

This *is* Community Action In the Spotlight...

Elderly and Early Care & Education Services



Photo: HRA New Britain



CAFCA
Connecticut Association
for Community Action

Welcome to CAFCA's "In the Spotlight" where we will be highlighting programs and services offered at Community Action Agencies (CAAs) across the state. Each issue will focus on specific programs and services at three of Connecticut's nine CAAs.

Across Connecticut, Community Action Agencies (CAAs) work tirelessly to provide services to individuals and families. Every person who walks in the door of a CAA has their needs identified through a comprehensive assessment process that allows barriers to be addressed through the CAAs' integrated service delivery approach. From direct services to coordinating with partners, CAAs continue to support individuals and families so they can build capacity to achieve greater levels of self-sufficiency.

This issue of "In the Spotlight" focuses on the Elderly and Early Care & Education Services provided to Connecticut residents, many who came to a CAA for the first time in 2021 and many who were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. CAAs in the spotlight in this issue are Alliance for Community Empowerment, Inc., Human Resources Agency of New Britain, Inc., and Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc. Take a look at the results of those services and learn about some of the people whose lives are changed as a result.

Connecticut Community Action Network Reach:

*Elderly and Early Care & Education Services

6,904 elderly individuals maintained an independent living situation by receiving in-home, transportation, social, and nutrition services.

10,874 elderly and homebound individuals received prepared meals ensuring the needs for proper nutrition were met.

2,924 children between the ages of birth to 5 years old participated in Early Care & Education Services.

4,564 children and youth improved positive approaches toward learning, including improved attention skills.

302 adults, including young adults, participated in Financial Literacy Education programs.

Meet Shondell...



Like most parents, Shondell wants the best for her child. She wants her 2-month old daughter, Maria, to grow up without limitations or restrictions. Shondell was engaged in Energy Assistance services, as well as Alliance's Early Head Start Home Based Child Care program. She was excited to find out about the CT Baby Bonds program. The Baby Bonds program creates a trust for babies whose births are covered by the state's Medicaid program. It requires that the children complete a financial literacy course when they are between the ages of 18 and 30 after which time they can submit a claim to access funds from the trust for expenses that include higher education costs, to purchase a home in Connecticut, investment in a business in the state, or savings for retirement. Shondell says this is a huge relief. "(Children) are the future, so we have to make sure they're alright."

Alliance for Community Empowerment's Home Based Early Head Start program supports children and their families through weekly home visits and group socialization experiences. The Early Head Start home visits provide comprehensive services to support and strengthen the relationship between infants, toddlers, and their parents.

Meet Arianna ...



Arianna is a 25 year old single mother to 3-year old, Amari. As a mom, Arianna does her best to provide all the necessities, as well as trips to the playground for her son. She also has been trying to stay ahead of her bills and has started working on her CDA (Child Development Associate). Amari attends TVCCA's Little Learners program. Recently teachers informed Arianna that Amari may benefit from Birth to Three for speech and other concerns. A referral was made, allowing the teachers and Birth to Three to collaborate in the classroom to assist Amari. A referral was also made to the Groton Public Schools so he will be able to receive the Special

Education services he needs as well as attend a full day of childcare so Arianna can continue working.

Things changed this past spring when both Arianna and Amari were affected by COVID and she missed many days of work. Shortly after that her car broke down, resulting in more missed days of work and unexpected bills. Unfortunately, Arianna fell behind in her rent and other bills, had no money to purchase summer clothes for her growing son and even had difficulty purchasing pull-ups for him. As expected, this left Arianna feeling very defeated in her personal goals but also as if she was letting her son down as a mother. Arianna spoke with the Little Learners' staff seeking assistance with her rent, childcare fees, and pull-ups for Amari. They provided pull-ups from their supply and TVCCA, United Way, and Groton Human Services assisted with her rent and childcare fees. This assistance has allowed Arianna to be current with her bills once more, feel confident again, and of course, be a great mom. Arianna says she does not know where she would be without the support of TVCCA Little Learners as she would have no idea how to navigate the education process or seek the assistance with her family needs.

TVCCA's Little Learners is a year-round, full-day program serving children and families from birth through age five. TVCCA also offers Head Start with year-round, school-year, and part-day options for preschool children ages 3-5. In addition, the agency offers Early Head Start year-round as a home visitation program serving expectant parents and families from birth through age three.

Meet Laura...

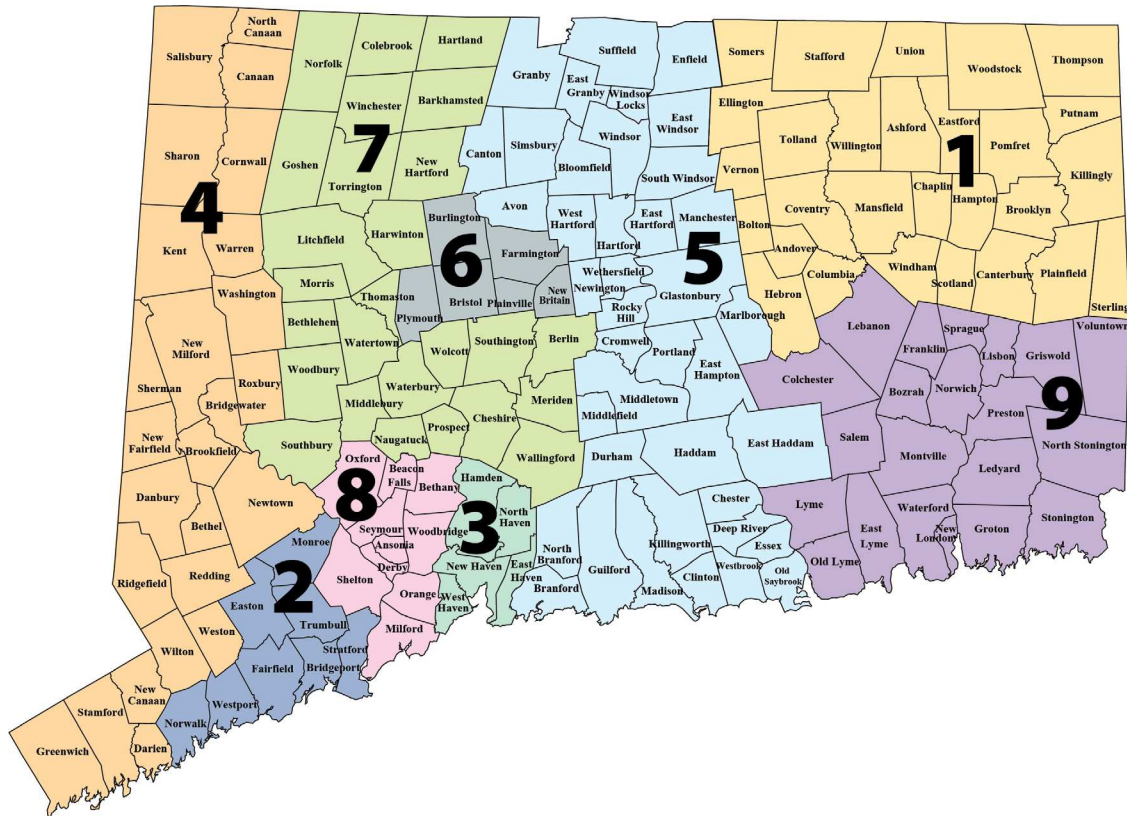


"One in a million". That's how Laura describes Elaina, the homemaker that she has from HRA's Homemaker and companions program. Laura, a senior living alone cannot do what she used to. She relies on the services that Elaina provides like preparing meals, light housekeeping, and most importantly for Laura, companionship. She also utilizes HRA's Dial-a-Ride transportation service. She looks forward to rides to the Senior Center where she attends Tuesday dancing and at the encouragement of friends, she has joined a knitting class. Laura loves getting out of her apartment and catching up with friends. She says that she has even used the Dial-a-Ride to get to a doctor's appointment when her family couldn't take her.

Laura considers herself lucky. She says, "because of the services at HRA I can continue to live on my own and enjoy activities with my friends. It's keeping me young, at least young at heart!"

HRA's Elderly services include Homemaker and Companion services that offer light homemaking, meal preparation and companionship, transportation to medical appointments, grocery stores, social engagements and senior centers, assistance finding independent housing, no-cost health food packages, Elder Abuse Assistance, as well as connecting individuals to social service assistance.

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