

# THE NEWS

Schuylkill Community Action  
Quarterly Newsletter



Pictured left to right: [back] Dave Young, Erin Muldowney, Quanita Shinkus, Jason Schally; [front] Kate Spofford, Liz Rosa, Lynn Rosa, Brittany Ortiz, Rich Bigg. Not Pictured: Theresa Yurkonis.

## Promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Our Commitment in Action

In May 2023, Schuylkill Community Action (SCA) took a significant step toward promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) by establishing our very own DEI committee. Comprising ten dedicated staff members from various employment levels (pictured above), the committee represents a harmonious blend of front-line and administrative personnel. Over the past few months, the committee has embarked on a mission to drive positive change within our organization. Meeting twice a week, they've devoted substantial time to examining our employee handbook through a DEI lens, engaging in thoughtful discussions on language and policies. Their aim is to transform our workplace into one that is not only diverse and inclusive but also equitable for all employees.

One of the committee's first achievements has been the creation of a DEI statement, a testament to our commitment to fostering an inclusive and equitable workplace. The process of drafting a comprehensive DEI policy is also underway, reinforcing our dedication to this vital cause. Beyond the committee's efforts, we've taken further strides in our DEI initiatives by inviting guest speakers to join us at our annual staff training day in September. These guest presentations added significant value to our knowledge and understanding. Beck Moore from the Community Action Association of Pennsylvania (CAAP) delivered a captivating DEI presentation that illuminated our understanding of these fundamental concepts, while Dr. Dobash of St. Luke's presented a training session on stigma reduction in the context of substance use and addiction. These initiatives aim to empower our staff to better serve our community and its individuals, solidifying our commitment to making a positive impact.

## NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

Promoting Diversity, Equity,  
and Inclusion (DEI)

LIHEAP Crisis Cooling Pilot  
Program - Outcomes

Community Engagement

A Message of Hope from  
the Executive Director



Beck Moore, CEO  
Community Action  
Association of PA  
(CAAP)



Gregory C. Dobash, MD  
St. Luke's

## Keeping Schuylkill County Cool: LIHEAP Crisis Cooling Pilot Program

Schuylkill Community Action's LIHEAP Crisis Cooling Pilot Program, running from June to August 2023, provided cooling assistance to past or present LIHEAP recipients and income-eligible Schuylkill County residents. Our Weatherization Department efficiently distributed fans and air conditioning window units and provided installation as needed. We also conducted maintenance and repairs on existing air conditioning systems.

In total, 244 households, comprising 520 individuals, benefited from this program, ensuring they stayed cool and safe throughout the sweltering summer months. We remain dedicated to the well-being of Schuylkill County residents, delivering vital assistance when it matters most.



## Community Engagement and Outreach

At Schuylkill Community Action, we're passionate about connecting with our community. Over the past quarter, we've actively participated in various local events, including the Schuylkill Chamber of Commerce's Annual Golf Outing, the Pottsville Outdoor Market at Alvernia CollegeTowne, the Back to School Fair at the Schuylkill Intermediate Unit, and the Senior Expo at the Veteran's Memorial Building in Orwigsburg.

These events have provided us with the opportunity to share our mission and information about our services, engage with community members, and create valuable connections. We're excited to continue our involvement in future community events, as we strive to make Schuylkill County an even better place for all.

Pictured from left to right: Kate Spofford, Director of Planning (SCA); Brittany Ortiz, Case Manager (SCA); Faran Mansoor, MD, Physician (St. Luke's)

## A Message from the Executive Director

As the seasons change, our commitment to assisting Schuylkill County's most vulnerable residents with their heating needs remains strong. We are pleased to announce that the LIHEAP Crisis heating season begins November 1st. One can apply in person at the Schuylkill County Assistance office or online at <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/>. While filling out the application, one may find eligibility for additional resources, such as our home weatherization program, focused on enhancing energy efficiency by sealing gaps and insulating against heat loss. Access to support for fixing malfunctioning heating units is also available through the LIHEAP Crisis program, along with ensuring the regular maintenance of heating systems for improved safety, efficiency, and longevity with the LIHEAP Clean and Tune program.

Households may also be eligible for Customer Assistance Programs and grants in partnership with PPL and UGI, providing essential support to ease financial energy-related challenges. Eligibility criteria, including income and other factors, apply. For inquiries or more information, please contact our office at (570) 622-1995. We're here to help access these valuable resources.

