

TO BOLDLY SMILE

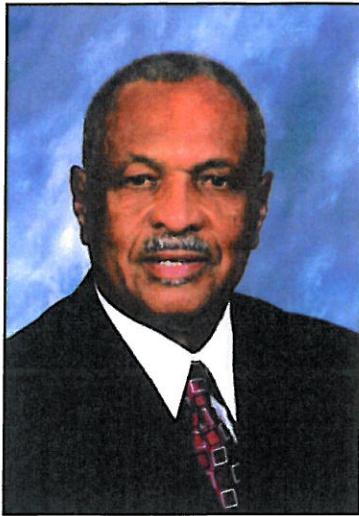
**Annual Report
2007-2008**

St. Martin • Iberia • Lafayette
Community Action Agency

"PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE"



A Letter from the Executive Director



To boldly go... That is our commitment – to you. That is our commitment – to ourselves and to the future.

As we present our Annual Report for 2007-2008, we remain committed to forging ahead despite threats to the stability of our national economy and to our livelihoods.

Now more than ever, we are facing challenging times. And now more than ever, we are seeing more and more families in need.

We pledge to be there for those in need. But we cannot do that without your continued support. We remain committed because we believe in our motto, *"People Helping People."* We believe in you – whether you are someone in need, a partner, a funding source, a supporter, or someone like us who believes in making a difference.

Our theme, *"To boldly go..."* means that we are committed to forging ahead into unknown territory. It means that we are committed to seeking new challenges and new ideas.

We ask that you join us on our journey. We ask that you, too, pledge *to boldly go*.

Perhaps, you may be interested in adopting one of our homeless families in our three shelters. You might prefer to adopt one of our Head Start Centers, which serve more than 1,400 children, including infants and toddlers. We also accept donations to help families with their rent, utilities, food and prescriptions. And if you would like to volunteer, we welcome you as well.

During the fiscal year, we were proud to embark on a landmark anniversary in 2008 – four decades of serving the community! We have been here for 40 years because you have been here with us.

We hope that you enjoy our Annual Report. Please take the time to review the different programs and services that we offered. Our programs have indeed made a difference in the lives of many. And for that, we are grateful.

Sincerely,

Alvin Wiltz
Executive Director

• Administrative Staff

Alvin Wiltz
Executive Director

Irma J. Bourgeois
Director of Field Operations

Alvin Jones
Director of Early Childhood Development Programs

Brenda Foulcard
Director of Finance

Pamela E. Chaisson*
Director of Human Resources

Rosalie Brannon
Acting Director of Human Resources

Ruth Foote
Grants Coordinator

RoxAnne Chaisson-Pitre
Equal Opportunity Officer

Rita McCoy
Executive Secretary

Veronica Figaro
Receptionist

• Parish Coordinators

Paulma Johnson
Coordinator of St. Martin Parish Community Action Center

Michael Sorrell
Coordinator of Iberia Parish Community Action Center

Lois Andrus
Coordinator of Lafayette Parish Community Action Center

*An Equal Opportunity Employer/Program
Auxiliary Aids and Services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities*

* Family Medical Leave

About SMILE

The St. Martin, Iberia, Lafayette Community Action Agency, Inc., or SMILE (as it is widely known by its popular acronym), serves as the primary provider of social services in a tri-parish region. Chartered as a 501 (c)(3), tax-exempt corporation in 1968, the Agency is headquartered in Lafayette. This fiscal year marked 40 years of service by SMILE, a landmark anniversary.

The Agency's motto, "*People Helping People*," stems from the Economic Opportunity Act's goal to uplift the nation's disadvantaged, and to assist them in obtaining self-sufficiency.

SMILE's programs include Head Start/Early Head Start, comprehensive housing counseling, emergency assistance, family transitional shelters, utility and rent/mortgage assistance, prescription assistance, senior volunteers/expo, youth mentoring/tutoring, weatherization, parenting education, job placement/referrals, and the distribution of clothing, food and hygiene products.

★ AGENCY MANAGEMENT

SMILE operates under the administration of Executive Director Alvin Wiltz. He oversees a managerial staff that includes the Director of Field Operations, Director of Finance, Director of Human Resources, Director of Early Childhood Development Programs, Grants Coordinator and Equal Opportunity Officer. These supervisors, in turn, have staff members who oversee their various departments.

In-service training is a vital part of the Agency's operations. The Agency also has an accounting system in place, and conducts an annual audit. It also practices non-discrimination.

SMILE is governed by an 18-member Board of Directors, representing a cross-section of the public, private and low-income sectors of St. Martin, Iberia and Lafayette Parishes. The volunteer Board serves as the legal entity of the organization, and is committed to its success.

★ NETWORKING WITH AGENCIES/ORGANIZATIONS

Collaboration has always been an integral part of the Agency. Not only does the Agency collaborate, but it has also been instrumental in the development of important programs in the region, including the Council on Aging and Meals-on-Wheels. SMILE has also assisted agencies in their start-up efforts, including 232-HELP. The Agency was also instrumental in the creation of ARCH (Acadiana Regional Coalition on Homelessness and Housing), and served as a founding member.

The Agency also collaborates with the La. Workforce Commission.

History of SMILE

People Helping People is a noble phrase, one that almost assumes a spiritual connotation by an American public influenced by Judeo-Christian principles and practices. But without a concerted effort of vital resources and funding, the concept lacks the means to significantly change the lives of poor people. The federal government acknowledged this fact with the enactment of the Economic Opportunity Act in August 1964.

The Act provided for the establishment and funding of Community Action agencies and programs. Its purpose was to focus all available local, state, private and federal resources so that low-income individuals and families could attain the skills, knowledge, motivation and opportunities needed to become self-sufficient. Its primary mission was to make the entire community more responsive to the needs and interests of the poor.

Although the undertaking of such a mission was monumental, concerned local citizens were determined to set into place the mechanism to assist the area's poor. In 1965, a non-profit organization called *Acadiana Neuf*[®] was founded to serve the needs of the poor; it was the forerunner of SMILE Community Action Agency. The consortium of nine parishes included St. Martin, Iberia and Lafayette, as well as Acadia, Avoyelles, Evangeline, Pointe Coupee, St. Landry and Vermilion.

While representatives struggled to define the organization, three of the parishes – Avoyelles, Evangeline and Pointe Coupee – withdrew. The remaining six parishes persevered against odds and even achieved a measure of success. The organization selected Mr. Gordin Sibille as its first executive director, and was awarded an initial grant of slightly over \$40,000 to serve the needs of school dropouts through education, training and counseling. This was later followed by grants for Head Start, remedial reading and other projects that were consistent with the organization's mission.

Inasmuch as the Economic Opportunity Act made provisions for the delegation of activities, *Acadiana Neuf* entered into contractual arrangements for many of its services. Organizations as the St. Martin Parish School Board, St. Landry Parish School Board and the Southern Consumer Education Foundation were engaged to administer pilot programs such as Head Start. *Acadiana Neuf* was also successful in securing funding for programs such as Medicare Alert, Neighborhood Referral Workers Program and Neighborhood Service Centers.

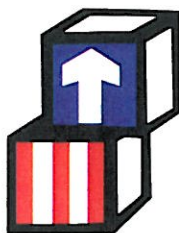
Even while achieving moderate success in these initial endeavors, the young organization still did not have the internal stability required to be truly effective. Instead, sectionalism and personality clashes eventually led to *Acadiana Neuf* being phased out in April 1967.

In its aftermath, individual parishes opted for autonomy, having become disillusioned by the consortium concept. Iberia Parish formed a single-parish agency; Lafayette attempted a limited agency for sponsoring Head Start, which had emerged as a highly effective vehicle for realizing social competency among mostly lower income families. While acknowledging that these single-parish organizations were serving a useful purpose, the general consensus was that they were much too limited in scope to truly serve the needs of the area's disadvantaged populations.

Movement toward a multi-parish agency was started by such visionaries as the Rev. Stovall and State Sen. Edgar Mouton. The concept of a tri-parish agency – serving St. Martin, Iberia and Lafayette Parishes – was developed through the efforts of pioneers such as Dr. James Oliver, Mr. Dennis David and Mr. Carlton James, who were formerly associated with *Acadiana Neuf*, as well as newcomers such as Mr. Charles Finley, Mr. L.L. Broussard, Mr. William Prade and Mrs. Jessie Taylor. These concerned citizens became the principal architects of what is now known as the St. Martin, Iberia, Lafayette Community Action Agency – SMILE.

As the Agency looks to the future, painstaking efforts are taken to ensure that SMILE remains true to its primary mission – serving the needs of the impoverished. The founding fathers would indeed be pleased to know that the torch has been passed without cessation or deviation these many years. While challenges are ahead, the concept of *People Helping People* remains the guiding force – interwoven in SMILE's history.

SMILE Programs



• HEAD START

Perhaps one of the greatest social programs of recent years, Head Start provides a part-day program for 1,300-plus preschool children, ages three to five. Includes social competence in health, educational, social and nutritional activities. Also offers disability services for children, and provides special needs for them so that they can interact and assimilate in the learning environment. In addition, the program provides training and technical assistance to the staff and parents to better prepare them to achieve the overall goals and objectives of Head Start. This includes workshops and college credit courses in Early Childhood Development.

• EARLY HEAD START

Provides comprehensive early childhood development and family support services on a year-round basis for 80 children under age three and pregnant women in order to enhance children's physical, social, emotional and intellectual development. Also supports parents in fulfilling their parental roles, and helps parents move toward self-sufficiency. The program is interwoven with Head Start, and offers the same support system.

• CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM (CACFP)

Provides funds to assist with food service costs for the Head Start and Early Head Start Programs.

• COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM (CSBG)

Provides support services for community-based, anti-poverty programs and projects, such as emergency assistance, transportation, housing and weatherization.

• LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHEAP)

Provides direct payments to home energy suppliers on behalf of eligible households, particularly the elderly and disabled.

• WEATHERIZATION

Provides energy conservation and preventive measures to eligible households.

• GENERAL TRANSPORTATION

Provides transportation services (within and outside of respective parishes) for a nominal fee so that clients may attend hospital and medical appointments and social service appointments.

• EMERGENCY FOOD AND SHELTER NATIONAL BOARD PROGRAM

Provides emergency food and shelter, and helps with rent or mortgage payments and assists those families in need of emergency shelter and food.

• EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Provides emergency assistance with food, clothes, shelter and prescriptions.

• LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Provides supplementary assistance for transportation, housing and emergencies.

Equal Opportunity Office Profile



Submitted Photo
RoxAnne Chaisson-Pitre
Equal Opportunity Officer

Fairness, consistency and honesty are among the factors that drive RoxAnne Chaisson-Pitre in her role as Equal Opportunity Officer. "I try to be fair and consistent in the way I treat people, and to be completely honest and have all the facts in order before I proceed," she says.

Chaisson-Pitre's Equal Opportunity Office is responsible for reviewing the Agency's procedures of hiring, upgrading and dismissal, as well as policies and procedures of other agencies, which SMILE does business with, in order to be in compliance with Civil Rights guidelines.

"It's important because every employee has rights in the workplace," Chaisson-Pitre says of the EO Office. "And it doesn't matter what their occupation is, they have the right to know the laws and procedures that affect their job."

The EO Office is responsible for helping to develop and implement SMILE's overall equal opportunity and non-discrimination program.

As EO Officer, Chaisson-Pitre receives guidance from the Executive Director, the SMILE Board of Directors, Equal Opportunity Committee and the La. Workforce Commission's Equal Opportunity and Compliance Division. Her duties include serving as the official liaison to both the State and Federal Civil Rights Offices on compliance matters, including complaint investigations, settlements, monitoring reviews and mediations.

The EO Office also provides aggrieved persons, even the general public, with information and advice on equal opportunity procedures, including local, state and federal redress procedures and notification of filing deadlines for Equal Opportunity Commission complaints.

In her position, Chaisson-Pitre also receives and attempts to resolve complaints of discrimination. Her duties also call for assisting employees in resolving complaints at the lowest level. In addition, she assists complainants in preparing formal complaints to the La. Workforce Commission, Office of Civil Rights, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, National Labor Relations Board and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, of alleged discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age or disability.

What are Chaisson-Pitre's goals for the future? "I want to make more auxiliary services available in all three parishes to assist more clients, clients as well as employees," she replies.

Chaisson-Pitre provides Equal Opportunity services at the SMILE Central Office, located at 501 St. John Street in Lafayette, and the SMILE Computer Technology Center, located at 105 Courville St. in Breaux Bridge. She can be reached at (337) 234-3272, Ext. 231 in Lafayette or (337) 332-3710 in Breaux Bridge.

Iberia Community Action Center Profile

When the fiscal year ended, the Iberia Community Action Center staff were busy preparing to relocate their New Iberia office from the Courthouse Annex to 722 Walton Street, also the home of the SMILE Transportation Headquarters.

Since then, the Center has relocated.

According to Parish Coordinator Michael Sorrell, the move was a blessing in disguise.

"At first, we were a little leery," Sorrell admits. "But now this looks like this is the best thing that happened to us."

The move gave the Iberia Parish staff a chance to rejoin the transportation department, headed by Transportation Manager Morris Guidry. The two departments had shared space in the Annex years ago until the parish government allowed SMILE to use the building on Walton Street, and transportation had relocated there.

Now that they are in the same building, Sorrell says, "It makes us feel more homely and like a family; we're back with transportation."

And as far as the clients are concerned, Sorrell adds, "They really like it."

Serving the clients is top priority for the staff at the Iberia Community Action Center. They believe in making a difference in the lives of those in need.

"Besides helping them with self-sufficiency, we want to make sure they're comfortable in coming to us," Sorrell says.

"That's what we're here for, regardless of the situation," he adds.

Sorrell believes in treating people as "you want to be treated," a philosophy that he has his staff follow as well.

"You never know when the tides can turn and you can be on the other side of the desk (needing help)," Sorrell says.

He has witnessed such over the years, circumstances determining a person's plight.

"I've seen people who have been really up, up there, but because of circumstances in life, they need help," he says. "It's not that they did anything, but because of circumstances, they're in need."

The Iberia staff members, also including Assistant Coordinator Terri Thompson, Secretary Rosemary Robertson and Caseworker Detoi Smith, provide services from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The office number is 365-8151.

Services include emergency assistance, utility payment assistance, prescription assistance and case management.

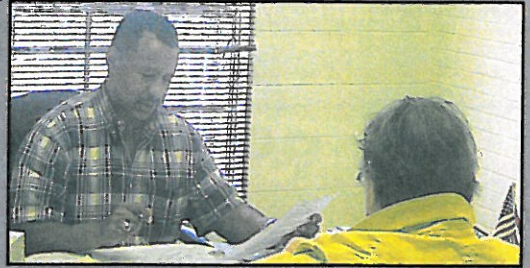


Photo by Venice Roberts

Iberia Parish Coordinator Michael Sorrell assists a client.

• COUNSELING AND REFERRALS

Provides counseling services to clients who have been referred by other social agencies. Also provides referral for alternative services that may be available to clients.

• HOMELESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Provides the homeless with the opportunity to make the transition out of poverty. Also provides social and maintenance assistance.

• HUD-APPROVED COMPREHENSIVE HOUSING COUNSELING

Provides housing counseling assistance to HUD-related clients. Housing counseling activities include mortgage default, pre-purchase activities, consumer education, preoccupancy rental, rental delinquency, relocation assistance, and others. Provides the pros and cons of becoming first-time homebuyers.

• RETIRED AND SENIOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM (RSVP)

Places retired senior volunteers in various social service agencies, which is beneficial to both the volunteers and the community.

• STEP-TRANSPORTATION

Provides transportation for qualified participants, including clients and their preschool children who are transported to education sites and day care facilities, respectively. Previously referred to as the FIND Works Program and Project Independence, it is designed to assist certain groups of TANF clients in securing independence from outside resources.

• EMERGENCY SHELTER GRANTS (ESG) PROGRAM

Provides transitional housing for the homeless, including supportive services, to help them achieve independent living.

• MEDICAID APPLICATION ASSISTANCE

Assists with completing applications for clients wishing to enroll in the Medicaid Program. Eligibility determinations are made by the state.

• FAMILY RESOURCE/PARENTING CENTER

Provides community education in St. Martin Parish on developmental stages of child growth, importance of parenting skills, stress/anger management.

• COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY CENTER

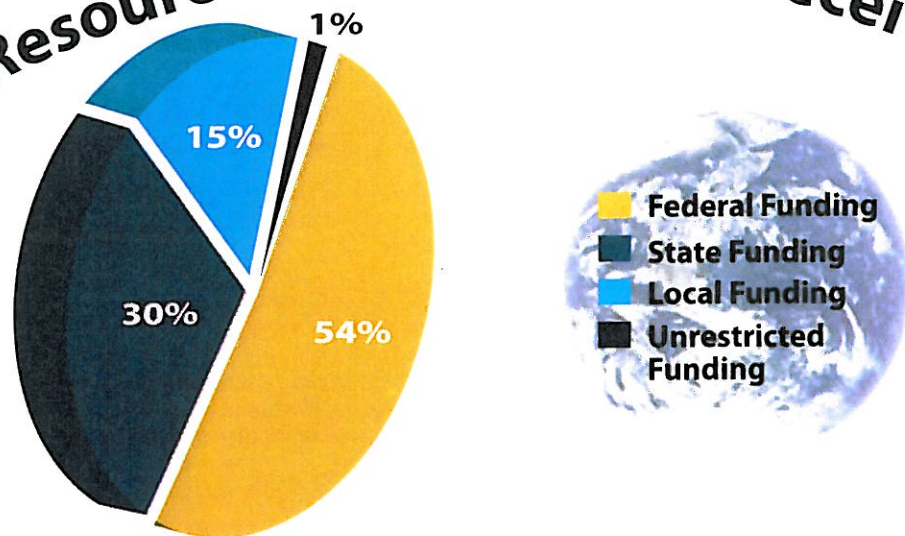
Provides limited computer technology and internet services for community residents in St. Martin and Iberia Parishes.



Financial Report

for the fiscal year ended May 31, 2008

Resources (Funds/Match) Received



Resources	Total Funding	Percentage
Federal Funding	\$9,116,355.00	54%
State Funding	\$5,181,344.00	30%
Local Funding	\$2,675,908.00	15%
Unrestricted Funding	\$97,834.00	1%
TOTAL	\$17,071,441.00	100%

Resources Allocated by Program Costs

• Early Childhood Development Programs (Head Start/Early Head Start/USDA).....	\$12,478,356.00
• Low-Income Home Assistance Program (LIHEAP).....	\$2,398,098.00
• Transportation (Elderly, General, STEP).....	\$880,974.00
• Community Services (Rent/Mortgage, Utilities, Shelters, Food, Medication).....	\$578,018.00
• Weatherization.....	\$225,081.00
• Elderly (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program -- RSVP).....	\$88,106.00
• Administration.....	\$422,808.00

TOTAL.....\$17,071,441.00

SERVICES PROVIDED

Service/Source	Households	Household Members Benefiting
CSBG Services	315	699
FEMA	104	330
LIHEAP - Non-Crisis	5,340	12,226
LIHEAP - Crisis	547	1,500
Weatherization	48	101
Toys for Tots	61	232
Medicaid Enrollment	67	173
Referrals	2,396	6,054
Food Pantry (St. Martin)	115	460
Income Tax (St. Martin)	502	1,506
United Way of Iberia - Medication	70	112
United Way of Iberia - Homelessness	55	135
Lafayette Consolidated Government External Funding Agency	68	204
ATMOS- Share the Warmth	106	317
Other Utilities/Rent	3	10
TOTAL	9,797	24,059

TRANSPORTATION

Service/Source	Unduplicated Served	Services Provided
Transportation (STEP)	779	10,583
Transportation (Title XIX)	10,396	34,215
Transportation (General)	2,437	12,080
TOTAL	13,612	56,878

RSVP

(Retired and Senior Volunteer Program)

Volunteers	629
Donated Hours	130,434

HEAD START / EARLY HEAD START

Service/Source	Total Unduplicated	Services Provided
Head Start	1,328	1,328 services
Early Head Start	80	80 services
Delegate Agency	40	40 services
TOTAL	1,448	1,448 services

HOUSING

Comprehensive Housing Services (HUD)	136
Comprehensive Housing Services (Non-HUD)	316
TOTAL SERVICES	452

SMILE Board of Directors*

Ms. Patricia Douglass, President
Iberia Parish, Public Sector

Ms. Rosemary Rochon, Treasurer
Iberia Parish, Low-Income Sector

Mr. Richard Potier, Vice-President
St. Martin Parish, Public Sector

Ms. Yvonne Mercier, Parliamentarian
St. Martin Parish, Private Sector

Mr. Pernell Livingston, Secretary
Lafayette Parish, Low-Income Sector

Ms. Margaret Guidry, Chaplain
Lafayette Parish, Public Sector

St. Martin Parish

- **Low-Income Sector**
Mr. James Charles
Mr. Albert Menard
- **Private Sector**
Mr. Zachary Landry
- **Public Sector**
Ms. Vonda LeBlanc

Iberia Parish

- **Low-Income Sector**
Ms. Patsy Boudoin
- **Private Sector**
Mr. Bronel Hebert
Ms. Deidre Ledbetter
- **Public Sector**
Ms. Norma Vital

Lafayette Parish

- **Low-Income Sector**
Ms. Gwen Harris
- **Private Sector**
- **Public Sector**



SMILE Central Office

501 St. John Street
Lafayette, LA 70501
(337) 234-3272
(337) 234-3274
www.smilecaa.org

St. Martin Community Action Center

2097 Terrace Rd.
St. Martinville, LA 70582
(337) 394-6013

Head Start Central Office

306 S. Theater St.
St. Martinville, LA 70582
(337) 394-6071

Iberia Community Action Center

722 Walton St.
New Iberia, LA 70560
(337) 365-8151

RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program)

501 St. John St.
Lafayette, LA 70501
(337) 234-9936

Lafayette Community Action Center

501 St. John St.
Lafayette, LA 70501
(337) 232-6810

Transportation Headquarters

722 Walton St.
New Iberia, LA 70560
(337) 369-9387