Friends,

It is our pleasure to present the FY2016-17 annual report for Community Action of Allegan County (CAAC). CAAC is part of a national network of Community Action Agencies, and is the largest 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation providing anti-poverty programs and services in our community. Our organization’s focus, from its earliest beginning to present day, remains: to serve, advocate, and engage individuals, families and communities to overcome the effects of poverty and encourage self-reliance.

CAAC administers a variety of programs and services, providing a “safety-net” for Allegan County residents in temporary states of instability and crisis. This year CAAC provided 134,137 basic need supports to assist individuals and families in achieving stability and self-sufficiency. More than just providing direct service, CAAC staff help children, individuals and families achieve aspirations for economic security ... providing dignity and hope.

The Board of Directors’ commitment to mission is unwavering and our vision remains focused on advocacy, action and “impact” … mobilizing community resources in the areas of basic needs, financial stability, access to health care and early education.

A critical component of CAAC’s vision is the provision of “safety-net” programs. Of equal necessity is identifying gaps in service and developing collaborative strategies to address poverty barriers like affordable housing, transportation, and access to primary care. Through this work, CAAC will continue to lead in creating innovative programs that help families identify strengths and build bridges to opportunity. In the pages to follow you will read stories of challenge and struggle; just a glance into a few of the many lives touched by our programs and dedicated staff. Important outcomes will be highlighted regarding energy education and weatherization services that encourage low-income households to decrease consumption; lowering utility bills to increase annual savings. You will note our emphasis on health; ensuring low income children have access to vision, dental and developmental screenings, and older adults are transported to medical appointments. Finally, you will appreciate the varied approaches taken to engage parents and families; providing mentorship and guidance to help families maintain their resilience in the face of hardship.

All of these strategies are “action” based and designed to empower. The success of CAAC’s work would not be possible without the support of community partners, our Board of Directors, volunteers and staff. We express deep gratitude for their gifts of time, talent and treasure. These gifts allow us to rally resources and maintain our efforts in truly … Helping people and Changing lives in our community.

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Evans
Executive Director

Mike Vandenberg
Chairman, Board of Directors
United States Public Law 88-452, the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, authorized the formation of local Community Action Agencies as part of the War on Poverty under President Lyndon B. Johnson. These agencies are directly regulated by the federal government. Over 1,000 Community Action Agencies exist across the U.S. with each providing a group of services most fitting to their respective communities.
Community Action of Allegan County is committed to serving the interests of struggling families to ensure issues of poverty and barriers to economic security are effectively addressed. This commitment to our mission is shared by a diverse group of partner organizations and community volunteers. We express deep gratitude and appreciation for their support.
WHOM DO WE SERVE?

Community Action’s mission is to provide individuals and families in crisis, or those struggling above the poverty line, with essential services to meet basic needs for food, housing, mobility and quality education services; while supporting paths to self-sufficiency and self-reliance. Our services focus on lifting families out of poverty and poverty prevention.

What is Poverty?

Poverty is the state or condition in which a person or family lacks the financial resources and daily essentials necessary to enjoy a minimum standard of life or well-being. Poverty status in the United States is assigned to people or families whose annual income and economic security is below a threshold set by the Department of Health and Human Services.

### Allegan County Household Survival Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONTHLY COSTS</th>
<th>SINGLE ADULT</th>
<th>2 ADULTS, 1 INFANT, 1 PRE-K</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>$576</td>
<td>$713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childcare</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$1,039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>$184</td>
<td>$609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>$349</td>
<td>$697</td>
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<tr>
<td>Healthcare</td>
<td>$184</td>
<td>$707</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>$149</td>
<td>$406</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taxes</td>
<td>$194</td>
<td>$291</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monthly Total</td>
<td>$1,636</td>
<td>$4,462</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annual Total</td>
<td>$19,632</td>
<td>$53,544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hourly Wage</td>
<td>$9.82</td>
<td>$26.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ALICE Families

(Asset Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed)

ALICE represents individuals and families in our community with income above the Federal poverty line, but below the basic survival threshold. Defined as the “working poor,” these individuals are working or have worked, but public or private assistance is not enough to help them afford basic needs or maintain a survival budget. In Allegan County, 37% of households do not earn enough to make ends meet on a monthly or annual basis.

Source: ALICE Study of Financial Hardships, United Way of Michigan, 2017
LIFE TAKES TURNS

David and Greg owned a floral shop in South Bend, Indiana for 17 years. Successful entrepreneurs, the two decided to retire and move to Allegan County to be primary care givers for Greg’s mother. They were looking for a small rural community with great schools, where their 9-year-old daughter could thrive and feel safe to play outside.

Allegan County seemed like the perfect fit for the family and the two bought a home outside of Fennville. Using their retirement, the couple purchased wooded property that included a fixer-upper home, with plenty of acreage for their daughter to run, play and explore. As the couple began making home repairs, life hit them with some unplanned challenges. Relying on a seasonal income with more work in the summer than winter, making ends meet became a struggle when their water well broke. Repairing the water well on a fixed income meant something else had to give. Being able to pay a utility bill in the thick of a Michigan Winter was looking impossible.

Then, as they described it, “fate” intervened when Greg and David attended a workshop led by CAAC staff and hosted at their church. During the workshop, they learned about CAAC’s Crisis Utility Assistance program. “It was a chance meeting … we had no idea these services were available,” recalls David.

Fast-forward to four years later, and the two are paying the help they received forward, as volunteers for CAAC’s Food Commodity Program. While the two have only needed CAAC’s services once, they live by the life motto to always give back when you receive. “It’s how we do. To us that’s how it should be. We really appreciated and will always be grateful for the help.”
Community Action assists families, individuals and seniors with their basic needs every day through food programs, emergency utility assistance, transportation, outreach and referrals.

Allegan County’s United Way 2-1-1 Service is provided to individuals and families seeking social services assistance. More than 70% of all calls from our community are received in the Basic Needs category. Food, shelter and transportation are among the basic needs of our community’s residents.

How we’re addressing basic needs in Allegan County

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)
Home Delivered Meals (HDM)
Senior Project Fresh - Farmers Market Coupons
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
Early Education Nutrition Assistance
Senior and Early Education Transportation
Crisis Utility Assistance
Our client suffered from retinal neuropathy several years ago cutting the blood flow to her eyes, causing her complete blindness. She spent almost 6 months in a nursing home before deciding she wanted to try living alone in her own home. In-home supports, including Home Delivered Meals, were put in place to help her live life with increased dignity and independence. Sometime later, she was diagnosed with breast cancer for a second time.

The supports provided by CAAC enabled her to avoid round the clock care; allowing her to continue to live independently while she received radiation treatment. After suffering additional health issues, she recently spent another 6 weeks in a rehabilitation center. Upon returning home she, once again, struggled to adjust to being at home on her own.

One day, Faith, a CAAC Home Delivered Meal driver arrived at the client’s home to deliver her meal. When the driver did not get an answer at the door, Faith attempted to contact her via telephone, but did not receive an answer. This was out of character for the client. Suspecting that something might be wrong, Faith proceeded to look in the living room window and noticed the television was on. She knocked again and again, with no answer in reply. Faith continued her efforts and called the client’s home phone several more times. Finally, the client was able to make her way to the phone and told the driver that she had gotten disoriented walking through her home. She stated that the only way she found her way was by following the sound of the ringing telephone.

Faith made her way into the home after speaking with the client, and noticed the client was indeed disoriented. After getting the client safely back in her chair, Faith picked everything up and made sure the telephone was also hung up correctly. She reassured the client and assisted the client with her meal and made sure the client felt safe before proceeding with her route. Community Action of Allegan County contacted the client’s family and advised them of the situation. The family was extremely grateful not only for the assistance provided, but also for not giving up and making sure their loved one was safe.

Our volunteer drivers traveled 106,281 miles to get seniors where they need to be.

Volunteer drivers provided 482 seniors door-to-door transportation 2,285 rides to and from appointments for medical, legal, nutritional or social purposes. Consistent, reliable access to transportation for activities of daily living, is essential to meet basic needs and ensure quality of life.
Combining the population of households in poverty with ALICE, equals the total population struggling to afford basic needs in our county.

Even with at least one person in the household working, 37% of households in Allegan County don’t earn enough to reach the basic survival threshold.

Our Weatherization Program provides help in stabilizing a family’s budget and minimizing monthly utility expenses.

More about the Weatherization Assistance Program

The U.S. Department of Energy’s Weatherization Assistance Program reduces energy costs for low-income households by increasing the energy efficiency of a home while ensuring a family’s health and safety. This program is the single largest residential/home energy efficiency program in the United States. Community Action’s local administration of the Weatherization Assistance Program supports a national industry; producing new jobs and technologies, while supporting the health and wellness of the most vulnerable families in America.

“Our home after weatherization operates in winter off a coffee cup of propane a day… our home is small, but that’s just amazing!”  
-Scottie M.
Low-income families with insurance struggle to find accepting providers and face challenges to pay for care. Allegan County has a low number of primary care physicians and dentists per capita with 17% of the population having no healthcare provider and 12% having no access due to cost.

Our Early Education Programs provide Child Development Screenings. Medical Exams include vision, hearing, physicals, hemoglobin, and blood lead screenings and dental care. Children enrolled in Early Education Programs receive ongoing health supports, such as primary care referrals, medical records assistance and appointment reminders.

We assist low income families and individuals in accessing Michigan’s Medicaid Health Plans through the MIEnrolls Program. Giving low-income families access to preventative health care and other medical services like: doctor’s visits, family planning, health checkups, hearing and speech services, home health care, hospice and pre-natal care.

In collaboration with the Area Agency on Aging of West Michigan, we help educate, counsel and empower older adults, as well as, individuals with disabilities in our community to make informed health benefit decisions.

- 399 children received child development screenings
- 307 children received all medical screenings
- 278 children received dental care

571 low income families were helped through the MIEnrolls and the Medicaid/Medicare Assistance Program.
Early care and education is vital to long term educational success in children. The barriers preventing parents from receiving quality childcare and early education are attributed to social and economic conditions facing families.

The Head Start and Early Head Start Programs provide valuable education and health services directly impacting children and families in Allegan County. Early Head Start and Head Start reach over 400 children each year by providing quality comprehensive early childhood programming throughout the county. Most of our sites provide transportation to assist families who are working and/or unable to transport their children to receive service. Early Head Start and Head Start Programs are offered to families tuition free. This is a direct benefit to our county.

Early Education Services received a fiscal review through the new Federal monitoring protocol. Both programs were 100% compliant in all content areas. Results for CLASS (an observation instrument developed to assess classroom quality and child/adult interaction in preschool through third grade) were above the 2015 national program average in three domains; emotional and instructional support and classroom organization.

80% of eligible children were at or below the poverty guidelines. Additionally...
7% were foster children
6% received public assistance
6% were homeless
...and just 1% were over-income.

352 Families Served
85% of parents had a high school degree or higher.
57% were single parent families and 43% were two parent households.
691 parents received training
Including adult education, mental health, health education, parenting education and crisis intervention.
### Financial Statements

**Revenue**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Federal Grants</td>
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<tr>
<td>In Kind</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Grants</td>
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<td>State Grants</td>
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<td>Private Contribution</td>
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<td>Program Income</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,489,224.00</strong></td>
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**Operation Expenses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expense</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education Programs Support</td>
<td>$3,730,723.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Costs</td>
<td>$582,288.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Nutrition Programs Support</td>
<td>$423,174.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing Programs Support</td>
<td>$390,230.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Programs Support</td>
<td>$277,102.00</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,403,517.00</strong></td>
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**Expenses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td>10.78%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Nutrition Programs Support</td>
<td>7.83%</td>
<td>$423,174.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Programs Support</td>
<td>5.13%</td>
<td>$277,102.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing Programs Support</td>
<td>7.22%</td>
<td>$390,230.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Programs Support</td>
<td>69.04%</td>
<td>$3,730,723.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,403,517.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Community Action of Allegan County has a tripartite board structure to promote the participation of the entire community in the reduction or elimination of poverty. The Board of Directors consists of elected public officials, private sector representatives and low-income residents.

**Board of Directors**

- **Michael Van Den Berg**
  **Board Chairman - Public**

- **Dean Kapenga**
  **Vice Chairman - Public**

- **Carolyn Jordan**
  **Secretary - Client**

- **Lovedia J. Stap**
  **Treasurer - Private**

- **Jim Pitsch**
  **Public**

- **Scott Owen**
  **Public**

- **Jim Storey**
  **Public**

- **Carol Dennis**
  **Private**

- **Laurie Schmitt**
  **Private**

- **Nicole Richmond**
  **Private**

- **Mimi Gabriel**
  **Private**

- **Linda Burton-Collier**
  **Client**

- **Linnea Isenhoff**
  **Client**

- **Sharon Martin**
  **Client**

- **Stacey Lucas**
  **Client**

- **Victoria Anderson**
  **Client**

**Executive Staff**

- **Lisa Evans**
  **Executive Director**

- **Brenda Molendyk**
  **Chief Financial/Operating Officer**

- **Sarah See**
  **Director of Early Education**