



# Quarterly Connection

## Our Mission

We overcome poverty by meeting basic needs, helping people grow, and collaborating in our communities.

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## PRE-SERVICE

To kick off the beginning of each new program year, all Children Services staff from all counties come together in York, Nebraska, for Pre-Service training. During Pre-Service, staff get to hear from wonderful speakers, learn new skills, and expand on previous knowledge. However, this also creates a time for all our staff to come together as one for a day. Component Officers are able to train with their entire team to refresh and put new plans into action. BVCA also invites speakers to provide their expertise and expand our skills.

To build on active supervision training that occurred throughout the previous program year, BVCA invited Mindy Young to speak with the staff and provide interactive training on how best to provide a safe environment and transform active supervision from a passive approach to an active skill. Mindy not only discussed the importance of active supervision, but how to best put theory into action.

Abuse and neglect can be difficult to identify and speak out about. It is BVCA's goal to provide its staff with as many resources as possible to help them during difficult times. Braegan Darling from BraveBe presented on child abuse and neglect and gave wonderful insight on the responding and reporting process. She did a great job of bringing this heavy subject to life. This knowledge enables staff to identify red flags, intervene early, and provide us understanding to support our families.

To pull preservice together, we were honored to be joined by Executive Director of the Buffett Early Childhood Institute, Dr. Walter Gilliam. Dr. Gilliam spoke about the evolution of Head Start and the war on poverty. During his presentation Dr. Gilliam shared a video about Edward Zigler, who is considered the "father" of Head Start. Dr. Gilliam worked closely with Zigler for many years and shared the journey Head Start has taken since it was first founded. As Blue Valley Community Action is one of the first Head Start programs this training provided a lot of inspiration and motivation for staff to see how their impact can last through time. This was a great way to kick off the new year.



## Visit Us Online

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Helping People. Changing Lives.

## ANNUAL COMMUNITY ACTION CONVENTION

In August, BVCA had three employees travel to Seattle, Washington, to celebrate 60 years of Community Action by attending the Annual National Community Action Convention. The theme for this year's convention was "Inspiring Hope and Advancing Opportunity." The convention was not just a celebration, but a tremendous learning opportunity that brought together members of the more than 1,000 national Community Action agencies to share ideas. Erica Troxel, Weatherization/Property Coordinator; Chelsea McCardle, Fiscal Coordinator; and Kari Janssen had the opportunity to network with other Community Action agencies and develop professionally by attending breakout sessions geared toward their interest and role with BVCA.

National Community Action Partnership's Board Chair, Dalitso Sulamoyo, said of the event, "This year marks community Action's 60th anniversary. 60 years of serving America's poor. 60 years of providing hope to those who have found themselves lost and desperate. 60 years of protecting children and families from falling deeper into the dark abyss of pain and suffering. 60 years of caring for our seniors.

60 years of providing a hand up to those whom many would like to forget exist in our midst. When Community Action was launched 60 years ago, it was critically needed then as it is today. Community Action is the catalyst of transformational change throughout this country. Change that impacts not only the lives of those it serves but change in attitudes and apathy toward poverty."



Thank you, Erica, Chelsea, and Kari for representing Blue Valley Community Action Partnership at such a monumental event and for taking advantage of this professional development opportunity and experience!

## JOIN OUR TEAM | BEGIN YOUR CAREER OF HELPING PEOPLE & CHANGING LIVES

BVCA has several positions available! Visit [www.bvca.net](http://www.bvca.net) and select "Careers" from the navigation menu to find out more about our career opportunities and benefits.



## BIG GIVE GAGE

Blue Valley Community Action Partnership participated in Big Give Gage for the sixth consecutive year. Since 2018, Big Give Gage has helped BVCA raise funds for a variety of projects and programs. These include the Infant Toddler Quality Initiative, senior services, and building a new playground at New Horizon Apartment Complex in Beatrice.

In the most recent event, BVCA raised funds for emergency assistance. When a family becomes homeless, or faces imminent homelessness or the loss of power and water, BVCA can help. Staff at our Gage County Family and Community Services Office located at 2015 N. 6th Street in Beatrice, Nebraska, can either work with a landlord or utility company on payment, or provide rapid rehousing to a family that has been displaced. The negative ramifications of even short-term homelessness have a knock-on effect that can last years, especially for children.



## BVCA PARTNERSHIP ANNOUNCES SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Blue Valley Community Action (BVCA) Partnership is now accepting applications for their 2024-2025 scholarship opportunities. All scholarships will be in the amount of \$1,000 and can be used for tuition, books and fees associated with enrollment. Three scholarships will be awarded. BVCA Partnership will offer the following scholarships this year:



- The “BVCA Partnership Scholarship” will be awarded to an individual planning to attend or currently attending a 4-year college.
- The “BVCA Partnership Vocational Scholarship” will be awarded to an individual planning to attend or currently attending a 2-year or less program at a vocational college.
- The “BVCA Partnership Southeast Community College Scholarship” will be awarded to an individual planning to attend or currently attending Southeast Community College.

Applicants must reside in BVCA Partnership’s service area, which includes Butler, Fillmore, Gage, Jefferson, Polk, Saline, Seward, Thayer and York Counties in Nebraska. Scholarship applications, guidelines and a listing of eligibility requirements may be obtained from area high school administrative or guidance counselor offices, or by contacting the BVCA Partnership Center in your area. Applications can also be downloaded from our website: [www.bvca.net](http://www.bvca.net). For more information, contact Heather Lytle, BVCA’s Administrative Director, at (402) 729-2278 ext. 122. All applications must be received or postmarked on or before March 1, 2025.

Individuals or businesses wishing to donate to BVCA’s Scholarship Fund are asked to contact Shari Weber, BVCA’s CEO.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



Have you ever considered becoming a volunteer? There are many reasons why people volunteer their time and talents. Many do so because they want to make a difference in the lives of others, they are looking for a purpose in life, or they feel the desire to give back to their community. Does this sound like you or someone you know? If so, consider volunteering for BVCA! BVCA is currently seeking volunteers in all nine of our Family & Community Service (FCS) Centers, our Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), and our Foster Grandparent Program.

Those interested in volunteering in our local BVCA FCS Centers can help with tasks such as: sorting donations; assisting in the thrift store with pricing, stocking, organizing, running the cash register, creating window displays; helping in furniture rooms; assisting customers; answering phones and taking messages; and assisting in the food pantry. Those interested in volunteering with our CSFP Program can assist at local clinics by packing food boxes and helping customers to their vehicles. CSFP also needs volunteers to help unload food trucks. Anyone interested in volunteering at a FCS Center or CSFP Clinic may contact their local BVCA or email [volunteer@bvca.net](mailto:volunteer@bvca.net).

Our Foster Grandparent Program is also looking for volunteers interested in mentoring and tutoring children. Volunteers are placed in classrooms and work one-on-one with children who have special needs. Individuals must be 55 years of age or older, in relatively good health, and must love kids. Volunteers receive stipends and can volunteer up to 40 hours per week (there is an income guideline to receive the tax-free hourly government stipend and mileage reimbursement). Being a Foster Grandparent volunteer gives individuals an opportunity to stay active in their communities, meet new people, make friends and make a difference in their community. Interested individuals may contact Sonja Workman at (402) 223-6036 or [pioneer-fgp@bvca.net](mailto:pioneer-fgp@bvca.net).

**Blue Valley Community Action Partnership's 4th Quarter Outreach**

Case Management	112 Individuals
Childcare Services	21 Individuals
Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)	273 Individuals
Compassionate Projects	30 Individuals
COVID-19 Vaccines	6 Vaccinations
Early Head Start Child Care Partnership	37 Individuals
Early Head Start Home Based Services	58 Individuals
Early Head Start & Head Start Childcare Food Program	10,097 Meals & Snacks
Emergency Assistance	76 Households
Financial Coaching	34 Individuals
Food Rescue/Security	497 Households
Foster Grandparent Program	32 Individuals
Friends of Blue Valley Volunteer Program	315 Individuals
Head Start	192 Individuals
Homeownership Opportunity Program	3 Households
Housing Counseling	34 Individuals
Immunization Program	437 Shots
Infant Quality Initiative Program	9 Individuals
Lease-to-Own	48 Households
Nebraska Homeless Assistance Program (Shelter)	2 Households
Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation	0 Households
Project FIRST TH/RRH (Families In Residence with Support in Transition/Rapid Re-Housing)	5 Households
Project FYRES (Focused Youth on Rehousing, Empowerment & Stability)	7 Households
Rental Apartments/Duplexes	95 Households
Rental Elderly Apartments	23 Households
SNAP Outreach (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)	9 Applications
SSI-SSDI Outreach, Access & Recovery (SOAR) <b>PROGRAM ENDED 6/30/24</b>	0 Individuals
Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)	82 Individuals
Telehealth	0 Individuals
Thrift Stores	800 Individuals
Transportation	1,465 Rides
Weatherization	15 Households
WIC Peer Counseling	29 Individuals
Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)	1,022 Individuals



**WE ARE HERE TO HELP**

Visit us at [www.bvca.net](http://www.bvca.net) for more information about the programs we offer and how to apply.

**The Promise of Community Action**

Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.