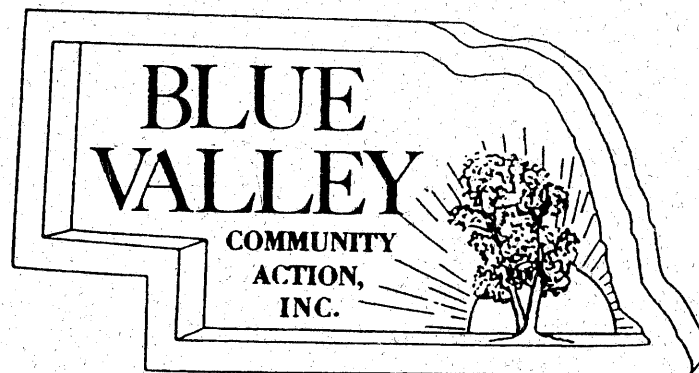


BLUE VALLEY COMMUNITY ACTION

A NEBRASKA COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY



**1994
ANNUAL REPORT**

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & BOARD PRESIDENT

1994 Board of Directors

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Blue Valley Community Action is about to enter its thirtieth year of operations as a private charitable community group. Many challenges have faced the organization during those years and more lie ahead. In every challenge there also lies an opportunity. BVCA has seized many opportunities over the years. We hope this report will show some that have been developed during the 1994 fiscal year.

In 1966, BVCA was begun by area citizens trying to deal with local economic stresses. They applied for and received a federal grant. Earlier in 1964, Congress had passed a law authorizing funds to go to local groups to deal with the issue of poverty and economic opportunity as the local community determined this need. It was an innovative piece of legislation for Washington because it allowed local citizens to design program solutions. A decade later the concept of block grants was developed based upon this same notion - that Washington does not have the answers for all local problems. The idea is being reborn in the 1990's as Congress contemplates even more block grants. Local groups and communities produce meaningful solutions.

Community Action is a solution and a concept that works. 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 thank our many supporters and volunteers who have helped with our efforts again this year. We appreciate their community actions.

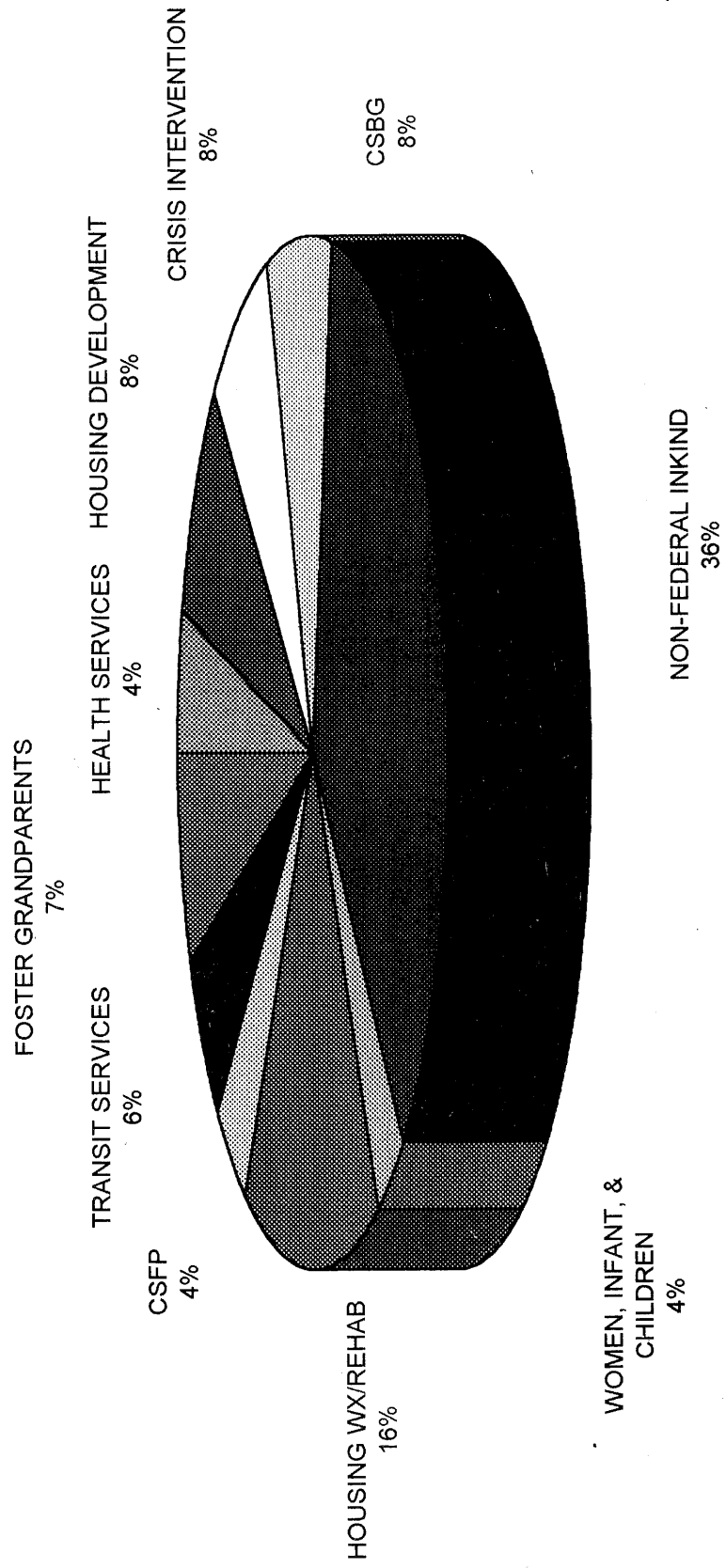
The volunteer Board of Directors and the staff of Blue Valley Community Action hope you will review this report to see what your Community Action organization has done for our communities and neighborhoods during 1994.

Mary B. Evans - Richard D. Nation

Mary B. Evans
Board President

Richard D. Nation
Executive Director

BVCA BUDGET 1993-1994



**Number of Persons in Households Served
(BVCA's Nine County Area)**

Butler County	730
Fillmore County	885
Gage County	1,461
Jefferson County	1,518
Polk County	621
Saline County	2,620
Seward County	1,900
Thayer County	1,506
York County	1,525
Other Counties	<u>1,213</u>
TOTAL	13,979

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

- * Opened the first BVCA Head Start Center in Kansas at Mankato
- * Awarded AmeriCorps grant for violence prevention
- * Began construction on duplex affordable apartments in Geneva, Grafton and Exeter
- * Awarded Nebraska's first "Community Good Beginnings" for Crete collaborations
- * Expanded Head Start to Wymore in Gage County
- * Awarded WIC Demonstration Project in hospitals
- * Opened Phase I of the newly constructed 12,100 sq. ft. Blue River Family Center
- * Rehabilitated five homes with financing from private dollars
- * Began construction on the first BVCA eight unit apartment building in Crete
- * Awarded "Good Beginnings" recognition for Blue River Family Center by First Lady Diane Nelson
- * Remodeled a second homeless shelter owned by BVCA, in York
- * Revamped and modernized BVCA fiscal operations
- * Set collection records during Can-Care-A-Van food drives in Beatrice, Geneva, York, Fairbury, Seward and Hebron
- * Repaired and remodeled 24 units of housing using public resources
- * Weatherized 158 units of housing
- * Served a record number of children in the Head Start Program
- * Awarded a second WIC demonstration project to provide nurse home visits
- * Opened BVCA's second privately funded pre-school and our first day care
- * Received 1st round approval in a private funded housing development competition
- * Constructed and opened the Tender Loving Care Center for mildly ill children
- * Sponsored a regional Youth Violence Workshop in Beatrice
- * Enrolled the highest number of Grandparents in BVCA's operation of the seniors working with special needs children Foster Grandparent Program
- * Began home visitation and chore service for elderly in Saline County
- * Received a record number of donated non-cash contributions (\$1,151,610.54) and volunteer hours (33,735 1/4 hours which equates to more than 16 full time people)
- * Received second year funding for full day services from Child Care Block Grant

PURPOSE AND HISTORY

Blue Valley Community Action (BVCA) is a private, nonprofit corporation that has provided services to the residents of southeast Nebraska for almost 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 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, 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 13,979 individuals during the 1994 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 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 and their families. BVCI serves a ten county area of southeast Nebraska including Butler, Fillmore, Gage, Jefferson, Polk, Saline, Saunders, 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 271 families and received 1,788 crisis line calls this year. The BVCI staff gave 136 presentations to audiences of 3,755 people.

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.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION PROGRAMS

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. 19,475 food packages were given to 2,312 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 834 families in emergency situations. The annual Can-Care-A-Van, sponsored by KOLN/KGIN TV, Con Agra and Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska, generated over 47,000 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 1994, 61 households received tomatoes, peppers and cabbage plants.

IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM: BVCA coordinates five public immunization clinics in Seward, Saline, and Jefferson Counties each month. 1,526 children, ages 2 months to 21 years were given 4,310 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 is funded through the State of Nebraska Department of Health. Currently there are 33 people enrolled in this program.

PEOPLE CARING FOR PEOPLE: This 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 1994, 291 women were involved in the program.

WIC (WOMEN, INFANT & CHILDREN SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD PROGRAM): This nutritional 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, 27,058 food vouchers were given to 1,434 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.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

HEAD START: Head Start is a nationally renowned child development program for pre-school children ages 3 to 5, which stresses parent involvement, education, social services and health. Throughout the 1993-94 Head Start year, we served 235 children within 9 counties in Nebraska. Of the 235 children, 94 were 3 years old, 134 were 4 years old, and seven were 5 years old. At some time during the program 181 of those children were enrolled in Medicaid and 75 families received AFDC benefits.

Fifty of the enrolled children were diagnosed with a disability. Of these fifty children, 26 were 3 years old, 22 were 4 years old, and 2 were 5 years old. Most of these children were receiving help to deal with these disabilities, however, the Head Start Staff provided steps to those who were not receiving the appropriate care.

The ethnic composition of the enrolled children were as follows: three Native Americans, one Asian, seven Hispanic, and 222 Caucasians.

Blue Valley Community Action's Head Start program received funding for 210 children. Sixteen children were served in the Home Base option which consists of one home visit per week per family and two center experiences a month. The remaining 194 children were enrolled in the Combination Program which offers center activities two days a week for each child and two home visits a month for each family.

FRIEND PRESCHOOL: Blue Valley Community Action offers a pre-school opportunity on a fee basis. Twenty-two children were enrolled in this private preschool during the 1993-94 school year.

BLUE RIVER FAMILY CENTER: The 1993-94 fiscal year was the beginning of a new addition under BVCA's umbrella. Although the Blue River Family Center's permanent facility was still under construction, two programs were being operated in alternative sites. On August 24, 1994, the preschool program and the schoolage program began operating. Approximately 45 children were being served as of September 30, 1994.

When completed, the Blue River Family Center will provide a central location within the community of Crete for comprehensive human services available to children and families. The BRFC will house the following programs: Head Start, infant to preschool child care, TLC sick child care, before and after school child care, immunization clinic, WIC program, the food pantry, Pioneer 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.

HOUSING PROGRAMS

WEATHERIZATION PROGRAM: The weatherization program receives federal funding that is administrated by the Nebraska Energy Office. These funds are eligible to individuals meeting the 130% poverty guidelines. The weatherization program encompasses all of our nine county service area. The essence of the programs involves all energy saving measures. Blue Valley Community Action weatherized a total of 158 units in the past year.

HOUSING REHABILITATION PROGRAMS: In the past year we have completed a Saline Housing Preservation Program serving 19 families with extensive rehabilitation on home owned units. This program performs all health and safety measures on the unit.

Also in the 1994 fiscal year, we began administering a Seward Housing Preservation Program serving one family with extensive rehabilitation. An additional 20 to 25 units are scheduled for 1995.

We have served 15 families with the Housing Preservation Loan Fund, which offers low interest loan to eligible income recipients, to rehabilitate their home to health and safety standards.

In the past year we have served 2 families with the Community Development Block Grant Revolving Loan fund in Butler County, which offers low interest loans to eligible income recipients, to rehabilitate their home to health and safety standards.

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS: Three properties in two communities were purchased and rehabilitated during the 1993 and 1994 fiscal years. These three properties are occupied as affordable housing units.

Currently under construction is an eight-plex facility consisting of four 2-bedroom and four 3-bedroom units including one handicap accessible and one sensory impaired unit. This project is funded partially with HOME funds, Low Income Tax Credits and a small first mortgage.

Also under construction are three duplexes consisting of two and three bedroom units which will all be rented as low-income units per the HOME guidelines. The units are anticipated to be completed by April, 1995. Funding for this project was received from HOME Disaster Funds to replenish and replace housing stock that was lost due to the storms in Nebraska in 1993. A small first mortgage was also acquired.

HOMELESS SHELTER PROGRAM: BVCA operates a number of facilities used for short-term and longer-term shelter for homeless individuals or families. During the 1994 fiscal year 103 families (158 persons) were served. The need for shelter may be due to fire, tornadoes, transience, domestic disputes and homelessness. Shelters are located in Gage and Jefferson Counties and, in the near future, York County. 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. 151 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 51,000 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, 834 households received Christmas baskets and 1,261 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, 194 individuals were given 7,260 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 local aging offices in some cases.

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 and Friendly Visitors.

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 restraint loan 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 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 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*

*Tim Zikmund
Deputy 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*