O.C.E.A.N., Inc. Day at Lakewood Blueclaws

Through in-kind donations by Lakewood BlueClaws, the O.C.E.A.N., Inc. Head Start families, agency staff and board members participated in the O.C.E.A.N., Inc. Day on April 13, 2018 at the Lakewood BlueClaws Stadium. The event included pre-game nutrition and fitness workshops for all Head Start families. Community Partners including staff from Congressman Tom MacArthur and Christopher H. Smith’s offices were in attendance along with Shoprite, NJDCA, St. Barnabas, the Ocean County Library and Health Department, Soccer Shots and Horizon Blue Cross, Blue Shield of New Jersey.

O.C.E.A.N., Inc. works in partnership with these organizations and agencies throughout Ocean County promoting healthy lifestyle choices through nutrition and fitness programs, services and materials to all members of our communities. Lakewood BlueClaws sponsored O.C.E.A.N., Inc. by providing free tickets to the ballpark which were distributed to all Head Start families to enjoy a night out and enjoy the ballgame while learning about fitness and nutrition.

Jennifer Underwood, NJDCA Noriko Kowalewski, Director of Constituent Services for Congressman Tom MacArthur, Channell Wilkins O.C.E.A.N., Inc. President/CEO and Board Chairperson Anita Woolery participated in the pre-game ceremony.

L-r: Justin Langlois and Glynis Wray of the Ocean County Library provided reading materials for the Head Start families.

O.C.E.A.N., Inc. is currently accepting Universal Service Fund (USF) Applications in Ocean and Atlantic Counties.

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- Eagle Scout Project 6
- Fair Housing 8
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Calendar of Events

June - September

July 4th - Independence Day - All Head Start Centers, Agency and Corporate Offices are closed.

September 3rd - Labor Day - All Head Start Centers, Agency and Corporate Offices are closed.

OCEAN TIDES

Volume III  Issue 17

June, 2018
Second Round Energy Challenge Winner

The second round winner of the O.C.E.A.N., Inc. Energy Challenge from October 2017 to March 2018 is the 40 Washington Street Administrative office with a 41.89% savings! All staff at that location will be having their luncheon on July 19th.

Since there was such an amazing overall savings, the agency also made an overall “Winner of the Year” category which went to the Barnegat Head Start Center with an overall savings of 31.39%. Their luncheon is slated for June 15th.

As a result of everyone’s energy conservation efforts throughout the entire year, O.C.E.A.N., Inc. saved a grand total of $15,697.89 (17.71%).

Just a reminder that the next round of the Energy Challenge has already begun! The third round started in April and will run through September, 2018 with the winning site receiving a catered lunch at the end of 2018. ♦

SmileAmazon.com

Support O.C.E.A.N., Inc. by shopping at AmazonSmile. When you shop at AmazonSmile, Amazon will donate to O.C.E.A.N., Inc.

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Lori Sigrist            Home Energy
Home Energy Outreach Events Held in Atlantic County

Assemblyman John Armato (pictured 2nd from the left) hosted the "Community Office Hours" at the Atlantic City Library in April with organizations including O.C.E.A.N., Inc., New Jersey Shares, Inc., Atlantic City Electric, South Jersey Gas and Clarifi staff who assisted in signing up residents in need of energy assistance. Mr. Armato is from the 2nd Legislative District in Northfield, NJ covering Atlantic County.

L-r: Stephanie Bittner from Clarifi, Assemblyman John Armato, Kimberly Warrick NJ Shares, Shantel Soto from O.C.E.A.N., Inc., and Christina Teel from South Jersey Gas.

O.C.E.A.N., Inc. Head Start Grow It, Try It, Like It........

As part of the Farm to Pre-School training provided by the NJ Department of Health, the O.C.E.A.N., Inc. Head Start Centers participated in the Grow it, Try it, like it project. Jessica Polenberg a cook at the Brick Head Start Center shows a display of the children's participation in the project. The children learned about sweet potatoes and participated in growing and cooking activities including preparation of sweet potato granola bars and sweet potato fries. The children really enjoyed preparing and

Jessica Polenberg the cook at the Brick Head Start Center shows the display to staff.
During the Month of May, O.C.E.A.N., Inc. celebrated Community Action Month as part of a National Community Action Campaign. The national office of the Community Action Partnership designates May as National Community Action Month to recognize Community Action Agencies’ work fighting poverty on the local level.

This year the Atlantic County Freeholders including Freeholder Ernest D. Coursey, and Sonya G. Harris, Clerk of the Atlantic County Board of Freeholders presented Channell Wilkins, President/CEO of O.C.E.A.N., Inc. with a Proclamation in recognition of Community Action Month.

O.C.E.A.N., Inc., is the designated Community Action Agency for Ocean, Atlantic and Cape May County residents and also provides services in Monmouth County. More than 26,002 unduplicated individuals were served by O.C.E.A.N., Inc. last year through these services.

Each year, Community Action Agencies help 20 million Americans achieve and maintain financial stability through programs such as Head Start, Weatherization, job training and placement, financial education, housing, energy assistance and transportation.

The services provided by Community Action Agencies are even more critical as deficit reduction and spending cuts to key human services programs take place, while tens of millions of Americans across the country are struggling financially.

O.C.E.A.N., Inc. applies for the Ocean County CDBG Housing Rehabilitation Grant

O.C.E.A.N., Inc. continues to apply for funding for the Weatherization Rehabilitation Program. Through grant funding, the agency is able to provide weatherization conservation measures to provide immediate and long term relief to eligible residents with supplemental services including roof repair/replacements, trailer skirting and installation of fascia and soffits. The grant also covers heater/hot water repair and replacements.
O.C.E.A.N., Inc. and other members of the Ducktown Revitalization Team conducted the kick-off meeting with the Wells Fargo Regional Foundation staff who provided grant funding to O.C.E.A.N., Inc. to provide the Ducktown Neighborhood Revitalization Plan. The plan will include the guidance and structure of creating a blueprint for the community and what it will look like over a span of 10 years.

The team partners include O.C.E.A.N., Inc., planner Rutala Associates, LLC., Stockton University, City Officials, law enforcement, Atlantic City PAL, Faith, Arts, Community Organizations, volunteers, residents and residential leadership from Ducktown who will all be part of the process in bringing the neighborhood together to plan for its future.

Throughout the next 12 months, the team will have the opportunity to learn about the human landscape of Ducktown through the development of leadership in the community. The creation of the agenda are based on the following pillars of success including:

1) Affordable Housing - The team will help residents access affordable housing. 2) Economic Development by working with the business merchants and providing technical assistance to the business. 3) Workforce Development including ESL, skills training, childcare, transportation and getting people to jobs. 4) Neighborhood Buddy - Creating a cohesion between neighbors and developing leadership within the residents, community safety and the celebration of culture through community cohesion. 5) The team will review program gaps for families and children and will find out ways to engage residents into these programs.

As part of the community engagement process, the team will conduct residential surveys to over 1300 housing units in the Ducktown section providing baseline data for evaluation (assessment tool) showing success over time.
NJ and Regional USDA Recognizes
O.C.E.A.N., Inc’s CACFP Program

Declan Stapleton of Troop 6 completes his Eagle Scout Project to benefit Head Start Students

Eagle Scout is the highest achievement in the scouting program. Only four percent of Scouts are granted this rank after a lengthy review process. The requirements necessary to achieve this rank take years to fulfill and require a scout to complete a project like the multi-functional table Declan and his volunteers completed for the agency. O.C.E.A.N., Inc. congratulates Declan on his project and on his rank of Eagle Scout.


O.C.E.A.N., Inc. staff accepts a proclamation from NJ State and a certificate from the Regional USDA in recognition of successful implementation of the updated CACFP Meal Pattern requirements which feature meals with a variety of new vegetables that encourages children to develop healthier food choices. Photo: L-r Channell Wilkins, President/CEO, Theresa Gerhard, Nutrition Services Manager, Rose Tricario, New Jersey Department of Agriculture Division of Food and Nutrition Director and Meg Saunders, O.C.E.A.N., Inc. Head Start Director.

Clockwise, Patricia Dombroski, USDA Regional Food and Nutrition Administrator watches as Lisa Pagano, Teacher at OCC serves lunch family style to the Head Start students. The program encourages children to learn healthy eating habits which will promote life-long healthy behaviors.

Photo: L-r Channell Wilkins, President/CEO, Therisa Gerhard, Nutrition Services Manager, Rose Tricario, New Jersey Department of Agriculture Division of Food and Nutrition Director and Meg Saunders, O.C.E.A.N., Inc. Head Start Director.
Employee Recognition at General Staff Meeting

O.C.E.A.N., Inc. Staff Received their Letters of Appreciation at the Monthly General Staff Meeting

Georjean Trinkle, of the Community Action Partnership of NJ and Jennifer Underwood of NJDCA conducted Regional Board Trainings throughout NJ. O.C.E.A.N., Inc. board members and board members from other CAA’s participated in these two-day trainings.

Downtown Toms River Trolly Begins Rolling

O.C.E.A.N., Inc. clients and visitors to the County Seat have a new way of getting around the downtown area. A new trolly promoted by the Downtown Business Improvement District and sponsored by local businesses will run service through Labor Day and may be extended.

O.C.E.A.N., Inc. Hosted a Regional Board Training for the CAA’s of Central New Jersey

Dana Mancini- Crilley - 10 Years of Service

Kelly Valente - 5 Years of Service

Lori Sigrist - 25 Years of Service

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A one-day fair housing seminar held in April explained to residents, what their rights are, as well as what it means to comply with fair housing regulations for developers, builders and administrators of housing developments. The seminar was sponsored by Toms River Township, the nonprofit Solutions To End Poverty Soon (STEPS) and the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development. Also in attendance were the community action agency - O.C.E.A.N., Inc. and other community and faith-based organizations throughout the region.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Fair Housing Act, which was signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson in 1968. The seminar focused on such topics as how the fair housing act and other related legislation protects residents from housing discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability and familial status. Fair Housing counselors were also present at the seminar to listen to residents and their concerns. The free, daylong seminar provided an overview of the rules and specifications required by fair housing laws. The conference was important because residents should understand the laws and what rights they have so they can fully use and enjoy their homes.
The featured speaker for the event was Lynne Patton, HUD's Regional Administrator of Region II, which encompasses New York and New Jersey. Regional administrators serve as HUD's liaisons to mayors, city managers, elected representatives, state and local officials, members of Congress, private and nonprofit developers, and customers. They oversee the delivery of HUD programs and services to communities and evaluate their efficiency and effectiveness. There are 10 regional administrators in the United States.

Patton's presentation focused on the history of the Fair Housing Act. She also discussed some changes that will take place in the near future as it pertains to Section 3 and Section 8 rules which will be reviewed by HUD representatives.

“For the past 50 years, HUD has lead the charge to protect tenants from discrimination and I commend the Township of Toms River for bringing together stakeholders and residents to raise awareness of the unacceptable reality that discrimination continues to adversely affect tenants and their families,” Patton said. "I look forward to working with all involved to ensure they are aware of the HUD resources available to them, so that the communities can one day eradicate the silos of housing discrimination."

Don Guardian, Toms River Township Administrator presented the Fair Housing Proclamation at the seminar. Photo L-r: David Roberts, Toms River Division of Community Development Director and Fair Housing Officer, Lynne Patton, HUD Region II Administrator, Maria Maio-Messano, HUD Newark Field Director, Donald Guardian, Administrator of Toms River Township and Kaitlin McGuinness, Project Specialist for U.S. Senator Cory A. Booker.
All good things must come to an end. In May, Dr. Rosser of the Stealth Learning Program and staff of the Middle Township School District provided a Dinner/Awards Ceremony Finale for the participating Middle Township students, teachers and student/coaches who participated in making the program successful. ♦

L-r: Laura Lambert, Middle Township Teacher/Supervisor of the after school program, Freeholder Ernest D. Coursey, Student/Coach, Emma Guinane, Robert H. Matthews, Superintendent of Recreation at Middle Township and Student/Coaches Thomas Jefferson, and Augustina Mallous.

O.C.E.A.N., Inc. Testimonial-Letter of Appreciation

Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Attn: Lauren Christopher, Director Mary E. Switzer Building, 5th Floor 330 C Street, SW Washington, D.C. 20201

Re: Employee Recognition for Ocean County, New Jersey Waretown HEAP Office Representative - Dawn

Dear Lauren,

I am writing this letter as a humble note of appreciation for the outstanding service provided by one of your team members in your Waretown Office in Ocean County, New Jersey. I had my first interaction with Dawn a few months back. She was extremely patient, kind and explained how the HEAP program works and so on. I sent in my paperwork as directed and prayed for the best. A few weeks went by and I had not heard anything. I ended up reaching out and spoke with Dawn once again. She took the time out of what I am sure is a hectic schedule to sift through all the paperwork as she remembered me and my story. Most recently I called your office and guess who took my call? Yes, it was Dawn. She remembered me right away as I began talking. She pulled my file and advised me on where I was in the process and I thanked her for all her help. This has been a very difficult time for me personally and one of the hardest things I've had to deal with. The fact that your staff showed empathy, kindness and outstanding customer service is something we don't always hear. Most people are quick to call and only complain, not thank. I wanted to personally reach out to you and ask you to please ensure Dawn at the Waretown HEAP office is acknowledged for the outstanding service she continues to provide.

Respectfully, Rosemarie
Although they are just finishing up the fifth grade, Middle Township students just wrapped up a curriculum that included surgical simulation used to train real-life surgeons. The Middle Township School District just completed the Stealth Learning Initiative with the help of the Stealth Learning Company CEO, Dr. James “Butch” Rosser and through a grant from O.C.E.A.N., Inc. The district celebrated this event with the presentation of awards to students and teachers who participated. Rosser distributed awards to each participant and thanked them and their families for all of their hard work and their devotion to the program. After the award ceremony, parents were invited to participate in some of the activities that their children worked on each week, including video games, surgery simulators, and drones. The students met for 10 sessions after school at the Whitesboro Grammar School before beginning PARCC testing. At the beginning of the year, Rosser trained a group of teachers from throughout the district and high school students who would then use what they learned to teach fifth-graders different Stealth Learning techniques. “My favorite part of the program was learning a lot of different things that I didn’t know I could learn before. I got to fly a drone, which was a lot of fun. The program also really got me more into science. It was a lot of work, but I really liked what I was able to learn,” stated fifth-grader Savannah Hill. The best part about the Stealth Learning Initiative for the teachers was the opportunity to become students again and learn alongside the high school students.
O.C.E.A.N., Inc. applied for the Atlantic City CDBG HOME funding and received approval to construct three units at 38 N Texas Avenue in the Ducktown Section of Atlantic City.

At the June 13, 2018 Council Meeting held in Atlantic City, Channell Wilkins, President/CEO presented to the Atlantic City Council the proposed plans for the construction of three affordable housing units at 38 N. Texas Avenue.

During the presentation, Wilkins discussed the agencies previous construction projects and the agencies ability to continue with new construction projects into the future.

As part of the Ducktown Revitalization project, O.C.E.A.N., Inc. will create affordable housing and the team will help residents access affordable housing. ♦

Channell Wilkins, O.C.E.A.N., Inc. President/CEO presents the agency Ducktown Housing Project to the Atlantic City Council members.