



The Agricultural and Labor Program, Inc.  
Helping People. Changing Lives.

# community **Action** PARTNERSHIP **QUARTERLY Newsletter**

AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK

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## From the Desk of the Editor

During the 1980s the concept of "company quality" with the focus on management and people came to the forefront. It was realized that, if all departments approached quality with an open mind, success was possible if the management led the quality improvement process.

The company-wide quality approach places an emphasis on four aspects: **1. Elements** (*controls, job management, adequate processes, performance and integrity criteria and identification of records*) **2. Competence** (*knowledge, skills, experience, qualifications*) **3. Soft elements** (*personnel integrity, confidence, organizational culture, motivation, team spirit*) **4. Infrastructure.** The Agricultural and Labor Program, Inc. applied these principles and as a result, our efforts and quality assurance approaches were tested and proven to be just what was needed to ensure a successful Federal Monitoring Review.

Both the quality assurance approach utilized by ALPI in its self-assessment process and the ongoing emphasis placed on "quality" realized a positive outcome, as certified in the Head Start Federal Review report. The report acknowledges the accomplishment to the ALPI's Governing Body, Policy Council, staff, and families. The report further noted that, "meeting and sustaining compliance with regulations requires an ongoing commitment to self-assessment and continuous improvement." ALPI has been and will continue to be committed to improving all services for the children and families we so proudly serve throughout Florida.

**Deloris Johnson**  
Chief Executive  
Officer & Editor



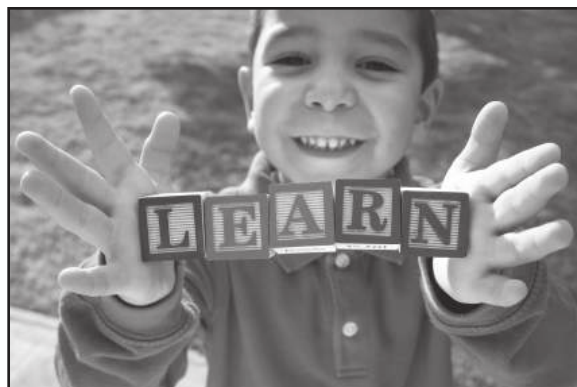
## ALPI'S Head Start Federal Monitoring a **SUCCESS!**

The Agricultural and Labor Program, Inc., received high marks and no findings during its Triennial Head Start federal review. The Head Start Act requires that Head Start programs be subject to a comprehensive on-site review every 3 years and that newly established programs be reviewed after the first year in operation.

Head Start Monitoring Reviews are conducted to ensure that the highest quality Head Start and Early Head Start programs are being offered to children in compliance with government standards. The Federal agency responsible for oversight of Head Start is the Office of Head Start (OHS). OHS works in partnership with two Government contractors, Danya International, Inc., and The Lewin Group, in administering the Head Start Monitoring Program. Danya International, Inc. (Danya), a health communications and technology firm delivering breakthrough solutions for public health and education, administered the ALPI Head Start Monitoring Review during March 1-6, 2009.

The FY 2009 Office of Head Start Monitoring Protocol contains a series of compliance questions covering all program content areas and management systems. Each compliance question is directly linked to a regulation; therefore, any review activity, including interviews, observations, and document reviews, relates to clearly defined Head Start Program Performance Standards.

On April 1, 2009, the Office of Head Start informed the ALPI Board Chairperson (Mr.



William Holt) that based on the information gathered during the review, it has been determined that the ALPI Head Start and Early Head Start Programs are in compliance with all applicable Head Start Program Performance Standards, laws, regulations, and policy requirements\*. Accordingly, no corrective action is required at this time.

**Congratulations to  
The Board of Directors,  
The Head Start  
Policy Council and  
the Head Start Staff...**

*Yes,  
We Did It...Together!*



\*The full report is available for review at the ALPI Head Start office located at 720 Delaware Avenue, Ft. Pierce, Florida.



# ALPI Joins Community Action Legislative Day



On March 24, 2009 The Florida Association for Community Action, Inc. presented a Legislative Day for all Florida Community Action Agencies at the Florida Legislature in Tallahassee. ALPI was one of many Community Action Agencies in

Florida participating in the event and helping to educate the Florida Senate on what community action "in the community" is all about.

While on the Senate floor, ALPI discussed some of the agency's many accomplishments during the past 41 years. Deloris Johnson (ALPI CEO) and Pa Houa Lee-Yang (CSBG/Economic Services Director) visited their district Senators to advocate for the communities ALPI represents and to further discuss the different ways in which Community Action Agencies, such as ALPI, are helping to reduce poverty, and thereby creating a positive change in the lives of many children and families.

The Community Action Agencies were welcomed by the Mayor of Tallahassee. John Edward, Jr., from the Northeast Florida Community Action Agency, Inc., made a speech on how to root out poverty and provide successful, measurable outcomes for poor families in our communities to become self-sufficient. Mr. William Holt (ALPI Board Chairperson and Florida Association for Community Action, Inc. Chairperson) delivered the closing remarks for the day and thanked all the Community Action Agencies for their support and encouragement.



William Holt (ALPI Chairperson and FACA Chairperson) - Pictured 3rd from left-top row and Tallahassee Mayor John Marks - Pictured far right.



Pa Houa Lee-Yang (ALPI CSBG/Economic Services Director) and Florida Governor Charlie Crist.



## ALPI Provides Exceptional Client Assistance

Recently I encountered a very difficult situation and requested the assistance of two ALPI staff members, Cheryl Burnham and Cynthia Perry. I would like to compliment ALPI on their staff's handling of this particular customer's problem. Both Cheryl and Cynthia were very responsive to my requests and acted quickly to help a disabled citizen of Martin County who critically needed energy assistance. I know there are increased demands on staff's time and attention, and I appreciate their flexibility and responsiveness. Thanks again and keep up the good work!

*Hilda Frazier - Manager  
Community Assistance Section  
Florida Department of Community Affairs*

## FREE LEGAL ASSISTANCE ...

Many counties in Florida provide free legal assistance and/or advice to those in need. Services are broad, and include everything from adoption to dissolution of marriage, elder law and even wills. In **Polk County**, contact : Volunteer Involvement Project-Affordable Legal Services at 863-688-7376. In **St. Lucie County**, contact Florida Rural Legal Services, Inc.- Volunteer Attorney Project at 772-466-4766. For **other counties** in Florida and throughout the United States, please visit the website: <http://www.abanet.org/legalservices/probono/directory.html#>



# ALPI Family Self-Sufficiency Program Participant Receives FACA 2009 Self-Sufficiency Award

Congratulations to ALPI staff for working so diligently with ALPI Family Self-Sufficiency Program participant, Ms. Valerie Smart. Ms. Smart is a very dedicated and committed single parent of 7 children (4 of whom still live at home). During her journey toward self-sufficiency, she had the opportunity to work with ALPI Case Manager Fred Stickney. Fred was not only her case manager, but quickly became a motivating force in Ms. Smart's life, both as a friend and mentor.



*William Holt (ALPI Chairperson and FACA Chairperson), Valerie Smart, and ALPI CEO, Deloris Johnson*

The Self-Sufficiency Award presented by the Florida Association for Community Action, Inc. (FACA) is a testimony to the life-changing decision Ms. Smart made to better her own life, as well as that of her children. With assistance from ALPI, Ms. Smart and her children are well on their way to becoming economically self-sufficient. However, she did not stop when her own life improved, but began working as a volunteer for The Center for Independent Living and even drafted a wheelchair ramp for one of their clients.

On the first day of enrolling in ALPI's Self-Sufficiency Program she stated, "I will own my own business one day!" With her amazing dedication, motivation and determination, Ms. Smart graduated this year from the Architectural/Drafting Program at Travis Career Center. As a result of her outstanding performance in the drafting program, as well as high test scores, Ms. Smart was selected to enroll in the Ox School of Construction, where she will pursue her General Contractor's License.

Ms. Smart stated that not being able to financially support her family "was not a result of her disability, but due to her not being able to further her education as a young mother and not having a strong understanding of the fact that in life, one has to sacrifice." She knows she has big dreams ... and she plans on reaching them. When asked how she plans to realize her dreams, she replied "With the help of my spiritual provider and the Family Self-Sufficiency Program at the Agricultural & Labor Program, Inc., there is no stopping me now!"

## National Foreclosure Mitigation Counseling Program (NFMC)

The NFMC Program was created by Congress to address the nationwide foreclosure crisis by dramatically increasing the availability of housing counseling for families at risk of foreclosure. The \$180 million program was authorized through the FY 2008 Consolidated Appropriations Bill, which named NeighborWorks as its administrator. An additional \$180 million was appropriated to this effort on July 30, 2008 through the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008, and the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2009 appropriated another \$50 million to the program on March 11, 2009.

As a certified U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Housing Counseling Agency, ALPI is able to partner with NFMC to provide critical assistance in the prevention of home foreclosures. So far this year, ALPI's HUD Housing Counselor (Ron Hill) has assisted in the prevention of (15) Foreclosures. That's 15 families that were able to stay in their homes, children who were able to stay in their schools, and parents who were able to keep their jobs!



*Did you know?*

Renters have more protection against losing their homes under a new foreclosure prevention bill President Obama signed into law on May 20. Starting immediately, the law requires that tenants who pay their rent on time can remain in their home until the end of their lease, or for up to 90 days after the foreclosure if there is no lease.



# LIHEAP PROGRAM SERVICES

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) provides grants to local governments and non-profit agencies to assist eligible low income households in meeting their costs of home heating and cooling. The majority of the funds are used for utility payment assistance.

The Agricultural and Labor Program, Inc. (ALPI) provides LIHEAP services in six (6) counties around Florida. Those counties are Polk, Collier, Glades, Hendry, Martin and St. Lucie.

Although there are no target populations for LIHEAP services, ALPI does provide services on a priority basis. The priorities are:

1. Receipt of Cut-off Notice
2. Seniors (60+)
3. Handicapped
4. Families with Children under 5 years of age.

ALPI delivers LIHEAP services directly and indirectly. The Direct delivery of services is through ALPI permanent and temporary staff, volunteers or Sub-Recipient Agreements with other community organizations and/or local governments.

ALPI'S LIHEAP Program has twelve (12) Sub-Recipients, along with four (4) Client Specialists that provide service delivery in approximately twenty-six cities.

To date (2/01/09-6/8/09) LIHEAP has provided Four Thousand Two Hundred Sixty-Nine (4,269) services to families in need of utility assistance. The total cost for these services is: **\$1,266,696.05**



## ALPI Sub-Recipient Partners

### POLK COUNTY

Womens Resource Center  
(Winter Haven/Lakeland)  
Living Hope Ministries (Polk City)  
Lake Wales Care Center  
Catholic Charities (Lakeland)

### COLLIER

COFFO (Immokalee)  
Macedonia Baptist Church (Naples)

### GLADES

Glades County Social Services  
(Moore Haven)

### HENDRY

Hendry County Social Services  
(LaBelle/Clewiston)  
Hendry/Glades Mental Health  
Behavioral Center (Clewiston)

### MARTIN

St. Vincent De Paul (Hobe Sound)  
Indiantown Non Profit Housing, Inc.  
(Indiantown)

### ST. LUCIE

Image of Christ, Inc. (Ft. Pierce)

*We greatly appreciate our Farmworker  
"Partners" for their assistance in meeting the  
needs of this deserving population of workers.*

Our Partners are:

#### ONE STOP CENTER

Plant City • Wauchula • Lake Placid

#### FARMWORKER JOBS & EDUCATION CENTER

Auburndale • Apopka

#### HISPANIC SERVICES

Plant City

#### GOOD SAMARITAN MISSION

Balm

#### CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Plant City

#### CHAPTER 1 PROGRAM

Frostproof

#### COLLIER COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY

Immokalee

## LEVERAGING PROGRAM SERVICES

Each year the federal government funds numerous community and economic development initiatives through an array of programs. Yet, the need for federal money to fund these initiatives has continued to grow, while the federal budget increasingly has been strained by other competing funding priorities. It is becoming more and more difficult to help finance these initiatives and program goals, especially during these hard economic times. Through the leveraging of funds from both the programs listed below, ALPI was able to serve approximately Four Hundred Twenty (420) farmworker families for Program Year 2008-2009. The breakdown for both programs is as follows:

**The Florida Department of Education, Adult Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Program** — **\$22,500** for the delivery of emergency assistance to WIA 167 eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their dependents who may require temporary assistance with housing, transportation, and utilities.

**Florida Non-Profit Housing, Inc.** — **\$43,253** for the direct provision of temporary and emergency housing related assistance to eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers.





# ALPI, the City of Auburndale, and The Agricultural and Labor Housing Development Corporation... A Community Partnership at Work

In the mid-90's, the Agricultural and Labor Program, Inc. (ALPI) determined a need for affordable rental housing for farmworkers in the Auburndale area. It established the Agricultural and Labor Housing Development Corporation (ALHDC) and, through financing by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Rural Development, built a 57-unit apartment complex on the east side of Auburndale. This complex, known as New Horizons, was completed in 1996 and has continued to operate successfully since then. Maintaining a 90-95% occupancy rate since opening, the complex continues to provide affordable housing for more than 175 farmworkers and their family members.

ALPI became the interim Community Action Agency (CAA) for Polk and Highlands Counties in 2007 and the permanent CAA in 2008. As part of its efforts to take services to the local community, ALPI staff would visit New Horizons a couple times per month. As funding increased and the demand for services went up, ALPI decided to set up a satellite office at New Horizons.

In mid 2008, the City of Auburndale contacted ALPI's Chief Executive Officer, Deloris Johnson, about meeting some of the needs of New Horizon with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. The City would purchase furniture, computers, and other electronic items with CDBG funds. New Horizons was included in Auburndale's annual CDBG plan and the purchase was approved. Towards the end of 2008, a permanent office was established at the complex and ALPI began providing much needed services.



With the purchase and installation of the computers, etc. by the City of Auburndale and the leveraging of Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funds, ALPI is establishing a presence in the complex and the surrounding community. Planning is underway for more services in the immediate future. Residents will now be able to access the internet for applying for jobs, food stamps, Medicaid, etc. Additionally, the children of the complex will have access to computers and the internet for completing their homework assignments and succeeding in school. Also, ALPI has plans to begin offering job search skills training, as well as budgeting and other services that are badly needed. Additional services are also being explored, including an after-school mentoring program.

This shows how a CAA can truly impact its local community and make real changes in people's lives.

## IN FLORIDA...

Food stamp benefits have gone up

between \$20 to \$24 per person per month.

The Florida Department of Children and Families

reported a food stamp caseload of 1,863,588 in

February — 31 percent more than in February 2008.

Unemployment benefits have increased by

approximately \$25 per week for all those receiving

unemployment compensation.



# CONTACT INFORMATION

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#### Child Development & Early Head Start Services

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ALPI's Programs and Services are Funded in part by:



**Early Learning Coalition of Polk County, Lincoln Park Child Care, Inc.,  
the Ft. Pierce Housing Authority, and the Polk County School Board**

## ALPI CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

The ALPI Circle of Friends is a club with no by-laws, no officers, and no meetings! It is simply an association of like-minded individuals, businesses, agencies, etc. who believe that "together, we can all make a difference." We encourage individuals and businesses to consider joining the ALPI Circle of Friends. It is an easy and simple way to have an impact in our communities. Please go to [www.alpi.org](http://www.alpi.org) and join today!



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The ALPI Newsletter is a quarterly publication designed to inspire and inform all employees, volunteers, parents, partners, and supporters of ALPI who have helped us through the years to grow the organization into what it has become today. We welcome your suggestions, comments, and ideas. Have a question about a feature? Heard an interesting story? Share it with us by phone, mail, or fax (refer to Contact Information).

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