

LIFT Digest

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF LIFT COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY, INC.

National Community Action Month: Celebrating the Power of Community

Each May, Community Action Agencies across the country celebrate National Community Action Month, recognizing the lasting impact of programs and partnerships that help individuals, families, and communities thrive.

At LIFT Community Action Agency, this month serves as a reminder of our mission to empower people, strengthen families, and create opportunities throughout Choctaw, McCurtain, and Pushmataha Counties. Every day, our dedicated staff works alongside community partners to provide resources and support that help families achieve greater stability and self-sufficiency.

Throughout May, LIFT celebrated the dedication of our employees, volunteers, Board members, and community partners whose commitment makes our work possible. Whether assisting families with housing, early childhood education and development, transportation, workforce development, victim services, or other vital programs, every effort contributes to building stronger communities.

As we reflect on National Community Action Month, we are grateful for the trust our communities place in us and remain committed to helping people overcome challenges, create opportunities, and improve lives. Together, we are making a difference—one family, one partnership, and one community at a time.

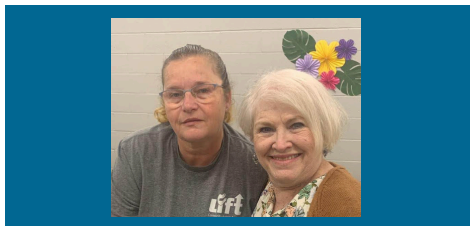


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Around the Agency

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH AWARDEES



The Employee of the Month for April 2026 is Kristy Priddy. Kristy is a Center Director for our Early Head Start Program.

Congratulations Kristy Priddy!



The Employee of the Month for May 2026 is Jordan Mack. Jordan is the Assistant Director for our Head Start/Early Head Start Programs.

Congratulations Jordan Mack!



The Employee of the Month for June 2026 is Renee Wright. Renee is a Job Coach with Work Ready Oklahoma - Idabel.

Congratulations Renee Wright!



SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Five Years:

Brenda Green, Teacher – Head Start Program
 Brianna Nelson, Family Resource Coordinator – Family Resource Center
 Chelsie Roden, Caregiver – Early Head Start Program
 Rebecca Vasquez-Powers, Case Manager – YouthBuild Program

Ten Years:

Sara Moore, Professional Development Specialist – Head Start Programs
 Barbara Sheets, Family Advocate – Head Start Program

Fifteen Years:

Johnny Driggers, Energy Auditor – Weatherization Program

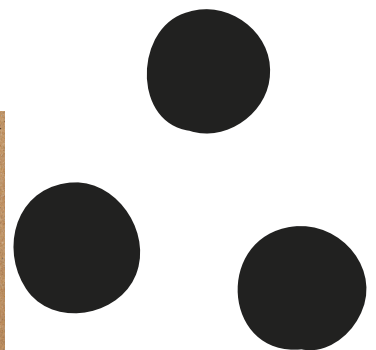
Twenty Years:

Kathy James, Senior Program Planner – Administration



CORE Dad - Choctaw County

The CORE Dad Program in Choctaw County continues to make a positive impact on local fathers and families. The team recently completed two workshops, including one held at the Choctaw County Jail, with three additional workshops currently underway. To strengthen services, Kent Grimes joined the team as the new Case Manager/Dad Coordinator. The team also attended the PREP 8.0 Relationship Education Training in Oklahoma City, gaining valuable tools and strategies to better support healthy relationships and stronger families throughout the community.



Head Start, Early Head Start, Early Head Start-Child Care & Family Resource Center

Connecting Families to Early Learning Opportunities

A key outreach initiative in April was the Early Head Start Sign-Up Day held in Idabel, Oklahoma. This event provided families with the opportunity to apply for Early Head Start and Early Head Start-Child Care services in a welcoming and supportive environment. Families who applied received incentives, which helped encourage applicants to submit a completed application. The event was made possible through a strong partnership with the Family Resource Center, highlighting the value of collaboration in meeting family needs.



Head Start Celebrates Community Spirit at Local Homecoming Parades

This year, our Head Start team proudly participated in several local homecoming parades as a fun and engaging way to promote our Head Start and Early Head Start programs throughout the communities we serve. Parade attendees had the opportunity to learn more about the valuable services available to children and families while celebrating local school spirit and community pride.

A special thank you goes to our amazing Family Advocates, whose enthusiasm, dedication, and hard work helped make this outreach initiative a success. From planning and organizing to representing our programs along the parade routes, they played a key role in connecting with families and sharing information about early childhood education opportunities.

Head Start Programs & Family Resource Center

Supporting Families Through Outreach and Connection

LIFT Head Start staff actively participated in the McCurtain County Baby Fair, an event hosted by the Oklahoma State Department of Health and LIFT Healthy Start. The fair brought together families, community organizations, and service providers to share valuable resources and support for parents and young children.

The event provided an excellent opportunity to connect directly with approximately 200 families from across the community. Staff were able to share information about Early Head Start services, answer questions, and help families learn about the benefits of early childhood education and family support programs.

This outreach effort was particularly important as the program continues to focus on strengthening Early Head Start enrollment within the area. By engaging with families in a welcoming environment and building relationships with community partners, staff were able to increase awareness of available services and connect families with resources designed to support their children's growth and development.



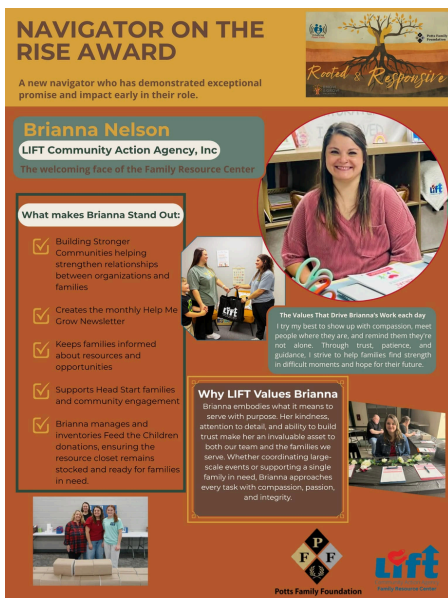
Family Resource Coordinator Receives Statewide Recognition

LIFT Community Action Agency is proud to celebrate Brianna Nelson, Family Resource Coordinator, for receiving the Navigator on the Rise Award at the Rooted and Responsive Navigator Conference.

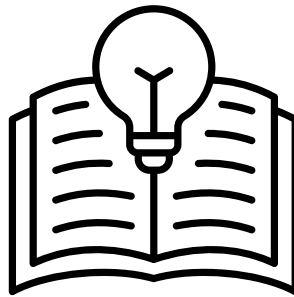
The award was presented by the Potts Family Foundation, which recognized Family Resource Center Navigators across Oklahoma who go above and beyond in supporting children, families, and communities. Out of 36 nominations submitted statewide, Brianna was honored for her dedication to helping families feel supported, valued, and connected to the resources they need.

Brianna's commitment to serving families reflects the heart of navigation—meeting families where they are, walking alongside them through challenges, and building strong community connections. We are incredibly proud of her achievement and grateful for the positive impact she makes every day.

Congratulations, Brianna, on this well-deserved recognition!



Healthy Start



In June, the LIFT Healthy Start Program held group-based education classes over Early Childhood Health and Developmental Milestones and water safety that were very successful. There were over 60 participants at the Idabel splash pad event on June 25th and in Hugo on June 26th.



Please join us in congratulating Jayleigh Nelms on her promotion to Program Director of LIFT Healthy Start!



On May 15, 2026, a Locally Grown Baby Fair was held, which was hosted by LIFT Healthy Start's Community Consortium and the Oklahoma State Department of Health.

Housing & Supportive Services

Weatherization Program

LIFT's Weatherization Assistance Program reduces energy costs for low-income households by increasing the energy efficiency of their homes. Ultimately the program works to reduce energy costs for low-income families by improving the energy efficiency of their homes while ensuring their health and safety. A total of \$15,781.63 in weatherization services were provided to clients within our service area from April through June.



11 HOMES WEATHERIZED THIS QUARTER

Intermediary Program

As a participating Intermediary in USDA's Section 502 Direct Loan Program, LIFT trains and supports certified packagers and qualified employers to help rural residents access affordable home financing. LIFT also serves as a quality assurance reviewer, ensuring applications are accurate and complete before submission to USDA.

7 NEW HOMEOWNERS CREATED | 9 APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED

Rx for Oklahoma

Rx for Oklahoma is a prescription drug program offered to our tri-county area residents by helping them obtain their prescriptions at a reduced or no out-of-pocket expense. This program is subject to eligibility criteria. Please contact us today for more information!



Choctaw County (580) 326-5165

McCurtain County (580) 326-5165

Pushmataha County (580) 298-2921

Rental Housing

LIFT's HUD 202 Senior Housing currently has vacancies at Clayton Place Senior Housing in Clayton and Kiamichi Place Senior Housing in Antlers. Eligibility requirements include age and income, and tenant rent is based on income. All available units are one bedroom and one bathroom.



CALL TODAY FOR MORE INFORMATION ! 580.326.5656

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call margie today for more information!

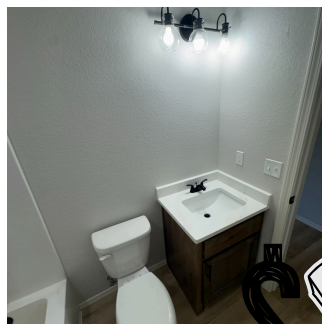
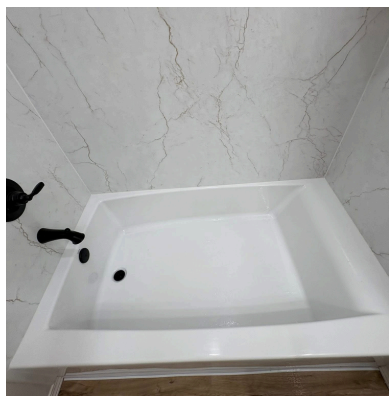


Housing & Supportive Services

Housing Stability Program

LIFT is excited to announce the construction of FIVE new homes just outside of Hugo, made possible through funding from the Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency's Housing Stability Homebuilder Program. We are utilizing two thoughtfully designed house plans for these homes. Three of the homes will include attached garages, while the remaining two will offer an additional flex room—perfect for a home office or nursery. Each home features 3 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms, with living spaces ranging from approximately 1,400 to 1,800 square feet. Lot sizes vary between 1 to 2.5 acres, offering plenty of space and privacy.

These homes are being built with high-quality finishes, including: custom cabinetry, solid surface countertops, recessed lighting and in-ground storm shelters for added safety.



\$292,500

call today for more information!

(580) 326-3351 Ask for Kinsey Cox or Macy Self

Tri-County Renew Project: Better Choices : Better Futures, Second Chance Re-Entry Program & Tri-County Abatement Collaborative

Tri-County RENEW Project (TCORP): Working Together to Strengthen Our Communities

The Tri-County RENEW Project continues strengthening southeastern Oklahoma through the collaborative efforts of Better Choices : Better Futures (BCBF), Second Chance Re-Entry Program, and Tri-County Abatement Collaborative.

In May, TCORP hosted the 4th Annual Fostering Hope: Fostering Resilient Responders Seminar, providing training for mental health professionals and first responders. A youth panel led by the Better Choices : Better Futures Youth Empowerment Network (YEN) was recognized as one of the event's highlights.

BCBF continues expanding the Handle with Care program in local schools, while the Second Chance Re-Entry Program provides counseling and case management to inmates preparing for successful re-entry. The Tri-County Abatement Collaborative has expanded jail-based services, provided Narcan training to community organizations and volunteer fire departments, and continued overdose prevention efforts throughout the region.

TCORP also participated in the McCurtain County Hospital Health & Wellness Event, sharing resources and promoting safe medication disposal through a Prescription Drug Take-Back event.

Through education, prevention, and recovery support, TCORP continues making a positive impact on individuals, families, and communities across the tri-county area.



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Victim Services Programs

25 Years Stronger: Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month

April marked the 25th anniversary of Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month, a time dedicated to raising awareness, supporting survivors, and strengthening efforts to prevent sexual violence in our communities. As part of Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month activities, Victim Services staff participated in an International Denim Day Event to stand against the myths and misconceptions surrounding sexual violence. The event, sponsored by the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and held at Wheelock Academy, featured guest speakers, an awareness walk, and informational booths. In reflecting on this important 25-year milestone, we remain committed to fostering safety, promoting healthy relationships, and ensuring survivors have access to compassionate support and resources. Together, every voice and every action contribute to a future free from sexual violence.



Working Together to Prevent Child Abuse

April also marked Child Abuse Prevention Month, a nationwide observance dedicated to raising awareness about child abuse and neglect while promoting the importance of strengthening families and communities.

The pinwheel, the national symbol for child abuse prevention, represents the bright future every child deserves. As we continue our prevention efforts throughout the year, we remain dedicated to fostering safe, stable, and nurturing environments where children and families can thrive.

BECOME A CASA VOLUNTEER



-  Support a child
-  Advocate for their best interests
-  Make a difference

• DeeDee (Dianna) Atwood,
Director Youth & Victim Services
580-298-2921
dianna.atwood@liftca.org



This quarter, we are excited to welcome Kaleigh Ammons and Christin Logan to our Victim Services team. Kaleigh joins the Safe Place Healing Hearts Too Program as a Program Coordinator/Victim Advocate, while Christin joins the Safe Place Healing Hearts Program in the same role. Both

bring a passion for helping others and a commitment to supporting victims on their path to healing. We are grateful to have them as part of our team and look forward to the contributions they will make to the individuals, families, and communities we serve.



 Kaleigh Ammons



 Christin Logan



Bureau of Investigation Special Victims Unit.

Victim Services staff and partners attend the 2026 Sexual Assault Awareness Month Symposium sponsored by the Oklahoma State



Victim Services staff recognize Community Action Month in May.

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Work Ready Oklahoma-Idabel

It has been an exciting and eventful third year for Work Ready Idabel, serving 171 participants and continuing to make a positive impact throughout our community.

In addition to our regularly scheduled workshops in this second quarter, we hosted job fairs, hosted a WORKlahoma event, attended a variety of trainings, attended community events, and celebrated a complete building makeover. We also faced an unexpected challenge when flooding created significant disruptions to our operations. Despite these obstacles, our team remained committed to serving participants and helping them achieve their employment and career goals.

This second quarter brought many reasons to celebrate. From participants securing employment and earning their Commercial Driver's Licenses (CDLs) to graduates successfully entering the workforce, we have witnessed remarkable accomplishments. Through career readiness workshops, job search resources, training opportunities, and individualized support, participants have gained valuable tools to build brighter futures.

The photos below highlight just a few of the successes, milestones, and celebrations that made this quarter so memorable. We are proud of every participant who has taken steps toward self-sufficiency and career success, and we look forward to continuing this important work in the years ahead.



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A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF
LIFT COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY, INC.

HELPING PEOPLE. CHANGING LIVES.

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