

SENCA News

SENCA is committed to improving the well-being of individuals, families, and communities in southeast Nebraska.

Winter 2007



802 Fourth Street
Humboldt, NE
68376
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Thanks to Our Youth:

Students from the **HTRS Public Schools** collected more than 700 cans of food for the SENCA food pantry during Red Ribbon Week in October. The High School Leadership and Mentoring students began the week by distributing red ribbons to each student and teacher at HTRS. Amongst various other activities the Leadership and Mentoring groups held a “can war” during the week.

Each class and their assigned mentors were challenged to bring as many canned goods as possible to see which class could collect the most. At the end of the week each class built a pyramid out of the cans they collected like the one below.



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.

It was also announced that the class that collected the most cans would be presented with an ice cream sundae party during the last week of October. At the end of the week the preschool through fourth grade classes counted and built a pyramid out the cans collected.

This year's winning class was the second grade who collected a total of 152 cans and built the wonderful pyramid pictured below.



*Back row, left to right: Megan Cochran, Christina Billings, Tyler Frank, and Troy Hinrichsen, Mentor Representatives.
Front row, left to right: Keely McLaughlin, Kendall Werts, John Kanel, and Trenton Plager, 2nd Grade Representatives.*

SENCA would like to take the opportunity to thank all of the youth throughout southeast Nebraska that give back to the communities by helping others.

Thank You SENCA!

“Words alone cannot express the appreciation, gratitude, and genuine affections I feel for the people at SENCA that have been my guardian angels, friends, support system, mentors, and benefactors. I cannot thank you enough for all you have done to improve my life and the lives of my daughters for the past two years, as well as our future.

A little over two years ago I walked into the SENCA office homeless, helpless, discouraged, and desperate. On Sunday I will walk with pride, dignity, and a heart full of joy and appreciation to receive my Associates Degree in Accounting from Hamilton College in Lincoln. It would never have been possible for me to receive my degree without the assistance, support, and encouragement I received from everyone at SENCA, most especially Sasha Rightsell and Pam Armknecht. They have truly been our guardian angels and I am honored to call them my friends.

The unfortunate circumstances which brought me to Sasha’s office two years ago were the same circumstances which enabled me to return to college. My life took a positive turn in the right direction the day I met Sasha. It was through the coordination of efforts of SENCA, Workforce Development, Health and Human Services, and Arbor Education and Development, that I was able to return to college and concentrate on my studies. I did not need to worry from day to day that my daughters and I would have a home, heat, health care, or even clothes. I did not need to be concerned for our welfare. My daughters and I were sheltered and cared for and my education was provided through the incredible compassion, understanding and funding provided by each of these incredible agencies.

It was through SENCA’s Project FIRST program that we had a home, and it was cozy and warm and filled with love and hope instead of worries and fears. My concerns as a parent were eliminated and the encouragement that I received to pursue my education was invaluable towards my success. I was able to concentrate on my studies instead of our basic needs. The opportunity to return to college was a blessing and a once in a lifetime opportunity that I did not take lightly. I was determined from the first day to make the most of that opportunity and to do my best always. I owed it to my daughters, those that were supporting my efforts, and myself as well.

I have received many congratulations for my success at school. I was on the Dean’s list most terms and with high honors for several. I graduated with a 3.61 GPA. I was able to concentrate on my studies because my family’s basic needs and comforts were provided. I did not achieve this success on my own. I will be forever indebted to all of these agencies for their support and encouragement, but SENCA and the Project FIRST program have without a doubt been the most supportive, generous, unceasing, compassionate understanding of our needs both physically and emotionally over the past two years. With my commute, class schedule, work, seeing to my daughters’ needs when I got home, late night studying and early rising, non-stop for a year and a half, there were days obstacles did arise and I felt I could not make it through the day. Sasha was a continuous source of strength and encouragement and only a phone call away. She always made me feel she welcomed my calls and never once did I feel it was an interruption or a bother.

I will always value the friendships that I have made with such compassionate, understanding, and loving people. I promise to do all I can to help SENCA in its efforts to reach those people that are in need of, and are deserving of your compassion and support in their effort to rise above their own unfortunate circumstances. You are all incredibly giving and caring people and I doubt you receive the thanks you deserve for your continuous efforts. I do thank you all from the bottom of my heart and you will be forever remembered in my prayers. I thank God each night for the miracles in my life, my daughters and this one, which He has performed through you, His

*This letter was recently presented to the SENCA Board of Directors by
Margaret Houston, recent college and Project FIRST graduate and current SENCA Board Member.*



*Counties
in the
SENCA
service area:*

Cass

Johnson

Nemaha

Otoe

Pawnee

Richardson

*Housing
Services
Available in
Sarpy &
Douglas
Counties*

SENCA Welcomes New Board Members

New members to the Board of Directors were welcomed to the SENCA team at the annual meeting on January 30, 2007. We are pleased to have these members join us this year and look forward to working together to benefit the citizens of southeast Nebraska.

New members appointed or elected include: **Zoe Thummel**, Otoe County Commissioner; **Lori Huebner**, Cass County; **Ruby Miracle**, Pawnee County; and **Malinda Morgan**, Otoe County.

Board Members returning this year include: **Dave Nielsen** and **Pam Jones**, Cass County; **Leroy Buethe** and **Robert Curry**, Johnson County; **Margaret Houston** and **Bob Hutton**, Nemaha County; **Chris Koslosky**, Otoe County; **Rasty Stephens**, Pawnee County; and **Jenny Margrave**, **Rex Jones**, and **Rev. Jaelyn Hoy**, Richardson County.

Janet Palmer will serve this upcoming year as the representative from the Head Start Policy Council. **Carol Thiemann** will continue her service to the Board of Directors as an at-large member from

Pawnee County

Executive Committee Members:



*Dave Nielsen, 1st Vice Chair
and
Robert Curry, Chair*



Chris Koslosky,



Jenny Margrave,

SENCA Snapshots...

Ouch! That Hurts...

Thanks to a collaboration with the Family Medicine Clinic of Humboldt, SENCA was able to provide staff members with free flu shots. On Friday, October 27th, Family Medicine Clinic staff opened the Humboldt clinic to SENCA and administered 54 flu vaccines to employees and their families. Many staff participated in what will hopefully become an annual event for SENCA.



'Tis the Season for Giving...

Thanks to the support of community members, SENCA's efforts during the Salvation Army Bell Ringing campaign raised \$4,628.54 at the end of 2006. Ninety percent of these donations go to directly to benefit residents living in the communities that raised the money.

Family & Community Services staff were also able to provide 330 food baskets during the holiday season. More than 700 children received toys that brightened their day. Both of these activities were made possible through the generous donations received within each community.

SENCA thanks everyone who donated to these seasonal activities!

*Visit us
on-line!
www.senca.org*

*FY 2006
Annual Report
Now*

SENCA Youth Mentoring Expands

In its third year of operation the SENCA Youth Mentoring program is expanding the opportunities available to area youth. This program was originally piloted two years ago with the cooperation of HTRS Public Schools. Thanks to the strong partnership with teachers and the administration, and the dedication of the HTRS middle school and high school youth involved the pilot was a huge success. This success prompted SENCA to expand this program to include the Auburn and Falls City Public schools in August 2006.

Middle and high school mentors are paired with children enrolled in SENCA's Head Start program. Both the mentors and Head Start children benefit from the development of trusting, caring relationships and the learning of new skills. All mentors receive formal training related to being a successful mentor, creating a positive self-image, and working with children ages three to five. Each mentoring program is designed just a little differently in order to meet the needs of youth within each public school system.

HTRS mentors meet twice a month with their Head Start mentees and mentors are selected by teachers at their school. In Auburn mentors meet one or more times a week and are members of the school's FBLA organization. Falls City mentors meet on a daily basis with the Head Start children and mentoring is implemented into the curriculum and offered as a class in which students may enroll. Although the actual design varies from one area to another, the opportunity to serve as a mentor provides area youth with an opportunity to become more involved in the community in which they live and to make a difference in the life of a child.

SENCA Mission Statement

SENCA is committed to improving the well-being of individuals, families, and



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