

CONNECTS

CASEY

SUMMER 2003
A REPORT FROM THE
ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

IN THIS ISSUE: Countering the Hidden Costs of Poverty; Notes of Recognition;
Supporting America's Other Frontline; INSITES

COUNTERING THE HIDDEN COSTS OF POVERTY

The best way to ensure brighter futures for kids is to strengthen the ability of our nation's most vulnerable families to work, earn more money, provide for their children, and save for the future. But hidden obstacles that drain hard-earned dollars and diminish their chances of success block the path to economic security for many of America's low-income families.

"Even when the earnings of poor families improve, the disproportionately high price they pay for basic goods, services, and credit stands in the way of building savings and assets," Casey Foundation President Douglas W. Nelson said at a June 11 policy briefing timed to

coincide with the release of the 14th annual *KIDS COUNT Data Book*.

Each year, the *Data Book* provides state-by-state data on ten measures of child well-being, presents national charts and rankings, and offers the Foundation's perspective on an issue affecting disadvantaged families.

In the opening essay this year, entitled *The High Cost of Being Poor*, Nelson notes that for all families, "real financial security is dependent on their ability to build savings, accumulate assets, and protect themselves from emergencies. Yet for low-income families, it costs more simply to participate in the workforce, purchase basic goods, and secure

reasonably priced financial services—things most Americans take for granted."

Because mainstream retailers and banks that offer competitive prices and services are often absent from poor communities, low-income families end up paying more for goods and services. They wind up relying on local markets and businesses that offer convenience, but often at a steep price. They cash paychecks or conduct routine financial transactions only by paying extra fees, and their inability to borrow money at reasonable rates makes them vulnerable to unscrupulous predatory lenders. All of these factors combine to strip hard-earned dollars from the working poor and sap their ability to save.

Simply getting to work can be more expensive for low-income workers. Many jobs don't have ready access to public transportation, making owning a car a necessity. Yet too often, people who have less money to buy and maintain a car are charged higher rates for financing and insurance based on their zip codes and credit histories.

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Gloria Guerrero, left, and Corinne Chacón of the Rural Development & Finance Corporation and Martin Eakes of the Center for Community Self-Help at the June 11 policy briefing on the high cost of being poor.

NOTES OF RECOGNITION

CULTURAL AND TECHNOLOGY CENTER ADDS NEW DIMENSION TO EL PASO WELLNESS PROGRAM

Imagine a child diagnosed with diabetes getting an Rx enrolling her in a computer lab to help her learn about the disease and

folk dancing classes from her native country to help her shed extra pounds and stay in shape.

The door to that dream opened for El Paso, Texas families on April 30, when the Centro De Salud Familiar La Fe added to its repertoire of exemplary health services a new Cultural and Technology Center.

The Centro De Salud Familiar La Fe, better known simply as “La Fe,” is a 2001 honoree in the Casey Foundation’s FAMILIES COUNT: National Honors program, which recognizes organizations doing outstanding work to help strengthen both families and communities.

tiny clinic in a tenement building into a network of seven facilities with a \$13 million budget.

In 1999, La Fe launched the Child and Adolescent Wellness Center, a full-service pediatric medical and dental facility offering social services and extras like vouchers for school supplies for families who stay up to date on physicals and free car seats and training on how to use them for parents receiving prenatal care.

The Cultural and Technology Center rounds out the package with a state-of-the-art facility including 75 computer workstations for children and their parents, a professional graphics center, a 200-seat theater/auditorium, arts studio, and a small recording studio.

“As we have traveled around the country, we haven’t seen anything that links traditional health care with culture and technology in this way,” says Salvador Balcorta, the executive director of La Fe, who was one of the patients who visited the clinic with his mother as a

little boy. “We feel very strongly that as we expand the office visit, we will create more of an environment where the child feels comfortable visiting our medical and dental personnel.”

Besides encouraging preventive health care and healthy lifestyles, the new center’s programs will expose young people to microenterprise opportunities and teach them more about their communities and native cultures. It’s all part of the founding women’s quest for a better life for their children.

“We are using everything and anything we can in an attempt to curb the ugliness of gangs, violence, drug abuse, and kids

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The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children in the United States. The primary mission of the Foundation is to foster public policies, human-service reforms, and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today’s vulnerable children and families. In pursuit of this goal, the Foundation makes grants that help states, cities, and neighborhoods fashion more innovative, cost-effective responses to these needs.



Local families celebrate the opening of the Centro Salud Familiar La Fe’s new Cultural and Technology Center with Salvador Balcorta, executive director.

Founded in 1967 by a group of poor women tired of trekking their children long distances to doctors who didn’t speak their language or know their culture, La Fe has been a trailblazer in addressing “La Totalidad de Nuestro Bienestar”—wellness encompassing a full range of social, economic, political, educational, spiritual, and psychological needs.

The founders’ tenacity—and substantial support from foundations and institutions—has transformed what began as a



CAROL HIGHSWORTH

The Latin American Youth Center provides many kinds of support to help young people complete their education and lead productive lives. A new partnership with Venture Philanthropy Partners will help the center expand its impact.

dropping out of school and getting pregnant at an early age,” says Balcorta.

INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP GIVES YOUTH CENTER A CHANCE TO BROADEN ITS IMPACT

The Latin American Youth Center is not content to be an “island of caring” in its Columbia Heights neighborhood in north-west Washington, D.C. The 29-year-old organization dreams instead of being a bridge to ever-expanding opportunities for its residents as well as a model for other communities to follow.

The center, a 2002 FAMILIES COUNT Honoree, will have the opportunity to springboard to the next level thanks to a new partnership with Venture Philanthropy Partners (VPP). The nonprofit public charity has tapped the center as one of a

dozen or so promising community organizations in the National Capital area to receive financial and technical support to expand its reach and magnify its impact.

Launched in 1974 primarily as an after-school program for Latino youth whose families were new to the United States, the center now comes in contact with thousands of D.C. youth and families through an innovative array of educational, employment, and social programs, including two charter schools, a Ben & Jerry’s ice cream store owned and operated by the center, and another store and partnerships with other businesses in the works.

“We have looked for ways to bring resources into the community and put them to work for our young people and families,” explains Lori Kaplan, executive director of the center. The center’s work

focuses mostly on young people who have dropped out, are having trouble in school, or need extra support to stay on course and graduate. A third of the center’s staff were recipients of these services, and many young people touched by the program are making positive contributions to the community.

VPP will provide the center up to \$250,000 and intensive support from its network of business and management experts to support a long-term strategic planning process. The center hopes to replicate its programs in some surrounding Maryland and Virginia communities and explore ways to influence policies on issues affecting immigrant and first- and second-generation youth and families in the region.

“Being able to hire a professional consulting firm to address some of the major questions we’re looking at will provide a blueprint for the future of the center,” Kaplan notes. One thing that attracted VPP to the center was its “potential for high impact with a very underserved population,” notes Jennifer Brown Simon, a partner with VPP.

VPP, founded by philanthropist Mario Morino, Prixicom founder Raul Fernandez, and Virginia Governor Mark Warner, uses a broad network of contacts, resources, and professional advisers to help leaders build on the strengths of their organizations.



This Far By Faith: African American Spiritual Journeys, the last project conceptualized by the late Henry Hampton, the legendary producer of *Eyes on the Prize*, aired on PBS June 24–26.

The six-hour series, funded in part by the Casey Foundation, combines archival photography, music, interviews, and re-creations to shed light on the religious experience of a population that has confronted adversity, clung to hope, and used faith to rally for social justice.

At right, the Rev. Cecil Williams’s work with the Glide Memorial United Methodist Church in San Francisco is featured in hour three.



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Participant at the June 11 policy briefing peruses the 2003 *KIDS COUNT Data Book*.

COUNTERING THE HIDDEN COSTS OF POVERTY

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Reliable, high-quality child care options also are more limited for low-wage employees working multiple jobs and long hours, and skyrocketing housing costs in many cities make it even harder to make ends meet. Many low-income families also confront an “earnings tax” that hits when their salary and tax gains are offset by reduced federal assistance and increased payroll taxes.

The essay concludes with examples of public and private initiatives taking root around the nation to remove these obstacles and replace them with opportunities for families struggling to build financial security.

Through the report in the book and a soon-to-be-released resource kit, the Foundation advocates a platform of recommendations to help level the “affordability” playing field for vulnerable families. These include promoting and implementing reforms that will encourage retailers to locate in low-income communities; providing education about and access to financial services that build assets and boost credit; enforcing stronger regulatory reforms; and reinforcing policies that protect earnings and savings.

The Foundation hosted a policy forum on the high cost of being poor at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., on June 11, moderated by Ray Suarez, senior correspondent for the *NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*. Casey Foundation Board of Trustees member Kent “Oz” Nelson and Foundation President Douglas W. Nelson offered introductory remarks to a lively panel

discussion that included Larry Aber, director of the National Center for Children in Poverty at Columbia University; Yolanda Scott Brown, senior vice president of Union Bank of California; Martin Eakes, chief executive officer of the Center for Community Self-Help in Durham, N.C.; Gloria Guerrero, president and chief executive officer of the Rural Development & Finance Corporation in San Antonio; Jack Markell, treasurer of the state of Delaware; and Bob Weissbourd, senior advisor of MetroEdge/Shorebank Advisory Services in Chicago.

Along with the essay and the state-by-state data and rankings on indicators reflecting the current status of child well-being across America, the 2003 *KIDS COUNT Data Book* provides insight into how kids and families have fared across the decade of the '90s. Overall the news is good.

“The 2003 *Data Book* shows that child well-being improved significantly during the 1990s,” says KIDS COUNT Coordinator William O’Hare. “Eight of the ten indicators we use to track how kids are doing improved during the decade, and improvement was seen in nearly every state. This was due to enhanced employment and earnings, and to the improvement of government supports for low-income families.”

Panelists at the forum agreed, however, that the hidden costs of poverty must be addressed to sustain positive outcomes for children. Ray Suarez, the moderator, reflected, “We are all paying the price in one way or another for the fact that large numbers of Americans are now living a life that perhaps holds less promise that they’ll be able to jump the hurdles into a sustained membership—rather than a precarious one—in the middle class.”

Copies of the *Data Book* and related materials are available by calling the Foundation publications line at 410-223-2890, or by visiting www.kidscount.org.

SPOTLIGHT ON COMMUNITY HEALTH LEADERSHIP

More than 100 leaders of community health programs shared strategies for strengthening their organizations at the Casey Foundation’s fifth annual Community Health Summit. The meeting at the Academy for Educational Development in Washington, D.C., May 30–June 1, helped executive directors, chief executive officers, and board members explore their leadership roles in developing strong health programs for diverse populations. Manuel Teixeira, a student at the Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center in Providence, R.I., helped render a “graphic recording” of the meeting.



SUPPORTING AMERICA'S OTHER FRONTLINE

An estimated 3 million Americans work on the domestic frontlines—in child welfare, child care, juvenile justice, youth services, and employment and training programs. For the most vulnerable families and children, these are the first responders who can intercede before a problem becomes a crisis.

Yet these workers themselves face often-overwhelming odds: caseloads twice as high as recommended standards, unclear job expectations, and turnover rates that exceed 40 percent in some sectors. In tight fiscal times, they are among the first targets for funding cuts and layoffs.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Brookings Institution held a policy luncheon in the spring to release new findings from a study about the status of the human services workforce and to launch the Casey Foundation's multiyear Human Services Workforce Initiative.

The initiative will highlight the need for better support for workers to produce better outcomes for families and communities. It has three components: collecting data on this workforce and on the link between workplace improvements and system outcomes; identifying and promoting best practices; and developing strategic communications plans to raise public awareness and strengthen policies and investments.

"As the single largest charitable institution focused on bettering the situation for kids and families, we believe it's impossible to improve publicly funded services and systems of delivery in a meaningful and sustainable way without paying attention to what goes on at the frontline," said Janice Nittoli, who manages the initiative at the Casey Foundation.

Initial findings from this study, which is the first major look at this workforce as a whole, show the field is nearing a breaking point. A new Brookings Institution random-sample survey of 1,200 human services workers finds that high stress, scant systemic support, and over-work lead many—in some cases up to one-third—to leave the field after two years or less.

The study points out that workplace conditions, not lack of commitment, are driving high turnover. "This is one of the

best motivated workforces in America—engaged and deeply committed to making a difference," noted Paul C. Light, director of the Brookings Institution's Center for Public Service.

"Our findings tell a story of an industry that is egregiously failing to prepare, attract, retain, support, or reward a



David S. Broder, Cokie Roberts, Douglas W. Nelson, and Paul C. Light at a spring event launching the Human Services Workforce Initiative. Roberts moderated a panel discussion that also included Andrew L. Stern and William C. Bell.

workforce ready and able to take on the jobs that are asked of them," said Casey Foundation President Douglas W. Nelson. "In any sector, this would represent a terrible inefficiency and missed opportunity. In the human services systems designed and funded by government to help the most vulnerable children and families, the consequences are terribly costly in both financial and human terms."

To demonstrate that these problems are not intractable, the Foundation is working to identify approaches that have shown promise in improving this workforce and to monitor their effects over time. Based on an online survey of 100 areas and visits to 13 sites, the Foundation has selected two locales as models: Hamilton County, Ohio, for its work to reward employee performance, and the state of Michigan, for its innovative recruitment techniques.

Nittoli is overseeing a national survey of nonprofit human services providers—the first of its kind—to learn how the best ones manage to attract and retain strong frontline workers.

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Janice Nittoli, manager of the Human Services Workforce Initiative, and William C. Bell, commissioner of New York City's Administration for Children's Services.

SUPPORTING AMERICA'S OTHER FRONTLINE
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But best practices and voluntary behavior are not enough to change a whole system. It often takes real-world incentives to motivate policymakers to find the necessary funding and political will for reform.

"There's a lot of talk about policy, but not enough about politics," said Andrew L. Stern, president of the Service Employees International Union. Stern stressed the importance of leveraging the power of unions to organize and exposing the real costs of system failures to the public. Unfortunately, it often takes a tragic event—such as the death of a child or some other incident that rivets public attention—to spur change.

For example, the much-publicized death of a child and formation of a court-approved special child welfare advisory panel prompted improvements in New York City child welfare caseworkers' training, salaries, and professional development opportunities. These changes are credited with reducing the turnover rate from nearly 50 percent in 1995 to 29 percent last year.

But too often these kinds of solutions come too late. "When a police officer fires in the line of duty, there is a battery of supports when he returns to the office," noted William C. Bell, commissioner of New York City's Administration for Children's Services. "If a child dies, there is a battery of accusations when the caseworker returns."

As researchers continue to gather data, findings will be strategically released and tied to local and national events to seek support for human services workplace reforms. "We need to drive home the costs in terms of public dollars and putting kids and families quite literally in harm's way," said Nittoli. "The private labor market won't fix these problems. This is by definition a matter of public policy because these systems are created by public policy."

UNFORTUNATELY, it often takes a TRAGIC EVENT—
such as the DEATH OF A CHILD or some other incident
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INSITES

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PROGRAMS OFFER LOCAL SOLUTIONS FOR WORKING FAMILIES



SUSIE FITZHUGH

Programs seek ways to **HELP**
FAMILIES meet basic needs at
REASONABLE PRICES.



CAROL HIGGS/SMITH

It costs a lot to be poor in America.

Contradictory as that sounds, it is a fact borne out in the real-life experiences of low-income families in isolated neighborhoods who find themselves facing high costs for nearly every necessity—from housing and food to child care and financial services—while they are simultaneously excluded from many of the economic benefits available to the middle class.

Amy Brown sees daily evidence that poor families pay high premiums for basic needs. As Director of Income Policy for the Community Food Resource Center in New York City—a 2003 FAMILIES COUNT Honoree—Brown points to one example after another.

“If you buy diapers or light bulbs at a bodega in a low-income neighborhood, you will pay double what they cost at a supermarket,” she says. “But most poor neighborhoods don’t have supermarkets nearby.”

Since New York subways recently switched from tokens to a fare card system, riders can buy a one-month card for \$70 that provides unlimited rides—and is often subsidized by employers. “But most low-income workers can’t afford \$70 all at once,” says Brown, “so they end up paying two dollars every time they ride to and from their jobs. It amounts to a big surcharge on poor people.”

These kinds of burdens can be heavy, but the following article illustrates how innovative organizations are doing their part to help families cope with the hidden costs of being poor. All three

Innovative programs around the country help families build assets and maximize their hard earned income.

organizations cited are 2003 awardees in the FAMILIES COUNT: National Honors program, which recognizes community-based groups doing exemplary work to strengthen families and neighborhoods.

CONNECTING TO COMMUNITY CHILD CARE RESOURCES

As greater numbers of low-income parents have moved from welfare to work, the need for affordable and high-quality child care has surged in communities across the nation. And yet access to such a service—essential to helping parents succeed in the workplace—is limited, especially for those who work multiple jobs and irregular hours.

unaware of their eligibility or are stymied by the complex application process.

When Canada decided five years ago to start a day care operation in her home, she turned to the Educare Initiative of the Local Investment Commission (LINC). Created in 1992 as a citizen-driven collaborative effort to help families with welfare-to-work transitions, LINC has been widely credited as a successful strategy to attract state, local, public, and private investments in low-income neighborhoods. Educare, launched in 1995, helps child care providers learn the skills they need to succeed in business and to give children a solid foundation for success in school and life.

Gayle Hobbs, LINC executive director, notes that in the aftermath of welfare reform, most caseworkers focused on finding jobs for mothers, and not on where their children would spend their days or the quality of care they would receive—which has significant implications for school readiness. In low-income communities,

parents often turn to neighbors and relatives for child care because more formal settings are either not available, affordable, or flexible enough to meet their needs.

Educare helps local neighborhood providers gain licenses and even accreditation by making child care educational, safe, accessible, and affordable. The program offers workshops across the greater Kansas City area on child development,

cognition, motor skills, and behavior problems. “We want child care workers to understand that they are much more than babysitters,” says Pamela McFreen, program coordinator. “These women are professionals who can have a positive impact on children at a vital point in their lives.”

The results have been striking. From 1996 to 2001, Kansas City saw a steady increase in licensed home providers and child care centers. In 2002, a total of 2,317 children participated in Educare programs and 2,514 providers attended workshops. In the process, 26 child care centers received state licenses, and 12 providers won professional accreditation.

Educare also offers its clients training in practical skills such as money management, connecting to community resources, self-advocacy, assertiveness, legal rights, and effective parenting.

Educare helped Luwillis Canada learn how to comply with city and state regulations, particularly around health and safety, and how to tap into helpful resources in the community. Now, Canada’s center has expanded to 55 children and 10 employees, and she passes along the lessons she has learned to the families she serves.

One lesson she emphasizes is the value of saving for the future. “If you live paycheck to paycheck and don’t first put something aside for your family, you won’t build the assets you need for the future,” she says.

OVERCOMING THE OBSTACLES TO HOME OWNERSHIP

The *KIDS COUNT Data Book* finds that 13.2 percent of U.S. households don’t have a checking account, and 9.5 percent don’t have a bank account of any kind. That leaves millions of “unbanked”



Educare Coordinator Pamela McFreen, left, and Deputy Director Candace Cheatem. The program helps neighborhood child care providers learn skills they need to succeed in business and to give children a solid foundation.

Luwillis Canada, owner of a thriving child care center in Kansas City, understands the dilemma of her client families. “People want to work, but they have to know that their children will be safe and well cared for,” she says. “And they have to be able to pay for that care.”

In many states, child care subsidies available through federal programs don’t go far enough and aren’t reaching families who need them, in part because they are



Naema Tajara was able to purchase a home after working with the Indianapolis Neighborhood Housing Partnership to repair her credit and budget her income.

Since 2000, the Indianapolis Neighborhood Housing Partnership has **HELPED MORE THAN 1,000 FAMILIES** move into their own houses or repair their existing homes.

Americans open to the blandishments of subprime and predatory financial outlets.

That comes as no surprise to Moira Carlstedt, president of the Indianapolis Neighborhood Housing Partnership, which works with families with rocky credit histories to encourage home ownership. She recognizes all too well the rip-offs and scams that prey on her clients.

“Anytime you are engaged in a nontraditional financial transaction—whether it is a check-cashing service or a money order from a storefront—it will cost you extra,” says Carlstedt. “But we tell folks that they always have a choice between good and bad deals, and that they can learn to seek out the best options.”

Created in 1988, INHP harnesses the resources of the private sector, government

agencies, community groups, and non-profits to help low-income households purchase homes. Since 2000, it has helped more than 1,000 families move into their own houses or repair their existing homes—largely because they have learned that they earn enough to qualify for mortgages.

For Naema Tajara, the path to home ownership involved nearly three years of work to repair a shaky credit history caused in part because someone fraudulently used her Social Security number to amass debts in her name. A Federal Express employee in Indianapolis who has several children of her own and also is a foster mother, Tajara faced plenty of discouragement in her effort.

“I had a job and an income, but I didn’t budget my money very well,” she says.

“And because my credit was in such bad shape, it took a long time to get it fixed. I lost out on ten houses along the way.” After pre-purchase counseling from INHP, Tajara moved in June with her father and three children into a five-bedroom house on the city’s west side. Now, she says, she plans to take in more foster children in her larger residence.

The challenges Tajara faced are not uncommon, says Carlstedt. Thousands of families in the Indianapolis area rent rather than own—despite earning enough to qualify for a mortgage. Those hoping to purchase a home begin with INHP’s home ownership training classes and personalized pre-purchase counseling to identify potential barriers, such as credit judgments or late payments. Pre-purchase counseling, which can last up to two years, ends with families being matched with INHP lender partners and loan programs that best fit their situation. In addition to linking qualified homebuyers with partner banks’ mortgage companies, INHP also manages a multi-bank loan pool of more than \$21 million in available loan funds for clients who are deemed “unbankable.”

“Too many people are unaware of the mortgage products available to families with challenged credit histories, limited incomes, or both,” says Carlstedt. “But a family can usually qualify for a loan within two years of beginning pre-purchase counseling. We want them to grow the asset so they will have the equity to send a child to college or start a small business. That creates family wealth, which leads to generational change.”

Increasing home ownership clearly encourages low-income areas to thrive.

“It’s just natural that people who own rather than rent will take more pride and interest in improving their neighborhoods,” says Tracy Hughes, INHP director of customer development. Home ownership, she says, stabilizes communities and creates a range of “Main Street” spinoffs—new retail stores, commercial and residential development, libraries, cleanup of old industrial sites, new schools, and renewed attention from local government.

A FOOD BANK HELPS FAMILIES BUILD FINANCIAL ASSETS

For nearly 25 years, the Community Food Resource Center (CFRC) in New York City has combined advocacy and direct services to help low-income families meet basic needs for food and nutrition, income support, and decent housing. The center serves 200,000 meals a year at its Community Kitchen of West Harlem and Senior Dinner Program, and helps thousands of New York families access food stamps, housing, and other public benefits.

Darrell White is head cook and Josephine Butler is a kitchen worker at the Community Food Resource Center, which serves some 200,000 meals a year.

In January 2002, center officials decided to expand their services in a way that could provide more permanent benefits to poor New York families. The result? A citywide free tax preparation campaign to help low-income wage earners claim tax credits and avoid the high fees of commercial tax preparers. In its first year, the center’s nine tax preparation sites helped nearly 10,000 low-income workers get more than \$18 million in federal and state tax refunds. The initiative also helped tax filers open bank and credit union accounts and access other financial services to build their family assets.

“We realized that the Earned Income Tax Credit represented a potential windfall for our families,” says Richard Murphy, executive director of the center. “This was money that they had coming to them but was either unclaimed or was being siphoned off by predatory tax preparation companies.” Estimates by the Brookings Institution suggest that nearly half a billion dollars in earned income tax credits go unclaimed in New York City each year.

For individual families, the extra income has been critical in New York City, which has experienced high joblessness

and stress since the September 11, 2001 attacks. “The average refund for low-income families with more than one child amounted to 30 percent of their annual income,” says the center’s Amy Brown. “That’s like getting a one-third pay raise.”

For their 2003 campaign, CFRC set up bilingual toll-free hotlines to answer tax questions, distributed thousands of fliers through churches and community organizations, and produced dozens of newspaper and radio ads. The center enlisted the support of Mayor Michael Bloomberg in promoting the campaign, and collaborated with labor and credit unions across the city to attract attention.

Staying true to its mission to help low-income families make ends meet on a daily basis, CFRC last year also launched a new program that trains 40 adults a year for jobs in the food service industry and helps them find employment. “The training center is a good example of how we are always looking for innovative ways to serve families in the community,” says Kathy Goldman, who founded CFRC in 1980. “It’s important to talk and advocate with government officials, but you should be helping people stay alive while you are doing it.”



“It’s important to **TALK** and **ADVOCATE** with government officials, but you should be helping people **STAY ALIVE** while you are doing it.”