A Year of the Pushmi-Pullyu

This last year has been full of contrasts, peaks and valleys, and can be likened to the Dr. Doolittle fictional animal, the Pushmi-Pullyu, famous for both coming and going at the same time.

While the local response to the COVID pandemic was amazing, by public health and health care providers, local businesses, and WSU, we saw ongoing impact of lost jobs, food insecurity, and the behavioral health challenges from being isolated at home for periods of time.

New and increased resources to help with food and housing security was timely, allowing Community Action Center to deploy relief to those who were struggling to pay rent and keep food on the table. Unfortunately, most of the funding was for direct services, and our staff was stretched with its efforts to meet the increased need and get relief out the door to people who needed it, while not having proportional funding to increase staffing. The push and the pull, so to speak. Yet, time and time again, our resilient staff came through with the help that was needed by so many who asked.

Despite the tension of being pulled and pushed at the same time in the last year, I am incredibly grateful for three things: a smart and strong staff who have persevered, a supportive and caring Board of Directors who remain engaged, and a generous community who have come alongside the work to help everyone reach their full potential!

With gratitude,

Jeff Guyett, Executive Director
The Food & Shelter Folks
Community Action Center (CAC) works to empower the people and communities of Whitman County to achieve their full potential by:

- Promoting the independence of people with low to moderate income;
- Promoting cooperation between local communities to enhance social and economic resource development; and
- Working to raise greater awareness to help communities address the causes of poverty.

STAFF
“2021 was a year full of challenges with extreme changes, including new programs and staff. New staff members jumped in feet first and prevented any lapse in assistance to the community. Being able to offer help to those in need with only minor bumps was miraculous. I believe it was due to staff’s hard work, desire to help, and willingness to learn.”

–Georgia Beck, Interim Housing Coordinator

RESIDENT
“I love that we have a place we can be proud of and invite people over and the comments are always, ‘Wow! What a beautiful home!’”

–Kelly Halsall, Riverview Resident

BOARD MEMBER
“Whitman County entered 2021 just recovering from the devastating loss of the Pine City and Malden Communities in the Labor Day fires. Add to that the isolation of social distancing, loss of friends and family, business closures, and conflicts over the pandemic. The situation stretched all of us. It was a pleasure to see the care and perseverance each staff member at the Community Action Center demonstrated as they implemented strategies to maintain services at the highest levels we have seen in our history all the while protecting one another’s health and safety.”

–Bill Skavdahl, Board Member

Board of Directors • 2021-22
Peter Holland, Retired
Glenn Johnson, Mayor of Pullman
Annie Pillers, Whitman County Coroner
Kyle Rakowski, Graduate Student, WSU
Melanie Schaefer, Stewart Title
Bill Skavdahl, Values & Vision
Chris Skidmore, Whitman County Public Health
Year in Review

Community Food

Community Food’s new Mobile Farmstand launched in May, serving nine locations in Pullman and rural Whitman County towns! The Farmstand brings fresh, local produce to all people, while paying farmers for their crops. We refined our curbside food bank services, so families experience a smoother visit and more food choices. We saw more folks coming to the food bank in the fall compared to spring and summer 2021, especially after the eviction moratorium ended. We are working to expand the Mobile Farmstand to more communities, and offer more culturally diverse and diet-specific foods for families.

Weatherization

Weatherization makes homes safer, healthier, and more energy efficient, and reduces environmental allergens and unhealthy substances in the home. In 2021, we weatherized 18 households, with three projects in progress and 48 people on our waiting list. About half of the households on the waiting list use oil, wood, or propane as their heat source. With some new funding coming our way we may be able to convert these folks to efficient electric heat. Our team has done great work despite supply unavailability and backorders due to the pandemic, and being down one staff member. We anticipate hiring a new full-time energy auditor in 2022!

Energy Assistance

Energy Assistance distributed new COVID-19 relief funding in addition to our usual LIHEAP and Avista LIRAP programs. In program year 2021, over 2,577 services were completed for Energy, Utility, Shelter, and Furnace assistance. COVID-19 funding allowed more folks to catch up on bills, as well as prevent power and water disconnections, which was especially crucial to households when the utility moratorium ended in October 2021. We continue meeting folks over the phone and processing mail-in applications.

Housing Solutions

Housing Solutions was able to help relieve a lot of stress and anxiety to families and individuals that were feeling the pressure of lost jobs, decreased income, and uncertainty of the future by being able to help them secure their housing. Over 2021, we had more contact with families than any year in the past, holding a total of 1,430 case management appointments. Our team helped folks secure long-term housing, emergency rental assistance, deposit assistance, and resources for emergency shelter and bus tickets.

Housing Choice Vouchers

We assisted an average of 300 families each month with Section 8 housing choice vouchers, which help make housing affordable by paying for a portion of rent. Clients can now apply for our waiting list online. At the moment, we have 433 people on our waiting list.

CAC Affordable Housing

We finished upgrades to our Davis Way apartments, for families transitioning from homelessness toward permanent housing. We celebrated the grand opening of Riverview, our newest 56-unit housing complex for people with experiences of homelessness, veterans, survivors of domestic violence, people with disabilities, and families with children. Riverview is currently completely leased up. Avista installed a charging station for electric car charging at Riverview at no cost to us.
By the Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applications to receive Energy &amp; Utility Assistance and help to keep water, lights, and heat on</td>
<td>2,232</td>
<td>2,577</td>
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<tr>
<td>Households living in Community Action Center’s Affordable Housing</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People who received food at Community Food</td>
<td>7,816</td>
<td>7,210</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pounds of food distributed at Community Food</td>
<td>146,180</td>
<td>134,160</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homes weatherized for comfort and energy efficiency</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families who secured stable housing (or keep their home) through Housing Solutions</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How You Can Help

You can help us build a strong, resilient Whitman County! We need:

- **To help sustain your neighbors with food and housing needs**, please donate to Community Action Center at https://www.cacwhitman.org/donate/ or send checks to Community Action Center, 350 SE Fairmont Road, Pullman WA 99163

- **Cash donations for Community Food.** Your dollar will go farther in buying food if you donate cash than if you buy food to donate yourself at the store! Please donate at: https://www.cacwhitman.org/communityfood/

- **Food and toiletry donations for Community Food**, with monthly lists of foods needed on the Food Bank page of www.cacwhitman.org website. You can bring donations to 350 SE Fairmont Road in Pullman weekdays from 8:00-4:00 (closed for lunch 12:00-1:00). Please call the front desk (509-334-9147) to make an appointment to donate food. When dropping off the food, please come to the parking lot, call the front desk at 509-334-9147, and we will have a staff member come to your car to take the donation.

Your Investment in Our Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Number of Households/Year</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilities &amp; Program Support</td>
<td>$681,819</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low Income Weatherization</td>
<td>$1,119,605</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency Housing &amp; Needs, Transitional</td>
<td>$4,231,481</td>
<td>1,430</td>
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<tr>
<td>Affordable Rentals &amp; Housing Development</td>
<td>$1,311,369</td>
<td>266</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Food - Food Bank, Gardens &amp; Kitchen</td>
<td>$562,444</td>
<td>7,210</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rental Housing Vouchers</td>
<td>$1,690,551</td>
<td>356</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy Assistance</td>
<td>$1,478,976</td>
<td>2,577</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Community Action Center
350 SE Fairmont Rd • Pullman WA 99163
509-334-9147 • cacwhitman.org