

Fall 2024

UCAP Prioritizes Safe, Stable & Affordable Housing

United CAP recognizes housing as fundamental to a family's ability to improve themselves and their circumstances for a better future. Not only is housing necessary to reduce poverty and increase economic mobility, when tenants can afford rent, more of the family's budget can go towards food, transportation, health care and other resources.



For more than 30 years, UCAP has provided programs to support housing needs in Creek, Kay, Osage, Pawnee and Noble counties. The agency is a Community Housing Development Organization, CHDO, meeting requirements to maintain this designation to develop affordable housing projects supporting 370 units. Properties include: Cambridge Court, in Sapulpa; Edgewood at the Gables, in Sand Springs; Copper Ridge and Willow Creek, located in Ponca City; and Glenshire Court, in Glenpool. Uniquely, UCAP took the lead to develop, construct and is the owner of Pawnee Townhomes. Potential tenants have the option to lease one, two or three bedroom units. Rent is subject to federal income guidelines and all tenants are vetted.



In 2023, UCAP rentals provided safe and affordable housing to 44 families. These single-family dwellings are typically 3 bed/2 bath homes. Rentals are located in Billings, Blackwell, Fairfax, Newkirk, Pawnee, Perkins, Perry and Tonkawa.

Gary Vance, Jr. Housing Director, ensure rentals are kept in a state of good condition. UCAP partners with the Oklahoma Housing and Finance



Pictured above, Gary Vance, Jr., Housing Director with newest tenant, Ms. Davis, of Perkins.

From the Desk of Executive Director Johnny Bryant

For years, we have been seeking funds for a new Cushing Head Start/Early Head Start building. After operating in other smaller facilities, a piece of land was secured years ago with the vision for a new facility. We are now nearing the end of completion and I have been monitoring construction through its various phases, as shown in the adjoining picture (lower right) with Board Member James Adams, Cushing Head Start Center Director Jerri Harris, me, Executive Assistant Monica Sewell, and Procurement Officer/Transit Operations Manager Randy Heisler.

A long range goal of mine has always been to provide nice operating facilities for the Head Start/Early Head Start children as well as all of our workers. I appreciate the work that Head Start Director Kim Rice and Randy Heisler have put into securing funds and necessary steps towards this project and other new facilities in our area.

Also, nearing completion are two Payne County houses that have been renovated for rental to low-income or other vulnerable residents. The goal is to provide adequate housing for residents in our service area. Gary Vance, Jr., UCAP's Housing Director, has been working on this effort.

Finally, I'd like to welcome UCAP's new board member Roy Fleshman. Fleshman replaces long-time board member Margie Janzen, who is no longer able to participate. Roy is a very active part of the community of Morrison, OK. We are pleased to welcome him to the Board of Directors.



Cimarron Transit Hits Silver Anniversary

November marks 25 years of service and impact of Cimarron Public Transit System (CPTS). The rural program is an essential curb-to-curb, shared-ride service covering 5,238 square miles. CPTS operates in Creek, Kay, Osage, Pawnee and Washington counties, Monday through Friday. An average of 10,000 trips are provided each month.



Project managers with Oklahoma Mobility and Public Transit, a division of Oklahoma Department of Transportation, traveled to Pawnee this summer for a post delivery audit of a new ADA vehicle. The Braun Wagon serves the Ponca City community. Pictured from left, Mason Brown, Justin Gregory and Randy Heisler, CPTS Operations Manager.

Staff Profile- Janet Thrasher

Janet Thrasher: A Lifelong Commitment to United CAP and Community

It was the summer of 1982, when Pawnee native Janet Thrasher embarked on a career with United CAP that would span over four decades. Her first major achievement was relocating the local Head Start site from the Pawnee Nation to UCAP, a move that marked the beginning of her deep involvement with the Head Start Program. Throughout her early years, Thrasher immersed herself in various roles within the program, including teacher assistant, teacher, center site manager, home visitor, and home visitor supervisor.

For more than half her career, Thrasher's journey primarily revolved around her role as a Human Resource Manager, where she has played a pivotal role in shaping the agency's workforce and culture.

A Legacy of Impact

Thrasher's tenure at UCAP is marked by her unwavering commitment to both the employees and the families they serve. She has witnessed first-hand the transformative outcomes for children who have gone through the Head Start Program, and she has seen the agency grow and evolve over the years.

Personal Triumphs and Passion

Beyond her professional life, Thrasher is a creative spirit who enjoys crafting and taking pride in planning agency events. Her greatest joy comes from her grandsons, whose sporting and school events she follows with enthusiasm.

Having overcome personal tragedy, Thrasher has learned the importance of resilience and self-advocacy. She lives by the philosophy that "life is too short to dwell on what could have been," embracing the mantra "just let it go" as a guide for moving forward. Her favorite quote, "Treat others as you would like to be treated," reflects the kindness and empathy she brings to all aspects of her life.



Thrasher, pictured top and with husband, Pete, grandchildren from left Layden, Devlynn and Waylen (front right).

Pawnee/Osage CASA Summer of 2024



The Annual CASA Bingo Fundraiser was held July 12 at the Pawnee Women's Building, raising \$3,457 to support general operation expenses. 81 people attended the event.



Pawnee/Osage CASA partnered with the Osage Nation Indian Child Welfare to host a free bingo event in Hominy.



Pictured above: CASA staff and volunteers attended the CASA State Conference.



Honoring Heritage and Community:

UCAP Board Member Teresa Bates Rutherford

Since joining the UCAP Board on January 19, 2016, Teresa Bates Rutherford has brought a wealth of experience and a deep commitment to community service. An Osage tribal member from the Grayhorse District, Rutherford shows pride in her heritage, having raised two daughters and four granddaughters to respect and actively participate in Osage traditions.

With a career spanning the technology world as a computer analyst, followed by an unexpected turn as a Blackjack and Poker dealer at a local casino, Rutherford retired twice, finding fulfillment in each phase of life. Retirement hasn't slowed her down.

Today, Rutherford serves on three boards, including chairing the Osage Nation Tax Commission Board, acting as Secretary for the United Community Action Program Board, and contributing to the Executive Committee of the Osage Shareholders Association.

For Rutherford, being a UCAP board member is about staying connected with the community, understanding its needs, and ensuring that UCAP's resources are utilized to meet those needs. "It's a role that feels more like an honor," says Rutherford, who is following in the footsteps of her father, Joe D. Bates, who also served on the board for many years.

Reflecting on her journey, Rutherford shares a favorite quote by Mick Jagger, "You can't always get what you want. But if you try sometimes, you might just find, you get what you need." This quote, has guided Rutherford to distinguish between desire and necessity—a principle that has brought contentment in both personal and professional life.

In addition to traveling, spending time with family, and serving the community, Rutherford has set a new goal: to become much better at speaking and writing the Osage language, ensuring that the rich traditions of the Osage people continue to thrive for generations to come.



Pictured above:
Teresa Bates Rutherford (top) and with fellow board member Rhonda Wallace at the Osage Oscars Watch Party in Pawhuska.

Holiday Closings 2024

October 14 - Columbus Day

Nov. 11 - Veterans' Day

Nov. 28 and 29th - Thanksgiving

Dec. 25 - Christmas

2025

Jan. 1 - New Year's Day

Jan. 20 - MLK Day

Feb. 17 - President's Day

April 18 - Good Friday

May 26 - Memorial Day

June 19 - Juneteenth Day

July 4 - Independence Day

September 1 - Labor Day



Last April, UCAP staff traveled to the OK State Capitol to deliver the agency's latest Annual report and visit with members of the Senate and House of Representatives about the importance of Community Action for vulnerable citizens, the local economy and the entire community in celebration of the 60th year of Community Action.

Pictured from left: IT Manager Adam Wheeler, Housing Director, Gary Vance, Jr., Executive Assistant Monica Sewell, Program Input Clerk Crystal Kirkham and Procurement Officer/Transit Operations Manager Randy Heisler.

Satisfaction Survey feedback: "The people are very helpful, respectful, kind and courteous. Some of the best people. Very beneficial to the community."

SURVEY FEEDBACK ON HEAD START

"Head Start provides homelike stability & views. I know my children are being taught and loved in a place that is safe and they are valued, able to be themselves, get to experience fun activities with friends and have great days."

New Survey Open

If you have benefited from a UCAP Program since July 1, 2024, please take time to complete the Customer Satisfaction Survey at the following link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/L8SWWGD>

All feedback provides valuable insight for staff to better assess current programs as well as anticipate future needs for the communities, individuals and families in the UCAP service area. For more information, or if you need the survey in a different format, contact 918-762-3041 Ext. 116.

United CAP Board of Directors

Executive Committee

Johnny Bryant, Executive Director
Michelle Turner, Chief Financial Officer
Harold Harris, Chair
Susan Case, Vice Chair
Teresa Bates Rutherford, Secretary
James Adams, Treasurer

Members of the Board

Beverly Brownfield
Chris Burnett
Roy Fleshman
Bronson Grimes
Billie Ponca
Jo Beth Spears
Rhonda Wallace
Mike Waters

Family and Community Services

Associated Charities

212 E. Bridge Avenue, Blackwell, OK
580-363-1290

Food bank and general assistance,
when funding available

Days and hours of operation
Tues. 3pm-5pm

Wed. 9am-11:30am and 3pm-5pm

Operation Blessings

803 Market Street, Perry
580-336-3313

General assistance, food pantry and
emergency needs.

Days and hours of operations-
Mon. through Fri. 9am-4pm

Clothing- 1st and 3rd Wed/Thurs of
month from 9am to noon

Donations accepted Monday-
Thursday 9am to noon.

United Community Action Program, Inc.
501 Sixth Street, Pawnee, OK 74058
918-762-3041

Visit us at www.ucapinc.org
www.facebook.com/ucapinc.org



Careers with United CAP

All Employment opportunities are posted on the agency website at www.ucapinc.org. UCAP is an equal opportunity employer (EOE). Positions are open to the public, as well as to United CAP staff. Applications can be completed on the website.

Go to Career Openings, scroll through the list of openings. Click on the 'Apply Now' button located at the top of the web page to download the application.

UCAP is committed to a workplace that acts upon daily responsibility to treat all applicants and employees with dignity and respect, as well as equitably under the guidelines of the EEO Plan. Call 918-762-3041, if you would like an application mailed to you. Applications can be returned to UCAP, 501 Sixth Street, Pawnee OK 74058, Attention: HR



Mission: To improve people's lives, embody the spirit of hope, and in partnership with communities, help low-income people lift themselves out of poverty by providing services and opportunities for increased self sufficiency and greater participation in the community.