is a near impossibility within the setting of homelessness. ~ Joe Finn, President, Massachusetts Housing & Shelter Alliance

During 2013, so many Americans continued to struggle to afford basic necessities and stay housed. As more people became homeless and were turned away from overcrowded shelters, many found themselves without a roof overhead. Limited shelter beds are often filled night after night by chronically homeless individuals with serious barriers to stability, including severe mental and physical health issues, that prevent them from finding permanent homes. As a result, shelters see little movement and the newly homeless are left out on the streets.

Here on Cape Ann, the picture was no different. But now, with ACTION INC. launching the area's only Housing First model program, we're working to change that picture and put an end to local homelessness. ACTION's new Welcome Home program uses the Housing First low-threshold model to get the most difficult-to-house individuals out of shelters, off the streets, and into affordable, permanent housing. Unlike so many other programs, the Housing First model doesn't require participants to meet certain eligibility criteria or reach specific milestones in order to receive housing. The philosophy is that once individuals are housed, they will have the stability necessary to begin to address serious issues such as disabilities and debilitating substance abuse.

The core goal of Welcome Home and the Housing First model is to keep people housed and reduce the significant costs to cities and states associated with the chronically homeless, including shelter operating costs and emergency health care. ACTION receives funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and from the

Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance to cover housing vouchers for program participants. According to the Alliance, in Massachusetts "the annual costs per [chronically homeless] person decreased from \$33,474 before housing to \$24,102 after housing placement, resulting in an annual savings of \$9,372 per person."

ACTION recognizes that housing is just the first step toward a healthier, more self-sufficient life for our Welcome Home participants. That's where Tom Connolly comes in. As ACTION's Welcome Home Case Manager, *Tom works with landlords to find housing placements, coordinates the furnishing of apartments, conducts weekly home visits, and connects people with services and resources such as counseling, health care, and public benefits.* Participants also have access to ACTION's Licensed Substance Abuse and Mental Health Counselor, and are assisted with addressing life skills such as communication, housekeeping, and self-advocacy. This vital case management component of Welcome Home is funded through the Community Support Program for People Experiencing Chronic Homelessness.

Tom came to ACTION from Heading Home in Cambridge, one of Massachusetts' original Housing First programs. During his six years there, Tom saw many difficult and heartbreaking cases and worked hard to keep people housed and connect them to the help they needed. "This population in general is the toughest you'll find. Most have multiple issues — drug addiction, alcoholism, mental health, impulse control," said Tom. "These are the 15% among the total homeless population that cost 75% of the resources."

Now Tom is continuing his work here on Cape Ann, and it hasn't gotten any easier. "In many ways, Gloucester has even tougher struggles than Cambridge. People are isolated and dealing with severe alcoholism and disabilities without any support. I've seen people drink themselves nearly to death, and others get evicted over and over due to hoarding."

While his days are often discouraging, Tom sees firsthand that the Housing First model truly does work. "These are people that would otherwise be spending years living in shelters and on the streets, costing thousands more dollars and not getting any of the support they need. I've seen some amazing turnarounds, but that's the exception. What I see that counts is that they are no longer in shelter, no longer on the streets, and they're gaining control over their lives."



Manny was dropped off at the Fernald State School, the Western hemisphere's oldest public institution for people with developmental disabilities. The school became infamous at various points in history for wrongly institutionalizing young boys, performing medical experiments on residents, and for accusations of physical and sexual abuse. During his 12 years at Fernald, Manny never learned to read or write.

At 18, out on his own for the first time, Manny made his way to Gloucester and for many years earned a living as a fisherman. But as the local fishing industry collapsed, he found himself unemployed, illiterate, facing untreated mental health issues, and living on the streets. After spending five years sleeping at the ACTION Shelter, Manny, now 55, has finally found permanent housing and the support he needs through Welcome Home.

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Who were we in 2013?

7,190 clients served

157 staff members

3,659 households served* **20** Board members

*Our Energy Services division oversaw energy-saving home improvement projects on an additional 14,467 households

2013 clients at a glance

Single-parent households: 1,069

Homeless clients: 235

Disabled clients: 1,134

College educated: 812

Clients ages 55 & up: 1,974

Household income below 200% of poverty level: 3,134

156 partners in 2013 72 non-profit organizations 6 faith-based groups 16 city/town departments 19 state agencies/departments 10 federal agencies/departments 2 for-profit corporations 5 consortiums/collaborations 1 housing consortium 4 school districts 2 post-secondary institutions 3 financial institutions 14 health service institutions 2 statewide associations

Who do we want to be?

Looking ahead to 2014 & beyond

Community Needs Assessment

During 2014, ACTION will conduct a comprehensive assessment of the needs among economically disadvantaged residents of Greater Cape Ann, including the City of Gloucester and the towns of Essex, Ipswich, Manchester-by-the-Sea, and Rockport, Massachusetts.

Planning for the future

The 2014 Community Needs Assessment will be part of a larger strategic planning process that ACTION undergoes every three years. This process helps us to assess our internal operations, customer and employee satisfaction, programs and services, and funding strategies, and enables us to identify new ways to meet community needs and future opportunities for collaboration.

Our approach

To get the conversation started, we've already placed surveys at businesses and organizations throughout Cape Ann. You can complete our survey online at www.actioninc.org.

We're also interviewing key individuals in each of the communities we serve, and gathering folks together for group discussions about needs, issues, and great new ideas for how to address them.

What's next?

The information and ideas we gather will inform our 2015-2017 Community Action Plan and determine who we want to be for the next three years. The Plan will be available in early 2015. Until then, check out our current Plan at actioninc.org/publications.html

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Who we are: ACTION staff

Administration

Timothy Riley, Executive Director
Peggy Hegarty-Steck, Deputy Director
Ken Kudym, Chief Financial Officer
Jessica Benedetto-Unger, Director of Marketing and Planning
Judy Manchester, Director of Human Resources
Geraldine Coughlin, Administrative Assistant
Patricia Foster, Bookkeeper
Agi Simon, Grants Coordinator

Client & Housing Services

Maggie Howard, Director of Client and Housing Services
Laura Hart, Client Services Coordinator
Jennifer Beloff, Advocate
Tom Connolly, Housing First Case Manager
John Cordner, Shelter Case Manager
Shannon Cronin, HOPWA Case Manager
Molly Derr, Counselor
Debbie Eason, HomeCorps Case Manager
Fatima Gomes, Advocate
Eric Kreilick, Advocate
Mike McNair, Homeless Services Case Manager
Megan Merlin, Intake Specialist

Jim Noble, Shelter Manager
Stella Mae Seamans, Rental/Mortgage Assistance Coordinator
Shelter Staff: Michael Barry, Melody Fidler, Carolyn Fountain, Michael Gaynor,
Thomas Good, Christine Heard, Daniel Hossack, Eugene Simpson, John Thackeray

COMPASS Youth Program

Elizabeth Moran, COMPASS Program Coordinator Kelly Karvelas, Academic and Vocational Coach Lauren Riley, Health and Wellness Coordinator Teachers: Darcy Culverwell, Richard St. Pierre, Darlene Story

Job Training & Education

Shari Cornett, Director of Job Training and Education
Michele Ameno, Adult Education Coordinator
Joan Fitzpatrick, Home Health Aide Instructor
Michael Hayes, Adult Basic Education Instructor
Stephanie Jackson, Adult Basic Education Counselor
Louis Rossi, Adult Basic Education Tutor
Yun Wang Swanson, Adult Basic Education Instructor

Energy Services

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

HomeCare

Karen Turnquist, Director of HomeCare Lisa Murrin, Operations Manager Doreen Ahearn, Administrative Assistant Tracey Aitken, Payroll and Billing Clerk

Nurse Supervisors: Elizabeth Bosselman, Whitney Marshall, Candy Natti

HomeCareWorkers and Home Health Aides: Deborah Aiello, Mary Jane Aiello, Holly Amaral, Maria Amaral, Jennifer Baptiste, Jaime Barry, Patricia Barry, Caron Bernier, Amy Brooks, Danette Bruni, Judith Carey, Wendy Chipperi, Aaron Dickerson, Theresa Doucette, Janet Downey, Karen Favazza, Amy Gallagher, Esther Garlick, Virginia Gibney, Jane Gleason, Pamela Gledhill, Emily Gusmano, Maia Haverty, Debra Hawes, Christine Heard, Geraldine Hilton, Dana Huffman, Sharon Jordan, Melissa Kippen, Carole Krech, Wendi Lattof, Joseph Lentini, Shelley Lovasco, Florence Mahoney, Linda McDonough, Leah McEachern, Cherie McPhail, Jillian Dunn Mello, Maryanne Michel, Beth Miller-True, James Milone, Roberta Milone, Catherine Moore, Virginia Morey, Paula Morse, Kelly Moses, Sara Mullen, Rhonda Murray, Gale Laurie Newman, Roxanne Nilson, Patricia Joyce Norris, Lisa O'Brien, Holly O'Connor, Margo Madruga Olds, Joan Oliver, Christa Orlando, Deanna Ouderkerken, Amy Paige, Marie Paquiot, Jessica Pierce, Joan Pierce, Donna Pike, Barbara Reeves, Doris Rivera, Jackeline Rivera, Angela Rodriguez, Grace Romeo, Marry Russo, Francine Ruta, Stephanie Ruta, Lois Santos, Rose Sawyer, Barbara Sawyers, Shannon Seigas, Jane Selig, Nancy Sheehan, Linda Silva, Candice Spanks, Beverly Stanley, Paula Stanton, Ashley Stevenson, Maureen Surrette, Barbara Todd, Deb Vanhbouaravong, Ida Wheeler, Riva Wilson, Mary Wonson

In memory



With the passing of Thelma McDermott in March 2014 in a tragic house fire, we lost a dedicated HomeCare nurse and a much beloved member of the ACTION family.

Thelma, you will be missed.

Who we are: Donors & Private Funders

....\$50-99.....

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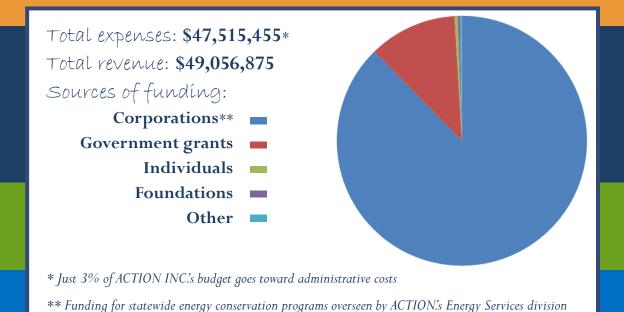
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2013 Annual Report created by Jessica Benedetto-Unger