

LENAWEE UNITED WAY

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# CAA program leads to self-sufficiency

By Amy Clough Baker

Promoting self-sufficiency has been Community Action Agency's goal since opening its doors in 1965. More than 50 programs, including adult literacy education, weatherization services, energy conservation classes, financial management classes, free tax preparation, homeownership counseling, Individual Development Accounts and foreclosure prevention help Lenawee County residents maintain and increase their financial independence.

Our newest program at Community Action Agency is Complete Approach to Self-Sufficiency (CASS). CASS offers case management and support for up to 30 families who want to become more self-sufficient. After identifying their goals, clients work with their CASS counselor to maximize their strengths and address whatever barriers are in their way.

Because the caseload is limited, CASS clients receive individualized, intensive services. For one client, Natasha, this meant transportation assistance to interviews and other appointments, access to a computer as she researched colleges, and a referral to math education courses to help her brush up on her skills. She is now a college student and is looking forward to completing her training to become a literacy tutor.

Natasha had this to say



about the program: "Since I have become a part of CASS I have hope again for my future. I have enrolled back in college and have received other community resources to help me and my family."

In the last six months, CASS clients have been busy. Seven applied to college or enrolled in adult literacy classes, five accessed nutrition services to help them eat better and stick to a grocery budget, five are preparing to purchase homes, five participated in group or personal financial counseling, three found full-time employment, and one began classes to open a business.

CASS allows Community Action Agency to provide long-term support and advocacy for our clients as they make life changes. We are grateful to United Way for helping us develop this program.

For more information about CASS and how it could help you or someone you know reach your goals, call Amy Clough Baker at 263-7861.

CASS is a funded program of Lenawee United Way.

*Amy Clough Baker is the CASS Counselor at Community Action Agency.*