



Quarterly Connection

Our Mission

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

Our Board Members

Luis Sotelo, President
 Julie Johnston-Hermann, Vice President
 Mark Schoenrock, Secretary
 Luellen Schauer, Treasurer

Tony Krafka
 Mike Boss
 Dave Dohmen
 Nancy Lee
 Patrick Carraher
 Joyce Knudson
 Liesal Hoffman
 Phil Hardenburger
 John Culver
 Don Schuller
 Steve Van Hoosen
 Janet Whitehurst
 Kimberly Green
 Jennifer Banos
 Jeff Neiman
 Marlin Bauhard
 Michelle Steckly
 Jeff Hammer
 Madhav Narayan
 Rochelle Monroe
 Mikala Chrastil
 Melanie Disney
 Shannon Dohmen

Our Leadership Team

Shari Weber
 Chief Executive Officer

Heather Lytle
 Administrative Director

Jamie Swartz
 Fiscal Director

Ryan Bailey
 FCS Director

Kim Clark
 Housing Director

Tiffany Shoner
 Children Services Director

Danielle Meade
 Health & Nutrition Director

Roxanne Hammond
 Human Resources Officer

Ben Schwartz
 Communications & Development Director

In This Issue

- 1 | BRELA Open House
- 2 | BVCA Celebrates Community Action Month
- 3 | Annual Campaign Thank You
- 4 | BVCA Awarded WIC CIAO Grant
- 5 | Foster Grandparent Recognition
- 6 | ¼ Brief

BRELA OPEN HOUSE

Blue Valley Community Action Partnership celebrated the Blue River Early Learning Academy (BRELA) on June 26 with an open house. BRELA was pleased to share with the community of Crete a new preschool classroom while also showcasing the entire building as well as their employees. BRELA's employees, along with BVCA Administration, glowed while they walked around the building with Senator Brandt, Senator Dorn, Mayor Bauer, and community members, which included BVCA's Board President, Luis Sotelo.

The new classroom will provide the opportunity for more social emotional and cognitive learning by creating a space that allows for children to be spread out amongst the classroom with fewer children in one room. During the tour, six lead teachers spoke about the curriculum, routines, meals and social emotional possibilities in the building. Early care and education is important to BRELA and they were excited to provide a space and time for the community to see the essential functions that occur everyday.

Pictured below (l-r): Back row: Luis Sotelo, BVCA Board President; Dave Bauer, Mayor of Crete; Senator Myron Dorn; Senator Tom Brandt. Middle row: Tiffany Shoner, BVCA Children Services Director; Sarah Johnson, Teacher; Cheri Chulpa, Classroom Coordinator; Amy Kearney, Teacher; Shari Weber, BVCA CEO. Bottom Row: Barbra Dressel, Teacher Aide; Brenda Kiima, Teacher; Amy Kemerling, Teacher; Amy Sinn, Teacher; Hannah Manalili, Teacher; Penny Thompson, Site Leader



Visit Us Online

www.bvca.net
www.facebook.com/BVCAPartnership
www.twitter.com/BVCAPartnership
www.youtube.com/BVCAPartnership
www.instagram.com/bvcapartnership
www.tiktok.com/@bvca_partnership



BVCA CELEBRATES COMMUNITY ACTION MONTH

During Community Action Month, BVCA found several ways to celebrate and raise awareness of the great work that Community Action does every day. Following is a list and photos of some of the activities that BVCA either participated in or hosted during the month of May.

- Community Action of Nebraska Proclamation Signing with Governor Pillen
- Community Action Proclamation Signing with Beatrice Mayor Morgan
- Annual “Spring into Action” Virtual Run/Walk Event
- Seward County Gives Event
- Crete Cinco de Mayo Event
- Free Sloppy Joes Community Event with a Weatherization information booth in Butler County
- WIC Huggy Heart Coloring Event for the children
- Community Action awareness and appreciation gift baskets for community partners & businesses
- Retirement Celebration for Joyce Mason—36 years of service





Thank You

Blue Valley Community Action Partnership would like to thank the businesses who sponsored our 2023 Annual Campaign and/or our "Spring Into Action" virtual run/walk.

OTHER SPONSORS INCLUDE:
Tom Posey Real Estate & Appraisal, Van Borkum Co., Drake Refrigeration, Beatrice Serfoma Club and Kiwanis Foundation.

In addition, we'd also like to extend our thanks to the individuals who participated in our "Spring Into Action" virtual run as well as to those who have personally donated to our Annual Campaign. Your contribution will help those struggling to maintain economic stability.



BVCA PARTNERSHIP RECEIVES \$478,953 GRANT TO REACH MORE FAMILIES THROUGH INNOVATIVE WIC OUTREACH EFFORTS



BVCA Partnership has been awarded a \$478,953 grant to implement a WIC Community Innovation and Outreach Project (WIC CIAO). WIC CIAO is supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service and aims to support efforts to develop, implement, and evaluate innovative outreach strategies to increase awareness, participation, and benefit redemption in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and reduce disparities in program delivery.

“Too many women and children in Nebraska are missing out on the nutrition they need in order to thrive,” said Danielle Meade, Health & Nutrition Services Director, BVCA Partnership. “We are proud to be part of this critical initiative to identify new ways of connecting people to WIC.”

BVCA Partnership was selected through a highly competitive grant process. The Women Infants and Children (WIC) program is a hidden treasure for communities across Nebraska and the United States. Unfortunately, due to budget restrictions innovative outreach has not always been a priority for WIC staff. With this grant comes the opportunity to initiate innovative strategies to address the continuing decline in WIC participation in our service area. We seek to improve awareness of what WIC is and how we can help our low-income, rural communities and the Hispanic/Latino population. We will work towards an increase in utilization of WIC benefits among our rural and non-English speaking populations by providing the tools and knowledge they need to make the most of their participation in WIC. And finally, we aim to improve awareness of WIC services among rural healthcare providers, rural businesses and rural organizations that serve the rural and Hispanic/Latino populations. By utilizing state and community data we will determine and develop new ways to reach all potential WIC participants. And by creating easy and cost-effective outreach methods that can be maintained after the grant period we aim to continue the growth of the WIC program for years to come.

BVCA Partnership, located in Fairbury, Nebraska, provides WIC services including healthy foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding counseling and referrals for 1,178 participants, including 302 pregnant and postpartum individuals, 330 infants up to 12 months, and 546 children up to age 5.

In 2020, [only 50 percent](#) of all eligible individuals nationwide participated in WIC, equating to a shortfall of almost 6 million individuals. The WIC CIAO Project aims to change that by expanding partnerships with community organizations and using community-level data to develop and implement innovative WIC outreach efforts.

Reaching more families with WIC will have positive impacts on the community. WIC has been shown to provide wide-ranging benefits, including longer, safer pregnancies, with fewer premature births and infant deaths; improved dietary outcomes for infants and children; improved maternal health; and improved performance at school, among others. In addition to health benefits, WIC participants showed significant savings in health care costs when compared to non-participants.

In total, there are 36 [WIC CIAO awardees](#) made up of WIC state and local agencies, including tribal nations, and nonprofit entities and organizations.

WIC CIAO is administered through a USDA cooperative agreement with the [Food Research & Action Center](#), in partnership with the [Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition](#), the [Native American Agriculture Fund](#), and [UnidosUS](#). WIC CIAO is part of USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service broader initiative to [modernize](#) WIC. Visit hellowic.org to find out more about the WIC CIAO Project and awardees, and sign up for updates on [WIC CIAO events and announcements](#).



FOSTER GRANDPARENT RECOGNITION

On April 26, 2023, the Pioneer Foster Grandparent Program Recognition was held in Beatrice at the Vintage Venue. Twenty-seven of the 29 volunteers attended the luncheon as well as many volunteer station representatives. Volunteers were able to invite a special personal guest to accompany them to the lunch as well. A total of 57 people attended the event. All volunteers received a t-shirt with this year's theme, "AmeriCorps Seniors are like Sunshine on a Cloudy Day", prior to the Recognition. During awards, volunteers received their 2023 volunteer pin with the current year's theme, as well as certificates of appreciation. One volunteer who serves at the Beatrice Community Preschool received her five-year pin.

Annual flowers decorated the tables and each person in attendance got to take a flower home with them. Everyone was also given a bottle of water with a flavored drink packet with a note that said "Thanks for helping others Shine". The focus of this luncheon was to express our sincere gratitude to the volunteers and all of those who invest in our program's success.

Please visit the Pioneer Foster Grandparent Program Facebook page for more pictures and program information and updates.



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

BVCA has several positions available! Visit www.bvca.net and select "Careers" to find out more about our career opportunities and benefits. Visit <https://bvca.hireclick.com/jobboard> to apply.



Blue Valley Community Action Partnership's 3rd Quarter Outreach

Case Management	102	Individuals
Childcare Services	17	Individuals
Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)	435	Individuals
Compassionate Projects	0	Individuals
COVID-19 Vaccines	1	Vaccinations
Digital Navigation This program ended 12/31/22.		
Early Head Start Child Care Partnership	36	Individuals
Early Head Start Home Based Services	75	Individuals
Early Head Start & Head Start Childcare Food Program	5218	Meals & Snacks
Emergency Assistance	59	Households
Family & Youth Involvement Center (CASTLE)	123	Individuals
Financial Coaching	118	Individuals
Food Rescue/Security	384	Households
Foster Grandparent Program	30	Individuals
Friends of Blue Valley Volunteer Program	281	Individuals
Head Start	210	Individuals
Homeownership Opportunity Program	2	Households
Housing Counseling	152	Individuals
Immunization Program	249	Shots
Infant Quality Initiative Program	11	Individuals
Lease-to-Own	52	Households
Mortgage Assistance This program ended 9/30/22.		
Nebraska Homeless Assistance Program (Shelter)	1	Households
Opportunity Passport This program ended 10/1/22.		Individuals
Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation	1	Households
Project FIRST TH/RRH (Families In Residence with Support in Transition/Rapid Re-Housing)	7	Households
Project FYRES (Focused Youth on Rehousing, Empowerment & Stability)	9	Households
Rental Apartments/Duplexes	91	Households
Rental Elderly Apartments	32	Households
Rural Southeast Nebraska Connected Youth Initiative This program is		
SNAP Outreach (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)	19	Applications
Southeast Nebraska Collaborative Community Response This program		
SSI-SSDI Outreach, Access & Recovery (SOAR)	8	Individuals
Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)	90	Individuals
Thrift Stores	800	Individuals
Transportation	1244	Rides
Weatherization	25	Households
WIC Peer Counseling	18	Individuals
Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)	933	Individuals



WE ARE HERE TO HELP

Visit us at 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.