

LENAWEE UNITED WAY

Community Action Agency provides free income tax preparation

By Diane Bach

Is your household income less than \$52,000? If so, you could take advantage of the free tax preparation services provided at Community Action Agency.

Are you thinking "I don't have to file taxes because..."? While it may be true you do not have to file a federal tax return, you may be missing out on some state credits. If you own your home you may be eligible for the Homestead Property Tax Credit. If you own your home or even if you rent, you may be eligible for a Home Heating Credit.

The free tax help is available through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, an Internal Revenue Service (IRS)-sponsored program that has been in existence since 1969. Community Action Agency (CAA) has provided the service in Lenawee County since 2004. CAA provides the service for individuals who meet the one and only qualification — annual household income of less than \$52,000 — in Lenawee, Hillsdale and Jackson counties.

CAA trains volunteers using IRS-provided materials. Volunteers are



required to pass IRS tests to become certified by the IRS in order to prepare taxes as a VITA volunteer.

Volunteers will meet individually with you to ensure you receive all of the money you are entitled to receive. Volunteers are able to complete the federal, state and city (where applicable) returns as well as any tax credits including the Federal Earned Income Tax Credit, the Michigan Earned Income Tax Credit, Home Heating Credits, Child Tax Credits,

Homestead Property Tax Credit and other available credits. All at no charge.

All returns can be electronically filed (e-filed) with the refunds being direct deposited into your bank account. This allows you to receive your money in about 10-14 days. Plus, CAA tax volunteers are available year-round should you have questions or need assistance after tax season.

Last year, 20 volunteers in Lenawee County completed returns for 2,429 households which represent 3,831 individuals. As a result, these households received millions in refunds and credits. CAA serves anyone whose household income is less than \$52,000.

All returns are prepared by appointment only. To schedule an appointment call the Lenawee County CAA office at 263-7861 or 800-438-1845 or call 211. The operator will be able to tell you all of the documents you need to bring to your appointment. CAA partners with

many agencies and organizations in Lenawee County. One partner is the Lenawee County Department on Aging (LCDA). Older adults may also call LCDA/264-5280 for an appointment.

Lenawee United Way is a partner with the Lenawee Financial

Stability Coalition and supports resources and programs that help make residents of Lenawee County financially stable.

Diane Bach is the community outreach manager/Lenawee deputy director for Community Action Agency.

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