



Make A Donation Today

December 2023 Newsletter

Hello GENE,

The name Gateway Community Action Partnership reflects our expanded coverage area, but more importantly, it signifies what we are all about. We are a gateway to success for individuals and families in our community and we achieve those results through actions done in partnership within that very community we serve. So please take a minute to read our newsletter and learn more about Gateway Community Action Partnership and our impact in our communities.

Agency Mission And CAP Promise

The agency's mission is to provide services that improve the quality of life and promote self-sufficiency.

CAP Promise: Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.

Gateway Partners With Local Law Enforcement And First Responders For Shop With A Hero Program



Gateway wrapped up yet another successful year of our Shop With A Hero initiative over the week of December 11 through 14, providing children in Cumberland, Gloucester, and Salem counties with the chance to connect with local law enforcement and first responders to shop for holiday gifts. Joining the heroes and Gateway staff volunteers were Albert B. Kelly, Gateway's President and CEO, and Edward Bethea, Gateway's Executive Vice President and COO.

As part of the program, each child was provided with a \$150 gift card to shop for their gifts of choice. This program aims to make sure that children in low-income families still have gifts "under the tree" for the holiday season, especially when finances are tight. With the support of our partners, our wider goal for Shop With A Hero is to build trust and positive relationships within communities, reducing the gap between police officers and first responders and the general public. With this goal, Gateway hopes to move forward in our mission "to provide services that improve the quality of life and promote self-sufficiency" while contributing to creating more connected, equitable, and resilient communities.

Gateway is thankful for our partners who volunteered their time to make this program possible (many of whom come back year after year), including multiple police departments, the New Jersey State Police, sheriff's departments and, for the first year, fire departments and EMS units – allowing us to expand our program to serve more children and forge more connections.

This program is provided by Gateway through a Non-Discretionary Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funded by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, as well as funding and support from local Walmart stores.

The photos shown are from this year's Shop With A Hero program at the participating stores in Upper Deerfield, Pennsville, Deptford, Millville, and Vineland.







Southeast Gateway Neighborhood Celebrates New Mural With Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony



Southeast Gateway (SEG) celebrated the completion of another successful neighborhood revitalization project, a new mural on Terrace and Spruce Streets in Bridgeton, with a ribbon cutting ceremony held on November 3. Albert B. Kelly, Gateway's President and CEO, opened the ceremony with gratifying remarks addressed to all of the Gateway staff members and partners who worked tirelessly to plan and complete the mural. As the City's Mayor, he expressed his love and appreciation for the Great City of Bridgeton, as he proudly calls it, and applauded everyone involved in this transformational and beautifying project.

The mural project was led by Esaul Martin, SEG Neighborhood Revitalization Coordinator and his then assistant Cassandra Avila, who is now Site Coordinator at Gateway Wellness Center in Salem. Michelle Lopes Barakat, Grantmaking and Program Manager for Justice Outside's Liberated Paths Program (Philadelphia) - which granted funds to help make this project possible - congratulated everyone on a job well done.

Other speakers and attendees at the ribbon cutting ceremony included Lisa David, the Head Artist in charge of directing the artwork for the project; Tara Sherman, Art Teacher at Bridgeton High school, accompanied by students in the Art Club who assisted in painting the mural; Lona Gaines, a local artist who also assisted with the project artwork; Celeste Merriweather, Bridgeton Public Schools Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction; Omarey Williams, Shared Service Coordinator, Cumberland County Cultural & Heritage Commission; Lucia Osborne from the American Littoral Society, Millville; Matthew Brenner, Bridgeton Public Schools Supervisor of Creative and Performing Arts; and Ruth Hands, Board President of Cumberland County Technical Education Center, Vineland.

Edward Bethea Presents At Housing And Community Development Network Of NJ Jumpstart Program



Edward Bethea, Gateway's Executive Vice President and COO, presented at the Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey's JumpStart program on Friday, December 1. This program provides training and certification to nonprofit community agencies developing affordable housing, with a focus on Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) developers, with a goal of closing the racial wealth gap in New Jersey. Bethea was the featured presenter at the first meeting of the series, discussing Gateway's experience in affordable housing development and neighborhood revitalization. Bethea currently serves as Vice Chair of the Housing and Community Development Network, and will be Chairman beginning in the new year.

Gateway's Foster Grandparent Program Brings Joy To Head Start Children All Year Long



Gateway partners with AmeriCorps Seniors to provide a service opportunity for adults 55 and older in Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, and Salem Counties known as the Gateway CAP Foster Grandparent Program (FGP). Through this program, FGP volunteers visit many of our Head Start locations throughout the school year to read, play, make arts and crafts, serve meals and snacks, and spend meaningful time with the children. The program also provides the FGP volunteers with a larger social support system as they interact with other volunteers and attend meetings, luncheons, and holiday parties.

Not only do we recognize the importance of grandparents and grandparent figures in the lives of young children, but these interactions also greatly benefit our FGP volunteers. Socialization in and around retirement is vital for seniors in both maintaining and improving their level of independence and quality of life. FGP aids volunteers in developing stronger social networks and helps them live longer, healthier lives.

The photos shown feature a few of the many highlights from just this month (December 2023). The program welcomed a new group of FGP volunteers on December 8, and held their monthly meeting on December 14, during which one of our volunteers from Williamstown, Ms. Elizabeth Beatty, shared her experience with FGP and answered questions from new recruits.

On December 19, Mr. Donald Scott, one of our FGP volunteers from Linwood, visited the Gateway Head Start Early Education Center in Atlantic City dressed as “Santa Scott” to surprise the children just in time for the holidays.

Gateway is tremendously grateful for all of our FGP volunteers and for the work they do to make a difference not only for Head Start children, but also in one another’s lives.

For more information, photos, and updates on our Foster Grandparent Program and AmeriCorps Seniors, please visit our website and Facebook page by clicking on the buttons below.

[Visit The FGP Website Here](#)

[Visit The FGP Facebook Here](#)



Salem Family Success Center Hosts Holiday Craft Night



Salem Family Success Center held a Holiday Craft Night for Salem County children and their parents. The families created snowmen and pop-up Christmas trees, colored Christmas pictures, and wrote letters to Santa. Everyone received a hot chocolate kit to take home along with their lovely artwork.

Bridgeton Code Blue Receives Donation From The Cumberland County Bar Association



The Cumberland County Bar Association (CCBA) presented Bridgeton's Code Blue program with a donation in the amount of \$1,000. The check, delivered by CCBA Executive Director Carol Walker, was graciously accepted by Nina Young, Gateway's Special Projects Coordinator and Code Blue Director (pictured left) and LaTanya Mack, Code Blue Assistant (right) on behalf of Albert B. Kelly, Gateway's President and CEO and Mayor of Bridgeton. Gateway is extremely grateful for the CCBA's generosity in helping us provide services to those experiencing homelessness through our Code Blue warming center.

Southeast Gateway Makes House Calls For Thanksgiving Basket Giveaway



The Southeast Gateway Neighborhood Revitalization team presented Holiday Gift Boxes to four families in the community for Thanksgiving. Gateway's Executive Vice President and COO, Edward Bethea, assisted with two of the presentations. Southeast Gateway's Neighborhood Revitalization Coordinator, Esaul Martin, made house calls to deliver the others.

Twin Rivers Head Start Parents Teach Students About Holiday Traditions



Twin Rivers Head Start welcomed parents to visit the classroom for a special show and tell activity, during which they spoke to the children about their traditions and different ways they celebrate throughout the holiday season. Following the presentations, the class worked on crafts inspired by what they had learned.

Holly City Family Success Center Hosts “Letters To Santa” Activity



Local families joined together at the Holly City Family Success Center to write letters to Santa on December 7. The children enjoyed refreshments and goody bags as they filled out their Christmas wish lists to send to the North Pole.

Hamilton 1 Head Start Celebrates The Holiday Season At Their December Parent Meeting



Hamilton 1 Head Start children wrapped up their “music study” with a holiday performance in front of their families at the center’s December parent meeting. Students and their families enjoyed games, singing and dancing, and sharing the dishes they brought in for lunch.

Twin Rivers Head Start Puts On A Fashion Show For Proud Parents



Children at Twin Rivers Head Start eagerly showed off their favorite outfits in front of teachers, classmates, and family members during a red-carpet fashion show! This activity marked the completion of the center's "Clothes Study," during which students learned about various articles of clothing.

Salem Family Success Center Shows Appreciation Through Volunteer Brunch



Salem Family Success Center held a Volunteer Appreciation Brunch on December 7 to thank their volunteers for all they do for the center and the community. Many of Gateway's programs, such as our Family Success Centers, greatly benefit from the help of volunteers to further our mission of providing services that improve the quality of life and promote self-sufficiency.

Hamilton 1 Head Start Spreads Holiday Cheer



Hamilton 1 Head Start wishes everyone a very merry holiday season and a happy New Year!

Families Enjoy Breakfast In Pajamas At Vineland 3 Head Start



Gateway's Vineland 3 Head Start Center welcomed parents to join their children in the classroom for a cozy breakfast in pajamas.

Special Guests Deliver Donated Gifts To Twin Rivers Head Start



Santa and his elves visited Twin Rivers Head Start to distribute donated items from St. Paul Lutheran Church.

How Atlantic City Electric's New Smart Energy Network Will Benefit You

Atlantic City Electric is building a Smart Energy Network throughout its South Jersey service area. The network is designed to enhance reliability, improve the resiliency of energy service and customer experience, and support new tools and programs to help customers save money and energy. As part of Atlantic City Electric's Smart Energy Network initiative, the company will install upgraded smart meters for approximately 565,000 residential and business customers across its service area.

In addition to the benefits The Smart Energy Network brings to a household, the network will support the local companies within South Jersey as well. More than \$27 million will go to local companies that are supporting the smart meter upgrades. In addition to their current efforts in supporting the South Jersey community, Atlantic City Electric has continuously supported the South Jersey workforce. In 2020, Atlantic City Electric donated \$50,000 through its Community Scholars Program, to support local South Jersey students seeking careers in energy or related fields. The Smart Energy Network supports the efforts made by Atlantic City Electric by creating jobs for field technicians and support personnel.

There is no upfront cost to customers for new smart meters. Customers will receive several communications prior to their meter upgrade providing additional information about the upgrade process.

The Smart Energy Network comes with numerous benefits once the smart meters are installed and activated. Customers will have access to new tools to help them manage their energy usage and lower their bills. Some benefits that customers will notice after the installation are:

- Tools that can help customers use energy more efficiently and save money.
- Enhanced reliability with faster and more efficient power restoration efforts.
- More detailed outage information when outages occur.
- Reduced need for estimated billing.
- Better integration of new clean energy technologies.

Customers will receive more information about the new features and benefits that will become available once Atlantic City Electric activates their smart meters.

Atlantic City Electric's customers can learn more about the Smart Energy Network features and benefits by visiting www.atlanticcityelectric.com/SEN.

Welcome to Gateway CAP's New Hires!

Isabella Nash, Staff Accountant

Betzaida Perez, WIC Admin/Outreach Clerk

Dina Villatoro, Breastfeeding Peer Counselor/WIC Clerk

Aniya Taylor, Wellness Mental Health Advocate

Lee Prevard, Prevention Specialist

Tasha Hannah, Domestic Violence Intervention Specialist

Alma Morris, Family Partner Worker

Ebelin Cardona, AHS Lead Teacher

Yulinnette Soriano, Sub Teacher Assistant

Tiffany Tolbert, Floating Group Teacher

Brenda Rodriguez, Food Service Worker

Destiny Hidalgo, Sub Teacher Assistant
Paulette Davis, EHS Group Teacher in Training
Paula Baena Orozco, EHS Teacher
Sierra Stout, EHS Teacher
Erika Edwards, DOE Teacher
Larry Jordan, Code Blue Assistant

Gateway Community Action Partnership

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Contact Us Today



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