

BLUE VALLEY COMMUNITY ACTION



1995 ANNUAL REPORT

October 1, 1994-September 30, 1995

*BEGINNING OUR
30th
YEAR OF SERVICE*

1995 Board of Directors

Executive Committee:

Bonnie Schoenbeck, *President*

Fern Shamburg, *Vice President*

Albert Simacek, *Secretary*

Raymon Gough, *Treasurer*

Norene Fitzgerald

Laddie Dolezal
Eunice Beran
Mary Lou Coufal
Hilvie Gross
Martha Marget
Barbara Erdkamp
Tony Schmutzler
Don Deats
Lenora Hawkins
Kenneth Volle
James Weichel
Thomas Wright
Geneva Schoenrock
Florence Herman
Michael Simonsen
Margaret Johnson
Harold Korinek
Lila Witt
Bonnie Schoenbeck
Ray Naber
Larry Bonner
Donna Lindquist
Genne Sandusky
Virginia Eng
Larry Lange
Paul Hergott
Robert Thomas
Russell Bredenkamp
H. Duane Birt
Jane Beck Smith
Larry Kramer
Tracey Stewart
Tami Broderick

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & BOARD PRESIDENT


Blue Valley Community Action's thirtieth year of operations as a private charitable community group began in 1995. The changes occurring within the nation and state will create many challenges for BVCA to face during the years that follow. In every challenge there also lies an opportunity. BVCA has seized many opportunities over the years. We hope this report will show those that have been developed during the year 1995.

In 1966, BVCA was begun by area citizens trying to deal with local economic stresses. They sought funds to go to local projects to deal with the issue of poverty and economic opportunity as the local community determined this need. It has gone full circle and now legislation from Washington and Lincoln seems to focus on local projects funded in part by federal and state resources. Allowing local citizens to design community solutions may prove to be the best solution. Block grants to local groups and communities work.

Community Action has been a local solution for three decades and 1995 was no exception. Local citizen involvement in the needs and developments within their area strengthens the community, makes it safer, offers more residents opportunities for growth and fulfillment and resolves many needs that threaten smaller communities existence. We hope our efforts during 1995 have helped, strengthen, made safe, and offered opportunities for the folks and communities within the Blue Valley region. We thank our many supporters and volunteers who have helped with our efforts again this year.

The volunteer Board of Directors and the staff of Blue Valley Community Action hope you will review this report to see what your Community Action organization has done for our neighborhoods and communities during 1995. We hope you will partner with us in 1996 for a better tomorrow.


Bonnie Schoenbeck
Board President


Richard D. Nation
Executive Director

PURPOSE AND HISTORY

Blue Valley Community Action (BVCA) is a private, nonprofit corporation that has provided services to the residents of southeast Nebraska for the past 30 years. BVCA is committed to the development and administration of programs that: 1) prevent the onset of poverty, 2) ameliorate the effects of poverty, and 3) transition individuals and families out of poverty.

BVCA presently operates health and human services programs that are aimed at assisting low and moderate income individuals and families. These services are provided under contract to state and federal agencies, including: ACTION, Farmer's Home Administration, Health and Human Services, Nebraska Department of Health, Nebraska Department of Social Services, Nebraska Energy Office, Nebraska Department of Roads, Nebraska Department of Education, and the Nebraska Department of Economic Development.

A 28 member volunteer board of directors is responsible for the governance of the corporation. Board composition is one third low-income, one third public officials and one third private sector representatives. One ex officio position is reserved for a member of the Head Start policy council. Directors come from each of the nine counties that comprise BVCA's core catchment area.

BVCA is comprised of five main departments which are Youth Services, Housing, Family and Community Services, Blue Valley Crisis Intervention and Operations. Various programs are operated within each of these departments. This annual report will briefly review some of the available programs and the impact each program has on our communities and its people. BVCA served 14,020 individuals during the 1995 fiscal year and we hope to continue improving the lives of the citizens in our communities.

BLUE VALLEY CRISIS INTERVENTION

The Blue Valley Crisis Intervention (BVCI) program receives funding from the County, State and Federal level as well as funding from private organizations. These funds are used to help victims of Domestic Abuse and/or Sexual Assault, their families, and to prevent violence in families and communities. BVCI serves a seven county area of southeast Nebraska including Fillmore, Gage, Jefferson, Saline, Seward, Thayer, and York Counties.

The purpose of BVCI is to lend emotional support to victims of domestic abuse/sexual assault, to provide emergency crisis intervention services and to offer an on-going program of community education and awareness. The goal of the program is to ensure that these victims are able to identify their options and resources. We are here to help empower the victims and their families to recognize their own abilities to make informed decisions about their lives and plan for a future free of abuse.

BVCI provided shelter for 295 families with 2,142 units of crisis support. BVCI also provided 554 shelter beds on 183 unduplicated shelter nights for victims and their families. The BVCI staff gave 160 presentations to audiences of 4,375 individuals.

All Crisis Intervention services are completely confidential and are free of charge to anyone who requests our assistance. There are no income guidelines for these services. The services provided by Blue Valley Crisis Intervention include the following: a 24-hour crisis line (1-800-777-7332), transportation, temporary shelter, legal assistance, medical attention, emergency financial assistance, individual and group support, and community education.

Three AmeriCorps members serve a nine county area and have developed programs focusing on preventing and reducing violence among youth. The AmeriCorps members work directly with youth to prevent and reduce violence through School Mediation, Peer Mediation, and Conflict Resolution training. School Mediation programs provide students with an opportunity to non-violently resolve their disputes. Schools establish mediation programs to reduce detentions and suspension, to encourage effective problem solving, to reduce teacher involvement in minor student conflicts, and to improve school climate.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION PROGRAMS

IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM: BVCA coordinates five public immunization clinics in Seward, Saline, and Jefferson Counties each month. 1,578 children, ages 2 months to 21 years were given 5,396 immunizations with serum provided by the Nebraska Department of Health last year. Through a computer database recall system, reminder cards are sent to parents whose child has missed a timely immunization. Clinics are the cooperative efforts of local nurses, individual volunteers, doctors, hospitals and Blue Valley Community Action.

MATERNAL AND CHILD DENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM: The Maternal and Child Dental Health program is available for children under 21 years of age in Jefferson, Fillmore and Saline Counties. The MCH Dental Project provides quality dental services for children of low-income families according to their income. It will be funded through the State of Nebraska Department of Health through December of 1995.

PEOPLE CARING FOR PEOPLE: This nationally recognized rural health project is operated by a consortium of agencies targeting the special needs of high risk rural pregnant women in Gage County. Services include prenatal information and access to medical care, crib and car seat loans, and post-delivery home visits by a nurse. In 1995, 23 women were involved in the prenatal portion of the program.

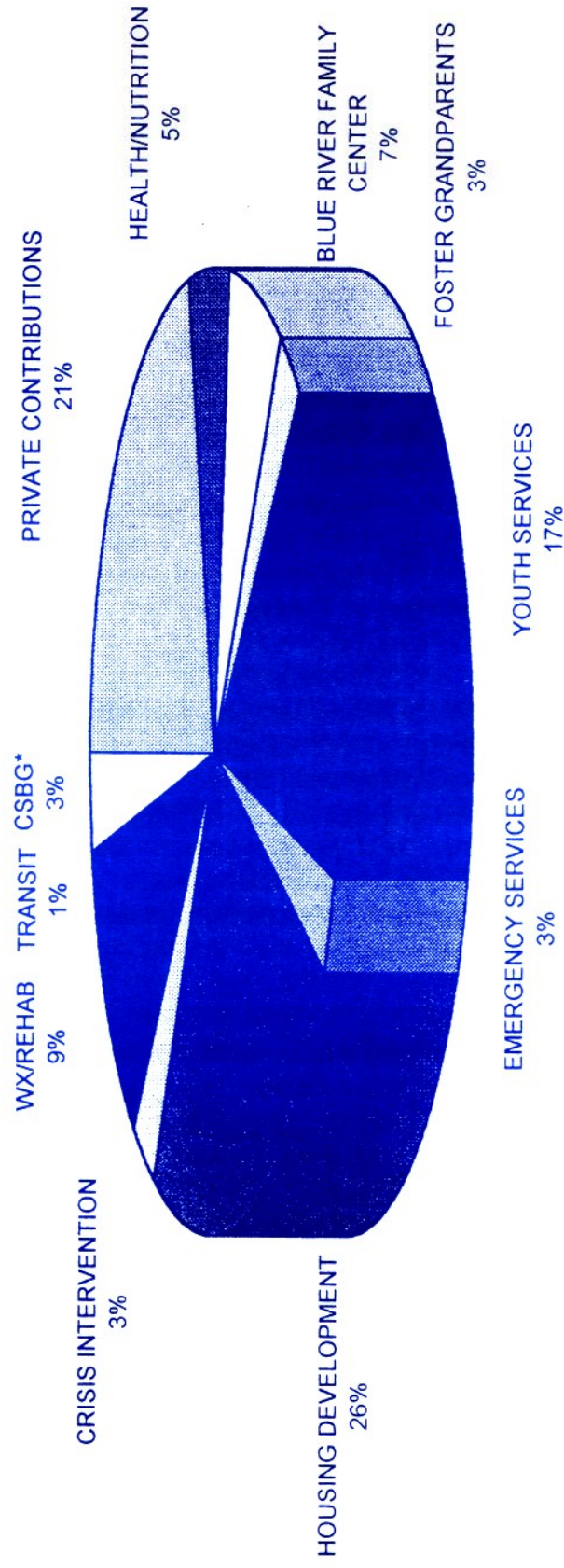
WIC (WOMEN, INFANT & CHILDREN SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD PROGRAM): This health program provides medical and nutritional screening to determine the risk factors for pregnant and breastfeeding women, infants and children to age five. At eight monthly clinics from sites in Crete, Geneva, York and Seward, 26,419 food vouchers were given to 2,168 certified individuals to be used in local grocery stores. The WIC's New Mom's Project encourages women to breastfeed through informative home visits. If they choose not to breastfeed, the Newborn Nutrition component enables the mom to obtain formula immediately after birth.

COMMODITY SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD PROGRAM (CSFP): This nutritional program distributes government purchased surplus food commodities to income eligible children to the age of six, women who are pregnant, breast-feeding, or have given birth within the last twelve months, and persons sixty years or older. 18,529 food packages were given to 2,168 different individuals at monthly clinics at David City, York, Dorchester, Hebron, Beatrice, and Humboldt.

FOOD PANTRIES: Each community based office operates a food pantry. Community groups and individuals donate non-perishable food and paper products and funds to purchase perishable items. Food boxes were given to 940 families in emergency situations. The annual Can-Care A-Van, sponsored by KOLN/KGIN TV, Con Agra and Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska, generated over 47,500 lbs. of food for six pantries.

GARDEN PROJECT: The Fairbury Future Farmers of America group plants, tends and nurtures seedlings in Blue Valley Community Action's greenhouse to mature plants to be distributed to low income households in BVCA's nine county area. In 1995, 71 households received tomatoes, peppers and cabbage plants.

Blue Valley Community Action 1994-1995 Budget



***Community Services Block Grant**

Total Annual Budget \$5,819,062

BLUE VALLEY COMMUNITY ACTION

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

1995

- ♦ BVCA purchased its own building for Jefferson County Head Start.
- ♦ Construction began on duplex housing units in Ohiowa, Fairmont, and two more in Geneva. This will bring the total new such units to fourteen.
- ♦ BVCA awarded HIV/AIDS awareness grant to do HIV/AIDS prevention presentations in schools and to community groups.
- ♦ The Blue River Family Center (Phase I) opened its doors in January 1995 and now serves over 250 children.
- ♦ A second eight unit apartment house was built in Crete.
- ♦ Blue Valley Joint Housing Authority was formed, with BVCA as administrator.
- ♦ Blue River Family Center in Crete began Phase II construction for multiple agency use.
- ♦ Blue Valley Head Start expanded to its second Kansas site in Smith Center, joining nine other sites in Nebraska.
- ♦ Single family rental home built in Milligan.
- ♦ AmeriCorps members operate peer-mediation or conflict resolution in Wilber, Wymore and Beatrice Schools.
- ♦ Wymore-Blue Springs home ownership program approved.
- ♦ Saline ElderCare completes first full year of Friendly Visitor Program.
- ♦ Area-wide home repair program funded and begun.
- ♦ Over 20% increase in domestic abuse caseload.
- ♦ Fillmore Transit passes 7,000 trips within the year for the first time.
- ♦ BVCA helps establish the CATCH network in southeast Nebraska to ensure medical homes for Medicaid enrollees.
- ♦ Second year of AmeriCorps program on youth violence prevention begun.
- ♦ Head Start organizational structure revised to handle growth.
- ♦ BVCA successfully completes 29th fiscal year, all in the black.

Number of Persons Served (Unduplicated Count)

Butler County	734
Fillmore County	1,052
Gage County	1,319
Jefferson County	1,584
Polk County	474
Saline County	2,874
Seward County	1,846
Thayer County	1,545
York County	1,408
Other Counties	<u>1,190</u>
TOTAL	14,026

CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

HEAD START: Head Start is a nationally renowned child development program for pre-school children ages 3 to 5, and their families, who meet the income guidelines. Blue Valley Community Action's Head Start program served 259 children in nine Nebraska counties and two counties in Kansas.

Children who attend Head Start participate in a variety of educational activities. They receive free medical and dental care, have healthy meals, and enjoy playing indoors and outdoors in a safe setting. Services are also offered to meet the special needs of children with different ranges of disabilities. Fifty-two of the enrolled children during the 1994-95 Head Start year were diagnosed with a disability.

Head Start provides children with activities that help them grow mentally, socially, emotionally, and physically. The children are provided with a variety of experiences in and out of the classroom to help them socialize with others, solve problems, form good habits, and to excite them about learning. Head Start helps all children succeed.

Staff recognize that parents are the first and most important teachers of their children. Head Start expects and welcomes parent involvement in Head Start activities and will work with parents as partners at the center and during home visits to help in their child's' development. Parents and community persons are encouraged to volunteer their time and talents at their local Head Start program.

Each child is examined by skilled professionals for physical and dental exams. Professionals also arrange vision, speech, and hearing tests and provide follow-up care. A mental health professional is available for children and families with special needs.

Head Start staff offer the children love, acceptance, and understanding that is enhanced by working with the entire family. The Head Start program offers a sense of belonging, other needed support services, and a chance to be involved in activities that may help not only the child, but the whole family.

BLUE RIVER FAMILY CENTER: The Blue River Family Center opened its doors in January of 1995. It provides a central location within the community of Crete for comprehensive human services available to children and families. The BRFC houses the following programs: Head Start, infant to preschool child care, TLC sick child care, and the before and after school child care. Phase II will include area for an immunization clinic, WIC program, the food pantry, a mental health clinic, and adult classes for parenting, GED, English as a Second Language, the domestic abuse program, and Blue Valley Community Action's intake services.

By October of 1995, 250 children (200 families) were enrolled in programs at the Blue River Family Center. The center has given many tours to visitors from across the state who are interested in developing a facility that provides a wide variety of services to families.

HOUSING PROGRAMS

WEATHERIZATION PROGRAM: The weatherization program receives federal funding that is passed through the Nebraska Energy Office to sub-grantees. These funds are eligible to families meeting the 130% poverty guidelines. The weatherization program encompasses all of our nine county service area. This program is in serious jeopardy nationally due to funding cuts. Energy conservation is no longer a priority in Washington. Funds were cut in the past year and will be cut an additional 47% in the new year. The furnace replacements we have done in prior years have gone a long way to improve the safety of the clientele we serve.

HOUSING REHABILITATION PROGRAMS: We recently completed a Seward Housing Preservation Program serving 16 families including 41 individuals. This program rehabilitates owner occupied units to bring them to health and safety standards.

In the past year we have served 2 families with the Community Development Block Grant Revolving Loan fund, which Blue Valley Community Action administers for Butler County, that offers low interest loans to eligible income individuals, to rehabilitate their home to health and safety standards. In the past year we have served seven families with BVCA's own revolving loan fund. These units were rehabilitated to health and safety standards.

DISASTER: Two applications were submitted and funded, for \$465,000.00 of program dollars, from the Department of Economic Development to repair and replace damages caused by the Disaster of 1993. Eighteen units have been repaired and seven are in the process. 100 families still remain on the waiting list.

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS: Blue Valley Community Action, Inc. has completed 17 units of affordable housing in three counties. All units are full.

Currently under construction is a second eight-plex facility, four duplexes, and one single family unit. These units will be available in the spring of 1996. With the completion of these projects the total of affordable units will be brought up to 34. All of the projects were funded from a variety of sources including HOME, disaster funds, private investments, and small local bank loans.

HOMELESS SHELTER PROGRAM: BVCA operates a number of facilities used for short term and longer-term shelter for homeless individuals or families. During the 1995 fiscal year 184 families (448 persons) were served. The need for shelter may be due to fire, tornadoes, transience, domestic disputes and homelessness. Shelters are located in Gage, Jefferson, and York Counties. Other services provided to homeless families include emergency food and clothing, transportation, counseling, advocacy, assistance to locate permanent housing, and safe homes.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

EMERGENCY SERVICES: Staff provide short-term case management with information, referrals and advocacy to help clients meet immediate needs in the area of shelter, transportation, and counseling services. Donated funds are used to address small emergencies. 144 families were directly assisted to help pay for deposits, rent and utilities to end or prevent homelessness.

FOSTER GRANDPARENT PROGRAM: Older adults, age 60 years and older, are matched with children who have special needs to provide a supportive one-to-one experience. 62 adults were placed at health, education, welfare or related settings in Gage County and surrounding counties, volunteering 50,000 hours to help alleviate the physical, mental or emotional problems of the exceptional children.

HOLIDAY PROJECTS: Due to the generosity of many local community groups, organizations, individuals and volunteers, 587 households received Christmas baskets and 1,521 individuals received gifts at Christmas. County projects vary from the Adopt-A-Family to Toy Workshops to Mitten Trees to Gifts-For-Parents and free trees.

RURAL TRANSIT SERVICES: County-wide public transportation services are provided for a small fee with priority given to elderly and handicapped riders. Trips are scheduled within and out of the county. In Fillmore County, 178 individuals were given 7,111 one-way trips in twelve months. BVCA is also connected with transit services in Butler and York Counties. This service is provided in cooperation with local county governments, the Nebraska Department of Roads and, in some cases, local aging offices.

SALINE ELDERCARE PROGRAM: The development of senior services in Saline County is possible through a contract with the Lincoln Area Agency on Aging. The local office in Wilber offers services for older adults, such as in-home services, telephone reassurance, Friendly Visitors, and the Gate Keepers Program.

VOLUNTEERS AND DONATIONS: Volunteer opportunities are available utilizing a variety of skills and expertise. Activities include fund-raising, holiday projects, packaging food boxes, child care, advisory board membership, clothing store workers, receptionists, and special projects.

MISCELLANEOUS: Other community service projects involve the transporting and, in some cases the distributing, of the mass commodities for the Department of Social Services; the follow-up contacts for Job Corps participants (JACS and WICS); child safety seat program; optical services at free/reduced costs (local optometrists in York County); Green Thumb worksite (11 workers); grocery shopping for the homebound (City of Seward with cooperation of local grocers); Farmer's Markets (Fairbury and David City); and clothing recycling stores (Geneva, Hebron, Fairbury, Osceola, David City, Seward, and York).

ADVISORY BOARDS: Interested volunteers are encouraged to serve on one of the several advisory boards in the agency. These boards give input regarding community needs and projects, assist in fund-raising for local areas, make recommendations to the volunteer governing board of directors, and sponsor local community projects. There are twelve advisory boards in the Family and Community Services Department.

**BLUE VALLEY COMMUNITY ACTION
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
620 5TH STREET
P.O. BOX 273
FAIRBURY, NE 68352-0273
PHONE (402) 729-2278
FAX (402) 729-2801**

*Richard D. Nation
Executive Director*

*Jodene Werner
Fiscal Director*

*Jerri Kerr
Housing Director*

*Ardith Hoins
Family & Community Services Director*

*Kathryn Molczyk
Youth Services Director*

*Rhonda Drewes
Blue Valley Crisis Intervention Director*