

ANNUAL REPORT- JULY 1, 2017 – JUNE 30, 2018



Formally, Emergency Aid Association
450 South Street, Suffield, CT 06078
860-668-1986 Fax: 860-668-1908
Janet Frechette, M.S.W., Executive Director
www.suffieldcommunityaid.com

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Our Mission:

Suffield Community Aid, (SCA), - *your local safety net!* Formerly Emergency Aid Association, the SCA provides supportive health and social services that positively affect the well-being of Suffield residents during periods of need.

NEW Name Change:

We are celebrating 115 years of service to the Suffield community! This milestone anniversary prompted the EAA Board of Directors to review our mission, take stock of the services we offer, and consider how we communicate our message to those that both need our help or support our cause. As a result, we determined that a new name was in order and selected Suffield Community Aid to better reflect our full range of services and to meet the changing needs of our town.

Brief Background:

The Suffield Community Aid, (SCA), is a private, non-profit 501(c)3 social service agency. Incorporated in 1903, the SCA has existed for the sole benefit of those in our community struggling with health and financial hardships. The SCA strives to enhance the full potential of all residents, and thereby, improve the overall quality of life in our community.

Our Focus:

The SCA serves as a safety net for residents experiencing financial and other challenges. Residents reach out to the SCA when they don't know where else to turn. They may have lost a job, suffered a health crisis, required help caring for an aging parent or experienced financial hardship. *The SCA is here to offer the resources and support that community members require to move forward in their lives.*

Through social work consultations, our goal is to help residents achieve self-sufficiency, preserve economic well-being and adjust to difficult circumstances and events in their lives. By partnering our own immediate relief programs with other government and private resources, we are able to maximize eligibilities and alleviate hardships to promote better overall individual and family functioning. Specific services provided to qualified Suffield residents include the following: medical and financial assistance for defined needs, benefit & credit counseling, food bank assistance, bereavement support, senior & disabled outreach, Meals on Wheels, Holiday Basket Programs, energy assistance, camp subsidies, rental rebates and information & referral on a myriad of other supportive programs and services.

SCA/Town Relationship:

A memorandum of understanding was initially signed on October 1, 2003 transferring the administration and delivery of certain Town social services to the SCA. The current contract extends this partnership through June 30, 2022.

Social Work Staff:

Janet Frechette, MSW, hired in 1999, serves as the SCA's first Executive Director. Janet guides all aspects of the organization with a focus on mission and goal achievement. Janet is accountable for strategic program planning & analysis, financial management, insurance compliance, marketing & fundraising and policy creation in accordance with the Directors of the Board.

Beth Sheridan, BSW, hired in 2007, serves as the SCA's Social Service Coordinator. Beth's primary functions include administering the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program, the Operation Fuel Program and the Rental Rebate Program. In addition to these duties, Beth provides social service consults, responds to requests for food & fuel, assists with applications for financial and medical aid and connects residents to resources. Beth participates as a member of Suffield's Local Substance Abuse Prevention Council.

Patricia Beeman, MSW, hired in 2004, provides outreach social services to elder residents and their caregivers. Pat conducts assessments focused on client goals and the barriers they face. Pat assists with issues related to aging, disability rights, substance abuse, mental health, housing and financial assistance in order to educate residents regarding resources. Pat serves as Suffield's Municipal Agent for the Elderly as required by the CT Statute and participates as a member of the North Central Regional Mental Health Board and as a member of the CLASS (CT Local Administrators of Social Services).

Josephine Dzioba, hired in 2015, provides administrative support to the director and staff in the coordination and delivery of SCA programs and services.

Highlights of FY 2018:

Listed below are some of the health and social service programs provided by the SCA to Suffield residents during fiscal year 2017-2018:

- ◆ **Fiore Food Pantry**-The Food Pantry was accessed 509 times by 145 different Suffield families comprised of 314 persons, of whom 138 were children and 45 were over the age of 65. The value of this assistance is estimated at \$54,705! The Suffield Housing Authority maintains a small food pantry, supplied by SCA donations, for tenants in need. A successful fundraiser, “Designer Purse Bingo,” added \$2,630 to our food pantry account!
- ◆ **Fuel Assistance**-Thirty thousand, six hundred thirty dollars (\$30,630) in critical fuel aid was distributed to 81 Suffield families from various SCA-administered funds (\$9,965 was expended from SCA Private Fuel donations.) An additional 179 energy applications were submitted to the State of CT on behalf of our residents, resulting in \$118,220 in fuel aid to 158 eligible households.
- ◆ **Medical Subsidy**-The SCA subsidized essential medical services totaling \$10,425 for the benefit of residents directly, or through a third party contract.
- ◆ **Quality of Life Fund**-This program served 66 Suffield residents at a cost of \$7,200. Social workers make referrals for items and/or services that would enhance a resident’s quality of life, but would otherwise be financially prohibitive.
- ◆ **Social Service Consultations**-Staff responded to over 2,100 requests for information and provided comprehensive case assessment and networking to 380 Suffield households, comprised of 630 residents, using Charity Tracker case management software.
- ◆ **Forward Focus, a partnering program to help launch Suffield teens and young adults**-This program addresses financial and other challenges that impede the attainment of life goals for identified Suffield youth and young adults. In its fifth full year, 12 young adults were assisted at a cost of \$4,550. Assistance with driver’s education, medical costs and school related expenses were some of the need-based requests that were funded.
- ◆ **Medical Equipment Loans**-Three hundred eight-five (385) donated durable medical items were loaned to residents or their family members.
- ◆ **Meal Subsidies**-One thousand, two hundred five (1,205) meal subsidies were distributed, at a cost of \$4,217, making it possible for low-income seniors and disabled persons to participate in the lunch program at the Suffield Senior Center two days a week.
- ◆ **Camperships**-Twenty-seven (27) camp subsidies were given to children in low-income homes at a cost of \$5,990.
- ◆ **Amiel Zak P.I.L.O.T. Center** – the Amiel Zak P.I.L.O.T. Center (Promoting Independent Learning of Online Technology) was completed this year and provided a private office space, dedicated for the use of SCA clients, to navigate their own online eligibilities. Clients without computer access and those lacking strong computer skills have benefitted.

- ◆ **Salvation Army**-Serving as a local conduit for Salvation Army funds, we increased the financial resources available to Suffield residents by recruiting Salvation Army bell ringers this past December. Kettle donations generated \$2,513 and provided heat, partial rents, prescription assistance and supported costs associated with the SCA's annual "Return to School Backpack Program."
- ◆ **Meals-On-Wheels**-SCA coordinated volunteers who distributed 9,477 meals to a total of 57 homebound seniors - an average of 26 meal deliveries per day here in Suffield.
- ◆ **Holiday Basket Program**-The SCA coordinated the distribution of 212 donated holiday and other seasonal baskets to low-income households.
- ◆ **Blood Pressure Screenings**-Twenty-three (23) SCA-sponsored clinics were offered providing 405 free screenings at the Suffield Senior Center.
- ◆ **School Supplies Collection**-The SCA distributed 102 filled backpacks to school-age children in low-income homes. Funding for gift cards for shoes was raised through the local Salvation Army Kettle Drive and through the generous support of Sacred Heart Church and individual donors.
- ◆ **Children's Vision & Hearing Screenings**-SCA staff and volunteers partnered with our local Suffield Lions to conduct 873 digital vision screening. Audiology screenings were also performed for 55 preschoolers at Bright Horizons, Conway's Kiddie Kollege and the Cooperative Preschool.
- ◆ **Renter's Rebate**-By July 1, staff had processed 24 applications and submitted a claim to the Office of Policy and Management for \$9408.00 to be shared by Suffield elderly and disabled qualified renters.
- ◆ **Community Events**: In conjunction with Foundation for Exceptional Children of Suffield, FECS, Suffield Youth Services & SPD, the SCA assisted in the coordination of a Mental Health Resource Fair, Light Suffield Up Blue, and brought a renowned speaker, Kevin Briggs – a former California state patrolman, to discuss his experience with suicide prevention while patrolling the Golden Gate Bridge.
- ◆ **Your Money, Your Goals: Developing Your Financial Empowerment** - A trained SCA volunteer assisted in building financial security by helping clients set financial goals, pay their bills, manage debt and save for emergencies.
- ◆ **CHOICES Counseling**: Trained volunteers provided unbiased assistance to residents and others looking to explore their Medicare options.
- ◆ **Parkinson's Peer Support**: SCA staff coordinates a monthly peer support group at the Suffield Senior Center the second Monday of each month to share ideas and resources in the managements and treatment of Parkinson's disorder.
- ◆ **"Playing with Parkinson's"** - In June, the SCA co-sponsored a community forum in conjunction with Kent Memorial Library to show a documentary about Sangeeta Michael Berardi, a successful guitarist. Now with a diagnosis of Parkinson's, Sangeeta still plays, but in a different way.
- ◆ **Medical Transportation**-SCA volunteers provided non-emergency medical transportation for older and disabled residents when other options were not available.
- ◆ **Bereavement Support Group**-In conjunction with Masonicare Home Health and Hospice, the SCA hosted two 8-week grief support groups at our facility free of charge.

- ◆ **Beat PD Today**- The SCA and Suffield Senior Center subsidize participation costs for residents with movement disorders. This exercise program improves the quality of life of people with Parkinson's by performing exercises that are functional to everyday living. Each session is 8 weeks.
- ◆ **Friendly Visitor & Friendly Shopper**- Volunteers served as visitors, callers and/or shoppers to isolated residents for purposes of providing social engagement and nutritional well-being.
- ◆ **Chair Exercise Program**-The SCA sponsored this on-going program at the Suffield Senior Center in an effort to help participants reduce the risk of falls. Program attendees are asked to bring a non-perishable food item for the SCA Food Pantry in lieu of payment.
- ◆ **North Central Opioid Addiction Task Force**-In conjunction with other area stakeholders, the SCA partnered to address local responses to opioid prevention, treatment and enforcement.
- ◆ **Veterans' Assistance**-The Suffield Knights of Columbus & Landry Sic VFW Post 9544 provided new funding to meet the needs of Suffield Veterans experiencing financial and medical hardships.
- ◆ **Resident At-Risk List**-The SCA partnered with the Town's Emergency Preparedness team to identify vulnerable residents when events warrant.
- ◆ **After-Hour SPD Support Plan & Town Emergency Responder Assistance**-The SCA developed a support plan to ensure resident safety and wellbeing if a fuel, food or housing crisis should occur during non-SCA work hours. The SCA also partners with the Town's Emergency Responders to assist residents experiencing serious health & housing challenges.
- ◆ **SCA Vegetable Garden**- Special volunteer efforts allowed the SCA to offer fresh vegetables to those utilizing the Food Pantry.
- ◆ **James Coggins, Jr. Community Service Award** - The 2018 recipient of this annual \$1,000 award was Caitlin Bombard
- ◆ **Jane Purtil Fuller Memorial Scholarship**- Award recipients must be pursuing a nursing or social services degree. The 2018 recipient was Mackenzie Bly.
- ◆ **Pet Food Support**-The fundraising efforts of some local residents have made it possible for the SCA Food Pantry to offer cat and dog food on an on-going basis.
- ◆ **Volunteer Recognition**-One hundred twenty (120) SCA volunteers were honored at an appreciation event held at Suffield Tavern in May.

We may be rolling out a new name, but rest assured that the services you value will remain unchanged. Suffield Community Aid will operate with the same staff, at the same location and with the same mission: to provide supportive health and social services that positively affect the well-being of Suffield residents during times of need. We remain resolute in our commitment to delivering the highest caliber of timely social service support to improve the quality of life for those who seek our help.

Respectfully submitted,
Janet Frechette, M.S.W.
Executive Director