NCCAA February 2025 | Empowered Newsletter ❤️

From Sharon Goodson, North Carolina Community Action Association <communications@nccaa.net>
To <sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org>
Reply-To <communications@nccaa.net>
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Empowered Newsletter | February 2025 | Issue 2

EMPOWERED NEWSLETTER

N.C. Rep. Shelly Willingham, EIC Executive Director Dr. Landon B. Mason, Martin County Commissioner Ronnie Smith and Retired Superior Court Judge, J. C. Cole. (Story below)

Make Your Plans!

Annual Conference Set for May in Raleigh

Sheraton Raleigh Hotel and Raleigh Convention Center
Conference Dates: May 13 – 16, 2025
Pre-conference on Tuesday, May 13th Conference kicks off on Wednesday, May 14th
Board Summit Friday, May 16th through Saturday, May 17th
Sneaker Ball Gala on Thursday, May 15th

Learn More

Keynote Speaker

James H. Johnson, Jr.

James H. Johnson Jr. is the William R. Kenan Jr. Distinguished Professor of strategy and entrepreneurship and director of the Urban Investment Strategies Center at the Frank Hawkins Kenan Institute of Private Enterprise. Dr. Johnson and Dr. John D. Kasarda co-authored “The Economic Impact of the African American Population on the State of North Carolina" and a study on the economic impact of North Carolina’s Hispanic population. Dr. Johnson examines the causes and consequences of growing inequality in American society, particularly as it affects socially and economically disadvantaged youth; entrepreneurial approaches to poverty alleviation, job creation, and community development; interethnic minority conflict in advanced industrial societies; and business demography and workforce diversity issues. His latest book is "Prismatic Metropolis: Inequality in Los Angeles."

Sneaker Ball Returns!

Popular Event Now Included in Conference Registration

NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY ACTION ASSOCIATION
SNEAKER Ball & AWARDS PROGRAM

At our conference last year in Cherokee we held our inaugural “Sneaker Ball” event to enjoy fellowship in our work community, to recognize allies in the community action fight, and to present themed awards to individuals and organizations notable for recent work. We also use the event to announce our annual NCCAA standing awards.

This year's Sneaker Ball is included in your conference registration.
Sneaker Ball tickets can also be purchased separately by friends, family and community members

Recognizing Those Who Go Above and Beyond

2025 Award Nominations

Hall of Fame

Champions of the Community Action movement in North Carolina

Nominate

Essential Piece

Community Action Employee of the Year. Boardroom to mailroom!

Nominate

Roselle Copeland

Exemplary individual contribution to association, agency or community

Nominate

Lonnie D. Burton

Client who has achieved a significant level of self-sufficiency and independence

Nominate

Gloria M. Williams

Corporation, foundation, or other partner that has advanced our cause

Nominate

Andrea Harris Scholarship

Student interested in a career serving underserved people and communities

Nominate

Valentines for Elected Representatives!

Here's a downloadable PDF template for a Valentine's Card you can print. Add notes and signatures on the inside and send it along to your local representatives.

Click Here to Download

News From the NCCAA

Uncertain Times: Tips for Managing Your Team

Letter from the Executive Director

February, 2025

Dear Colleagues,

When the news brings what feels like endless challenges, it's even more important that we lead Community Action teams with stress reduction in mind. Staff in our space lead with deep empathy and it's even more important that we remind them daily that problems can be temporary. Here are a few tips on how to manage a team in uncertain times:

Communicate a Clear and Inspiring Vision
Reiterate the organization's mission and why the work matters.
Be transparent about challenges while offering hope and solutions.

Lead with Empathy and Support
Acknowledge team members' concerns and challenges.
Offer emotional support and create a culture of psychological safety.

Encourage Flexibility and Adaptability
Allow for innovative approaches to problem-solving.
Be open to changing workflows and strategies as needed.

Recognize and Appreciate Contributions
Regularly acknowledge small and big wins.
Offer shoutouts in team meetings, personal notes, or small incentives.

Foster Collaboration and Inclusion
Encourage cross-team support and collective problem-solving.
Involve staff in decision-making to increase buy-in and engagement.

Providing Opportunities for Growth
Offer professional development, even in low-cost ways (mentorship, webinars, etc.).
Keep team members engaged by giving them meaningful responsibilities.

Maintaining Stability Where Possible
Provide consistency in leadership, messaging, and routines.
If change is necessary, guide the transition with clarity and reassurance.

Keeping Morale High with Positivity and Team Building
Organize activities that strengthen relationships and bring joy (even virtually).
Foster a culture of resilience by celebrating perseverance and teamwork.

Let's keep going strong for North Carolina families! We are in this together.

With gratitude and in solidarity,

Sharon C. Goodson
Executive Director
North Carolina Community Action Association
sharon.goodson@nccaa.net

Executive Director Goodson Speaks at NCAP Conference

Our Executive Director Sharon Goodson was a guest speaker January 30 at the 2025 Management & Leadership Training Conference, held in New Orleans, Louisiana. She is pictured during "Navigating Crisis: Disaster Response Policy and Community Resilience," a key component of this year's Community Action Partnership National Office's annual leadership training.

Welcome Sheryl Andrews, CSBG Liaison

Help us welcome Sheryl Andrews to the team, NCCAA CSBG Liaison! Sheryl has deep experience in CSBG programs and served as the Community Services Block Grant Director at Joint Orange Chatham Community Action in Pittsboro, NC. Watch for an interview with Sheryl on NCCAA social media channels this month.

NCCAA Seeks Audit Firms for Referrals to Network Agencies

The NCCAA is seeking CPA firms that are interested in working with nonprofits. Please contact our office to connect with us and learn more: 919-790-5757

Seeing Our Progress & Looking Forward!

Do you have 2024 Community Action highlights you'd like to share on NCCAA social media or via the monthly newsletter?

Are you working on something BIG for your community action agency in 2025 that you'd like us to publicize to the network?

Send us a photo of yourself and a description of your goal, milestone, or accomplishment and we will share these with the Network!

Let us know! **communications@nccaa.net**

News From Around the Network

EIC AWARDED $2M FOR HOME REPAIRS

The Economic Improvement Council, INC. (EIC) has received a $2 million grant from the NC Healthy Homes Initiative to rehabilitate homes for low-income families. This funding will address critical repairs like pest control, carpentry, and plumbing to create healthier living spaces. This initiative also offers work opportunities for local contractors in related fields. A special event on January 10, 2025, celebrated this milestone with local leaders and community partners.

(Photo in newsletter header)

Mountain Projects, Haywood Habitat for Humanity and the United Way of Haywood County are working together to build small homes for individuals and small families who lost their homes in the 2021 and/or 2024 floods. This community will be built in Bethel Village and will feature modular and stick-built homes on the Waynesville side of Jonathan Creek.

More From the WLOS TV
More From the Mountaineer

Latest Episode of SRCAA "Talk About It" Podcast: The Importance of Male Involvement

Agency Spotlight: Gaston Community Action

Highland Charter Head Start – Classroom 5 recently thanked Home Depot Store #3606 for its generous donation! Each student received a Kids Workshop Kit and an apron, aligning with the class's Building Study. Hands-on learning experiences like these help children develop creativity, problem-solving skills, and a love for learning.

BLUE RIDGE community Action
Helping People, Changing Lives

BRCA Head Start Teachers Advocate in Washington

BRCA employees had the opportunity to go to Washington DC along with with several agencies from all over NC recently to advocate for Head Start families and children. They met with members of Congress and Legislators from NC to discuss the impact that Head Start has on our local communities.

Catissa Head Represents Network in CHEER Hub

Coastal Community Action
Helping People. Changing Lives.

Thank you to Coastal Community Action's Executive Director Catissa Head for representing the Community Action Network in the Coastal Hazards, Equity, Economic Prosperity & Resilience Hub (CHEER).
In less than a decade, hurricanes like Harvey, Irma, and Ian have caused over $25 billion in damages each, leaving vulnerable communities stuck in a cycle of devastation. CHEER is working to break that cycle by focusing on resilience, equity, and economic prosperity—key factors often overlooked in disaster recovery efforts.
As a Community Partner, Coastal Community Action shares the perspectives of rural, high-poverty communities impacted by storms. Catissa Head says, “For nearly 60 years, CCA has been breaking barriers to help individuals and families overcome poverty. We remain dedicated to improving lives through advocacy, education, and support.”

Passage Home Staff Receives Human Trafficking Training

passage home
www.passagehome.org

January was Human Trafficking Awareness Month. To end the month, Passage Home's staff received training from the team at Shield North Carolina.
It’s important for community partners to come together and learn from each other. Our team is better prepared to screen for potential trafficking situations, which is vitally important as individuals experiencing homelessness are at a high risk.

News From the Community Action Partnership

2025 Pathways to Excellence Enrollment Deadline Feb. 21!

Kick off the new year by joining the **2025 Spring Cohort of Pathways to Excellence**! This program is your opportunity to explore the Standards of Excellence, adopt best practices, and collaborate with peers across the Community Action Network. Pathways offers a tiered approach to organizational improvement, and for Spring 2025, we're enrolling agencies in the Silver and Gold tiers.

Spring Cohort Virtual Meeting Dates:

Tuesday, March 25
Tuesday, April 22
Tuesday, May 20
Tuesday, June 24 *(Gold Tier Agencies Only)*

All meetings begin at **1 PM ET / 12 PM CT / 11 AM MT / 10 AM PT** and last about 2 hours. Full Excellence Team participation is strongly recommended.

Learn More

Toolkit Available Online

NCAP has developed a tool in direct response to the Community Action Network's request for language and tools to build their capacity related to equity and mobility as they are core to the current and future work of Community Action Agencies (CAAs). This toolkit also aims to provide a national perspective that CAAs in every community can learn from, draw inspiration from, and embody.

Learn More

HEAL NC Family Engagement Event for January Draws Young "Positive" Parents

Fourteen parents attended HEAL NC's January event, and discussed Triple P/ Positive Parenting Program. Attendees had a candid discussion about managing parental stress and the challenges everyone faces in parenting children.

"You guys are angels on earth, I love how y'all create a safe place for us and let us be ourselves no matter what we maybe dealing with ! I really appreciate how y'all show up for me and give me reassurance on making things better (creating a positive atmosphere) Y'all know how to brighten up a room! Again I appreciate y'all so much y'all deserve the world for what y'all do."
- Message from attendee

Parent of the Month: Erica Gooding

"It's truly helping me help my children to thrive."

Erica Gooding is down to earth, hard-working, and bright. The dedicated mother of two is also a registered nurse.

She draws her motivation from two powerful sources: her children (AKA the future) and the past. That leaves her situated neatly in the present, which keeps her grounded.

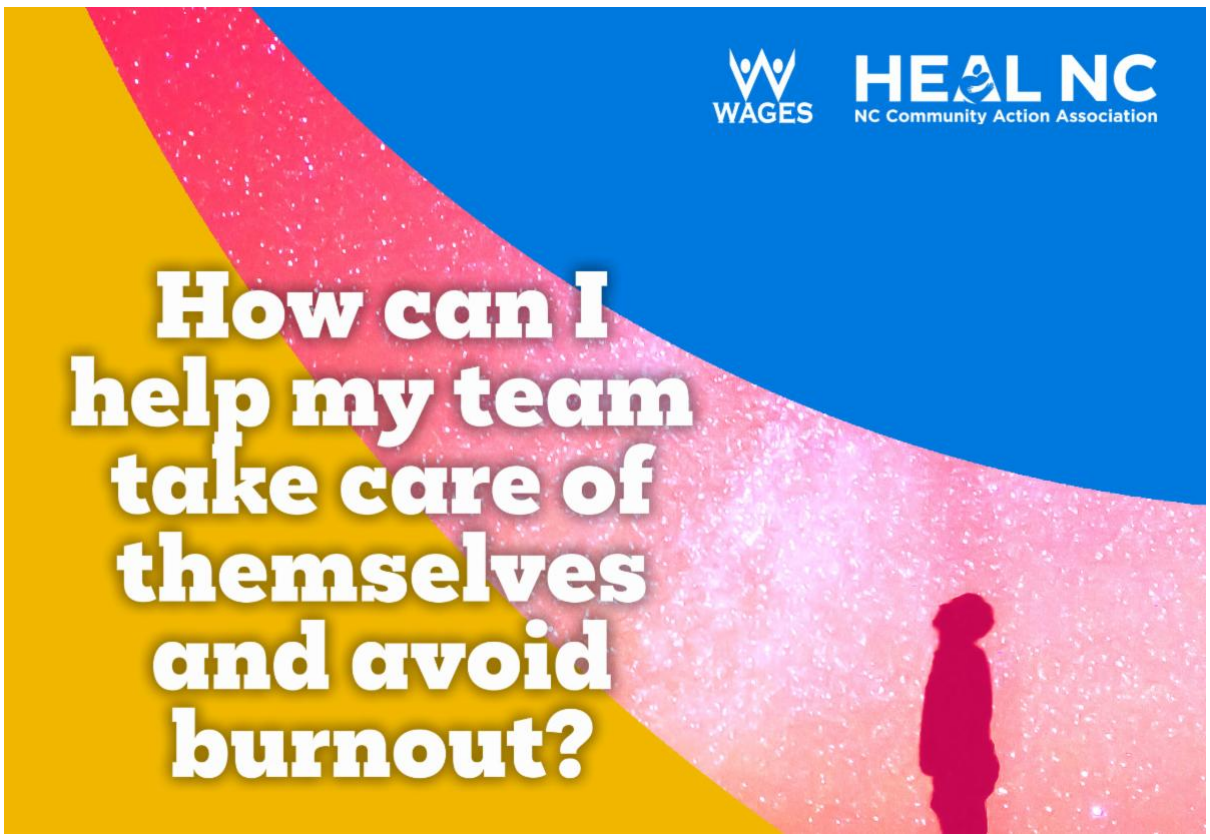
Her children inspire her daily, fueling her drive to grow and become the best version of herself. The past is a chapter she has learned from and never wants to revisit. Her past has shaped her, teaching valuable lessons and instilling a deep determination to
strive for a brighter tomorrow.

Erica's goals include exploring the world. She has a passion for travel and loves embracing new cultures. Her dream is to build a life so fulfilling that she doesn't feel the need to escape from it.

Erica describes HEAL NC as a transformative experience.

"The program has provided a safe, supportive space to learn self-help techniques and access resources..." she said. "The staff at HEAL NC stands out for professionalism, compassion, and care. Their unwavering support has been instrumental in my journey, allowing me to be a better parent to my children. I am incredibly grateful to be part of such an amazing program."

WAGES and HEAL NC Plan Workshops to Help Team Members Avoid Burnout



WAGES and HEAL NC are offering workshops in Wayne County based in the Community Resiliency Model (CRM), which teaches participants to re-set the natural balance of the nervous system with easy-to-understand concepts that bring reliable relief. CRM helps people help themselves and others. Beneficial to small teams and the general public, CRM helps navigate life's difficult situations.

More Information
Christina Watts
WAGES Community Engagement Coordinator
Email: cwatts@wagesnc.org
Phone: 919-734-1178 ext. 212

Job Spotlight: WAMY

WAMY Community Action is looking for a passionate and detail-oriented Finance Assistant to join our amazing team!

This is your chance to play a key role in supporting Community Action, fight poverty, and make a positive impact every single day. If you're ready to grow your career and work in an exciting, collaborative environment, we want to hear from YOU!

Apply now and take the first step toward a fulfilling career with WAMY Community Action!
Click here to apply or learn more about the position: [Finance Assistant Job Opportunity](**https://www.indeed.com/.../finance-assistant...**)

Links to Career Pages in the NCCAA Network

(Link goes to home page when career page isn't offered)

Far West
Blue Ridge Community Action, Morganton
Blue Ridge Opportunity Commission Inc., N. Wilkesboro
Catawba County, Hickory
Community Action Opportunities, Asheville
Four Square Community Action, Inc., Murphy
Macon Program for Progress, Franklin
Mountain Projects, Waynesville
WAMY, Watauga, Avery, Mitchell and Yancey Counties

West
Charlotte Area Fund, Inc., Charlotte
Davidson County Community Action, Lexington
Experiments in Self-Reliance, Inc., Winston-Salem
Gaston Community Action, Inc., Gastonia
I-Care, Inc., Statesville
Salisbury-Rowan Community Action, Salisbury
Sandhills Community Action Program, Southern Pines
Union County Community Action, Monroe
Yadkin Co. Economic Development District, Boonville

Central
Alamance Co. Community Services Agency, Burlington
Franklin-Vance-Warren Opportunity, Inc., Henderson
Johnston Lee Harnett Community Action, Inc., Smithfield
Passage Home, Wake Co.
Southeastern Community Action Partnership, Lumberton
Welfare Reform Liaison Project, Greensboro

East
Action Pathways, Fayetteville
Choanoke Area Development Assoc., Rich Square
Coastal Community Action, Newport
Economic Improvement Council, Edenton
Eastern Carolina Human Services Agency, Jacksonville
Greene Lamp, Inc., Kinston
NEW Community Action, Rocky Mount (info@newcainc.org)
Wayne Action Group for Economic Solvency (WAGES), Inc., Goldsboro

Share your community action career opportunities on our web page and have them distributed to 7000+ emails through the NCCAA newsletter! Send your job listings to communications@nccaa.net.

We Want Your Stories!

Working together to share the impact of Community Action

Does your Community Action Agency have impactful content to share? Let's collaborate. The NCCAA develops creative content year-round to celebrate, educate and inform. Let's amplify the voices of organizations in our network! Let's share the impactful work of community action and tell the stories of our clients! Reach out for collaboration: communications@nccaa.net.

Share Community Action News with a Friend

As a member of the NCCAA community, we work to empower low-income families, change people's lives for the better and improve the communities we serve. We are all dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other. Please take a moment and forward this news to a co-worker and grow the community of professionals dedicated to this important work.

Click to Sign Up

Follow the NCCAA:

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