

*Helping people. Changing lives.*

**CAPLine**



## Tri-Town and South County Announce New Fatherhood Initiative

*Strengthening families and the community.*

Tri-Town Community Action Agency and South County Community Action Agency are beginning a new **Fatherhood Initiative** beginning in November of 2011. The new Initiative will provide absent and single fathers with the skills they need to increase involvement in the lives of their children to significantly increase their child's ability to do well in school, have healthy self-esteem, exhibit empathy and pro-social behavior, and avoid high risk behaviors such as drug use, truancy, and criminal activity.

Research provides overwhelming evidence that children who have a strong positive relationship with their fathers are more likely to become healthy, successful, independent adults. Children who lack this strong paternal relationship are much more likely to have negative outcomes as both children and adults in all areas of life, including earnings potential, health, education, mental health and social functioning.

According to recent US Census data, children in father-absent homes are 5 times more likely to be poor than those in two-parent families. These single parent homes are predominantly female head of household, many of whom receive little to no monetary support from the absent fathers and rely heavily on federal and state subsidies to provide for their household maintenance costs. These sources are woefully inadequate to meet most families' basic living needs. In Rhode Island, 17.1% of the state's 226,000 children under the age of 18 live in households with incomes below the federal poverty level (US Census American Community Survey 2007-2009). Of these children, 79% are living in single-parent families. This makes Rhode Island the 38th lowest ranked state nationally and the worst ranked state of the New England region.

According to Joseph R DeSantis, Chief Executive Officer for both the Tri-Town and South County agencies, "*One of the core missions of community action agencies is to identify gaps in the neighborhoods we serve and to ensure that those gaps are addressed. I can think of nothing more important than to have our children grow up with strong and loving parents who are able to provide for their financial and emotional needs. Both Tri-Town and South County are committed to bringing these critical and necessary services to our families.*"

Phase One of the **Fatherhood Initiative** will offer programs and services to help parents build the skills necessary to become positive role models for their children. This will include

parent education; parent financial literacy, and structured activities to strengthen parent/child relationships. Phase Two, scheduled to begin in early 2012, will introduce a Healthy Marriage component including marriage education, marriage skills, and relationship skills programs as well as premarital education and marriage skills training for engaged couples and for couples or individuals interested in marriage.

**The Fatherhood Initiative** will utilize the following methods and strategies to create a comprehensive and integrated approach to keeping parents engaged and active in their children's lives:

**Nationally Recognized Curricula** delivered by certified, trained instructors will help fathers increase and strengthen parental skills;

**Employment Assistance, Skill Upgrades and Financial Literacy Counseling** will allow fathers to find better career opportunities and to take an active role in managing their finances, thereby increase earnings to meet support obligations and to eliminate their child's need for state/federal subsidies;

**On-Going Case Management and Support Groups** delivered by qualified staff will help link fathers with critical and necessary supportive services and eliminate barriers to successful program participation. Monthly *Dad's Night Out* meetings will give fathers the opportunity to meet and socialize and serve as a support group, stressing positive parenting and community advocacy centered on male and fathering issues.

**Parent/Child Activities** such as a My Dad and Me Basketball League, Weekly Game Night, Father Daughter Dances, Cooking with Dad, and Movie Nights will provide opportunities for parents to practice their new found parenting skills and will keep dads engaged in the program. [Click here to download some great ideas for father/child activities](#)

Both Agencies have the necessary facilities and internal programs to begin this Initiative. South County will utilize space at their new facility on Route 2 in North Kingstown and Tri-Town will operate out of the Tri-Town Community Center located on 33 Maple Avenue in North Providence.

The Community Center includes a full gymnasium, picnic facilities, computer lab and Teen Activity Center from which a multitude of parent and child activities can be operated. Internal programs such as Head Start, Youth Success, the Youth Opportunity Center, Adult Education/GED Prep, and an array of

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[www.fatherhood.org](http://www.fatherhood.org)



Smallest Moments



The Cheerleader



The Manicure



Making Pizza

supportive social services will provide the base from which the Initiative will deliver those activities necessary to achieve the program goals.

For more information please contact  
**Tri-Town Community Action Agency**  
**(401) 351-2750**

For the South County Program, please contact  
**South County Community Action, Inc**  
**(401) 789-3016**

### Fuel Assistance Begins Soon



The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) will once again provide low and moderate income families with fuel assistance benefits to help ease the high cost of home heating during the coming winter months. Particularly hard hit during these harsh economic times are the elderly and families with young children. As the cost of home heating fuel continues to rise, the federal and state economy continues to worsen, leaving working families and those dependent on pensions and Social Security with less resources to meet their home energy needs.

Since LIHEAP began in the 1970's, Tri-Town has provided millions of dollars of assistance in the form of direct payments to oil, gas and electric companies as well as assistance with shutoffs and service restoration. For details about income requirements and program benefits, please follow the LIHEAP link below.

### Volunteer Tax Preparers Needed!

With Summer over and the holidays fast approaching, you can bet that tax season isn't far behind. Tri-Town will once again provide free Federal and State tax preparation and free electronic filing to residents of our local communities. Over the past 6 years, Tri-Town has helped thousands of working families reclaim millions of dollars through refunds, child tax credits, the Earned Income Tax Credit, and the RI Property Tax Relief Credit.



This year, Tri-Town has set a goal to serve 750 low and moderate income individuals beginning in January of 2012. To accomplish this goal, the agency is seeking dedicated volunteers willing to give a few hours a week to this worthwhile effort. Familiarity with computers is helpful, but *no prior experience in tax*

### Apple Festival 2011- A Great Success



The 2011 Apple Festival drew thousand of families and friends to Johnston Memorial Park between Saturday the 24th and Sunday the 25th of September. Sponsored annually by the North Central Chamber of Commerce, the Apple Festival featured a variety of fun family events including a mini carnival with games and a rock climbing wall, a pie eating contest, a parade featuring the Johnston High School Band, an excerpt from the upcoming performance of Disney's Aladdin Jr. by Johnston Dance and Performing Arts, and a wide assortment of food and services vendors from the local area.

Over 500 tote bags filled with an assortment of useful items were handed out to visitors of the Tri-Town booth and children enjoyed the free balloons and stickers. Tri-Town participates in the Apple Festival annually. It provides agency staff with a great opportunity to let residents of the local community know

Tri-Town will begin taking applications for assistance in mid October. Those seeking an appointment may call the Energy Department at

**(401) 519-1913**



Click here to download  
the RI LIHEAP Fact  
Sheet

*preparation* is necessary as the Program offers free tax preparation training utilizing IRS Certified Instructors.

If you or someone you know is interested in getting involved, please contact Stephanie DiTusa.

**(401) 519-1917**

[Contact Stephanie by email](#)

about the comprehensive list of new and existing programs available at the Agency.

Click on the link below to find out more information about the Annual Apple Festival and other events sponsored by the North Central Chamber of Commerce.



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Visit our website at [www.tri-town.org](http://www.tri-town.org)