July 19, 2016 – Sept. 20, 2016

MEDIA PACKET

Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino County

Press Releases, News Items, Social Media, Flyers, etc.

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AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK

Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino County

WE INVEST IN...
SELF-SUFFICIENCY
ENERGY EFFICIENCY
ECONOMIC STABILITY
PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY
FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES

Food Bank Partnerships and Volunteers

Helping Families become self-reliant

Individual Development Accounts Program

Helping Hungry Kids

Safer Homes & Energy Conservation Programs

Lead Abatement

Replacing Inefficient Appliances

Weatherizing Homes

Maximizing Tax Returns Using EITC

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Agency News Items

THE SUN

HUNGER

Feeding America Riverside/San Bernardino is in urgent need of donations

Shelves are empty in the Feeding America Riverside/San Bernardino warehouse on July 19 in Riverside. The food bank is desperately seeking donations of cash or non-perishable food. COURTESY PHOTO

By Michel Nolan, *The Sun*

POSTED: 07/26/16, 5:10 PM PDT | UPDATED: 10 HRS AGO

The food bank is sending out an SOS.

For hundreds of thousands of people living in the Inland Empire, hunger is a fact of life.

Now, the safety net in place for these people is in danger of letting them down.

Feeding America Riverside/San Bernardino, the regional food bank serving the Inland Empire, is desperately low on its food supply.

Empty shelves are a stark reality.

The organization provides food to more than 500 local nonprofit organizations that in turn assist more than 425,000 local men, women and children.

“Our local food bank needs your help — our shelves are bare,” said Stuart Haniff, chief philanthropy officer of Feeding America Riverside/San Bernardino.

“This is an urgent appeal for help,” he added.

According to Food Bank CEO Bill Carnegie, summer is always a difficult time to raise food and money, but this summer is especially a struggle with donations being much lower than expected.

Carnegie said the food bank typically distributes enough food for more than 2 million meals each month, but June’s distribution was down by 333,000 meals.

“That’s significantly fewer meals for people in need in our community,” Carnegie said.

“August is looking worse.”

It’s a perfect storm.

During the summer, school children who live below poverty level miss out on receiving school lunches.

Apparently, hunger is not seasonal.

Stuart Haniff said that 52 percent of the people the food bank serves are children.

Not only is it summer, when food banks see a downturn in donations, but both San Bernardino and Riverside have not recovered from the economic recession.

Grocery chains and distribution centers do donate, but food banks have seen a decrease there as well, due to the time of year and other factors, according to Haniff.

Carnegie said the Food Bank needs to raise $150,000 by the end of July to meet the demand for August.

For each dollar raised, the Food Bank can acquire and distribute enough food for nine meals.

Feeding America Riverside/San Bernardino Counties (formerly Second Harvest food bank) partners with 500 local charities including food pantries, soup kitchens, emergency shelters, senior meal sites, day care centers and youth programs that help distribute food in Riverside and San Bernardino counties.

Most needed food items are peanut butter, cereal, canned soups, canned fruits and vegetables, canned tomato products, canned meats, boxed meals, and non-perishable food items.

Feeding America Riverside/San Bernardino has the USDA (surplus food from the federal government) Contract for Riverside County, while Community Action Partnership Food Bank of San Bernardino County has the USDA Contract for San Bernardino County.

"San Bernardino County is in the top 10 counties in the country for the most food-insecure children," said Brandon Romano, program manager for Community Action Partnership Food Bank of San Bernardino County.

According to "Map the Meal Gap 2016," a report by Feeding America, there are 15 counties in the U.S. with more than 100,000 food-insecure children.

San Bernardino County is at number 10 with 131,290 food-insecure children. Riverside County is number 9 with 134,270 food-insecure children, while Los Angeles County tops the list with 536,100 children who are food-insecure.

In all, five California counties made the list.

In San Bernardino County, Community Action Partnership Food Bank of San Bernardino County serves 50,000 families every month.

In all, 22 percent — more than 800,000 — live below the poverty level in the two counties.

The percentage of need is even higher for children; one in four children in the Inland Empire is at risk.

The CAPS Food Bank partners with 255 charitable organizations and nonprofits.

"We serve a mix of working poor; people transitioning between jobs; part-time workers, and people who can't find a job," Romano said.

Contrary to popular belief, there is not more need during the holidays, Haniff added.

"Hunger is not seasonal," he said. "People are struggling with hunger every day of every week of every year."

FEEDING AMERICA RIVERSIDE/SAN BERNARDINO

NUMBERS SAY A LOT

•18.75 percent (more than 800,000), the average number of people in Riverside and San Bernardino counties living below the poverty level

•1 in 4, (more than 300,000), the number of children at risk in Riverside and San Bernardino counties

•425,000+ individuals, including children, families, seniors and veterans are assisted each month in the Inland Empire

•2.5 million pounds of food is distributed each month

•98 cents of every $1 raised goes directly to food and programs

•$1 donation means 9 meals are distributed

•79,000 square-foot warehouse at 2950 Jefferson St., Riverside, CA 92504

•500 charities help the Feeding America Food Bank distribute food in the two-county area

•25,000 hours are contributed by volunteers each year, helping to move food to people in need throughout the Inland Empire

Programs offered by the Feeding America Food Bank include Child Hunger, Senior Hunger, Mobile Pantry, USDA Emergency Food Assistance, CalFresh (SNAP) and Drought Food Assistance Program (DFAP).

Community members can help by becoming a contributor, hosting a food drive, volunteering, or becoming an advocate.

Cash would be the most helpful donation, but donations of food are appreciated as well.

For more information about Feeding America Riverside/San Bernardino, call 951-359-4757, or go towww.FeedingAmericaIE.org.

For more information about Community Action Partnership Food Bank of San Bernardino County, call 909-723-1580, or go to CAPSBC.org.

Michel Nolan appears in The Sun on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays. Reach her atmichel.nolan@langnews.com or on Twitter @MichelNolan.

Need Help with Bills in Rialto, California

Residents of Rialto, California may be able to find bill payment assistance from various resources that serve the community. On this page, we'll be covering some of the most useful assistance programs available.

Cash Assistance

The Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino County (CAPSBC) may be able to provide emergency cash assistance to eligible low-income families and individuals. The funds may be used for housing, food services, or educational means that would lead to self-sufficiency. To find out more about the program or to apply for assistance, you may visit the website or call the office at 909-723-1500.

Help With Food

The SNAP Program (also known as Food Stamps) may be able to assist eligible families with the means of purchasing fresh and nutritious foods. Participants in the program are issued Electronic Benefit Cards with which they can purchase foods from participating retailers. To apply for SNAP or to inquire about the program, you may visit the website or call the TAD Rialto office at 1-877-410-8829.

Help With Shelter and Housing

There are various organizations in and around Rialto that offer emergency shelter solutions and housing assistance services. You may contact any one of the following to inquire about their program details:

Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino County	909-723-1500
Path of Life Ministries	951-683-4101
Inland Temporary Homes	909-796-6381
2-1-1	2-1-1

Help With Energy and Utilities

The Energy, Education and Environment Services Program handles applications for the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) and also provides utility bill payment assistance services to eligible low-income consumers. For information on specific programs and services, you may contact the Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino County at 909-723-1500 or visit the website.

Help With Telephone and Internet Bills

Low-income families may be able to qualify for benefits from the California Lifeline Program. The program provides eligible consumers with discounted telephone and internet rates. To apply for benefits, you'll need to work through an accredited service provider and follow the application instructions. You may also call the Lifeline Call Center at 1-866-272-0349 for more details on the program.

Help With Childcare

The Child Care Resource Center may be able to assist eligible families with childcare if they meet the program requirements. There are various assistance options that you may benefit from. To inquire about the different programs or find out if you are eligible for assistance, you may visit the website or call the San Bernardino office at 909-890-0018.

Help With Medical and Dental Care

The Medi-Cal Program provides free or reduced cost healthcare services to eligible families and individuals. You may also be able to benefit from the Arrowcare program, which is the San Bernardino County's Low Income Health Program. To apply for Arrowcare of Medi-Cal, you may visit the C4 Yourself website. Alternatively, you may also contact the Health Department offices at 1-877-410-8829 for more information.

Help With Legal Matters

There are various organizations in and around Rialto that provide free or low-cost legal services to members of the community. To inquire about services on offer or eligibility requirements, you may get in touch with any one of the following:

San Bernardino County Family Law Facilitator	909-948-4679
Inland Counties Legal Services	909-884-8615
YMCA of the East Valley	909-792-2762

Help From Other Groups

The Community Actin Partnership of San Bernardino County provides eligible low-income families and individuals with food assistance, rental assistance, transitional housing solutions, holiday meal programs, gas payment assistance, and bill payment assistance. If you are a resident of the San Bernardino County and you are in need of assistance, you may get in touch with the CAPSBC and inquire about the range of assistance services that you may qualify for. You can reach the office at 909-723-1560 or send an email to rwilson@capsbc.sbcounty.gov. Alternatively, you can also visit the website for more information.

We hope that this post has shown you where and how you can apply for bill payment assistance in the Rialto area when you need it most.

Victor Valley NEWS
Real News. Real Fast.

The Summit Inn Cafe was completely destroyed in the Blue Cut fire late Tuesday. (Gabriel D. Espinoza, Victor Valley News)

Federal Aid Not Expected For Blue Cut Fire Victims

Victor Valley News August 20, 2016 Featured Stories, News
August 22, 2016

County residents who have lost their homes to the Blue Cut Fire have been asking local relief workers if federal assistance will be available to help them rebuild. Unfortunately, the fire is not expected to reach the threshold needed to qualify for a federal disaster declaration and the federal aid that would follow.

The ongoing Blue Cut Fire burning through several San Bernardino County communities already stands as one of the most costly disasters to strike the county in recent years. But counties, cities, and other local government agencies cannot directly request federal aid. Only states can ask for a federal disaster declaration.

San Bernardino County declared a local emergency on Tuesday, the day the fire broke out. In response, the governor declared a state emergency and requested a federal declaration, which would have cleared the way for federal assistance to fire victims. But the fire did not meet the threshold for a federal disaster, and the request was not approved.

The state countered by combining the Blue Cut Fire with two other recent California wildfires in a request for federal consideration. But the federal government did not approve that proposal, either.

The county is helping fire victims to the degree that it can by operating a Local Assistance Center at the San Bernardino County Fairgrounds in Victorville. The center is a one-stop location for the various services available to fire victims. Among the services assembled by the county at the center are the state Department of Insurance and various insurance companies who can provide homeowners with advice and assistance on restoring their properties.

The Local Assistance Center also includes representatives from the county Assessor/Recorder/clerk and the departments of Children and Family Services, Aging and Adult Services, Behavioral Health, Public Health, Veteran's Affairs, Land Use Services, Transitional Assistance and Workforce Development. Also available are the State Department of Motor Vehicles, Oak Hills Water District, Community Action Partnership and Southern California Edison.

DAILY PRESS

Stater Bros. donates over 400,000 pounds of food

Posted Aug. 2, 2016 at 7:21 PM

As part of the "Harvesting Hope in the Summer" campaign, Stater Bros. is bolstering food reserves to local food banks by donating over 400,000 pounds of healthy and nutritious food items. The "Harvesting Hope in the Summer" campaign is an extension of Stater Bros. ongoing efforts to give back to the community. The following food banks will be receiving food from Stater Bros.: The Salvation Army, Riverside County 117,154 pounds; Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County 97,626 pounds; FIND Food Bank 61,491 pounds; San Diego Food Bank 35,790 pounds, The Salvation Army, San Bernardino County 35,790 pounds; Feeding America 35,157 pounds; Desert Manna 8,776 pounds; and Community Action Partnership, Kern County 8,776 pounds. In addition, Stater Bros. Markets annually donates over 3 million pounds of unsold items that are fit for consumption to local food banks on an ongoing basis.

DAILY PRESS

- # Food delivery postponed by fire

- Posted Aug. 18, 2016 at 7:41 PM

The Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino County announced Thursday that it was unable to provide its USDA commodities food delivery scheduled for the High Desert area Thursday due to the local fire and road closures to the region. The organization said it is working to reschedule this delivery for next week and apologized for the disruption of this service to its valued customers.

THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

Food delivery scheduled for low-income High Desert residents halted by Blue Cut fire

By ALEX GROVES / STAFF WRITER

Published: Aug. 18, 2016 Updated: 7:04 p.m.

A nonprofit corporation dedicated to helping low income people in San Bernardino County announced Thursday, Aug. 18, that it would not be able to make a scheduled food delivery because of the ongoing Blue Cut fire.

The Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino County said in an email Thursday that it would not be able to deliver food to High Desert residents who are recipients of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Supplemental Commodities Program.

"Please be advised that, regrettably, we were unable to provide our USDA commodities food delivery scheduled for the high desert area today due to the local fire and road closures to this region," reads part of an email of from the organization.

The email said that CAP was trying to make arrangements to get the food delivered sometime next week.

According to the USDA's website, the USDA Supplemental Commodities Program aims to provide low income residents who are 60 years or older with food items such as milk, oats, fish and poultry.

Contact the writer: *951-368-9693, agroves@scng.com or @AlexDGroves on Twitter.*

Food delivery scheduled for low-income High Desert residents halted by Blue Cut fire

A nonprofit corporation dedicated to helping low income people in San Bernardino County announced Thursday, Aug. 18, that it would not be able to make a scheduled food delivery because of the ongoing Blue Cut fire. The Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino County said in an email Thursday that it would not be able to deliver food to High Desert residents who are recipients of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Supplemental Commodities Program. "Please be advised that, regrettably, we were unable to provide our USDA commodities food delivery scheduled for the high desert area today due to the local fire and road closures to this region," reads part of an email of from the organization. [Article]

by ALEX GROVES, Riverside Press-Enterprise. 2016-08-19

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY

A County dedicated to prosperity and well-being

CountyWire

More...

Bluecut Fire updates

The Bluecut Fire started on Tuesday at 10:36 a.m. in the Cajon Pass near Kenwood Avenue, west of Interstate 15. For updates and information on the fire, including mandatory evacuation areas, animal evacuation shelters, road and school closures, **click here** or visit **http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/4962/**. Evacuation centers are available at the Jessie Turner Community Center, 15556 Summit Ave., Fontana and the San Bernardino County Fairgrounds, 14800 7th St., Victorville.

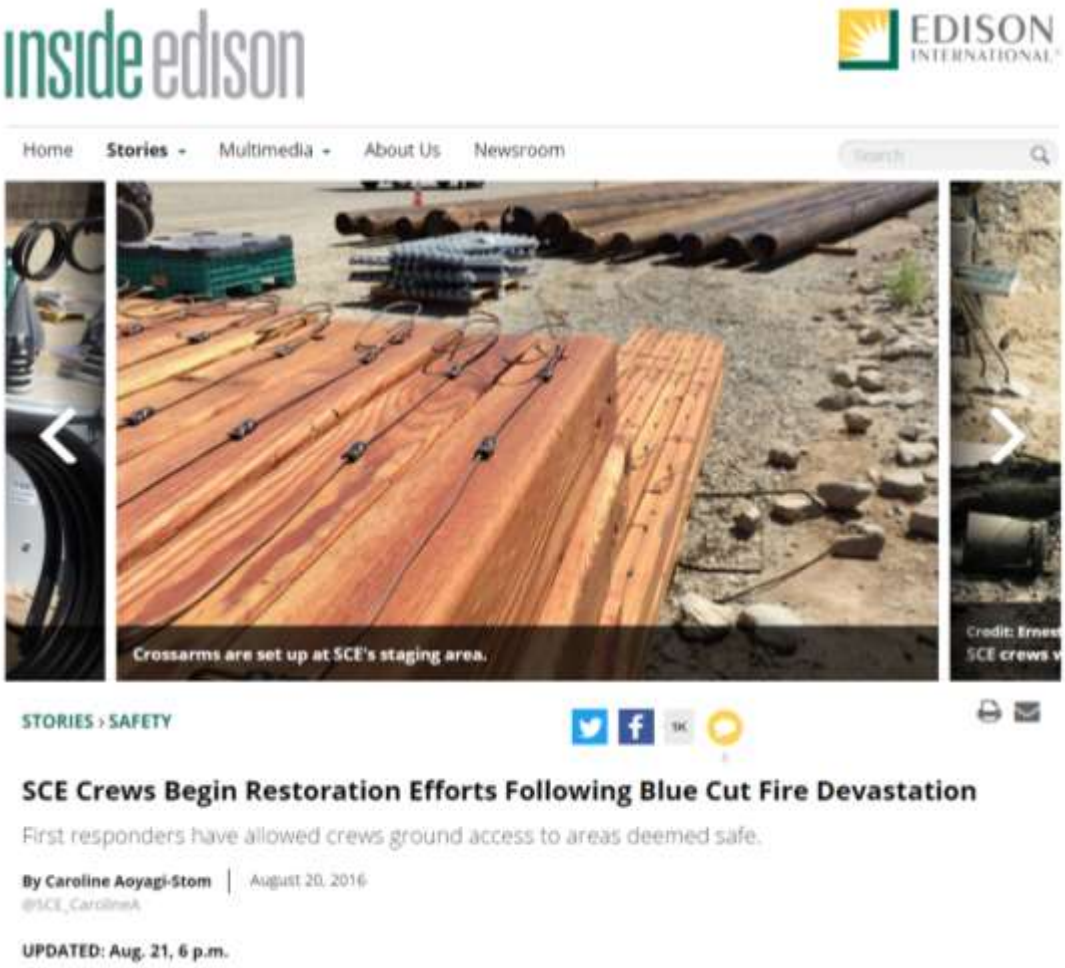
Follow San Bernardino County Fire on **Facebook** and Twitter **@SBCOUNTYFIRE** or follow San Bernardino County Sheriff on **Facebook** and Twitter **@sbcountysheriff** for up-to-date information.

A relief fund for Bluecut Fire victims has been created. To donate, or text RELIEF to 40403, or visit https://ieuw.org/help, or send a check payable to Inland Empire United Way to IEUW Fire Fund, 9644 Hermosa Avenue, Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730.

The County has opened a Local Assistance Center at the San Bernardino County Fairgrounds, 14800 7th St., Victorville, for residents affected by the fire. The LAC is a one-stop location for a variety of services including but not limited to disaster assistance, property information, and insurance claims. The following agencies are currently providing services at the LAC:

County Departments:
Assessor/Recorder/clerk
Children and Family Services
Department of Aging and Adult Services
Department of Behavioral Health
Department of Public Health
Department of Veteran Affairs
Employment Development Department
Land Use Services
Transitional Assistance Department
Workforce Development Department

Non-County Entities:
State Department of Motor Vehicles
State Department of Insurance
State Farm Insurance
Allstate Insurance
Farmers Insurance
Oak Hills water district
Community Action Partnership
Southern California Edison



SCE Crews Begin Restoration Efforts Following Blue Cut Fire Devastation

First responders have allowed crews ground access to areas deemed safe.
By Caroline Aoyagi-Stom@SCE_CarolineA

August 20, 2016
UPDATED: Aug. 21, 6 p.m.

As the Blue Cut Fire continues to burn, first responders have allowed Southern California Edison crews ground access to areas that have been deemed safe to begin restoration efforts.

A staging area has been set up near the fire in San Bernardino County for extra personnel and the vast amount of equipment that will be needed to be replaced or repaired, including poles, wires and transformers. More than 300 SCE personnel are now working on restoration efforts.

Damage assessment teams have identified 384 poles that have been destroyed or damaged. Currently, there are 140 customers without power in the cities of Hesperia, Oak Hills, Pinon Hills, Phelan,,

Victorville and a number of communities in unincorporated San Bernardino County. Crews are working to install portable generation in some locations, where possible, to restore service to customers.
"Due to the continuing fires in San Bernardino County and the difficulty in accessing the impacted areas, customers should be prepared to be without service for several more days," said Jeff Billingsley, SCE incident commander. "We know this is an inconvenience and we appreciate their patience."
In addition, customers who are allowed to return to their homes and businesses may not have electric service and should be prepared to be without service for an extended period of time.
SCE personnel will also be staffing the Local Assistance Center at the San Bernardino fairgrounds in Victorville. Locals affected by the fire can get updated outage information and other customer support services, including help with turnoffs and temporary address changes.
SCE employees at the Local Assistance Center.

SCE employees at the Local Assistance Center.

The Blue Cut Fire started on Monday and has burned 37,020 acres. The fire is now 83 percent contained.
Power Outage and Wildfire Safety Tips

- If possible, stay away from areas severely impacted by the fire damage.
- If you see downed lines, please call 911 and report it to the police and fire departments immediately. Never touch or try to move a downed power line.
- Check on the safety of family members and neighbors, especially those dependent on power for medical equipment.
- Do not rely on candles for lighting during a power outage because they could pose a fire hazard; please use flashlights.
- Do not cook indoors with charcoal or other fossil fuels not meant for indoor use. They could create deadly fumes if used indoors.
- If you are without electrical service in your home or business, leave a light switch in the "on" position to serve as a signal that electrical service has been restored in your area.
- Turn off and unplug any unnecessary electrical equipment, especially sensitive electronic equipment.
- If you are using a generator, place it outdoors and plug individual appliances directly into it, using heavy-duty extension cords. Do not connect generators directly to household circuits. Doing so creates "backfeed," which is extremely dangerous and could be fatal to repair crews.
- Tags: Blue Cut Fire, restoration efforts, wildfires, SCE crews

Agency Related News Items

Kaiser Health News

KHN Morning Briefing

Summaries of health policy coverage from major news organizations

JUL 19 2016

California Announces Sharp 2017 Rate Increases To Obamacare Plans

Covered California, the state's health insurance exchange, says that its premiums will balloon by a statewide average of 13.2 percent next year — more than triple the roughly 4 percent increases in each of the previous two years.

California Healthline: Covered California Health Plan Rates To Jump 13.2 Percent In 2017
California's Obamacare premiums will jump 13.2 percent on average next year, a sharp increase that is likely to reverberate nationwide in an election year. The Covered California exchange had won plaudits by negotiating 4 percent average rate increases in its first two years. But that feat couldn't be repeated for 2017, as overall medical costs continue to climb and two federal programs that help insurers with expensive claims are set to expire this year. (Terhune and Bartolone, 7/19)

California Healthline: What Do Covered California's Big Rate Hikes Mean For You?
The average rate hike doesn't tell the full story for individual consumers. Health plan prices vary across the state, and within regions. How much you'll pay depends on a variety of factors: where you live, how much money you make, what level of coverage you want and which insurer you choose. Keep in mind that these premium increases affect only a fraction of insured Californians — not the majority, who get their coverage through work or a government program such as Medicare or Medi-Cal. (Bazar, 7/19)

THE SUN

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

66ers may leave San Bernardino over stadium lease issues

San Manuel Stadium in San Bernardino, Calif. on Tuesday, July 19, 2016. City of San Bernardino is considering selling San Manuel Stadium to the Inland Empire 66ers, who play there, or another entity as the end of the team's lease approaches on Dec. 31. (Photo by Rachel Luna/The Sun, SCNG)

By **Ryan Hagen**, *The Sun*

POSTED: 07/19/16, 8:12 PM PDT | UPDATED: 1 DAY AGO
6 COMMENTS

SAN BERNARDINO >> This is the 20th season the Inland Empire 66ers have played in this city, and it might be their last.

The City Council received a report Monday on negotiations over the minor league baseball team's lease of the stadium — known since 2012 as San Manuel Stadium — and financial hurdles that could prevent its renewal once it expires Dec. 31.

It's not that the city wants to sell the property for a profit. Rather, the 66ers' proposed lease extension asks the city to give them a subsidy of $2.3 million to pay for capital repairs and another $250,000 for maintenance and operating costs.

And that's money the city doesn't have — at least, not budgeted in the bankruptcy exit plan it is trying to get a court to approve. Including the stadium, the city now faces $18.9 million in capital projects seeking funding — the other projects are Carousel Mall, California Theatre and the Convention Center — and $16.7 million in funds available for that purpose, according to Community Development Director Mark Persico.

The City Council decided Monday to create a three-member committee that will study options for the stadium, noting that information important to their eventual decision wasn't yet available. That includes the terms of the current lease and a study on the economic impact of the team playing in San Bernardino.

But the decision goes beyond pure dollars and cents, said Councilman Fred Shorett.

"This is a decision about keeping baseball in San Bernardino, is what it comes down to," Shorett said Monday. "It's not a revenue generator, exactly, but there are other intangibles we can't quite put our finger on. I'm concerned about another headline that says 'Sixers leave San Bernardino.' We've lost how many businesses?"

Indeed, icon after icon has departed the city, and officials acknowledge its reputation has suffered. Since the 2012 bankruptcy filing alone, that litany includes the Route 66 Rendezvous leaving for Ontario, though a smaller version is back downtown; the California Welcome Center Inland Empire and San Bernardino Convention & Visitors Bureau cited a lack of funds for its closure; and decades-old businesses like The Mug and Le Rendez-Vous Restaurant.

But other developments are coming. In the downtown area of the stadium, plans are underway to revitalize the Carousel Mall and Theater Square — using the same pot of money that would be used for the

stadium — a $65 million health care and health education initiative plans to start offering services in September (adjacent to the stadium) and the San Bernardino Transit Center opened a year ago.

"I look at most things through the bankruptcy and recovery from bankruptcy, and I think the negative implications of losing a baseball team can have an impact on the city's ability to recover," City Attorney Gary Saenz said Tuesday. "I think a baseball team has an economic impact, I think it has a perception impact on our residents, and I think it has a perception impact on potential businesses."

Councilman Jim Mulvihill said the stadium's 1990s construction was premised on promises of restaurants and other economic renewal around it, which didn't happen then and he doesn't expect in the near future.

"My point is that I don't think there's a great deal of attendance," Mulvihill said Monday. "We do use it for major gatherings of the public, but we could use other places for that as well. From my point of view, I just tend to resist throwing good money after bad. Unless we can actually prove there's going to be some benefit to it, we've got other places to spend several million dollars over the long run."

Michael Bracken, managing partner at Development Management Group, said the team produced an economic impact of more than $12 million per year.

In the team's 25 years in San Bernardino — five at Perris Hill Park's Fiscalini Field and 20 at the stadium — more than 3.5 million people have watched them play and more than 1 million have come to other events at the stadium, according to Bracken.

"In every sense, the Inland Empire 66ers really epitomize minor league baseball," Bracken, representing the team, said Monday. "Time is of the essence. We do have an agreement with the (Los Angeles) Angels of Anaheim ... We're not able to fulfill that agreement without a facility in which to play baseball."

The three-person committee was formed in response to the urgency. The date of the committee meeting was not yet set as of Tuesday, according to city spokeswoman Monica Lagos.

City Manager Mark Scott estimated that maintaining an empty stadium would cost $150,000 per year, and would still lead to deterioration of the stadium.

Already, items in need of repair included cracked exterior stucco, waterproof concrete in the seating area, deteriorated stadium seating and a new public address system, according to a tabulation by city consultant Urban Futures.

The city's options include selling the property — to the 66ers, the county of San Bernardino or Cal State San Bernardino — leasing to the 66ers with the requested subsidy, making the 66ers repair and operate it without a subsidy, and putting the property up for auction.

Professional baseball was first played off and on in San Bernardino since 1899, according to the 66ers' website. After a 37-year drought, the city has for the most part had a home team, affiliated with the Seattle Mariners, Los Angeles Dodgers and — since 2011 — the Angels.

The New York Times

Food Banks Take On a Contributor to Diabetes: Themselves

By CATHERINE SAINT LOUISJUNE 17, 2016

Lola Lathon, who has Type 2 diabetes, with some of the goods she picked up at the Houston Food Bank earlier this year. Researchers have begun pursuing new methods of fighting the disease among those who rely on food banks. CreditErin Hull for The New York Times

HOUSTON — Lola Lathon couldn't afford to buy the leafy greens or lean meat displayed so alluringly at the grocery store. Instead, she ate cheap staples like white rice and potatoes, and occasionally went hungry for days before her next paycheck because she needed gas money to get to work.

It was not an ideal diet for a woman who is 5 feet 2 inches tall and 224 pounds, with Type 2 diabetes. And there was no reason to think it would improve when she and her daughter turned to an emergency pantry at theHouston Food Bank.

"We were just scraping by," said Ms. Lathon, 56, who works full time as a technician for the Harris County Health Department.

Not long ago, the mission of food banks was to relieve hunger with whatever was at hand, including salty canned goods or even potato chips.

But what she found at the food bank was a surprise: yellow tomatoes, butter lettuce, diced cactus. An employee checked her blood sugar and found it was sky-high.

Thatianne Moreira, left, helped Lola Lathon with her groceries in Houston. Inconsistent access to food can worsen Type 2 diabetes, and so can the goods at the pantries that many low-income people must rely on.CreditErin Hull for The New York Times

After that, "I changed everything," Ms. Lathon said.

Many who depend on food pantries are not underfed, but are, like Ms. Lathon, obese and diabetic, experts have found. In 2014, one-third of the 15.5 million households served by Feeding America, the nation's largest hunger-relief organization, reported that a household member had diabetes.

Inconsistent access to food worsens the disease, and so can the offerings at the pantries many low-income people must rely on. Now researchers have begun pursuing innovative new methods to address Type 2 diabetes among people who rely on food banks.

More than $1 out of every $10 spent on health care nationwide goes directly to treating diabetes and its consequences, according to the American Diabetes Association. Blindness, amputations and other complications are all too frequent.

“If there is one thing you need as a person with diabetes in order to control your blood sugar well, it’s stable access to food,” said Dr. Hilary K. Seligman, an associate professor of medicine at the University of California, San Francisco.

On a cold afternoon earlier this year, Ms. Lathon waited in line at the Houston Food Bank for the bags of asparagus, tilapia and bibb lettuce that have become her lifeline.

Pamela de la Garza at the Houston Food Bank. Many people who depend on food pantries are not underfed, but are diabetic, experts have found. CreditErin Hull for The New York Times

She now eats salads loaded with vegetables twice a day instead of once a month. She walks for 15 minutes a day and takes medication regularly to control her blood sugar. She’s losing weight.

“I am putting a lot into it,” she said.

In 2014, 17.4 million households were “food insecure,” or lacking enough to feed the whole family, according to the Department of Agriculture. Many of them rely on food banks at least part time to feed their families.

Food insecurity usually means access to food is sporadic: Waiting for a paycheck, for example, parents may coast on a meal a day so their children can eat two. Hunger isn’t necessarily a constant in these households.

A growing body of research links food insecurity to uncontrolled diabetes. Diet is partly to blame: The inexpensive food favored by people stretching their dollars is often low in fiber and rich in carbohydrates, which contribute to obesity and Type 2 diabetes.

Even when food bank patrons are aware they have diabetes — and many do know — they are not in a position to turn down free fare.

Rebecca Qian, an intern, prepared food bags in Houston. In 2014, 17.4 million households were "food insecure," or lacking enough to feed the whole family, according to the Department of Agriculture.CreditErin Hull for The New York Times

In addition, some medications to control diabetes must be taken with food. But how can someone do that without being certain where the next meal will come from?

Low-income people are admitted to the hospital with low blood sugar more often than people with higher incomes near the end of the month, when food budgets are commonly exhausted, researchers in California have found.

For the first time, new treatment guidelines by the American Diabetes Association urge clinicians to ask patients about food insecurity and to propose solutions.

Among diabetics, "stress is constant, and it can wear on you," said Margaret Powers, president of health care and education at the association. "If we want to save health care money, we need to get more education to people who are food insecure."

Set Up Like Grocery Stores

Some food pantries are set up like grocery stores; clients choose what they'll eat. The offerings at the pantry attached to the cavernous Houston Food Bank are typical: gallons of milk and sweet tea, almost-expired breads, canned goods, frozen meats.

A volunteer at the Houston Food Bank tested Patrick Amuah's blood sugar level. CreditErin Hull for The New York Times

But Dr. Seligman and colleagues at the University of California, San Francisco, and Feeding America have begun a randomized trial here and at two other sites to help patrons gain control of both their diets and Type 2 diabetes.

Researchers sitting at rickety tables outside the pantry asked patrons if they wanted their blood sugar checked and, if it was high, whether they wanted to enroll in a six-month program to lower it. (A control group was told to wait six months to begin.)

For those who enrolled, a staff member handpicked appropriate food from the bank's shelves, saying no to prepackaged junk, yes to asparagus and peanut butter. Participants pick up bags of selected food twice a month. They also receive referrals to a primary care physician, classes about diabetes management, and regular blood sugar checks.

The initial results have been promising. In a pilot study of nearly 700 food pantry visitors in Texas, California and Ohio, published in Health Affairs last November, participants with the worst blood sugar readings managed modest improvements in a relatively short time.

Adela Padron, 64, a retired bus driver, picked up free food once a month at the Food Bank of Corpus Christi in Texas and sat down to troubleshoot with Georgiana Bradshaw, a registered nurse there. With her guidance, Ms. Padron learned “to keep my sugar at a steady level” and to take her medications faithfully, she said. Her A1c readings — a measure of long-term blood sugar control — dropped from 13.5 percent to 7.5 percent. (A reading below 5.7 percent is normal for someone without diabetes.)

But not everyone puts their newfound knowledge to use. Bruce Cook, a 61-year-old veteran, also took part in the program in Corpus Christi. Recently, after he picked up power greens and carrots from the diabetes pantry, he returned the next day, grabbing a dozen chocolate-chip-and-M&M cookies at the regular pantry.

“I know what I’m supposed to eat and not supposed to eat,” he said. “But I still eat what I want.”

Sadly, food banks are ideal places to reach patients with uncontrolled diabetes. What used to be temporary assistance has become a lasting fixture in many lives, especially among older adults and the unemployed. Some have access to medical care, but few doctors ask if patients can afford food.

“The choices you make depend on the choices you have, and often in health care we forget to ask about the choices people have,” said Dr. Robert L. Ferrer, the vice chairman of research in the department of family and community medicine at the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio.

After two-thirds of Dr. Ferrer’s patients told him they ran out of money for food every month, he began a study with the San Antonio Food Bank for patients with Type 2 diabetes to see if handing out provisions and healthy recipes in his office parking lot might help.

But for many with low incomes, the challenges never end.

Three months into the Houston program, Ms. Lathon had lost 20 pounds, and her blood sugar was dropping. But she needed emergency surgery to remove her appendix, and then suffered severe burns on her arm when a pot of boiling water overturned at a crawfish festival.

Her blood sugar has risen significantly, as is often the case when people with diabetes experience stress or illness. And she has finished the experimental diabetes program at the Houston Food Bank.

She isn’t sure what’s next.

“I loved that nutritious program; that’s what kept me going,” she said.

THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE
INLAND SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S NEWSPAPER

MACDUFF: Spate of slayings has San Bernardino worried

Just halfway through 2016, San Bernardino has had 40 slayings. Police and city leaders are looking for ways to halt the trend.

Police investigate a fatal shooting E Street near Rialto Avenue on Monday, July 11, in San Bernardino.
MICAH ESCAMILLA, FILE PHOTO

San Bernardino Police Chief Jarrod Burguan, seen in Janary, applauded witnesses who came forward after the recent slaying of a 9-year-old boy in the city.

By CASSIE MACDUFF / STAFF COLUMNIST

Published: July 19, 2016 Updated: July 20, 2016 9:18 p.m.

The year is barely half over and San Bernardino already has logged 40 homicides.

I hope the town dubbed “Murder City” two decades ago for its frightening homicide rate isn’t returning to its bullet-riddled image as a city awash in blood.

Why is this happening now? Yes, crime rates are inching upward nationwide. But San Bernardino made it through the Great Recession with no uptick in capital crimes. Why the spate of slayings in 2016?

If homicides continue at this frightening pace, San Bernardino is on track to approach its record of the late 1980s and early 1990s that earned it the dreaded nickname.

To make sense of the senseless violence, I reached out to San Bernardino Police Chief Jarrod Burguan, Police Foundation head Jim Bueermann and Cal State San Bernardino criminal justice professor Stephen Tibbetts.

Burguan published a heartfelt Facebook post Friday night, lauding the witnesses who came forward in the slayings of a 9-year-old boy, his father and the father’s friend outside a Del Rosa neighborhood liquor store July 8.

Too often, witnesses remain silent, perpetrators going unpunished and a cycle of violence and retaliation sets in, Burguan said.

“This week was different,” he wrote. “This week, dozens of people angered by the death of a 9-year-old called and helped us.”

But it shouldn't take the death of a child to bring people forward, he wrote. "We need to be talking ALL of the time."

When people remain silent, crime flourishes and people suffer, he said, adding, "the reputation of San Bernardino suffers because of the perception of random violence."

It was a cry from the heart shared by three-quarters of the readers who saw it.

I asked Burguan whether his homicide detectives have been able to identify any commonality in the slayings this year.

"We see an overwhelming majority of our suspects have … significant criminal histories," Burguan said, adding that offenders are not being rehabiliated. "They're not coming out of prison better people than they were going into prison."

There are commonalities in victim profiles, too, Burguan said: Many have gang connections or involvement with drugs, the same elements we've heard connected with crime in years past. "That's always been consistent."

So the average person who lives and/or works in San Bernardino needn't fear? People seem to know that. At a recent Coffee with a Cop session, the biggest complaint was fireworks, Burguan told me.

THE SUN

HOMELESSNESS

New comprehensive homeless center to come to San Bernardino

Sister Betty McGovern, center, assists a woman named Celina, right, of San Bernardino, as she practices for her GED test on Tuesday, July 19, 2016 at Veronica's Home of Mercy in San Bernardino, Ca.(Micah Escamilla/The Sun, SCNG)

By **Ryan Hagen**, *The Sun*

POSTED: 07/20/16, 11:24 PM PDT | UPDATED: 1 DAY AGO
4 COMMENTS

A chapel is one feature of Veronica's Home of Mercy as seen here on Tuesday, July 19, 2016 in San Bernardino, Ca. San Bernardino is moving forward with a center for 85 homeless men, which will be similar to Veronica's Home of Mercy and run by Mary's Mercy Center.(Micah Escamilla/The Sun, SCNG)

SAN BERNARDINO >> Mary's Mercy Center now has approval to move forward with the first comprehensive center for homeless men in the central San Bernardino Valley.

The center will be built in phases, eventually offering housing, job training and other services to 115 homeless men, which city officials hope will help lower the number of homeless people that they see — aside from humanitarian motives — as discouraging business and making residents uncomfortable.

Known as Mary's Village, the project will be on Walnut Street between Pico Avenue and San Marcos Street, about 1.5 miles away from the two other centers run by Mary's Mercy Center on the Westside.

Monday's City Council vote was 4-2, with opponents Councilman Henry Nickel and Councilwoman Bessine Littlefield Richard worried the plan would in fact draw more homeless people to the city and unfairly burden the Westside. Councilman John Valdivia, whose south San Bernardino ward includes the 11-acre project site, was absent.

Residents will live on-site 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and a typical resident is at the facility for 12 to 18 months, said Mike Hein, vice president and administrator of Mary's Mercy Center.

"The misconception is we'll have people coming and going," Hein said Wednesday. "They're there seven days a week, under supervision; on the weekends we have staffing. The residents have to take care of washing their clothes, cooking, housekeeping. It's all part of the lifestyle change."

Veronica's Home of Mercy, also run by Mary's Mercy Center, is a model for Mary's Village. The different demographics — Veronica's Home is for women and children, while Mary's Village is for men — mean there will be certain changes.

But the essence of the program's success — 75 to 80 percent accomplish the individualized goals set by their case manager, such as getting a GED before getting a job and renting their own apartment — is empowerment, Hein said.

“You give them back their self-esteem,” he said. “They think better of themselves because they’re sometimes told they’re never going to amount to anything, but we show them they can.”

Mary’s Mercy Center opened in 1987, and offers services including free food for large numbers of homeless people — something the new location will not have. Veronica’s Home started in 2010, and Hein hopes 2017 will see the first phase of Mary’s Village.

Wednesday afternoon, Rebecca — following the center’s policy for residents, she didn’t share her last name — was working through algebra equations at the education center of Veronica’s Home.

She’s preparing to begin classes this fall at San Bernardino Valley College to eventually become a high school math teacher, Rebecca said.

“Math is something I’ve always understood,” she said.

Rebecca was taking classes at Mt. San Antonio College in Walnut when she became pregnant with her second child, who’s now 6 months old. She lost her job as a result, and the baby’s father left her, she said.

She learned of Veronica’s Home and enrolled 10 months ago, she said.

“I’ve seen a huge change in myself since then,” she said. “I feel like I can make it.”

One concern council members had is that people will come to San Bernardino from other communities.

The center will try to prioritize citizens of the city, but it would jeopardize its funding if it required it, Terry Kent of Mary’s Mercy Center told the council.

Already, San Bernardino has a lion’s share of the homeless: 546 people, which is 40 percent of the county’s homeless despite having only 10 percent of the county’s population, according to the county’s 2015 point-in-time count.

But the count also shows the number of homeless in 2015 versus 2014 fell much faster in the city than the county overall — accounting for 78 percent of the county’s drop — which is a sign the city’s approaches are working, Mayor Carey Davis said.

“The access center was one of the parts to the solution,” Davis said. “It was not intended to be the entire solution. … This will be part of the solution.”

Others criticized the homeless access center at Seccombe Lake as attracting more homeless people, and said the number of homeless organizations — 38 in the city, far exceeding other local cities, resident Juan Figueroa said — showed the city continued to treat the problem’s symptoms, allowing the problem itself to worsen.

Nickel echoed that, saying the city needed a comprehensive plan to combat homelessness.

“I’m not blaming you,” he told representatives of Mary’s Mercy Center. “I’m blaming us. We haven’t formulated policy.”

THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

NEWS

SAN BERNARDINO: Helping the homeless

A proposed center will eventually offer housing, job training and other services to over 100 men.

By RYAN HAGEN / STAFF WRITER

Published: July 22, 2016 Updated: July 23, 2016 5:31 p.m.

, MICAH ESCAMILLA, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Mary's Mercy Center can move forward with the first comprehensive center for homeless men in the central San Bernardino Valley.

The San Bernardino City Council voted 4-2 Monday night to approve the center.

The center will be built in phases, eventually offering housing, job training and other services to 115 homeless men, which city officials hope will help reduce the number of homeless people that they see – aside from humanitarian motives – as discouraging business and making residents uncomfortable.

Known as Mary's Village, the project will be on Walnut Street between Pico Avenue and San Marcos Street, about 1.5 miles from the two centers run by Mary's Mercy Center on the Westside.

City Councilman Henry Nickel and Councilwoman Bessine Littlefield Richard, who voted no, said they were worried the plan would attract more homeless people to the city and unfairly burden the Westside. Councilman John Valdivia, whose south San Bernardino ward includes the 11-acre project site, was absent.

Residents will live on-site 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and a typical resident is at the facility for 12-18 months, said Mike Hein, vice president and administrator of Mary's Mercy Center.

"The misconception is we'll have people coming and going," Hein said Wednesday. "They're there seven days a week, under supervision; on the weekends we have staffing. The residents have to take care of washing their clothes, cooking, housekeeping. It's all part of the lifestyle change."

Veronica's Home of Mercy, also run by Mary's Mercy Center, is a model for Mary's Village. The different demographics – Veronica's Home is for women and children; Mary's Village is for men – mean there will be certain changes.

But the essence of the program's success – 75-80 percent accomplish the individualized goals set by their case manager, such as getting a GED before getting a job and renting an apartment – is empowerment, Hein said.

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Mary's Mercy Center opened in 1987 and offers services including free food for large numbers of homeless people – something the new location will not have. Veronica's Home started in 2010, and Hein hopes 2017 will see the first phase of Mary's Village.

Wednesday afternoon, Veronica's Home resident Rebecca, who followed center and didn't share her last name, was working through algebra equations at the education center. She's preparing for classes this fall at San Bernardino Valley College and intends become a high school math teacher, Rebecca said.

"Math is something I've always understood," she said.

Rebecca was taking classes at Mt. San Antonio College in Walnut when she became pregnant with her second child, who's now 6 months old. She lost her job as a result, and the baby's father left her, she said.

She said she learned of Veronica's Home and enrolled 10 months ago.

THE SUN

CORPORATE GIVING

Amazon donates $10,000 in school supplies to San Bernardino teachers

Urbita Elementary teacher Kelly Basoco, left, thanks Angela Morrow, Amazon Associate, after Amazon donated $10,000 worth of donated supplies to help the teachers through their school year Thursday. PHOTO BY SARAH ALVARADO

By Neil Nisperos, Inland Valley Daily Bulletin

POSTED: 07/28/16, 5:25 PM PDT | UPDATED: 8 HRS AGO

Teachers from Urbita Elementary School in San Bernardino react after Amazon unveils $10,000 worth of donated supplies to help the teachers through their school year Thursday. PHOTO BY SARAH ALVARADO

SAN BERNARDINO >> Nearly two dozen teachers at Urbita Elementary School in San Bernardino were treated to surprise of being able to save up to a thousands dollars in out-of-pocket costs this year thanks to $10,000 worth of supplies courtesy ofAmazon.

The school was the only one chosen in all of Southern California for Amazon's back to school donation this year. Twenty-two teachers were at the school Thursday for orientation and to set up their classrooms before children come back to school Monday.

"It's such a huge acknowledgment when it comes from Amazon which is such a huge company," said Keith Keiper, principal of Urbita Elementary School. "To be recognized for all the hard work they do, the recognition is almost as important as the materials."

Each teacher received a rolling cart filled with classroom supplies, including crayons, markers, printing and art paper and scissors. Each grade level was also presented a color printer, with boxes of paper, and ink cartridges.

"Teachers typically spend $400 to $1,500 dollars out of their own pockets for school supplies and that's a pretty significant chunk of change, so we are doing these back to school events across the country," said Ashley Robinson, spokeswoman for Amazon. "They're starting to set up their classrooms and they're figuring out what they need to buy before the school year to be successful. We're here before the kids get to the classroom to provide them all these tools."

Fourth grade teacher Kelly Basoco was ecstatic over the gift. Her son works for an Amazon facility in San Bernardino, but she said she had no idea about the surprise.

"This last year. ... I spent over a thousand dollars out of my own pocket for student materials. ... So, this means a lot," Basoco said. "Not only to me, but for our community and for parents who can't afford to buy this stuff, and I get to say, 'we got it.' This is such a huge impact on our community."

Urbita Elementary School serves about 600 students from pre-school through sixth grade.

“We have one color printer to service our entire school, so now every grade level gets a colored printer and that, in and of itself, to create materials that are visually stimulating for our kids and engage them in our learning and have that available to us, this is really amazing,” Schindler said.

Amazon has eight California-based fulfillment centers, where orders are processed and shipped to customers, and two of those are in San Bernardino.

“This is paramount to having the largest logistics company in the world partnering with one of the more challenging community environments that we can see, with 54 percent of our population on some kind of public assistance and a relatively low educational attainment rate, our students are challenged and they come from very challenged circumstances,” said Mike Gallo, president and CEO of the Kelly Space and Technology firm in San Bernardino, and a member of the San Bernardino City Unified school board. “For a worldwide company to make investments in our local students and to see that they are put on that pathway to prosperity is just heartening.”

DAILY BULLETIN

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

- Access to health care

Kaiser Permanente announces $731,000 in grants to nonprofits serving San Bernardino County

By **Jim Steinberg**, *San Bernardino Sun*

POSTED: 08/08/16, 7:07 PM PDT | UPDATED: 7 HRS AGO

FONTANA >> Kaiser Permanente is handing out $731,000 in grants to more than 60 nonprofit organizations that provide free or low-cost programs and services to the underserved and uninsured throughout San Bernardino County.

“Kaiser Permanente strives to help eliminate health disparities and build healthier communities,” said Greg Christian, senior vice president and area manager for Kaiser Permanente San Bernardino County Area.

“We couldn’t do that without strong partnerships, like the ones we have with these organizations in San Bernardino County. Now more than ever, these partnerships are vital,” Christian said in a statement.

The grants were divvied up in increments between $5,000 and $20,000. Among the recipients were Victor Valley Community Services Council ($15,000), city of San Bernardino — Parks, Recreation and Community Service Department ($15,000), Youth Action Project ($20,000), Pomona Community Health Center ($20,000), Inland Empire United Way ($10,000) and Catholic Charities of San Bernardino/Riverside ($9,500).

DIVIDING LINES

How do Americans view poverty? Many blue-collar whites, key to Trump, criticize poor people as lazy and content to stay on welfare

BY DAVID LAUTER
AUG. 14, 2016

In 1985, Dorean Sewell talked to The Times about raising three children in a Baltimore low income project as part of a survey of American attitudes about poverty. A new poll by The Times and the American Enterprise Institute revisits those opinions. (Iris Schneider / Los Angeles Times) View more photos

- 2016: DIVIDING LINES
- 1985 SERIES: AMERICA AND ITS POOR — I

Sharp differences along lines of race and politics shape American attitudes toward the poor and poverty, according to a new survey of public opinion, which finds empathy toward the poor and deep skepticism about government antipoverty efforts. The differences illuminate some of the passions that have driven this year's contentious presidential campaign.

But the poll, which updates a survey The Times conducted three decades ago, also illustrates how attitudes about poverty have remained largely consistent over time despite dramatic economic and social change.

Criticism of the poor – a belief that there are "plenty of jobs available for poor people," that government programs breed dependency and that most poor people would "prefer to stay on welfare" – is especially common among the blue-collar, white Americans who have given the strongest support to Donald Trump.

The opposite view — that jobs for the poor are hard to find, that government programs help people get back on their feet and that most of the poor would rather earn their own way — is most widely held among blacks and other minorities, who have provided the strongest backing to Hillary Clinton.

Roughly a third of self-described conservatives say that the poor do not work very hard, a view at odds with big majorities of moderates and liberals.

But while Americans disagree in how they view the poor, they're more united in their skepticism of government programs.

That skepticism has held true for decades. The first Times poll of American attitudes toward poverty, in 1985, broke ground by surveying enough poor people to compare their views with those of people in the middle class.
The new survey, which was conducted by The Times and the American Enterprise Institute, a Washington think tank that is generally conservative, asked similar questions but with some updating.

Much has changed since the 1980s. Welfare got a major overhaul in the 1990s. The number of poor Americans dropped sharply in that decade, only to partially rise again, particularly during the deep recession that began in 2007. But many attitudes have held steady, the new poll found, particularly doubts about the federal government's ability to run its antipoverty programs, as well as their justification.

Most Americans do not believe that the government bears the main burden of taking care of the poor. Asked who has the "greatest responsibility for helping the poor," just over one-third said that the government does. That figure has not budged in three decades.

Those who did not think the government has the main responsibility were split about who does. Just under one in five Americans said that the poor themselves bear the greatest responsibility. Family, churches and charities each got mentioned by 10%-15%.

Among Latinos, family came in second behind government; among blacks, churches took second place; Republicans were most likely to put responsibility on the poor themselves.

White Americans were less likely to call government responsible than were minorities, but the difference lay almost entirely with blue-collar whites— those without college degrees. White Americans who graduated from college were as likely to say government has the prime responsibility as were nonwhites.

Attitudes toward antipoverty programs also have not changed much since the 1980s.

In the original poll, 58% of Americans said that such efforts had "seldom" worked, while 32% said they "often" had. In the new survey, with a differently worded question, 13% of Americans said such programs have had "no impact" on reducing poverty, and 43% said they have had "some impact." Only 5% said they have had a "big impact."

Those living below the poverty line and those above it had largely similar views on that issue both now and three decades ago.

College-educated minorities were most likely in the current poll to say that government programs have had a positive impact on poverty, with more than 7 in 10 taking that view.

At the other end of the scale, about one-third of Americans said that government programs had made poverty worse, a view that was particularly common among conservatives, 47%, and blue-collar whites, 43%.

In both surveys, about 7 in 10 Americans said that even if the government were "willing to spend whatever is necessary to eliminate poverty," officials do not know enough to accomplish that goal.

Blacks and Latinos were somewhat more likely to express confidence about the government's ability to end poverty. Even among those groups, however – and among self-described liberals – majorities said the government does not know enough to eradicate poverty.

Asked why antipoverty efforts have failed, more than half of Americans said the main problem was that programs were poorly designed. Among poor people, however, about 3 in 10 said the problem was that programs had not been given enough money to succeed.

On attitudes toward the poor, divides are sharper than on opinions about government.

Blue-collar whites were much more likely than nonwhites to view the poor as a class set apart from the rest of society – trapped in poverty as a more or less permanent condition. Minority Americans, particularly blacks, tended to say that "for most poor people, poverty is a temporary condition" .

A majority of whites see government antipoverty efforts contributing to poverty's permanence, saying that benefit programs "make poor people dependent and encourage them to stay poor."

Blacks disagreed, saying that the government help mostly allows poor people to "stand on their own two feet and get started again." The poor themselves divided evenly on the question. Latinos leaned closer to the skeptical view about government programs expressed by white Americans.

Asked if poor people "prefer to stay on welfare" or would "rather earn their own living," Americans by a large majority, 61%-36%, said they believed the poor would rather earn their own way. Blue-collar whites were more closely divided on the question, 52%-44%.

That was one of several questions on which the views of minorities and college-educated whites were close to each other, while whites without a college degree stood out as different.

Nearly two-thirds of whites without college degrees, for example, said that benefits encourage poor people to remain in poverty. Among college-educated whites, about half took that view.
Blue-collar whites also took a dimmer view of President Obama's handling of poverty than did other Americans.

Majorities of blacks, Latinos and other minorities, as well as whites with college degrees, approved of Obama's handling of poverty. But among blue-collar whites, fewer than one-third approved, and nearly two-thirds disapproved.

Not only are Americans skeptical about whether antipoverty programs work, nearly 6 in 10 said that the percentage of people in poverty has been increasing from year to year. About 1 in 4 say poverty has stayed the same, and and 1 in 8 say it has gone down.

Whether the public view of poverty getting worse is accurate or not is a tough question. A lot depends on time frame. Measured by the government's official poverty line, the percentage of Americans who were poor declined during the 1960s, plateaued during the 1970s, rose during much of the 1980s, then declined again during the boom years of the 1990s, only to rise again since 2000, especially during the recession. In the last few years, the poverty rate has leveled off at about 15%.

The official poverty measure, however, does not include the value of government benefits designed to help the poor. Including those payments, the share of people who are impoverished is now considerably lower than it was in the 1960s, although slightly higher than it was at the end of the 1990s.

One question on which views have changed somewhat since the 1980s is whether poverty is a temporary or a permanent condition.

In the 1985 survey, Americans by a very large majority, 71%-21%, said that most poor people would probably remain poor. Today, that remains the majority view, but the gap has narrowed somewhat, with 60% seeing poverty as mostly permanent and 33% saying it is a temporary condition that people can move into and out of again.
The poor divide closely on that question. So do minorities.

A correct answer to that question is complex. Census figures show that in recent years, people who fell below the poverty line typically stayed poor for about six months. A lot of people, however, cycle in and out of poverty, rising only slightly above the official poverty line, then falling back.

One recent census study found that about one-quarter of poor people were in poverty only briefly – the result of a job loss or other crisis. About 1 in 7 were chronically poor, spending much of their lives impoverished. In between are many who churn in and out of poverty.

Across the board, Americans overestimate how high the government's poverty line is and how many people live below it. Asked to estimate the poverty line for a family of four, those polled, on average, put it at just over $32,000, which is about a third higher than the actual figure of just over $24,000. The public's figure may be more realistic, however; many poverty experts think the official level is far too low.

Those polled also estimated that about 40% of Americans live below the poverty line – far more than the actual figure of 15%. Again, though, the public may have the clearer view. Many experts on poverty say that in addition to the roughly 45 million Americans who live below the official poverty line, roughly an equal number are "near poor." Many federal benefit programs, including healthcare subsidies, food stamps and Medicaid in many states, are open to people earning significantly more than the official poverty threshold.

The survey was conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates, one of the country's largest nonpartisan polling organizations. The survey was conducted June 20-July 7 among 1,202 adults aged 18 and older, including 235 who live below the poverty line. The survey has a margin of error of 4 percentage points in either direction for the full sample.

Numbers worsen; Poverty toll grows amid aid cutbacks

By Richard E. Meyer and Barry Bearak

July 28, 1985

At the home of Roger Luster in Welch, W. Va, Roger and wife Dodie with their children. Dobie prepares spaghetti dinner. Roger watches TV. (Iris Schneider / Los Angeles Times) View more photos

Roger Luster was 11 years old when John F. Kennedy came calling. In the blue-haze stillness of the hills, the clatter of his campaign attracted a dozen persons who stood in the yard and watched. Kennedy climbed the bare, wooden steps. Roger's family asked him in.

He'd been to Slab Fork and Mullens and Welch and Keystone. He'd turned off at Eckman and taken a winding road, black and tan with dirt

and coal dust, and he'd followed it up into Eureka Hollow. And now Kennedy, running in the 1960 West Virginia primary, sat in the living room, and Roger's mother, Betty, offered him coffee. It was about all they had.

Heart-rending answers

Burley and Betty Luster, son Roger and seven other children lived in four rooms: one-half of a weathered house, so faded that its yellow was less paint than memory. Another family lived in the other half. The house squatted in a clearing halfway up the hollow, in the heart of Appalachia. For 45 minutes, Kennedy asked questions: How did Burley and Betty and their children survive in these hills? The answers were heart-rending.

Roger's father had been hurt running a coal drill. He couldn't work. He got a government check, but it wasn't much. When the kids ate, it was beans and potatoes and water gravy. When they went to school, lunch was biscuits and jelly in a paper sack. Sometimes Roger was too embarrassed about it to eat. And he was ashamed of his shoes. They had been given to him, and they were nearly three sizes too big. For two months once, Burley and Betty Luster had kept their kids out of school because they had no decent clothes. Sometimes Roger and his brothers and sisters went to bed hungry.

Much of Kennedy's clatter was television: cameras, producers, correspondents. They turned out to be the most important thing about his campaign. On TV, families like the Lusters awakened the nation's conscience to poverty in the midst of plenty. Kennedy pledged: "If I'm nominated and elected President, within 60 days of the start of my Administration I will introduce a program to Congress for aid to West Virginia." Kennedy's program was the opening shot in a war against poverty that his successor, Lyndon B. Johnson, mounted all across America, from these white-poor hollows of Appalachia to the black-poor ghettos of Los Angeles. Together with a strong economy, Johnson's war helped cut the poverty rate to 11.1% of the population, the lowest level on record.

But during the mid-1970s the economy began to slump. Unemployment rose. The poverty rate started to climb. At the same time, Presidents Gerald R. Ford and Jimmy Carter allowed the after-inflation value of anti-poverty aid to decline. And since then, despite the increase in poverty, President Reagan has cut the anti-poverty budget. Today, the percentage of poor Americans is the highest since 1965, the year after Johnson declared his war on poverty. By the most recent federal count, a Census Bureau tally in 1983, the poverty rate stands at 15.2% of the population. This means there are 35.3 million poor--or an increase of about 11 million since as recently as 1978. One in every seven Americans is poor. Without government assistance, another 20.8 million Americans would be poor. That totals 56.1 million people--or nearly a quarter of the population.

Women, minorities

Worse, the poor are getting poorer. In 1968, the poorest fifth of all families had 91% of the money they needed for basic requirements, according to congressional researchers. By 1983, these researchers say, they had only 60%. The poor are women: More than 60% of all impoverished adults are women. The poor are children: A quarter of all children under 6 live in poverty; indeed, half the black children in America are poor. The poor are minorities: The poverty rate among blacks in general is nearly triple what it is among whites; among Latinos, the poverty rate is twice the Anglo rate. Most of the poor stay in poverty only a few years. But some remain poor much longer. While these are fewer, their impact is surprisingly large. They are an underclass of street-corner men, welfare-dependent women, delinquents and criminals--those hard-core poor left behind in the ghetto after the war on poverty helped others move up and out.

Effect of recovery

Most experts think the poverty rate will go down when the figure for 1984 is made public next month. They believe that recovery from the most recent recession will have gone on long enough for its effect to be felt. Because of this Reagan recovery, jobs should now be available for many of those who were thrown out of work--and this ought to counteract some of the effects of the President's anti-poverty cuts. However, many of these economic experts think the unemployment rate will level off at a high plateau, between 7% and 7.5%. Although some expect the poverty rate to continue to drop, most economists think that it will mirror the unemployment rate and level off at a high plateau--near 13% for the foreseeable future.

But people who are poor have one abiding hope: Americans are not pleased about the lot of the impoverished. A national poll by The Times shows that the public has an enormous sympathy for the poor. More than three-quarters of the public think poverty is the proper concern of the federal government and that there must be substantial government involvement in efforts to ease it. At the same time, Americans have doubts about the government's expertise. Most feel the government has not been effective in its battles against poverty because it does not know what to do about it. But most Americans want their government to take action--and they do not like Reagan's cuts in anti-poverty programs.

Beecher Linville (left), a 42-year-old timber cutter in Dawes Hollow, W. Va., and his son Billy. (Iris Schneider / Los Angeles Times)
View more photos

From the very outset, the President has spelled out exactly why he thinks these cuts have been necessary. "We've lived beyond our means and then financed our extravagance on the backs of the American people," Reagan said during his first news conference after taking his oath of office. "We think the time has come where there has to be a change of direction. . . . And it's going to begin with reducing government spending." He subsequently said his reductions would be made in social spending and not from the military budget because "government's first responsibility is national security."

David A. Stockman, director of the Office of Management and Budget and the chief architect of Reagan's cuts, declined to be interviewed for this story, the first in a five-part series on poverty in America. However, Stockman has said in congressional testimony that the cuts have improved incentives for the poor to better themselves--and, at the same time, targeted aid to the "truly needy" and reduced or eliminated aid to those who are not poor.

He has denied that Reagan's policies have been too harsh, or that government programs for the poorest of the poor have been damaged, much less destroyed. "The poor are still being helped impressively," he declared. "The rich are still helping to pay for the safety net on which the less fortunate depend."

It has been 25 years now since John Kennedy came to Eureka Hollow. Roger Luster is 36, a husky man in jeans, an old shirt and a tractor cap. His wife, Doris, is 23. She goes by Dobie and wears brown cords and a blue shirt. She carries the youngest of their three children on her hip. All are boys: Jesse is 5, Tony 3 and Timmy 1. They live down the hollow a piece from where Roger grew up. His old yellow house has been torn down--to make room for graves that had to be moved when the coal company strip-mined the cemetery. Today Roger lives in a wooden five-room house with a sagging black tar-paper roof. Its faded white walls are cracking, and the green trim on the windows is chipping.

He pays $15 rent.

He dropped out of school two years after Kennedy's visit and went to work at 16. He held several jobs until three years ago, when coal mining slumped and he got laid off. Roger went on welfare. West Virginia makes recipients work for their checks. It calls its program "workfare." Roger gets $360 a month--and is required to be a garbage man in the nearby town of Keystone. He works 10 days to earn his welfare check. He gets $25 for gasoline to drive to town--and $270 worth of food stamps. His cash income, $4,320 a year, puts him $8,240 below the poverty line--a threshold the government uses to define poverty for a family his size.

No phone, no washer

He has no phone; he can't afford one. Water runs into the house through a rubber hose. Dobie heats it on the stove. Gravity fills the toilet, but there is not enough pressure for a washer--even if he could afford one. Dobie uses a machine with a wringer--and two iron tubs, one pitted with rust. "You take a woman that does that stuff, and she don't ever get nothing--it's rough like that, see," Roger said one afternoon not long ago, during a break on the garbage truck. He stared down at his boots. "She has it rough."

So does he. "I own a '74 Plymouth. Thing needs a clutch. I'll ride it as long as it'll ride, and that'll be it."

In the winter, when there is a foot of snow and it's 22 degrees below zero, the wind blows through his house as if the walls weren't there. In a sense, they're not. The house has no insulation. "You got weatherboard on the outside and the same old weatherboard on the inside. Strips. Some places the strips hook together and some don't, and then when the wind blows, it just comes right on in."

Come the snow, Roger drags a bed into the living room next to the wood and coal stove. He, Dobie and the three boys climb in, so the youngsters don't freeze. Roger stays awake all night to keep the fire burning and to keep an eye on the stove and the chimney.

"You've got to stay awake, or you'll burn down, and that's just the way it is, see. If it's down below zero weather, you don't know how hot you're really getting the stove, because the house is that cold. And the stove will turn red on you. If it goes and turns red on you, you've got to get it cooled down, because it'll burn the house down. I've dozed off and had it turn red on me before and had to jump up and get it real fast, you know. My brother had his house burn down on account of that."

Jesse, the 5-year-old, goes to kindergarten this September. Workfare provides an extra allowance for school clothes. If it doesn't cover everything Jesse needs, Dobie will let the rent or maybe the light bill go unpaid to buy him pants and shirts. Then she'll scramble through October and November to catch up. Whatever it takes, though, Roger will be certain the kids get something for Christmas.

"That's only once a year," he said, "and they're little."

Jesse's front teeth have rotted out. Roger thinks it might be a calcium deficiency. Medical care that comes with workfare covers dentists, but case workers say that Roger needs special authorization because Jesse's problem is so severe. The family will wait until his adult teeth grow in. If they rot and the state denies coverage, Roger has no idea what he'll do. "I'll never get the money myself."

After the first of the month, when Roger gets his welfare check, and after the 12th, when he gets his food stamps, Dobie cooks spaghetti and hamburger and even steak now and then. But toward the end of the month, things run out. Then Dobie makes beans and potatoes. "She runs out of bread, and then she's got to make it. And we eat a whole lot of gravy at the end of the month. But it ain't water gravy, that's one good thing." Sometimes everything runs out. Then Roger tries to borrow a little money from friends and kin. When he can't get Winstons, he buys a tin of Prince Albert and some cigarette papers. He gets the Prince Albert for 99 cents and the papers for 35 cents, and he has learned to roll cigarettes thin enough to make as many as three packs. "I've run out. Had to borrow Prince Albert off my brother-in-law."

A couple of weeks later, his work on the garbage truck finished for the month, Roger sat and talked in the living room of his house. On a shelf are plastic roses and a bust of Jesus. Dobie's paisley wallpaper is peeling. The embarrassment of poverty is considerable, he said. "People look down on you. You're on welfare, and they figure you're freeloading, that you're getting something for nothing. And they don't think that it's right. Sometimes they'll joke around and carry on and stuff like that. You don't like it. But you ain't going to say a lot about it, because it might be one of your friends that's joking with you.

"I'd rather have a job and be working. I guess everybody would. If you see somebody working in the mines, you know, they got money or something, you know, and they go buy their kids something, and you can't--that's hard, stuff like that. It's just rough. Or my wife. Working in a mine or something, you could go buy her something. And stuff like that's real rough.

"She gets after me sometimes. You know, just that she ain't got no money to buy stuff which other people get and stuff like that, see. It's aggravating. What can I do about it? I mean, what am I going to do? Ain't nothing--I can't--you can't up and leave to go somewhere where you ain't got nowhere to stay or nothing, you ain't got no money to leave with."

Overwhelming worry

Roger doesn't say much to Dobie about it, but he has an overwhelming worry. "It ending. Something happening, you know, where they shut the program off or something like that, then not knowing how to feed your kids or nothing, see. Reagan stopping it all. And then how would you ever feed the kids? I worry about that. See, a lot of people get onto the program and they think it's going to last forever. But you know, something might happen to shut it down, and I don't know what a man would do. That's what worries me about programs like this, where if you had a job, see, you'd have a little bit of security.

"Why shouldn't he feed us? We're here. I paid taxes--I paid taxes for 16 years where I worked, paid in taxes, you know, to feed people, so I don't understand. He shouldn't cut it out on us, should he? We'd be ruined. I don't know what we'd do. There ain't nothing else. Ain't going to find a job here. I don't want to be on the program, but you have to be on it because there's no choice. You got to feed your family."

There are other signs of desperation.

People in Eureka Hollow get their mail at the post office in Eckman. Last winter, someone broke into the old brass mail boxes.

Whoever did it stole food stamps.

Roger Luster's fears are fed by his memories of Lyndon Johnson's war on poverty. It went into retreat because Vietnam consumed resources and because local politicians felt threatened by Johnson's efforts to help the poor organize to gain political power. And now anti-poverty programs are in retreat again, this time for other reasons. Americans are weary and wary. First, they are weary of the battle against poverty.

The Times poll, which surveyed 2,446 persons across the nation this April, showed that an overwhelming 89% think poverty will always be a major problem. Even among the poor, there is little hope that poverty will ever be wiped out. Respondents with incomes that make them officially poor think, by an 85% margin, that there always will be poor people in the United States--regardless of what anyone does.

Second, Americans are wary of the government's ability to do much about poverty.

The problem, they are convinced, is that the government, regardless of how competent it might be at other things, is simply incapable of dealing with poverty. Even if the government were willing to spend whatever is needed, 70% of Americans polled by The Times think that federal agencies do not know enough about poverty to end it. The taste for fighting poverty, clearly, has fallen to frustration.

More than half of the public thinks anti-poverty programs seldom work. More than half of the poor themselves are similarly convinced. About 39% of the public thinks anti-poverty money is spent on useless projects, and 42% thinks the money is intercepted and never gets to the poor people who need it.

One of the respondents to the poll was Paul Brinker, 24, a market researcher in Cleveland. He makes between $50,000 and $75,000 a year and lives in a middle-class neighborhood. To him, there is a built-in futility to the effort. "Basically," he said, "I just don't think society has the will nor the resources or the ability to redistribute resources so that there isn't always a percentage of the population that's considered to be poor. I think society is designed in that fashion. I do not think this has to do with politicians or with what happened with the war on poverty.

"As I've learned more about the way society works, I've found that people with the most power have resources to employ to their best interest. And they have the ability to retain as much of their resources as possible. Those who have, they'll use a small percentage of what they've got to hold onto the rest. But those who don't have many resources, the poor, they do not have the resources to change the status quo or to hold onto what they've got." Another respondent, Bob Rosenthal, 38, who works for the New York City Department of Finance, has decided that part of the problem is "the bureaucracies that dispense money. They eat a lot of money." Rosenthal, who earns between $40,000 and $50,000 a year, owns a brownstone near impoverished Bedford-Stuyvesant. "I see people walking the streets, looking for cans to pick up for a nickel deposit.

"If we had a social system that worked, they wouldn't be."

Because Americans like Brinker and Rosenthal are weary and wary, the political climate seems perfect for those who want to relegate the battle against poverty to the bottom of the public agenda. Since the public perceives the fight to be expensive, onerous and unwinnable, President Reagan, never a champion of social spending, seems at first glance to have acted within the temper of the times.

Congress resisted cuts

His cuts in the nation's anti-poverty programs have been numerous and deep. In many cases, the cuts would have been deeper if Congress hadn't resisted.

A study by economists D. Lee Bawden and John L. Palmer for the Urban Institute, a nonprofit Washington research organization that specializes in social problems and government policy, lists Reagan reductions through fiscal 1984 and their estimated impact on outlays in fiscal 1985. Among them are these:

--In Aid for Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), outlays down 14.3% from a projected $9.8 billion. Reagan wanted to cut them 28.6%.

--Food stamps, down 13.8% from $14.5 billion. Reagan wanted to cut them 51.7%.

These reductions, including those in the accompanying chart, are measured against outlays that would have been made had pre-Reagan policies been continued. In some instances, growth rates caused programs to expand even after the cuts, although less so than otherwise. In other instances, the Reagan cuts were large enough to cause actual reductions in the money spent. Most of the continued growth has been in programs with big budgets. However, about half the programs listed have had their spending actually reduced.

Stockman defends trims

In his congressional testimony, Stockman, the President's budget director, conceded that many social programs have been pared--but insisted that the effect was to "improve the targeting" of federal aid and that "these reforms do not reflect the picture of devastation critics have charged."

Bawden and Palmer agree with Stockman that the Reagan cuts have removed most of the least needy from the welfare rolls and targeted program benefits on the poor. "But, Administration claims to the contrary, there is also no question that the poor are not better off as a result," they said. "The Administration has suggested that benefits were retargeted on the poor, implying that aid was taken from the less needy and given to the more needy. In fact, this is not the case.

"In no entitlement programs were real (inflation-adjusted) benefits increased for the most needy when eligibility levels were reduced."

Only a few organizations lobby on behalf of the poor. The impoverished have little political clout. In the face of the Reagan cuts, they have been largely defenseless. And the Reagan reductions have been painful: While the Reagan cuts have removed higher-income recipients from eligibility for aid, they also have reduced the benefits received by people who remain eligible.

Indeed, politicians are much more reluctant to cut programs that include benefits for middle income people as well as the poor, such as Social Security and Medicare. As a result, these programs suffered less under the Reagan cuts.

Reduction consequences

The Urban Institute lists these consequences of the Reagan reductions:

> —Between 400,000 and 500,000 families have been taken off Aid to Families with Dependent Children. An additional 300,000 have had their checks reduced on average between $150 and $200 a month. About 1 million fewer disadvantaged children are getting help through compensatory education. Some 400,000 people have lost their public service jobs. Another 1 million persons have lost their food stamps; almost everyone who still gets them receives fewer.
>
> —About 1 million fewer families get housing aid and about 300,000 more will be living in substandard housing by the end of this year. Milk programs have ended at many schools; summer feeding programs are limited to the highest-poverty areas. Unemployment insurance runs out more quickly than before, stranding hundreds of thousands of recession-displaced workers with nowhere to turn but the dole.
>
> These consequences, too, are measured against what would have occurred had pre-Reagan policies been continued. By and large, the poor who are the most dependent upon government aid have been affected only modestly. But if Reagan had gotten cuts of the size he requested, consequences for these poorest of the poor would have been more severe.

The public perceives these cuts as a blemish on the Reagan presidency.

Deep public sympathy

The Times poll shows deep public sympathy for the impoverished. Half the respondents describe most poor people as hardworking. Only a quarter thinks they are lazy. By two to one, the public rejects the view that the poor have less in-born ability and find themselves in poverty because of some innate defect--in character, for instance, or intelligence.
Despite their misgivings about the way the government has tried to help the poor so far, Americans believe firmly that federal agencies ought to mount an expanded effort. The Times survey shows that an overwhelming 73% of the public favors government action on behalf of the impoverished.

A majority, 57%, even say they would pay a 1% federal sales tax to help finance the effort.
Moreover, the poll shows a deep disapproval of Reagan's cuts in anti-poverty programs. Despite an overall 2-1 positive job rating, the public gives Reagan a 58% to 34% negative rating for his treatment of the poor.
Half the public thinks Reagan's budget cuts have left the truly needy unprotected. Most believe he cares more about rich people. Only 2% of the survey respondents think Reagan cares more about the poor.

Response is typical

Mary Camp, 45, a high school counselor in Gadsden, Ala., is typical. "We as the American people do care about our fellow man," she said. "I don't want to get maudlin or mushy, but I do think that we care. I grew up in a hardworking, fairly poor and very proud family. And my mother and father sacrificed, really sacrificed to give me an education. Later my father got a higher paid job. But when I went to school in my early years, they struggled to have food on the table and good clothes. We had no luxuries. And that is probably why I can relate to these people and know where they come from.

"Because of my opportunities--my parents' giving and providing me with an education--I've been able to live a comfortable life." Camp makes between $10,000 and $20,000 annually. She lives in an attractive neighborhood of private homes and trimmed lawns.

"But," she said, "a lot of people just don't have these opportunities.

"As a general rule, the poor are hardworking and really want to be self-sufficient. But from things I've read in the newspaper and seen on TV, it really seems that Reagan cares more for the rich and big business than for the little man. If he had it his way, Social Security and the other social programs would be eliminated--or at least changed."

Not technically poor

Unlike Mary Camp, Rob Green is poor--not technically poor, but poor in fact.

Like Roger Luster, he lives in West Virginia. But the two aren't neighbors. Green, 75, lives farther north, up in Dawes Hollow, off Cabin Creek, only half an hour from Charleston, the biggest city in the state.

Ada Thompson cooks in her kitchen along Cabin Creek in West Virginia. She collects a total of $4,992 a year counting food stamps. (Iris Schneider / Los Angeles Times) View more photos

They live on potatoes, beans, a little bacon, a few onions, wild poke greens and some Shawnee, a Virginia waterleaf they pick in the hills. They get eggs from their chickens, and they sell a few eggs to make a little extra money. It has been two years since they've had enough money to buy clothes. Last winter, they ran out of coal. Because they're both too old to dig their own, they tried to buy some. But they couldn't get anyone to haul it home for them, so they cut some wood. It burned out the fire bricks in the stove. Now they need a new stove.

House needs repairs

Their tar-papered house needs a roof. It could use plumbing. Their bathroom is an outhouse. For baths, Mary gets water from a pipe that brings it from a spring near the house, and she heats it on a propane burner.

Rob Green suffered a stroke a few months ago. A blind son, who lives next door and makes his way over by following a clothesline, looks after his folks as best he can. But he's barely getting by himself. And Rob and Mary Green need help. They have given up getting more money from the government.

"They're not for the poor man," he said, watching the world from his front porch. "They just for themselves. They're cutting the budget and cutting the budget, but they ain't cutting their wages. Unh nunh. They don't cut their wages. Yeah, but they're going to cut our checks, I reckon."

For a poor man like Rob Green, that and another cold winter could make all the difference.

Poverty is complex; Poor share work ethic, U.S. dream

By Barry Bearak

July 29, 1985

Ola Reynolds in Brunswick, Ga. She has just left her husband, who was physically abusing her over the years of their marriage. She recently moved into this house in Brunsiwick and has a job at a seafood packing factory. (Iris Schneider / Los Angeles Times) View more photos

From each paycheck, $33 goes to the doctor who set baby Reneesha's broken arm after she flipped off the bed. The rest of the money spreads thinly across too many bills. Dinners have sometimes been no more than mayonnaise sandwiches.

"Better I'd never met Ray," Ola said.
Another is Kenneth Jones of Baltimore, whose first inkling of money trouble came as a rumor around the office: "Reduction in forces, people called it."
A father of four, he had always tried to make the right moves. He went to college and studied accounting, but at graduation he landed no job. Too inexperienced, employers said.

Then a friend told him they were hiring at Amtrak. It was not college man's work, but it paid all right, $5.60 an hour.

Kenneth Jones, who lost his job with Amtrakm, is looking for work. He plays horseshoes in the neighborhood with the neighborhood guys to pass the afternoon in Baltimore. (Iris Schneider / Los Angeles Times) View more photos

Started as trackman

Kenneth started as a trackman, replacing heavy wooden ties. Then he was a machinist, and then the company let him bid on an office job. In time, he was making $29,500 a year, writing reports that went all the way to Congress. Finding his way to Amtrak seemed a flash of luck.
But he has not worked since the layoff 15 months ago and, at age 33, his pride is papered over with welfare checks and food stamps. There is a leak in the dining room ceiling that he cannot afford to fix. The children's aquarium is down to a single fish.
At a city job-placement center where he is something of a star job candidate, he is also among the saddest of cases. He has pretty well given up on getting a job as good as the one he lost. His grip on the middle class, once firm as a fist, has been easily wrenched open. Now he wonders how far he must fall.
"Every chance at a job turns out just to be a tease," said Kenneth, sturdy as a spike and thoughtfully well-spoken. "Meanwhile, my life is going by and my kids are growing up poor."
His new problem is too much experience: "They tell me, well, you've got an impressive work record here, and, oh, you've got a degree too; we wouldn't feel right offering a $12,000 job to someone of your caliber and credentials."

Illness brought poverty

Then there is Bubby Guest, a Brunswick, Ga., junkman, poor because he is sick. Poverty set upon him to stay while he was lying beneath a burned-out jalopy.
High blood pressure was causing unbearable headaches, and neither the pills nor the needle seemed to help. He was pulling out a transmission when he closed his eyes, hoping to ease the pain. He came to much later, and there remains a hole in his life that he can't quite remember.
"Been two or three years and I haven't worked since," said Bubby, 40, a shy, beefy man who barely parts his lips to talk. "Time was, I worked most any kind of job, mechanic, construction, cutting wood. No more, not with these headaches."
These days, he keeps an eye on daughter Missy, age 4. Sometimes he takes the old Mercury for a drive and searches through other people's garbage. He found an old fan that way, and it only needed oil to get it going.

Geraldine Guest at work as a cleaning woman at the Oleander Motel in Brunswick, Georgia. (Iris Schneider / Los Angeles Times) View more photos

Food stamps are of some help, but the Guests are not eligible for welfare. Georgia, like half the states, refuses to aid two-parent families. "I'd have to leave Bubby to collect," said Geraldine Guest, 47. "And that would be a heartbreak."
So she makes beds at the Oleander Motel over on Glynn Avenue. The salary is $3.35 an hour, the minimum wage.
"On a good week, when the rooms are full and there's seven days' work, I can make $100, even $110," she said proudly, grateful for the job.

Poor man's America

Ola Reynolds at home in Brunswick, Georgia. She recently left her abusive husband and moved into a house of her own, her five kids. She is working at a seafood packing plant. (Iris Schneider / Los Angeles Times) View more photos

Ola, Kenneth and Bubby are all anecdotes in a poor man's America. They are out there with welfare chiselers and wobbly men on street corners with bottles in their hands. There is a poor person to serve as evidence for most anything. Policy-makers sometimes fetch them from obscurity, using their stories to commend a social program or to condemn one to oblivion.

Scholars attempt to go beyond the anecdotes, but the research is perplexing: If only there was some way to unwind a person's present and past, to measure gumption against frustration, to balance opportunity against inertia. Each situation is intricately knotted--part economics, part sociology, part soap opera.

What if Ola and Ray had not kissed that night in Winter Haven, Fla.? What if Kenneth's first job had been in a growth industry instead of the railroad? What if there is a cure for Bubby's headaches in the sample bag of the doctor in the next town?

Still, there is some pattern to the statistical weave.

Numbers tell much about the poor in general, if not in particular--who they are, how they became poor, how long they will stay that way.

Living in poverty, for instance, is often thought to mean living off the dole or welfare, the federal program formally called Aid to Families with Dependent Children. But only one-third of the poor collect AFDC. Of those, 66% are children.

Snares young, old

The poor are a far larger group, remarkable for their diversity. In 10 years' time, fully one-fourth of the nation slips for some time into poverty, studies show. It snares the young and the old, the hearty and the lame, the wicked and the virtuous.

Census data from 1983, the latest year available, shows the poor have a general commitment to the workplace: Excluding the elderly, the disabled, students and mothers with children under age 6--persons society does not ordinarily expect to hold jobs--more than two-thirds of the heads of poor households do work at least part-time, including 77% of the men and 55% of the women.

"The numbers show that poverty is far more a problem of job availability than work ethic," said Sheldon Danziger, director of the Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin, which compiled these statistics from census data. "Obviously, there are some bums out there. But, mostly, people are working or looking for work." Another problem is that many workers simply are not paid much.

In 1983, nearly 4.5 million full-time, year-round workers earned less than $6,700, then the poverty threshold for a family of two, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Another 6.5 million earned less than $9,999, below the poverty line for a family of four.

Of these low-paid workers, 1.8 million are poor. The rest sidestep poverty only because more than one person in the family has a job.

$3.50 an hour

Jackie Flanagan, cloth cutter in a Baltimore rag factory, makes only $3.50 an hour, and wonders if work is worth the trouble. The monthly take-home pay, about $506, is only $25 more than she received from welfare.

She started the job last December. Five lively youngsters, ages 3 to 11, were driving her stir crazy, and the characters on the afternoon soap operas had become more familiar than real life.

"I watched those stories so much that I dreamed about them," said Jackie, 33, a round-faced woman who speaks almost in a whisper.

Her routine now is to rise at 5:30, lay out the children's clothes, wash and dress the littlest ones. Then she makes lunches before leaving the children with the next-door neighbor.

The subway takes her downtown. From there, she catches either the No. 23 or the No. 15 bus. Both go down Franklintown Road, and it is a short walk to the factory. At 8 a.m., she starts slicing rags from a bolt of cloth.
"I enjoy the work," she said, her voice betraying her uncertainty. "The people are nice. They let you go on break when you feel like it."

Pleasant or not, the job is hard on her budget. She pays her neighbor $50 a week for baby-sitting. She also pays $8.50 a week in carfare.

No medicaid

Worse yet, the job offers no health insurance. Because she is no longer on welfare, the state will soon take away her Medicaid card. Every flu and cough the children catch will mean less money for groceries.

"Marcia, the 3-year-old, has asthma," she said, the worry clear on her face. "I didn't know working would end up costing me money. Mentally, I want to keep working. Financially, I don't know if I can."
Economists sometimes examine poverty as if it had two doors--one an entrance, one an exit. They want to classify how people generally get in, how long they stay, how they get out.

To a great extent, the answers are obvious.

For a family headed by a man, the biggest problem is loss of wages--his or his wife's.

This, for instance, was true for Gilbert Maxwell, the cleanup man in the Georgia shrimp factory. The Maxwells were not always poor.

For a few years, Pauline made beds at the Holiday Inn. Together, they earned more than $20,000. They had begun looking for a house in the country, where the four boys could play in the woods and Gilbert could build a machine shop out back.

"Really, by now we ought to have that house," he said.

But one afternoon last year, a sharp pain twisted through Pauline's chest while she was standing out front, gabbing with her cousin. She fell to the ground, stunned and confused. Heart attack, she mumbled, and she was right. Friends rushed her to the hospital.

The 25-year-old mother lay in intensive care for three days. The Maxwells will not break loose from poverty until the doctors say she can work again.

Loss of a man

For families headed by women, however, the biggest problem is not loss of a job but loss of a man. The trap door into poverty opens with divorce or separation or a birth out of wedlock.

Barbara Hollins, a Brunswick, Ga., welfare mother, knows much about this, for she has had two marriages, two divorces, three great loves, six children and a lifetime of hopscotching back and forth across the poverty line.
"Until men change and they want to support these kids, there's always going to be women like me," Barbara, 36, said in an angry monotone, shushing her two youngest ones, Gregory, not yet 2, and Destiny, just 6 months.
In her version of a turbulent lifetime, things looked so much better when she was 18. She had started junior college, and every day a handsome man named Roger carried her books home from school. He doted on her and she loved it. He did not lose interest until she told him she was pregnant.

The couple were married under the shotgun gaze of Barbara's mother, and it made an awkward beginning for a young pair who preferred other plans. Both worked off and on at jobs they did not like. They argued about money. Barbara had a second baby. The marriage lasted four years.

Perfect setup

So she was a perfect setup for John, who said a woman's place was in the home and a man's on the job. He planned to join the merchant marine and promised to give her $1,000 a month. Mostly, she said, he gave her two more babies and several dreary years. Barbara vowed never to be fooled again.

That Alfonso entered her life and remains there still, contributing so little money, is something of an embarrassment to her. He is the father of the babies at her feet, and he gives her but $25 a week. She depends on welfare and food stamps to get by until she finishes a course in clerical work. She hopes to be a file clerk.

"I have high blood pressure, and the doctor told me the birth control pill is too risky," she said apologetically, as an afterthought to her story.

Poverty researchers wonder how long people like Barbara Hollins, Jackie Flanagan, Gilbert Maxwell and the rest will stay poor. Is poverty often a long-term affliction?

The question has two correct, if very different, answers.

On one hand, most people who tumble into poverty during a 10-year period are short-timers, according to researchers at the University of Michigan. By age, sex and race, they reflect the population as a whole. Two-thirds stay poor less than three years.

No children

Joanne Harper, for one, is poor for now but probably not for long. She has moxie and smarts--and no small children. For nearly a decade, she worked bridge construction, carrying steel and running a machine that smooths concrete. Then, last December, she quit.

"I was getting so nervous up there, too shaky to go on," said Joanne, 47, a husky, red-haired woman separated from her husband.

She lives in Baltimore with her two teen-agers, in the same neighborhood where she grew up, It is like a little Peyton Place, she said. Everybody knows everyone else's business.

That is one reason she will not apply for food stamps. Hard times are so humiliating. People see you go into the food stamp office, then they see you at the grocery.

Years back, during another bad time, she took the stamps and she was always afraid she would be spotted. She stopped going to Food Town and began shopping at Steve's Supermarket, way up on Charles Street.

"I can understand how people feel," she said. "It bothers me when I see them with the food stamps, buying meat and real butter."

But, then, unlike many of the poor, Joanne has resources. She has some savings to draw upon, and she has some skills and a strong work record. She expects to hire on as a maid when the new Sheraton opens downtown.
"I'll get a job soon, no problem," she said confidently.

Others mired

But if there are a great number of short-timers like Joanne rotating through poverty every 10 years, there also is a group deep-stuck--enough of them, actually, to be a slight majority in any single year of that decade.
These deep-stuck poor require not just a temporary boost back up, but long-term support--and even guidance on how to maintain a foothold.

"These tend to be the people you'd expect--the poorly educated, blacks, unwed mothers," Harvard economist David Ellwood said.

The work ethic of this group also is harder to grasp. It is often complicated by disability of the body or spirit, and the very momentum of failure.

At times, the long-term poor seem buffeted amid the gear work of some diabolical Rube Goldberg contraption: She got pregnant so she quit school so she never learned fractions. He was laid off so he robbed a store so he went to prison. She never worked so she has no experience so she can't get a job.

"I never knew what that word 'location' meant," said Linda Phillips, 31, a Baltimore welfare mother enrolled in a remedial course about how to look for work. Job applications had always confused her.
"All that word means," she said, "is they want the address."

Federal fix

By and large, the many criticisms of the welfare system involve the long-term poor. It is argued that, for them, government assistance has become a way of life. They are addicted to a federal fix, their submission complete.
One of the leading critics is Charles Murray, author of the controversial book "Losing Ground." He complains that poverty programs have given the poor the wrong signals, suggesting to them that the system is to blame for their plight and welfare is a respectable alternative.

"To someone who is not yet persuaded of the satisfactions of making one's own way, there is something laughable about a person who doggedly keeps working at a lousy job for no tangible reason at all," he wrote.
In some cases, the argument is undoubtedly true. If some welfare mothers are badly prepared for the workplace, others simply weigh the pros and cons of a job and decide it is not worth the toil. Going on welfare seems to them a sensible personal and economic choice.

Traditional mother

For Nancy Papadopoulos, a nimble-witted Minneapolis divorcee with a year of college, work would not be hard to find. But a job is not as important to her as being a traditional mother to her three boys.

"If I put my kids in day care, it's like making them work a job," said Nancy, 29, emotion caught in her throat. "The little one cried when I left him, and they were too tired to eat when I got them home.

"I want my boys to grow up with my morals and my beliefs, not some other lady's. I want them to know I bnvv them."
Welfare benefits vary from state to state, depending on the state contribution. Minnesota is relatively generous, and each month Nancy gets a $611 check and $124 in food stamps. She pays only $96 rent for a federally subsidized town house that might ordinarily cost four times that. The Catholic school on York Avenue allows her oldest boy to attend for free.

$2,000 a month

"I'd probably need $2,000 a month to make getting off welfare worthwhile," she said. "So I really shouldn't work unless I get an excellent job."

So, inevitably, there is much conjecture about how often a steady welfare check keeps the Nancys of America from a job. It is another of those questions that require mind-reading for a certain answer.

There are indications, however, that Nancy Papadopoulos is actually in the minority--that most welfare mothers would prefer to dress each morning and head out the door.

Nearly half the states, including California, have been experimenting with some kind of "workfare," requiring welfare recipients to participate in intensive job searches, and sometimes community work, in return for their checks.

The Times Poll shows that 59% of the poor have a favorable impression of workfare, 33% have not heard of it and only 3% have an unfavorable impression. In fact, the poor endorse the idea slightly more than the non-poor.

Similar results have been noted by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corp., a nonprofit group that has been evaluating the workfare programs.

Finding child care

"The mothers' main problem is finding child care," said Judy Gueron, the group's executive vice president. "And if they find child care, then the question is whether they pay out more in carfare and day care than they make."
But welfare mothers usually are considered the most motivated of the hard-core unemployed. Often their problem is simply getting a start.

There are others who have dodged in and out of the workplace, and employers consider them the riskier hires. Largely, they are men. Generally, they are unskilled. Frequently, they have taken to the ways of the street.
Karl Marx called the worst of such people "social scum." To De Tocqueville, they were "rabble." Dickens described them as "the dangerous classes."

These days, the catchall term most often used is the underclass. It refers to a miasma of welfare-dependent women, street hustlers, petty criminals, the homeless and others who have drifted from society's mainstream.

"It isn't just that they're poor," Richard Nathan, a poverty expert at Princeton and a former official in the Richard M. Nixon Administration, said of the underclass. "It is that they are hard to love and hard to help. It is the people who threaten us."

Mishaps, misdeeds

Experts are not quite sure how to define the group, let alone measure its size. Estimates most often range between 2 million and 5 million. Like the others in poverty, they each have a story, theirs most often a webbing together of mishaps and misdeeds.

Among them is Donald McDuffie, 28, who once labored for seven steady years as a furniture mover. Then he argued with the boss. "I quit" is what Donald says when he gets angry.

He moved to Minneapolis, where he has relatives. When another job did not come easily, he became a foot soldier for a bad bunch dealing in phony prescriptions. Each time he got some painkillers, he took home $50.

From that, he moved on to forging stolen payroll checks. He got them from a buddy later killed in a dice game over on DuPont Avenue. In the last batch Donald signed, there were eight checks that would have netted him $713. Instead, they got him a year in jail.

Out of prison since August, he lives on a monthly $199 general assistance check from the state. He has looked for work at Honeywell and Control Data and the other big companies. He has been to the factories and the warehouses and the filling stations.

"I go to a lot of places and the first thing they ask is, do I have a criminal record," said Donald, a well-muscled man sagging in a torn sofa. "Well, I tell them the truth because honesty is the best policy. But then I feel the vibes, like they don't want anything to do with me."

Chances scarce

Second chances are scarce.

"If push comes to shove, I'm going back to what I did before," he said. "That's right. I won't be the man on the bottom all the time."

These anecdotes and the people who tell them go on into the millions, 35.3 million actually. In America, the poor are primarily victims of the very things that bless others--luck and love and children, the fragile gifts of body and mind, the sheer unpredictability of life itself.

Those most vulnerable are the elderly, the disabled, the poorly educated, mothers abandoned by their husbands or lovers, workers brushed aside by the nervous hand of the economy.

There are poor people even harder-working than Gilbert Maxwell and others more hooked on welfare than Nancy Papadopoulos. There are those more proud than Joanne Harper and those more defeated than Bubby Guest.

But whatever their problems, a slackness of spirit is rarely at the root. Most of the able-bodied poor want to work--and do so. Most share the dreams of an industrious nation. Most want to fit.

They are people like us, their poverty the icy curve on a hazardous road.
Times researchers Nina Green and Lorna Nones contributed to this story.

'Got no choice'; True victims of poverty are the children

By Bob Drogin

July 30, 1985

Gilbert Maxwell feeds his twins, Andre and Andrew, before he leaves for work at dinner time in King Shrimp Factory in Brunswick, Georgia. (Iris Schneider / Los Angeles Times) View more photos

Under a glaring sun, the battered gray trailer stands baking by parched corn and soybean fields. Inside, 16-year-old Barbara Pryor brushes flies from the face of her 7-month-old son, Jerome. The infant blinks but doesn't move. Born prematurely, he is undersized and listless.

"He's sick a lot," said the unmarried teen-age mother, a ninth-grade dropout. "He gets worms. But sometimes he be sick and I can't get nobody to take me to the doctor."
On a block of front porches and pickups in Peoria, Ill., Debra Baron's three school-age children wait as their mother carries home a brown bag of eggs, soup and beans from a church food kitchen. Her husband, Rick, laid off in 1981 from a factory job paying nearly $13 an hour, now earns less than $10 a day driving a cab. Despite welfare and food stamps, hunger forces Baron and her three children to scour the nearby streets for empty soda cans to cash in.

'Out of everything'

"It's terrible to be a garbage picker to have enough to eat," she said. "But at the end of the month you're out of food. The last seven days are the worst. You're out of everything."

And by burned-out buildings in the Bronx, 15-year-old Ronald Richardson patiently fills plastic jugs from a dripping fire hydrant. Although his mother works as a New York City welfare clerk, they live in a condemned tenement in a dimly lit apartment with no water, gas or heat. The bathroom ceiling has collapsed. Rats roam the dark, rubble-strewn halls.

"Every day, I go to the fire hydrant to get water for cooking, to clean dishes and to wash up for school," the shy eighth-grade student said as the pop song "We Are the World" blasted through a broken window. "I got no choice."
Across America, an increasing number of children also have no choice. Urban and rural, black and white, they are the true victims of poverty.

Between 1979 and 1983, the number of poor children soared by 3.7 million to 13.8 million, according to government reports. By the most recent estimate, 22.2% of America's children under age 18--the highest rate in two decades--live in impoverished families. Despite the increase, fewer children receive basic government aid, and what they do get is less generous.

"You're talking about more hunger," said Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Children's Defense Fund, a nonprofit, Washington-based children's advocacy group. "You're talking about more children being abused. You're talking about homelessness and poor health. You're talking about more kids with birth defects. . . . You're talking about the difference between life and death."

Hardest hit are the youngest and most vulnerable: One in four children under age 6 is poor. Family type is critical: Half of all poor children live in families without fathers. And race is crucial: Nearly half of all black children, more than one-third of all Latino youngsters, compared to one-sixth of all white children, are poor. All told, nearly 40% of America's 35.3 million poor people are children.

According to the Census Bureau definition, a family of four is poor if its annual income falls below $10,610. But such cold numbers do not reveal the human dimensions of poverty, nor the wrenching hardships of millions of children in the world's richest nation.

Pervasive problem

In more than 100 interviews with families, educators, social workers, doctors, nutritionists, economists, government officials and others around the country, The Times found child poverty a growing, pervasive problem from Iowa's failed family farms to Houston's once-affluent suburbs, from Boston's crowded soup kitchens to Youngstown's depressed blue-collar neighborhoods, from Mississippi shanties to hungry and homeless youngsters in California's wealthy Orange County.

"We're seeing a lot more hungry kids now,' said Jean Forbath, director of Share Our Selves, a nonprofit service agency at Rea Community Center in Costa Mesa. "We can tell they're hungry when they tear into a bag of food and grab a crust of bread."

In May, she said, the group gave food, shelter, medical care or cash to 200 poor families a day--9,500 persons in all, more than half of them children. About 470 children were homeless and living in "cars, parks and scrungy motels," she said.

Evidence of malnutrition

In America's breadbasket, the Illinois Department of Public Health last year estimated that there were 38,000 to 43,000 "chronically undernourished low-income preschool children" in the state. In Chicago, where city officials estimate that up to half the city's children are poor, doctors found that 30% of children under age 2 visiting Cook County Hospital's pediatric clinic in June, 1983, showed evidence of malnutrition.
"Many had been given infant formula that was highly diluted because their mothers couldn't afford to buy enough formula," said Dr. Agnes Lattimer, president of the Illinois chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.
America's poor children are not the gaunt starving faces of Ethiopia, or the ragged street beggars of Calcutta. But for millions of them the suffering is very real. Consider:

--More babies are dying. The death rate among infants aged 1 month to 1 year increased by 5.6% in 1983, while a 20-year decline in infant mortality has tapered off for the last two years. The number of women receiving inadequate prenatal care has grown, and a record number of teen-age mothers are producing more babies at risk of mental retardation, cerebral palsy, blindness, deafness and other birth defects.

Costly disabilities

"When you talk about infant mortality, it's not just living and dying that counts, but the number that live with very costly mental and physical disabilities," said Gov. Richard W. Riley of South Carolina, head of the Southern Regional Task Force on Infant Mortality, which covers the region with the worst infant death rates.

--More children are at risk. Every state has reduced health services for poor mothers and children since 1981. Most states also have cut or eliminated health education and illness prevention programs, including immunization campaigns, efforts to eliminate lead-based paint and rat control. And the federal government's Medicaid program (called Medi-Cal in California) covers half a million fewer children today than in 1976, when child poverty was lower by one-third.

"Without Medicaid, they fall between the cracks of the medical care system," said Dr. Victor Sidel, president of the American Public Health Assn. "If there is a desperate medical emergency, they can get care in the emergency room. But for immunizations, for normal medical or dental care, for preventive care, access is extremely limited or impossible."

--More children are hungry or poorly nourished. Three million children have been cut from school lunch programs since 1981, while food stamp benefits have fallen. A Harvard University study estimates that at least 20 million Americans, most of them children, now run out of food stamps and go hungry for several days each month. Although severe malnutrition is rare, the study says "silent undernutrition" is common, causing anemia, stunted growth and what doctors call "failure to thrive."

'Hidden time bomb'

"From a health perspective, it literally is a hidden time bomb," said J. Larry Brown, a Harvard School of Public Health nutritionist who directed the study. "If adequate nutrition is not delivered, the brain is going to be smaller, fewer brain cells will develop and cognitive development will be impaired."

--More children are failing school or dropping out. About a million fewer children are served by compensatory education programs, while most youth job training programs have been severely cut or eliminated. And new studies show that children bear the brunt when unemployment forces a family into poverty: Stress produces an increase in family violence, divorce, suicide, mental illness, alcohol and drug abuse, homicides, accidents and other serious problems.

"It creates a threat to the stability of the family and ultimately to the development of the child," said Dr. M. Harvey Brenner, professor of behavioral sciences at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.

Rate drops, rises again

What caused the alarming growth in child poverty?

In the 1960s, the nation's booming economy and President Lyndon B. Johnson's war on poverty nearly halved the child poverty rate, cutting it to a record 14% by 1969. But the rate climbed slowly back to 16% in the 1970s.
The problem, worried social scientists warned, was a "feminization of poverty." The number of poor single women raising families doubled within a decade to about 19% of all families. More than half their children were poor, three out of four if the mother had never married.

But the real explosion began in 1979, pushing 3.7 million more children into poverty in four years. It was the sharpest growth since the government began measuring poverty.

This time, a weak economy and cuts in Aid to Families with Dependent Children, the major federal-state welfare program, were chiefly to blame, according to congressional studies.

Unemployment, recessions

First, rapid inflation in 1979 followed by rising unemployment and back-to-back recessions between 1980 and 1982 pushed more than 1.8 million school-age children below the poverty line, according to a Congressional Budget Office study in December, 1984.

Second, Reagan Administration budget cuts in 1981 caused an estimated 1 million children to lose AFDC eligibility, according to a May, 1984, General Accounting Office study. Between 1981 and 1984, federal spending for welfare fell by 19% while the average monthly caseload fell 14%.

Additional cuts in Medicaid, food stamps, maternal health, child nutrition, education and other social programs exacerbated the welfare cuts. All told, federal spending fell by 11% in about 25 federal programs affecting children since 1981, according to a study prepared for the Urban Institute last December.

"In general, the federal government has abandoned children," said Madeleine H. Kimmich, author of the study. "Where states have picked up the burden, they've done all right. But a lot of states haven't, and a lot of children have fallen through the cracks."

Two-parent families

Although the number of female-headed families has continued to rise, the impact has been overshadowed by the larger growth in poor two-parent families since 1978. Indeed, the "relatively small shifts in household composition . . . did not contribute significantly to the increase in the number of poor children," according to a 670-page study of children in poverty issued in May by the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service and the Congressional Budget Office.

As long as unemployment stays high and welfare payments stay low, the future does not look much better, experts say.

"The poverty rate among children is not apt to drop very sharply, and large numbers of children will almost certainly be poor for some years to come," Congressional Budget Office Director Rudolph G. Penner told the House Ways and Means Committee on May 22.

Who is hurt and how? Making up the answer is a broad mosaic of disparate, often desperate, pieces:
Beaten as a child, Gladys Vallanilla ran away at 12 from her mother to live on the hard, cold streets in Hartford, Conn. Unmarried, unemployed and uneducated, she had her first child at 15. Three others soon followed. Welfare, Medicaid and food stamps helped pay the bills.

"Really, I didn't plan to have no kids," said the 23-year-old, shy, thin, black-haired woman. "They just popped out."

But the second child, Eveline, was born early and weighed less than four pounds. She died of pneumonia nine months later. The fourth child, a boy, was stillborn last year.

"It's like having hell in the family," said Vallanilla, crying softly in the fading afternoon light of her city-owned home. "There's two in my life I lost, a boy and a girl. And I think about it every day. And I suffer, and I still think about them, and I still don't know why they die."

Doctors perplexed

Hartford doctors also are perplexed. This graceful Colonial-era city of about 136,000 people on the Connecticut River is the capital of a state boasting the nation's second-highest per capita income, and white-collar headquarters for the nation's insurance industry. Traffic surges and business bustles around imposing office towers and government complexes.

But when the office workers return to the suburbs, they retreat from a city with the nation's fourth-highest poverty rate.

Heavily black and Latino, more than half of Hartford's preschool children are impoverished. Salvation Army soup trucks and church kitchens attract hundreds of families and young children. Despite three major hospitals and two health clinics, a study last year found that 30% of Hartford's residents had no regular source of medical care. Partially as a result, Hartford's death rate for infants under a year old in 1983 was 15.9 per 1,000 live births--down from 24.7 in 1977 but still nearly 50% higher than the national rate. In several of Hartford's poorest areas, the infant mortality rate is triple the nation's.

'Too early or too small'

"The principal reason babies die is they're born too early or too small," said Dr. Stewart Wolff, Hartford's director of maternal and child health. "And there's a direct link between being poor and having a baby who dies."

The link is medical care and age. Only 40% of Hartford's poorest pregnant women register for prenatal care in their first trimester, officials estimate. Only about one-third of the eligible mothers are enrolled in federal and state nutrition supplement programs. And a Community Council report in February noted that "60%-80% of Hartford primary care physicians do not routinely accept Medicaid reimbursement."

"Hospitals have started closing their doors to the poor, the near-poor and the uninsured poor," Wolff said. "In some hospitals, it now takes 8 to 10 weeks for a poor pregnant woman to get an appointment. And if she's in her third trimester and has diabetes, all the medical technology in the world isn't going to help the baby."

In addition, the younger the mother, the riskier the pregnancy. Teen-age mothers are 40% more likely to have premature or low birth-weight babies and thus have the highest share of infant deaths. In Hartford, one out of four babies is born to a teen-ager, more than twice the national rate.

More children

"The problem is children having children," said Sherry Deane, a coordinator in a new five-year, $2.9-million project sponsored by the city, several foundations and corporations to coordinate and extend medical outreach and education programs in seven neighborhoods. "Once a teen-ager has one child, she is more than likely--in fact 80% likely--to have a second pregnancy unless there is intervention."

One in eight babies born in Hartford has a low birth weight--less than 5.5 pounds--Wolff said. In some neighborhoods, one infant in six has a low birth weight. And one in every 44 babies dies before its first birthday. Following the national pattern, black infants are nearly twice as likely to die as whites.

That has devastated low-income, black neighborhoods such as the Charter Oaks public housing project, a sprawling complex of graffiti-covered brick apartments in southwest Hartford. At the nearby Warburton Community Church, the Rev. Paul Ritter leafed through a small, red, dog-eared date book to count the toll.

"I did 13 infant funerals in 1983," he said softly. "I had 14 the year before. I had nightmares. I couldn't sleep. I was wiped out all the time. It got so I'd just go home and go to bed. So I stopped (doing the services). I hated burying babies."

The 23 students in Pearlie Mattison's fifth-grade class have special reasons not to like Hardeeville Elementary School, a 58-year-old decrepit red-brick institution nestled between tall pines and broad oaks in South Carolina's Low Country.

"Every time it rains, it comes in," one girl complained, pointing at a jagged, water-stained crack in the yellow wall. "There are roaches and rats," said another. "The lights don't work," added a boy. "The paint peels off the walls," offered another student.

"It's a dump," shouted still another boy, as the children giggled.

But educational neglect is no joke in Jasper County. On April 10, the state Department of Education warned that four of the county's five public schools had failed minimum education requirements for the third straight year, and it threatened to cut funding and accreditation by September unless conditions improve.

'Continuing problems'

"We've got serious and continuing problems," said Solomon E. Bonds, chief school administrator in Ridgeland, the county seat. "A few of our teachers were uncertified. . . . Many of the schools are old and have not been maintained to assure safety."

Bonds said $520,000 in emergency repairs will keep the schools open. But new paint and plaster will not solve the grinding rural poverty and overt racism that has given the 14,504 rural residents here what may be the worst schools in the nation's ninth-poorest state.

Set between Charleston and Savannah, Ga., Jasper County is a lush land of wind-swept marshes and Spanish moss, neat farms and sprawling plantations. But the rich scenery is deceptive.

One in eight homes lacks indoor plumbing. In 1982, residents earned an average of $6,144 a year, barely half the nation's average per capita income. Nine out of ten students are poor enough to qualify for free or reduced-price school lunches. For some, it's the only meal.

'They want to eat'

"There are children who come in and they haven't eaten anything since lunch yesterday," said remedial reading teacher Molly Malloy. "They want to eat, not learn."

"We used to charge parents $15 or $17 a year for class workbooks," said Patricia A. Pilgreen, principal at Hardeeville Elementary School. "A lot couldn't pay, so we've reduced use of workbooks."

At Hardeeville High School, the hall clocks are all stopped at differ ent times. The marching band cannot afford uniforms to march in. Spanish is the only foreign language offered, but not in a language lab. In a recent achievement test, 87% of tenth graders scored below national norms. And only one in five graduates continues his or her education, half the state average.

"Kids from poor families do poorly, there's no question about it," Principal Bill Singleton Jr. said. "One of the disadvantages here is we cannot offer the programs, the curriculum, that students need."

Tax hikes rejected

Despite the apparent need, Hardeeville's mostly-white voters rejected proposed property tax increases in 1982 and 1983 to improve public schools. Both times, opponents argued in full-page ads that the tab of $10 million to $13 million was too high.

But others blame racism. Jasper County's public schools are virtually segregated today, 15 years after separate black and white schools were officially closed. About 790 white students attend three new, all-white, private schools. The public schools are overwhelmingly black.

"It wasn't a financial thing," said George H. Spare, Hardeeville town administrator, of the failed referendum. "White parents don't want to pay to send black children to school. . . . The sad thing is the private schools are no better."

Bomb threat

"It boiled down to a racial thing," agreed Bill Hornung, editor of Low Country Weekly. He said the tiny Hardeeville paper received a bomb threat and was "deluged" with angry letters and phone calls after he endorsed the school referendum in a mildly worded column noting that "40% of (county) residents won't be able to read this editorial."

Help may be coming. After 14 weeks of heated debate, the state Legislature passed a penny sales tax last year to improve education across the state. In the first year, teachers' salaries and requirements were raised, special programs were added for both gifted and remedial students, attendance is up, truancy down.

Whether it is enough for Hardeeville's poor is still unclear.

"Education is just not a priority in the community," said Veronica Thomas, a first-grade teacher and mother of three. "The truth is, this town neglects children."

Bobetta Bowcott saw her 10-year marriage and comfortable home collapse after her husband was laid off in June, 1983, from a $12.05-an-hour job assembling yellow Caterpillar bulldozers and graders outside Peoria, Ill. He began drinking and beating her, she said.

"Once, I was purple from here to the top of my head," said the soft-spoken, freckled 28-year-old woman, holding her hand across her chest. "Even my ears were black and blue. There were bald spots where he'd pulled my hair out." Late on May 9, after she was knocked down again, she took her three frightened daughters to her sister's. The next morning, she said, she obtained a court order to keep her husband out of their home and to force him to seek counseling.
"It affects everyone," she said tearfully. "Especially the children."

Strain is too much

Her neighbor, Patricia Marx, 36, finally broke down last fall. The strain had grown ever since her husband, Phillip, was laid off from his $500-a-week union job at Caterpillar's Mossville plant in June, 1982.
"I was in the hospital for nine days for a nervous breakdown over the humiliation of it all," said the short, red-haired mother of three young boys.

"The stress of feeling guilt, thinking maybe I did something wrong. I couldn't eat. I couldn't sleep. I lost 42 pounds in three weeks. I was afraid to eat for fear I'd be taking it out of my kids' mouth. . . . I got to the point of trying to commit suicide. I had pills. I thought of cutting my wrists. I thought I had no right to be here because I couldn't support my kids."

Such tragedies are increasingly common around Peoria, a one-time blue-collar boom town of 120,000 that lived--and now is dying--at the hand of the "great yellow God," the sprawling Caterpillar Tractor Co. Since 1981, Caterpillar has laid off more than 20,000 highly paid workers, while other local companies have laid off more than 7,000 other employees.

Costs staggering

The human costs have been staggering. Local officials say a broad array of social ills has grown with Peoria's unemployment and poverty, including battering and divorce, child abuse and runaways, severe depression and mental problems, alcoholism and drug abuse, assaults and suicide.

"I can tell you stories of kids who take their own lives because they don't want to be a burden to mommy and daddy because they don't have any money," said Dr. Jack Gilligan, head of Peoria's Human Services Center, a private, nonprofit social service agency.

Last year alone, suicide calls to the center's emergency response team jumped from 348 to 468, psychiatric and mental health calls climbed from 1,319 to 1,649 and calls for such basic needs as food and shelter shot up from 552 to 695.

"We attribute this to the economic times in the community," Gilligan said. "These are families living in cars. Utilities being shut off and people not having heat. People running out of food. It's happening more and more."

'Taking it out on kids'

"It's kind of like Archie Bunker going on welfare," said Debra Oberg, a center family counselor. "It's just not in their plan. . . . So you have a lot of real depressed dads, and they have to take it out on someone, and a lot of them are taking it out on kids."

The center's adolescent counseling and treatment program has a three-month backlog for the first time. School officials say truancy is up and grade averages are down. "I see kids from unemployed homes, broken homes, as having more stress and less ability to solve their problems," said Jay McCormick, head counselor at Peoria High School.
"I got guys come in and cry," said Tony Green, president of the United Auto Workers Local 974 in East Peoria. "They've worked 12, 13, 14 years. They've never been without a job. They're losing their homes, their cars. They're fighting with their wives. They're fighting with their kids. They've never seen their kids hungry before."

"This was supposed to be the all-American city," said John Colgan, head of a regional Anti-Hunger Coalition that helps 30 food banks and soup kitchens in Peoria. "Well, we can say without a doubt that 10% of the local population needs emergency food services. That's 12,000 families a month."

Heads scout troop

Mike Gillam, 37, heads one such family. Laid off from Caterpillar last December after 12 years, he still heads a Boy Scout troop. His wife, Janet, who earns $85 a week as a secretary, is active in the League of Women Voters. Both take a strong interest in their three children's schools and sports.

"I went to work when I was 16," said Gillam, smoking and drinking coffee as the children finished homework on the dining room table. "I was middle class. I could afford to buy my kids shoes, new clothes, pay for lunch. Now they get free lunch at school. I never had my hand out except to help someone. . . . I gave to my church, gave to the United Way. Now I've had to accept food from them. That hurts."

"Right now, if my kids get sick, we couldn't pay it," Gillam added, clenching his fists and staring at the floor. "We'd have to sell the house. How's that for the American dream?"

It was long past midnight on a cold, windy Friday, and infants and children outnumbered adults in the dingy city-run emergency assistance office for the homeless and helpless in the south Bronx.

The 15 children, mostly curled up and dozing on hard plastic chairs under harsh fluorescent lights, were victims of evictions, fires, fights and fear. The dozen parents, mostly women, sat silently, some smoking cigarettes, and all waiting for beds in New York's overloaded shelter system.

"All I want to do is get another job, put my kids back in day care or with a baby sitter," said Yvonne Harris, 23, whose two infant daughters slept under a yellow flannel blanket. "I am not a vagrant."

Shelter to shelter

Indeed, Harris wore a neat brown corduroy business suit. But she and her daughters have been homeless, shuttling from shelter to shelter since an angry boyfriend evicted them last Christmas. Without a home, she lost her job as a secretary for a Manhattan insurance company. And unable to pay a baby sitter, she takes her children and their five plastic bags of clothing to every job and apartment interview.

"I drag 'em with me everywhere," she said.

As child poverty has grown, it has grown worst in large cities. More than 40% of New York City's children are poor, twice as many as in 1970, according to the nonpartisan and nonprofit Community Service Society of Greater New York. The rates are even higher in Chicago, Detroit and Philadelphia.

One symptom is an increased number of homeless children. Nationally, 22% of the homeless in shelters are children, according to a 1984 Department of Housing and Urban Development study. On most nights, New York City provides a dry roof and a warm bed for more than 7,000 homeless children and their families--triple the number of four years ago--in some 50 aging hotels, hundreds of renovated apartments and four crowded shelters.

Long waiting list

"It's very difficult to see it getting better real soon unless there's a real influx of low-income housing," said Steve Thomas, director of New York's shelter program. The city's Housing Authority estimates that 17,000 families are doubled up in public housing, with a waiting list of 164,000 families to get apartments.

At the Roberto Clemente State Park gymnasium near Yankee Stadium in the Bronx, for example, dozens of families share a dusty basketball court that has become a bedroom. The city-run shelter, opened in late 1983, has 210 cots and cribs lined in rows. It is filled with harried women and children almost every night.

Although the city provides armed guards, mothers complained about fighting, stealing and constant noise at the shelter.

"I don't know what hell is like, but it certainly looks like hell to me," said Martha Santiago, a 25-year-old unmarried mother who moved to the shelter two months ago when her apartment burned.

'I want to go to school'

As Santiago changed the diaper on her 10-month-old infant and tried to quiet a second wailing baby, her 8-year-old daughter, Teresa, bounced on the bed and chanted: "I want to go to school. I want to go to school. I want to go to school."

Many of the mothers are teen-agers themselves. With more than 1 million adolescents becoming pregnant each year, the United States is the only developed nation where teen-age pregnancy is on the rise.

"A lot of these mothers look to the baby for the love they didn't get," said Verna Eggleston, a director at the Clemente center. "It's sad, but it's real. I've met kids as young as 15 with four kids, births nine months apart. They get counseling, birth control. In one ear, out the other."
One Clemente resident, 15-year-old Emily Torres, had given birth that morning, two weeks earlier than expected. According to her father, Angel Torres, Emily had refused to go to a prenatal clinic. He said the infant would be placed in foster care for safekeeping until the family found a place to live.
"We got to think of the baby now," Torres said.

The reason for such thoughts is clear. In the end, the poor die at a rate three times higher than other children, mostly from accidents, diseases, murders and suicides, according to a recent study of 1,030 child deaths in Maine.
In the end too, society will pay for the survivors with added costs in medical care, crime, family breakup, homelessness and more. And those costs are only part of the problem, according to Dr. Stewart Wolff, director of maternal and child health in Hartford.

"Is it different for a baby born in a cold-water flat?" he asked angrily. "Where the mother is shivering, where the father is gone, where there's not enough food, where there are no toys or books? Of course there's a difference. Children born into poverty learn a message from their birth. The message is we as a society do not value your life. And that's the tragedy."

Seattle woman got new start — then it ended; Case history of a 20-year War on Poverty

By Kevin Roderick

July 31, 1985

Mary Louise Williams talks about poverty programs she helped originate in Seattle and her experience now having to be a recipient of them. (Ken Lubas / Los Angeles Times) View more photos

Williams and the other organizers--most of them poor and over 30--were paid to knock on doors and get persons interested. They were the foot soldiers of Shriver's war. Doors were slammed in their faces by persons who did not believe that the federal government was paying welfare mothers to walk around and tell people how to apply for benefits, find jobs and fight City Hall. They were accused of being snooping welfare agents.

A turning point

Christmas of 1965 was a turning point, Williams recalls. The block workers spent Christmas Eve in a driving snow delivering gift packs they had scrounged.

"We were good beggars . . . food, clothes, just anything we could put together. That really broke the ice. Word of mouth began to get around, and doors started to open up a little more."

The Central Area Motivation Program grew into the main anti-poverty effort in Seattle. It moved to new quarters in one of the Central District's spacious Victorian houses and became a prominent voice for the black community. Morale was high.

If you were poor in the Central District, you could get a loan from the CAMP credit union. The neighborhood needed sprucing, so people were hired to plant trees and help repair homes. Few had cars and bus service was bad, so drivers were recruited for a fleet of vans and buses. More than 20 neighborhood groups were started to push for better bus routes, new stoplights and fair treatment by landlords. The staff grew to more than 300 persons, most of them formerly poor.

Jobs given to 500

By the end of 1966, a little more than a year after Mary Louise Williams began, more than 9,700 persons had come into contact with CAMP, according to an evaluation study published in 1968 by the School of Social Work at the University of Washington. More than 500 persons had been placed in jobs, another 450 in training programs. CAMP's community center became home for a whole range of services that did not exist before the war on poverty. Volunteers in the VISTA program--the domestic Peace Corps--helped write grants and run events. Upward Bound and other programs helped ghetto students prepare and enter college. Legal problems were referred to the local Legal Aid office.

About this time, Mary Louise Williams and another block organizer, Gloria Martin, convened the city's first group to work on behalf of welfare mothers. They knew that women felt abused and degraded by the welfare bureaucracy, but it was hard to persuade women that they would not risk losing their benefits if they joined.

Williams remembers that they managed to interest about a dozen mothers by offering an outing at the zoo, complete with free food and baby-sitting. They scrounged for the food, she says, "and my son and a couple of VISTA volunteers took care of the kids while we had our first meeting."

Many moved on

CAMP employees were to stay a year or two, then use their new skills to get better jobs. Many did move on. Williams remembers being pushed by a particularly stern supervisor to develop her work habits.

"He made us write everything down, and God, I hated him for it," she said. "But he said CAMP was not there for us to sit back and get comfortable. He trained us in politics, he trained us in social work, he trained us in how to go about getting a job. He trained us how to live in the world, really."

Gary Muse, center, works out a trade with an asian couple for foodstuffs they are not interested in but recieved at CAMP food bank in Seattle. (Ken Lubas / Los Angeles Times) View more photos

Marches and sit-ins established the Central Area Motivation Program as a force to be listened to in City Hall. It took the lead in starting a summer festival to ease racial tension. Black stars such as Bill Cosby and musician James Brown appeared at community events sponsored by CAMP.

"Nobody had a grand plan," said King County Superior Court Judge Charles Johnson, the agency's former chairman. "Everybody knew the poor needed upward mobility, but nobody was sure how to do it. But that's what was good about CAMP, you could experiment."

Poverty rate down

Life changed for the poor in America in those years. The poverty rate never fell as dramatically as Shriver predicted, but the combination of poverty programs and a growing economy driven by Vietnam War spending reduced the rate from 19% in 1964 to 12.8% by 1968.

For those left in poverty, welfare benefits were increased in most states and eligibility extended. Food stamps became widely available. Social Security benefits were raised and expanded.

Before the war on poverty, half of all Americans had no medical insurance. Today nearly all of the elderly have some coverage through Medicare, and most families on welfare receive at least some Medicaid coverage. Low-cost health clinics were started with federal help in many areas.

Before the Johnson program, there was also no general federal aid for local schools. Federal assistance for disadvantaged students was a key part of the war on poverty and helped countless poor students.

Find a future

In Seattle, Mary Louise Williams and others who participated say that hundreds of persons who had no hope for a future found one after they began working at the anti-poverty programs.

Blacks were the poorest, and they benefited the most.

"There were countless individuals who got some kind of start and maintained it," said Harry Thomas, the top non-elected official in Seattle's King County. Thomas, who is black, grew up in a Seattle housing project and became director of an anti-poverty program. "It was the first job for a lot of people. . . . Those kinds of things had a tremendous payoff. To have a job and lose it is not as bad as never having a job."

The first executive director of the Central Area Motivation Program was named to run the Model Cities program when it came to Seattle. He later became the city's chief budget officer and is now superintendent of parks. Another director became the highest-ranking black woman in state government in Washington. Alumni of CAMP and similar programs say they run into fellow graduates in all walks of life.

"We had the education, what we needed was the opportunity," said Harold Whitehead, a former CAMP executive director who was an official of the federal agency overseeing poverty programs for 10 years until it was eliminated by the Reagan Administration.

Original fury wanes

Across the nation, though, the original fury of the war on poverty waned after the first few battles. The escalating Vietnam War ate into the money earmarked for anti-poverty programs. Perhaps more important, the political tone of the anti-poverty programs had alienated big-city mayors and eroded support in Congress.

By the time Nixon was elected President in 1968, Shriver's promise was seldom mentioned. The Nixon Administration distrusted the political role of community action activities and put the brakes on federal spending for social programs. The Central Area Motivation Program in Seattle underwent a temporary resurgence under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act. The act distributed $10 billion in its peak years that allowed nonprofit agencies such as CAMP to hire temporary employees to keep their poverty programs operating.

Nationally, about 400,000 jobs were lost when the Reagan Administration terminated the program.

But the war designed by Johnson and Shriver was long over by the time Ronald Reagan was elected.

Mary Lou Williams thought her job would last until she retired. She had worked hard to put the welfare system behind her forever.

After she left the Central Area Motivation Program in 1968, she got a temporary job with a state program that paid the college expenses of ghetto youth.

The students were supposed to be handicapped, but "every minority I knew was handicapped, so I just gathered them all up and sent them to school. A lot of them graduated. A lot of them who had their BA degrees went on and got their Masters."

She was working for the American Red Cross when she decided that lack of a degree blocked her advancement. Mary Lou enrolled at Seattle University on a scholarship from the federal Model Cities program. With a year left to graduation, she went back out to find a job.

'There was always a fear'

"My arthritis began to bother me quite badly at that time, and I began to get afraid," she said. "The (poverty) programs were running out, and I wasn't working, I was just on scholarships. There was always a fear in the back of my mind that I was going to have to go back on welfare. I said I better get me a job while jobs are still available."
She got a job with the city women's commission. She held her last job with the parks department eight years before being cut loose.

Her layoff came at a bad time. There were more poor than at any time since the war on poverty began.
The national economy was in recession. Washington state's failing timber industry was adding to the state's woes. State legislators reduced welfare grants 3% in 1980 and another 12% in 1981. A number of state programs for the poor were cut back or eliminated, including dental care for poor adults.

New budget troubles

Welfare payments were restored to their old level in 1983 by a new Democratic majority. But new budget troubles this year, brought on by the state's reliance on unpredictable sales tax collections for most revenue, forced the Legislature to delay a 3% increase in benefits for six months. Plans to improve health coverage for the poor were dropped in a special session called to deal with the state's budget crisis.

Seattle's free food banks, which gather unsalable food from markets and unharvested produce from the fields, report that demand for food has doubled. So many homeless street people clutter downtown sidewalks and wander through Central District neighborhoods that the city is considering a law to punish aggressive beggars. The southeast section of town has become another poor area--and home to most of the city's large Asian refugee population.

When the Rev. Chuck McAlister ran activities for 50 to 60 southeast Seattle youths on Friday nights, he found that many of the children had not eaten for a day or two. "They're neat kids, but you wonder what's going to happen to them," said McAlister, pastor of a Presbyterian church in south Seattle.

Change in approach

At the same time that more people were becoming poor, President Reagan was leading and winning his revolution to change the federal government's approach to the problem.

Rules changes cut 400,000 families off Aid to Families with Dependent Children, the nation's largest welfare program, and reduced the benefits of another 300,000. Food stamp amounts were cut and about a million persons lost their food stamps altogether.

Cuts were needed to help reduce the federal budget deficit, Reagan said. But in return, he called on businesses and charities to step in and contribute more to helping the poor.

In response, businesses in Seattle contributed an extra $2.6 million over two years to the United Way. The money gave the charity its largest increase in several years and allowed United Way to begin financing emergency needs such as food and shelter.

Far short of demand

But Project Transition, as it was called, fell far short of demand. Instead of receiving 15% to 20% more contributions every year as expected, last year United Way's donations increased less than 4%.

"They tried to do what the President wanted, but it was nowhere near what is needed in the community," said Frank Chopp, director of Fremont Public Assn., an anti-poverty group in the city's more affluent North End.

Respondents to the Los Angeles Times poll would not be surprised. About 78% said substantial federal government involvement is needed to reduce poverty. When asked which American institution had the greatest responsibility for the poor, 34% said the federal government. About 21% said the poor themselves, and only 7% said charity. Nearly 60% of the persons surveyed said the government should spend more to reduce poverty.

More successful

Fremont Public Assn. is the only Seattle anti-poverty group that has flourished under the Reagan Administration. Its budget has tripled in three years, in part because it has been more successful in competing for federal funds than other agencies.

It provides free food, shelter and advice on welfare matters, puts out a community newspaper and led the forming of a coalition of activists who have become effective lobbyists for the poor.

Under the coalition's prodding, Seattle Mayor Charles Royer approved funds to try to make up some of the federal loss. This year the city put up $1.3 million for "survival services" from its share of general revenue sharing funds. But the amount was minor compared to the need, Royer said, and the funds are in jeopardy because the Reagan Administration would like to eliminate revenue sharing. The city also spends a higher percentage of its other federal funds on social services than most cities, but the Administration is seeking cuts in those funds too.

So when Mary Louise Williams rejoined the poor, her old friends at the Central Area Motivation Program could not help much.

Staff trimmed

In 1981 the agency had a staff of 48 and saw 20,000 clients a year. Despite rising demand, the staff was cut to 28 and the client load limited to 12,000 persons a year, most of them looking for food and help paying their winter heating bills. More than half of CAMP's $1.1-million budget goes for the heating program and a small job placement service. Federal funds through the Community Service block grant--the last of the original war on poverty money--have been cut every year since Reagan took office. The agency received $440,000 from the grant in 1981, and only $146,000 this year. The Reagan Administration is attempting to eliminate all funding next year.

"Right now we're really a survival agency," said Larry Gossett, a former student militant who became executive director in 1978 after a financial scandal almost closed the agency.

Every Friday morning, Delores Lindsay walks about a mile to CAMP's headquarters in an old fire station. Her marriage of 25 years recently ended, and she has struck a deal that helps both her and CAMP survive.

Sorts clothes

She sorts donated clothes into bins and supervises while people picking up a shopping bag of groceries at the weekly food bank also look for a needed pair of jeans or shoes.

She grew up in the Central District but never paid much attention to CAMP. "I didn't figure I needed it," she said. "I was with my husband then."

By volunteering, she is guaranteed a food bag even on days when stocks run out. Her welfare check of $346 a month plus $165 in food stamps is not enough to support her and two sons, she says.

The welfare grant provides Lindsay 62% of her official "need," which is determined by a statewide study of food and other costs.

Standards are austere. Women are allowed four pairs of underwear and two pairs of panty hose a year, and a new raincoat every 10 years. A typical 9-year-old girl gets a pair of oxford shoes a year and new sneakers every two years. She is allowed a bathrobe every three years, a nightgown every two years. The grant assumes no money spent on restaurants, television, entertainment and travel, or tobacco and alcohol.

Tuition, costs paid

Jenny Dorsey is enrolled in one of the few programs still directed at helping persons escape welfare for good. The state Department of Vocational Rehabilitation pays her tuition and costs at the University of Washington rather than require her to apply for low-paying dead-end jobs through the Work Incentive program.

By allowing her to complete her degrees in math and psychology, Dorsey says, she has a chance to escape poverty forever and earn a good living.

But she had to argue with welfare officials who wanted her to leave school and take immediate work as a nursing assistant.

Dorsey lives in a city housing project with her two daughters. As projects go, those in Seattle are not bad. They are called "garden courts" and sport more lawns and open space than the high-rise projects common in many cities. Still, Dorsey says she is looking forward to the day she is not stung with the stigma of welfare.

Life 'really controlled'

"I think the biggest thing I notice about public assistance is your life is really controlled by these agencies," she said. "When the public assistance office says jump, you have to jump. When Housing says those curtains are four inches too long, you have to take the curtains down."

Mary Louise Williams is better off than most who receive welfare. She collects $492 a month in disability payments and about $20 in food stamps. Rent takes $300 a month. Her house is heated by electricity, and the bills sometimes go over $150 a month in winter. But officially, she is $504 above the official poverty line for the year.

When she went to apply for medical help at the welfare office, she found the welfare system even more degrading than it was 20 years ago.
"You got to be almost dead to get on these programs now," she said. "It's a book that you have to fill out to get any kind of welfare help. You can go for months just trying to get the correct papers up there.

Poor 'play the game'

"It's a steady game that the Administration plays against the poor, and the poor learns, and they play the game back. If you can play the game, you can live. It's a shame that people can't be honest and live like decent people." Three of her children are making it alone. One daughter is on welfare.

If the war on poverty had not come to town, she said, she would have remained on welfare. Blacks in the Central District would have remained separated from the rest of the city.

"It was never, never meant to be as much of a success as it was. Instead, some of us learned. Some of us actually took advantage of the poverty program by getting an education."

But those days are over. Now, Mary Lou wonders about the future.

"The reason the doors were opened was because there was money for the doors to be opened. The doors have all been closed because the money is gone."

For every solution, a drawback; No tactic yet found to win poverty war

By Barry Bearak and Richard E. Meyer

Aug. 1, 1985

Soapy was a bum.

He didn't like to bathe. His home was a bench in the park. When leaves began to fall and his quilt of Sunday newspapers no longer sufficed, he decided to get arrested so a judge would pack him off to spend the cold brutality of the winter, as a guest of the taxpayers, in the congenial warmth of the poorhouse.

But, in O. Henry's classic story, even at this pitiful scheme Soapy failed. Six times he tempted the comforting arm of the law. He tried to eat a meal and stiff the check. He tried to act drunk and be disorderly. He tried to steal an umbrella. And each time he bungled it. He seemed doomed, no matter what, to liberty.

Wasted reformation

Then, in a magic moment, as he heard the Sabbath anthem echoing from a fine, gabled church, he realized the error of his ways. It reminded him of days when his life was rich with such things as "mothers and roses and ambitions." He resolved to reform--and, at that very instant, of course, a policeman pinched him for loitering. The judge dispatched Soapy, and his dashed conversion, away to the poorhouse.

O. Henry wrote that story 75 years ago, but things are even more paradoxical for the poor today. At a time when one in seven Americans is poor--and the poverty rate is at a 20-year high--the government is doing less to help them. More research about poverty accumulates each year, but public policy often is shaped on the basis of myths about the poor and misconceptions about what the public wants to do for them.

An intensive study by The Times, of which this is the fifth and final part, shows:

--Although President Reagan has whittled back aid to the poor, the newest evidence is that the public would prefer he do much more--not less--to ease the burden of the needy. According to a Times poll, 73% of the public favor government action on behalf of the poor and 57% would even be willing to approve a 1% federal sales tax to pay for it. About 55% say that Reagan cares most about the rich; only 2% say he cares most about the poor.

--If Americans sometimes picture the poor as derelicts like Soapy the bum, a more accurate image is far more pathetic. Nearly 40% of the nation's 35.3 million poor people are children. The world's wealthiest nation now has a growing number of children at risk of death and disease, hunger and cold, poor schooling and housing, abuse and neglect. The ultimate cost will come in higher medical bills, rising crime and other social ills.

Poverty programs worked

--Although social programs are frequently maligned, the anti-poverty efforts that began with the New Deal and accelerated dramatically during the 1960s and 1970s largely have been successful. America's poverty rate was cut by half between 1960 and 1973, and it has only started rising sharply again since 1979. Social programs do not work miracles but they do work. They have provided protection against hard times--cash, food, housing, medical care, job training--a safety net that is still in place, if fraying.

--Despite the fact that most who suffer poverty stay poor only a short time, an underclass of welfare-dependent women, street hustlers, small-time criminals and the homeless festers in almost every large city. A group hard to define, let alone count, the underclass has been neglected by researchers and policy makers alike. The nation appears to have written off part of its urban centers as territory gone bad.

--Although the nation has fallen into one of its periodic fits of suspicion about whether the poor are lazy--and even wonders if public aid lures them away from jobs--their work ethic actually is quite strong. Poverty far more often is the result of things beyond individual control: the jittery economy, low wages, ill health or simple bad luck.
"What characterizes the '80s is just the reverse of the '60s," according to Sheldon Danziger, director of the Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin. "In the '60s, we thought we could do anything and we were willing to pay for it. Today, we've swung in the other direction and we're too critical. The tendency is to think nothing works."

There are five basic approaches to helping the poor--give them cash; provide them food coupons, subsidies and medical services; create jobs; offer them job training; wait for the rising tide of the economy to lift them from distress. They all work, but they work imperfectly. Drawbacks come with every solution, and it is difficult to fuse the best combination at an acceptable price.

--Cash is the easiest. Social Security payments, now indexed to inflation, are credited with cutting the poverty rate among the elderly by more than half since 1967. But giving money to people sometimes makes them less eager to work. Although this is not a problem among the elderly--who no longer are expected to hold jobs--it is a proper concern about the recipients of welfare, the other major cash program.
--Food stamps, Medicaid, housing grants and similar programs are known as "in-kind" benefits. They allow the government to better control how public aid will be spent. But the in-kind programs tend to require their own bureaucracies, which raise administrative costs. Besides, they, too, can make recipients less inclined to work.
--Jobs for the able-bodied poor clearly are preferable to welfare. But creating public service jobs--whether they are cleaning parks, collecting garbage or building bridges--is very difficult without taking away private sector jobs. If the jobs are indeed truly additional positions, then there is the expense of the wages. And, if the wages are low, they tend to bring down the salaries of others who work at similar jobs.
--Job training, especially for those skills most needed in the workplace, is a good investment that allows some of the poor to eventually make their own way. But it is very expensive and the failure rate is high. It, too, ultimately depends on job creation. If the workplace is without extra jobs for the newly trained, they will simply compete for jobs already filled, bumping others into unemployment.
--The "rising tide that lifts all boats," the catch phrase for economic boom so popular with Presidents John F. Kennedy and Reagan, actually best lifts all yachts. The wealthy better withstand bad times and profit more from the good. Although a strong economy clearly helps some of the poor get jobs, prosperity often ignores the unskilled, the disabled and single mothers home with their small children.

No 'silver bullet'

"We've tried a lot of things and nothing is the silver bullet," says Robert Reischauer, executive vice president of the Urban Institute, a research organization specializing in social problems and government policy. "But poverty is a very difficult problem. We, as a society, shouldn't expect impossible results."
In the last 20 years, the safety net has been woven during both Democratic and Republican administrations. However complicated its pattern and frayed its edges, there is a logic to the weave. In it, necessity and responsibility and compassion are intertwined, and its resilience is a great part of what surely defines Americans as a people.
The problem of poverty is confounding, and much remains to be learned. The anti-poverty effort has had its successes and failures, the former often forgotten because the latter have been so discouraging.
Some current anti-poverty measures, however, enjoy the support of many liberals and conservatives alike.
--The poor have been taxed deeper into poverty, and there is bipartisan agreement that their burden should be lightened. One way to do this would be to increase the personal income tax exemption. Another would be to raise the earned income tax credit, a special tax break for low-income workers with children. The President already has recommended these changes.

'Workfare' being tried

--Experiments with "workfare"--requiring welfare recipients to intensively search for jobs, and sometimes do community work, in return for their benefit checks--are going on in nearly half the states, including California. Where these programs genuinely offer job opportunities and are in no way a punishment for being poor, many liberals and conservatives seem to agree the efforts should continue.
--There is a wide consensus that tougher child support laws need to be enacted, making sure that paternity is established for each child. Fathers would then be made to pay adequate support based on their incomes, removing much of that public burden. New legislation in Wisconsin may serve as a model for the nation.
--Thousands of mothers are prevented from working only because they lack reasonably priced child care. More subsidized quality day care would make entry-level jobs a reasonable alternative to a welfare check.

--America is the only developed nation where teen-age pregnancy is on the rise. One million adolescents become pregnant each year, opening a trap door that will drop many of them into a lifetime of poverty. Many analysts now believe that there is a critical need for a coordinated federal effort to caution teen-agers against pregnancy, as well as to assist young mothers with education and job training.

Varying welfare payments

Other measures under consideration are more controversial--as well as costly:
--Welfare benefits vary from state to state depending on a complex formula, which involves federal matching of state payments. This causes the maximum welfare benefit for a family of four to vary from $775 in Alaska to $120 in Mississippi. Many favor a minimum federal contribution, regardless of each state's payment, that would improve the living standards of millions of welfare recipients, most of them children.
--Benefits have been declining sharply against the costs of living. After adjustment for inflation, the median state benefit for a family of four has fallen by nearly 40% since 1970. Thus, some have proposed pegging benefits to a percentage of the poverty line, which is adjusted for inflation, to help recipients keep pace with rising prices.
--Half the states permit welfare payments to two-parent households, so that a jobless father does not disqualify his wife and children from benefits. According to the Congressional Budget Office, if this were extended to the entire nation, the cost would be an estimated $800 million in 1986.

No single solution

These changes, of course, would only alter the texture of the fabric. No single measure will erase poverty--or even swiftly cut it to size. Dramatic improvements will result only from a combination of a strong economy, low unemployment and carefully planned and generous anti-poverty programs.
An important part of the policy debate, too, is to understand that the problem of poverty did not arrive yesterday and it will not be gone tomorrow. Poverty is not specific to this country--or this generation or even this century. That despair rises from disparity is a theme as old as history, and that the duty of the strong is to help the weak is an obligation as rooted as morality itself. Hammurabi, ruler of Babylonia almost two thousand years before Christ, listed the protection of widows and orphans as an essential part of his famous legal code. Ancient Hebrew doctrine made it a duty of the virtuous to give and a right of the needy to receive. Christians believe that Jesus, by his earthly example, sanctified poverty. To help the poor was proof of devotion to God and necessary to eternal salvation.
But, if the poor have been exalted in religious teachings, they have been eyed with suspicion in everyday life: The feeble and lame and orphaned may have seemed worthy of a village's spare bread, but mixed among them were loafers and drifters--and they did not.

No charity for the impious

In 4th-Century North Africa, St. Augustine suggested that charity be withheld from the impious. In 14th-Century Europe, work was sometimes forced on the jobless. In 1587, Pope Sixtus V banned begging in Rome.
This great suspicion--and sometimes contempt--for the needy eventually led to England's milestone Poor Law of 1601. Although it recognized the poor's legal right to public help, it declared that vagrants--or anyone else healthy enough to work--had to earn their own way or risk prison, whippings or death.
This same ambivalence was carried over to the American colonies.
Calvinism was the ethic of 17th-Century New England, and its followers believed that a man's lot was predetermined by God: The wealthy owed their riches to divine grace and the poor were condemned because of their own sins and sloth.
"For those who indulge themselves in idleness, the express command of God unto us is, that we should let them starve," Puritan leader Cotton Mather said.
About 200 years later, far less devout "social Darwinists" advanced a similarly harsh conclusion: Society is a jungle and it correctly rewards the fittest and punishes the feeble.

Confined to poorhouses

Nevertheless, America grew up as a place where the poor were rarely ignored. This sometimes meant that they were shepherded into county poorhouses, where the able-bodied were compelled to work and children were made to study. In theory, this not only sheltered them from their surroundings but cleansed them of an impoverished spirit within. Instead of well-ordered refuges, however, the poorhouses were usually awful places, home to both the young and old, the sane and insane, the decrepit and the drunk. Although born in reform in the 1800s, they themselves became objects of shame.
Not all the poor suffered the poorhouse, of course. The needy numbered far too many for that. Many survived by begging or living off the land.
In the 1870s, a depression left millions jobless. The nation feared riots. Private charities started bread lines and soup kitchens, dispensing coal, clothes and even cash.
But charity workers came to suspect that a number of those accepting help could have survived on their own. Charity, they supposed, actually wooed people into poverty.

"In its most extreme forms, this led to the reasoning that . . . giving shoes to poor children so that they could go to school encouraged parents to keep their children out of school in order to get them free shoes," Columbia University historian John A. Garraty wrote.

'Visitors' inspected poor

The charity workers insisted that relief must be linked to moral counseling. This was done nationwide by an army of "friendly visitors" who inspected the poor in their homes, noting their inner failings and urging more appropriate behavior. The movement was called "scientific charity."

In time, however, the pendulum swung back. Charity workers eventually realized that poverty was a problem complicated by far more than misguided morals. No amount of "friendly visits" would remedy woes rooted in joblessness or low wages.

By the early 1900s, the storied "other half" was indeed almost that. Using the standards of those times--far lower than those now--about 40% of the nation was poor, according to historian James T. Patterson of Brown University. Blacks were so poor and isolated that they were "virtually invisible to reformers."

Still, poverty remained largely a state and local concern. The federal government did not get involved until the Great Depression, when millions of middle-class Americans discovered that poverty--and not a chicken in every pot--was just around the corner.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt's recovery strategy employed millions in public works. It marked an important precedent, and not all welcomed the change. To many Americans, WPA (the initials of the Works Progress Administration, one of those public works programs) stood for the lazy man's motto--"We Piddle Around."

Unforgettable lesson

Yet, the country emerged from the Depression with an unforgettable lesson: Whims of the economy, more than any human weakness, could cause poverty; and a great people must guarantee aid as a right.

In 1935, Congress approved the Social Security Act, aimed at preventing destitution among the elderly, the crippled and the blind. In addition, it provided for widowed mothers with children, a program that later became Aid for Families with Dependent Children, more commonly called welfare.

In the years after World War II, the nation thrived. Few American leaders noticed that the "other half" had merely shrunk into the "other quarter." Ghetto tenements and country shacks teemed with the poor from sea to shining sea.

When poverty was finally rediscovered, Presidents Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson spoke not of the poor's laziness but of the non-poor's neglect of its responsibilities. Washington would become the poor man's main pipeline to help.

To Social Security and welfare were added a variety of social programs. And, by the beginning of this decade, 10 million people received welfare, 20 million got food stamps. Federal spending for social programs--largely Social Security and Medicare--was $313 billion.

Social programs cut

Then the pendulum again reversed its arc. The Reagan years have brought budget cuts to social programs and a turn in attitude as well.

"In the past two decades, we've created hundreds of new programs to provide personal assistance," the President said in a 1981 address to the nation. "Many of these programs may have come from a good heart, but not all have come from a clear head."

Some of the vexing conflicts about the poor have returned.

Like the friendly visitors of 100 years ago, social analyst Charles Murray and others in the vanguard of the current critique suggest that inner weaknesses plague the poor more than business cycles and that public relief only encourages laziness.

In his controversial book, "Losing Ground," Murray proposes "scrapping the entire federal welfare system and income-support structure for working-age persons . . . . It is the Alexandrian solution: cut the knot, for there is no way to untie it."

But the eraser is no easier to use than the pencil. In an interview, Murray admitted that wiping away the system is not feasible. His suggestions, actually, were new programs, one for job training and another for public service jobs, an agency to employ anyone willing to work at less than the minimum wage.

'These idiotic ideas'

Similar programs, of course, have been tried for years, and Murray, chagrined, knew it: "Ten years down the road, they're going to say . . . Murray got caught up in the necessity of coming up with practical solutions, and so he came up with these idiotic ideas, and what happened is that it was CETA all over again."

CETA, the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act, was a job-training program, discredited by critics such as Murray and discontinued by the federal government. It went the way of the county poorhouse and "scientific charity" and a thousand other well-intentioned attempts that did not work well enough.

Only poverty goes on--nettlesome, perplexing and, most of all, enduring.

Almost 2,500 years ago, the Greek historian Thucydides wrote that poverty was "no disgrace to acknowledge but a real degradation to make no effort to overcome."
Now, as then, the challenge is to be benevolent in a time of limitations, to be equitable in a world of inequality, to be persistent in the face of a problem that seems never-ending.
It is an age-old matter of the pocket and the heart.

Credits: Produced Lily Mihalik and Andrea Roberson.

CP LIVING
The Christian Post

Heart Disease News: Lack of Fresh Food, Poor Households More Likely to Get Clogged Arteries

Fresh Food is Important to Heart Health

People who don't have regular access to fresh food, especially those from poor households, are more than likely to have early heart disease.

Fresh foods like fruits, vegetables, nuts, herbs and many more are important to a person's overall health. Having little of it or none at all can contribute to the clogging of arteries or a condition known as atherosclerosis, which contributes to early heart disease.

Atherosclerosis and Early Heart Disease Study

The American Heart Association (AHA) stated that in their research, people who are susceptible to early heart disease like clogged arteries have no access to fresh foods. Neighborhoods with no healthy grocery stores have a high number of people with atherosclerosis and early heart disease as they are most at risk.

Atherosclerosis is a condition where the inner walls of the heart's arteries are lined with fatty material.

The AHA researchers looked into several factors that contribute to early atherosclerosis development including neighborhood grocery stores, social environments, availability or lack thereof of recreational centers, and more.

They studied nearly 6,000 adults who were in the Multi-Ethnic Study of Atherosclerosis (MESA) database. Each adult was followed up for 12 years and had CT scans taken to observe any atherosclerosis in their hearts.

They found out that the lack of access to fresh food is the most common factor among adults and the elderly with atherosclerosis. Their research has been published in the journal Circulation.

Fresh Foods and Atherosclerosis Heart Disease

Lead author Ella August from the University of Michigan stated that fresh foods are one of the many ways to prevent atherosclerosis and stunt the progression of any early heart disease, Science Daily reported.

Some neighborhoods, especially those with poorer households, are susceptible because of the lack of healthy grocery stores in their vicinity. The authors noted that this is most common among black neighborhoods compared to white neighborhoods in America.

Reuters noted that people who had fresh food access within a range of a mile to their homes are less likely to have atherosclerosis build-up compared to those who live farther away from fresh food stores. However, the researchers did acknowledge that it is difficult to know how much fresh food is needed to reverse atherosclerosis as they have not found an accurate and reliable way of measuring it.

The AHA wrote that one of the best ways to prevent atherosclerosis is by partaking a regular heart-healthy diet. These foods include beans, nuts, legumes, vegetables, fruits, whole grains, fish, low-fat dairy and a bit of red meat and sugar.

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REPORTING RSS

AUGUST 16, 2016 BY LAURA TYSON AND LENNY MENDONCA

Commentary: Fighting Poverty in America

(Photo Credit: Justin Day/Flickr)

Originally published on Project Syndicate.

From 2005 to 2014, the real income of two-thirds of households in 25 developed economies was flat or fell. Only after very aggressive government intervention in taxes and transfers have some countries been able to hold families at least even.

This experience holds lessons for countries like the United States, where inequality and income distribution loom large in the run-up to November's presidential and congressional elections. What can the US learn from what works?

The US is a global outlier in tying much of its social safety net to employment. Social-welfare spendingaverages 23 percent of GDP in Europe, but only 16 percent in the US. And the US is an especially distant outlier when it comes to families: only three other countries – Tonga, Suriname, and Papua New Guinea –lack a national policy on paid family leave.

There are, however, many successful policy initiatives in the US. For example, Pete Weber, a retired business executive from Fresno and a member of the California Republican Party's executive committee, isat the forefront of a nationwide movement of efforts to think boldly about how to move families out of poverty and into self-sufficiency.

The Fresno Bridge Academy, founded by Weber in 2010, has received statewide and national acclaim for its results – not only its success with individuals in need, but also its cost effectiveness. The program is an 18-month employment-training program that also provides support services for families – including computer-literacy classes, résumé assistance, parenting classes, and tutoring for children – through its non-profit umbrella agency, Reading and Beyond.

Located in the poorest postal code in California, the program has helped 1,200 families who enrolled voluntarily and is funded to serve an additional 2,300 families over the next two years. To date, 80 percent of enrolled families have gained employment or significant wage growth, and 80 percent of those that do, retain these gains a year later. Thirty percent have achieved full self-reliance within just 18 months.

The Fresno scheme, funded by an innovation grant from the SNAP (formerly food stamps) program, is rigorously outcome-based and quantitatively assessed. It has generated $22 of benefit for every dollar invested, with $16 going to the families and $5 going to taxpayers (mainly in the form of higher revenues and reduced outlays for food stamps).

While the circumstances in Fresno are particular to the agricultural economy there, Weber believes the program is scalable and is already extending it to two other California counties (San Joaquin and Napa). Through a broader effort with California Forward's Economic Summit, Weber is embedding the lessons from Fresno in an effort to move a million families out of poverty in the state by 2025.

New approaches such as that taken by the Fresno Bridge Academy come at a time when both the left and the right are questioning current anti-poverty programs. By some estimates, since President Lyndon B. Johnson launched his "War on Poverty" in 1964, total spending on the fight has exceeded $22 trillion. Yet the front isn't moving. The official poverty rate in the US seems stuck at roughly 15 percent.

On the right, Speaker of the US House of Representatives Paul Ryan's Expanding Opportunity in Americaanchors the view that America already spends enough and just needs to spend it better. Ryan's plan focuses on integrating programs into an "opportunity grant," expanding the earned income tax credit (EITC), and criminal justice reform – all while encouraging economic growth, so that job creation does the heavy lifting.

On the left, organizations like the Opportunity Institute (full disclosure: we both sit on its board of directors) argue for targeted spending, particularly in early education; linking college to careers; and reducing criminal recidivism. Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton's policy platform proposes new programs to address these issues, with a particular focus on family leave and early childhood and college education.

Many if not most scholars who have explored the topic, such as a joint effort by the Brookings Institution and the American Enterprise Institute, include elements from the left and the right – particularly strategies aimed at strengthening families, improving the quality and quantity of work available, and breaking the cycle of recidivism. The EITC also has broad backing (more than three-quarters of economists surveyed by the American Economic Association support expanding it). There is also broad consensus on the need for betterquantitative assessment of what works.

Others, especially many in Silicon Valley's technology world and some in the labor movement, are concerned that technology will outpace job creation and leave many out of work. They would prefer a universal basic income (UBI), which would sever the link between employment and income. Swiss citizens roundly rejectedthat approach in a recent referendum, but the energy devoted to more radical approaches to help those who need it is welcome, even if the specifics of UBI and its cost have yet to proven.

Examples like the Bridge Academy – and others, such as the Federal Home Visiting Program– show that initiatives that are deeply rooted in and tailored to the needs of the communities they serve, and that are driven by evidence of effective outcomes, can work. Unfortunately, we too often embrace the opposite approach: broad-brush national programs with no focus on outcomes.

Consider the US Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service. Approximately 88 percent of its $82 billion in annual spending goes to direct aid (SNAP, or "food stamps") while only 0.33 percent goes to providing people the

skills they need to avoid government assistance. Even worse, none of the skills-focused programs have data to evaluate them.

A “progressive federalist” program would substantially increase this type of spending and rigorously evaluate it. Such a program would set high federal standards but allow cities and states to innovate, then fund what works. It’s time to think differently and align our thinking – and our spending – with what actually works.

Laura Tyson, a former chair of the US President's Council of Economic Advisers, is a professor at the Haas School of Business at the University of California, Berkeley, a senior adviser at the Rock Creek Group, and a member of the World Economic Forum Global Agenda Council on Gender Parity.

Lenny Mendonca is Co-Chair of the California Forward Leadership Council and a former director of McKinsey & Company.

Fontana Herald News
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S.B. County Board of Supervisors expands efforts to address chronic homelessness

1

Posted: Thursday, September 1, 2016 11:21 am | *Updated: 1:22 pm, Thu Sep 1, 2016.*

0 comments

Following the successful county-led effort to house more than 500 homeless veterans in one year, the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors voted recently to expand that initiative and target chronic homelessness, particularly among youth.

In July of 2015, the Board of Supervisors vowed to find housing for all homeless military veterans in the county by the end of 2015. A total of 401 veterans were identified as homeless and an advisory group of county, community and private partners went to work on finding permanent housing for them by December.

As it turned out, all 401 veterans were housed the day before Thanksgiving of last year, and an additional 162 were housed as of July of this year.

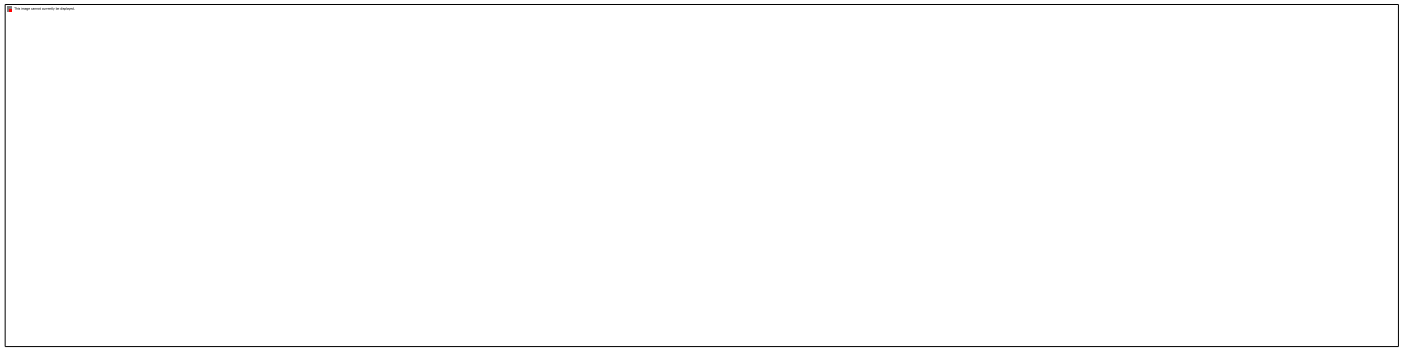
Encouraged by the results of the county-led initiative to reduce and end veteran homelessness, the Board of Supervisors endorsed the expansion of the advisory board's goals and strategic initiatives to focus on chronically homeless individuals, including the most vulnerable veterans and youth, as well as individuals experiencing mental illness, addiction, and other disabilities.

"We learned many lessons in our efforts to house homeless veterans and we want to use that knowledge to help other segments of the homeless population such as our youth," said Board Chairman James Ramos. "We believe we can break some of the cyclical and chronic patterns of homelessness, especially when we focus on our young people."

The board encourages the development of new strategies emerging from the 401>0 Veterans Initiative including a centralized housing search, development of housing targeted to the chronic population, a cost-benefit analysis study, and the partnership of local communities in the county in solving the homeless problem.

There are 376 people identified as chronically homeless countywide and 31 of them are chronically homeless youth ages 18 to 24. Homeless youth face increased risks of chronic homelessness, including victimization, anxiety disorders, depression, PTSD and suicide.

Press Releases:



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 22, 2016

Contact: Ashley Jones

(909) 381-3238

Assemblymember Brown's Backpack Giveaway Prepares Students for Classroom Success

SAN BERNARDINO - In an effort to prepare parents and students for the upcoming school year, Assemblymember Cheryl R. Brown (D-San Bernardino) hosted her 4th Annual Tools for Success Day in partnership with the Inland Empire Job Corp Center and a number of local businesses and non-profit organizations. This year, more than 500 students received a backpack stuffed with pencils, crayons, notebook paper, books, rulers and more.

"I'm so proud to host this annual event to provide students with the tools they need to be successful in the classroom," said Assemblymember Brown. "It also gives me an opportunity to discuss our Legislature's educational plans and accomplishments."

This year, Assemblymember Brown reported that our Legislature voted to increase funding for California schools by billions of dollars. This year's budget package provides additional funding for college readiness programs; counseling services; early education and child care programs; teacher recruitment; competitive matching grants to continue the Career Technical Education Incentive Grant Program (CTEIG); and grants to improve the quality of drinking water in public schools, preschools and day care centers.

Other local educational agencies such as the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools represented by Carolyn Tillman and the San Bernardino City Unified School District represented by Dr.

Harold Vollkommer, made appearances to greet parents and students and highlight their accomplishments as well.

Patricia L. Nickols-Butler, President and CEO of Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino County stated: “We want all kids to have an opportunity to do their best in school so we were pleased to share with Assemblymember Brown our donation of school supplies and food from our Food Bank. We look forward to supporting this annual event that provides much needed school supplies to low-income kids. This is truly providing ‘Tools for Success’ when kids have what they need to do well in school.”

The 4th Annual Tools for Success Day, emceed by KCAA Radio host Paul Rasso, was packed with information, giveaways, activities and included a special guest appearance by Speaker of the Assembly, Anthony Rendon (D-Paramount). “Attending Assemblymember Brown’s annual backpack giveaway was yet another reminder of her endless passion for public service. During the week, she’s in Sacramento fighting for her constituents. On weekends, she’s there for the families of San Bernardino – in last week’s case, providing students with the school supplies they need to succeed,” said Speaker Rendon.

Also at the event, live entertainment was provided by Alive in the Lights and Flora Fauna from the San Bernardino Teen Music Workshop, and a host of vendors offered community resources such as housing assistance, Prop 47 information, Medi-Cal insurance sign-ups, services for undocumented citizens and nutrition education.

"Assemblymember Cheryl Brown, once again, put together a very useful and well-attended event in this year's Tools for Success Day,” said Scott Hofferber, CFO of Farmdale Creamery in San Bernardino. “Farmdale Creamery is privileged to be a continuing sponsor and participant in the event benefitting the community surrounding our facilities. It was a pleasure to volunteer my services with on-site operation of my personal public address system equipment and help the live music artists' with their presentations to the folks on hand. Congratulations to Assemblymember Brown and her staff!”

Other program speakers and participants included Mayor Carey Davis, City of San Bernardino; Dan Flores representing Supervisor Josie Gonzales, 5th District; Board Member Gwendolyn Rodgers, San Bernardino School Board; Board Member BarBara Chavez, Fontana School Board; Board Member Randall Ceniceros, Colton School Board; Commissioner Kareem Gongora, Fontana Planning Commission; and Jorge Leyva representing the Mexican Consulate.

“It was a great event; especially because it’s about learning and getting an education,” said Claudia Lopez, Inland Empire Job Corps. “The Inland Empire Job Corps is honored to host this event every year and happy to help! The need for backpacks and supplies was evident by the number of families who attended the event. It was wonderful to see children with big smiles, walking away with their backpacks.”

The event concluded with a raffle and awards presentation. Raffle winners took home a 32 inch flat screen TV and bicycles donated by Assemblymember Brown and fruit trees donated by the Incredible Edible Community Gardens.

“The most important thing that I do in my position is provide assistance to my constituents,” said Assemblymember Brown. “I’m glad that everyone who attended this event was able to take away some valuable information and tools to assist with their child’s growth. Thank you to everyone who came out and I look forward to hosting next year’s event.”

This year's event was proudly sponsored by: Farmdale Creamery; Inland Empire Health Plan (IEHP); Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino County; KCAA Radio; City of San Bernardino Parks & Recreation; S.B. County Superintendent of Schools; Stater Bros.; Incredible Edible Community Gardens; Niagara Bottling; Home Depot; Pinnacle Medical Group; San Bernardino County Department of Public Health; First 5 San Bernardino; Mother's Nutritional Center; Molina Healthcare of CA; Loma Linda University; TODEC Legal Center; Consulado of Guatemala in San Bernardino; San Bernardino County Fire; United Cerebral Palsy of the Inland Empire; Inland Behavioral & Health Services, Inc.; Consulado of Mexico in San Bernardino; Target; and the San Bernardino Valley Chapter of the Links.

For more information, contact Ashley Jones at (909) 381-3238.

Photo link: https://1drv.ms/f/s!AsXv5I_NJJr-iRdv7jxVUgc1EiM3

Assemblymember Cheryl R. Brown represents the 47th Assembly District, which includes Colton, Fontana, Grand Terrace, Rialto, San Bernardino, and the unincorporated communities of Bloomington and Muscoy.

Website of Assemblymember Cheryl R. Brown: http://www.asmdc.org/members/a47/

PRESS RELEASE

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Dr. Margaret Hill
Board Chair

Patricia L. Nickols-Butler
President/CEO

From Left, Kevin Mahany, Director of Advocacy and Healthy Communities, St. Joseph Health, St. Mary; Brandon Romano, CAPSBC Food Bank Program Manager; Cornelious Page Jr., Executive Director of Community Health Action Network; and Jennifer Miller, PhD intern in Public Health at St. Mary.

CAPSBC Food Bank and St. Joseph Health, St. Mary partner to support healthy food access for low-income families in the High Desert

San Bernardino (August 11, 2016) – For more than 60 years St. Mary Medical Center in Apple Valley has been serving the medical needs of its community residents. St. Mary is part of St. Joseph Health serving all of California. Health advocacy in support of wellness is an integral part of their mission.

The Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino County (CAPSBC) Food Bank works diligently to provide healthy food options for low-income residents of San Bernardino County. In the High Desert region, CAPSBC Food Bank serves 18,755 meals each month at eight different soup kitchens, and provides USDA commodities and donated food to 5,085 households at 28 sites.

On Thursday, July 28, 2016, St. Joseph Health System Foundation provided $10,000 to the CAPSBC Food Bank to help in the mission to bring healthy food to hungry and malnourished residents of the High Desert.

CAPSBC President/CEO Patricia Nickols-Butler stated, "Access to healthy food options remains a challenge for the low income community. By working together, we are creating better food options for those who struggle financially. Food insecure families and individuals need support to have a chance at better health and the subsequently positive life outcomes of good health. We are grateful to St. Joseph Health, St. Mary for their support of our shared mission to help feed the poor."

Kevin Mahany, Director of Advocacy and Healthy Communities for St. Joseph Health, St. Mary stated, "We are grateful for the partnership with San Bernardino Community Action Partnership to expand High Desert access to healthy foods. And we wish to continue collaborative projects that support our efforts improve the health and wellness of our communities."

These funds will be used to make repairs on the CAPSBC Food Bank fleet that drives up the hill from its home base warehouse operations in San Bernardino to provide food to 33 sites including food pantries, community centers, shelters, and soup kitchens. These sites are provided USDA Commodities food and/or donated food, and other purchased food free of charge from the CAPSBC Food Bank.

Below is a listing of all the agencies supported by the CAPSBC Food Bank in the High Desert Region:

1. Adelanto Foursquare Church, Adelanto
2. Barstow Free Methodist Church
3. Desert Manna Ministries, Barstow
4. High Desert Outreach Center, Adelanto
5. Desert Sanctuary Inc., Barstow (Shelter)
6. Apple Valley First Baptist Redeemer
7. High Desert Second Chance, Victorville
8. Victory Outreach, Helendale
9. Feed My Sheep, Apple Valley
10. New Wine Men's Retreat, Lucerne Valley
11. Lighthouse Ministry, Apple Valley.
12. Baker Chamber of Commerce
13. Family Assistance Program, Victorville
14. In His Presence, Barstow
15. Bonnie Baker Senior Center, Big River

16. Victor Valley Rescue Mission, Victorville
17. Trinity Assembly of God, Daggett
18. Helendale Community Church, Helendale
19. Feed My Sheep, Hesperia
20. Hesperia Grange Hall, Hesperia
21. Hinkley Partnership Health, Hinkley
22. Lucerne Valley Resource Center, Lucerne Valley
23. Pacific Clinics, Lucerne Valley
24. St. Vincent De Paul, Needles
25. Newberry Springs Community Center, N.B
26. Oro Grande Community Church, Oro Grande
27. Trona Senior Center, Trona
28. Feed My Sheep, Victorville
29. God's Lighthouse SDA, Victorville
30. High Desert TLC, Victorville
31. Holy Innocence, Victorville
32. The Lords' Table, Victorville
33. Yermo Valley Community, Yermo

About St. Joseph Health, St. Mary

Established in 1956, St. Joseph Health, St. Mary is a 212-bed acute care medical center that is home to the High Desert's premiere comprehensive cardiovascular surgery program. The medical center is fully accredited by the Joint Commission. St. Mary is part of St. Joseph Health, which is a non-profit, faith-based health care delivery organization serving California, Texas and New Mexico. In Southern California, its hospitals include Mission Hospital with campuses in Mission Viejo and Laguna Beach; St. Joseph Hospital in Orange; St. Jude Medical Center in Fullerton; Hoag Hospital in Newport Beach and St. Mary Medical Center in Apple Valley, along with St. Joseph Heritage Healthcare and home health care services. St. Joseph Health has recently joined with Providence Health and Services to form Providence St. Joseph.

About Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino County

Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino is the designated Community Action Agency for San Bernardino County charged with providing programs and services for over 800,000 low-income individuals and families to help lift them out of poverty. We have been serving San Bernardino County since 1965. As one of the largest non-profit human services agency in San Bernardino County, CAPSBC, provides resources and opportunities to the low-income to improve their lives, contribute to their communities and offer a return on investment for our communities, cities and county. Programs include Home Weatherization, Home Energy Assistance, Family Development, Assets for Independence/Individual Development Accounts, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance, and the CAPSBC Food Bank. Please call 909-723-1500 or e-mail info@capsbc.org or visit our website www.capsbc.org for more information.

E-Mail Blasts

From: Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino County <patricial@capsbc.ccsend.com> on behalf of Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino County <mmerrill@capsbc.org>
Sent: Thursday, August 18, 2016 5:13 PM
To: Marlene Merrill
Subject: Public Notice - Local Fire Cuts Off Food Delivery to High Desert Today

Having trouble viewing this email? Click here

Helping People. Changing Lives.
Community Action Partnership
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK
Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino County

Public Notice: Fire/Road Closures in the High Desert Region today prevents USDA Commodities Food Delivery.

Dear Marlene,

Please be advised that, regrettably, we were unable to provide our USDA commodities food delivery scheduled for the high desert area today due to the local fire and road closures to this region. We are working to reschedule this delivery for next week.

We apologize for the disruption of this service to our valued customers and hope for a speedy end to this local fire emergency.

Thank You.

Helping People. Changing Lives.
community Action PARTNERSHIP
AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK
Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino County

CHECK IT OUT!

CAPSBC's New Website is LIVE at www.capsbc.org

IT'S NEW AND EASY TO USE!

Whether you are a customer, a partner, a volunteer, or a donor, you'll find what you need to know.

Featuring...

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- Food site locator maps (google) & distribution schedules
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After you visit, let us know what you think!

Click the button below to launch our brief website survey
Please complete the survey by **Monday, Sept. 12, 2016**.

WEBSITE SURVEY

Stay Connected

Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino County,
696 S. Tippecanoe Avenue, San Bernardino, CA 92408-2607

Sent: Thursday, September 01, 2016 10:15 AM
To: Marlene Merrill
Subject: September 2016 Calendar

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Hi, just a reminder that you're receiving this email because you have expressed an interest in Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino County. Don't forget to add mmerrill@capsbc.org to your address book so we'll be sure to land in your inbox!

You may unsubscribe if you no longer wish to receive our emails.

Like

A 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization dedicated to serving the low-income population of San Bernardino County since 1965

USDA Commodities Food Distributions
Free to low income residents of San Bernardino County
Energy Workshops and Utility Bill Assistance
Free to low income residents of San Bernardino County
Community Events

Thursday September 1, 2016

USDA Commodities Distribution

Pacific Clinics 3:00 pm-4:00 pm
32770 Old Woman Springs Rd- Suite B
Lucerne Valley, CA 92356

Outreach Nations
9565 Business Center Drive
Building II Suite A
Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730

Click on the image above for a short event video!

Beat of a Father

September 17, 2016
Fathers for Education & Against Poverty
Fiesta Village in Colton, CA
10:00 am - 6:00 pm
Drumline Showcase
Prizes, Awards & Giveaways
"My Dad the Big Winner" Competition
Live Entertainment - Community Resources
Local Merchant Specials
Fun & Much More!

Sent: Friday, July 29, 2016 12:06 PM
To: Marlene Merrill
Subject: August 2016 Calendar

Having trouble viewing this email? Click here
Hi, just a reminder that you're receiving this email because you have expressed an interest in Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino County. Don't forget to add mmerrill@capsbc.org to your address book so we'll be sure to land in your inbox!

You may unsubscribe if you no longer wish to receive our emails.

A 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization dedicated to serving the low-income population of San Bernardino County since 1965

USDA Commodities Food Distributions
Free to low income residents of San Bernardino County
Energy Workshops and Utility Bill Assistance
Free to low income residents of San Bernardino County
Community Events

Monday August 1, 2016

USDA Commodities Distribution

Rancho Cucamonga Community Center 10:30 pm-12:30 pm
11200 Base Line Road
Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730

CAPSBC Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) Education Workshop

At ACORE Solutions, 14318 California Ave. #106, Victorville, CA
9:00 am - 3:30 pm
Free to Attend - Call for an appointment 909-723-1500 or e-mail utilityassistance@capsbc.org

2016 National Night Out
Tuesday, Aug. 2, 2016
at Inland Empire Job Corps
3173 Kerry St., San Bdno.
presented by
Senator Connie Leyva
For more Info
click here

Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino County

SAN MANUEL BAND OF MISSION INDIANS

Chillin' at the Food Bank!

New Freezer construction completed thanks to funding from San Manuel Band of Mission Indians

Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino County (CAPSBC) is pleased to announce construction of a new freezer unit at their Food Bank in San Bernardino has been completed. Last year, $117,000 in funding was awarded by the San Manual Band of Mission Indians for the construction of the new freezer which has the capacity to store at least 90 pallets of frozen product. **Click here** to read more...

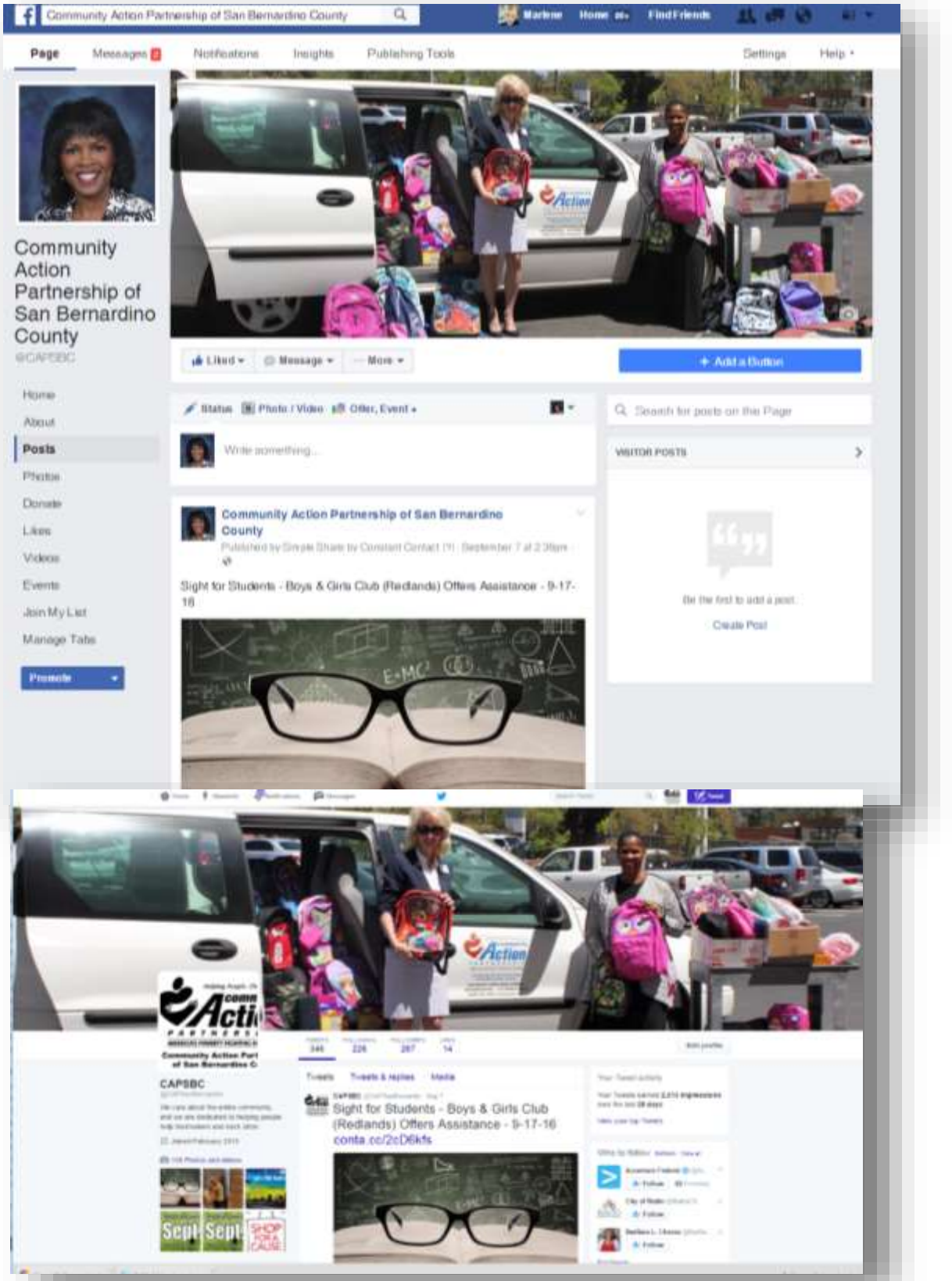
About Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino County

Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino is the designated Community Action Agency for San Bernardino County charged with providing programs and services for over 800,000 low-income individuals and families to help lift them out of poverty. We have been serving San Bernardino County since 1965. As one of the largest non-profit human services agency in San Bernardino County, CAPSBC, provides resources and opportunities to the low-income to improve their lives, contribute to their communities and offer a return on investment for our communities, cities and county. Programs include Home Weatherization, Home Energy Assistance, Family Development, Assets for Independence/Individual Development Accounts, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance, and the CAPSBC Food Bank. Please call (909-723-1300 or e-mail info@capsbc.org or visit our website www.capsbc.org for more information.

About the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians

The San Manuel Band of Mission Indians is a federally recognized American Indian tribe located near the city of Highland, Calif. The Serrano Indians are the indigenous people of the San Bernardino highlands, peaks, valleys and mountains who share a common language and culture. The San Manuel reservation was established in 1891 and recognized as a sovereign nation with the right of self-government. Since time immemorial, the San Manuel tribal community has endured change and hardship. Amidst these challenges the tribe continued to maintain its unique form of governance. Like other governments it seeks to provide a better quality of life for its citizens by building infrastructure, maintaining civil services and promoting social, economic and cultural development. Today San Manuel tribal government oversees many governmental units including the departments of fire, public safety, education and environment.

Social Media



Events

- 7-22-16 – Bloomington Community Health Center 1st Annual Back to School Health & Resource Festival
- 7-25-16 – When Fathers Talk About Their Daughters – advocacy for young fathers/Daughters Lives Matter project at Blakely Community Center in San Bernardino
- 7-27-16 – Assemblyman Marc Steinorth's Veteran's Job Fair at Central Park in Rancho Cucamonga
- 7-30-16 – Young Visionaries, Mayor Robertson school supply giveaway and resource fair at Rialto Middle School

- 8-2-16 – National Night Out – Ontario

- 8-2-16 – National Night Out (Senator Connie Leyva) – San Bernardino

- 8-4-16 – Daddy on Wheels – advocacy for young fathers/Youth Poverty Symposium outreach at Holiday Skating Center in Victorville

- 8-6-16 – Assemblymember Cheryl Brown's 4th Annual Tools for Success Day at IE Job Corps in Muscoy

- 8-19-16 – Blue Cut Fire, Victorville Evacuation Center

- 8-26-16 to 8-29-16 – Macy's Shop for A Cause event

- 9-13-16 – Young Visionaries Youth Forum at Hernandez Community Center in San Bernardino

- 9-14-16 – Arrowhead United Way Open House in San Bernardino
- 9-17-16 – Beat of a Father sponsored by Street Positive advocacy for Million Father Movement, outreach to young fathers at Fiesta Village in Colton

- 9-17-16 – Rialto Family Festival sponsored by City of Rialto
- 9-17-16 – Sight For Students (free eye exams/glasses for kids) at Boys and Girls Club of Redlands