



*Office of Mayor Lawrence J. Morrissey
LEADING BOLDLY, WORKING TOGETHER*

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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City of Rockford Human Services Department
Community Service Division
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ROCKFORD- For the first time in their lives, many people during this current economic crisis have faced unemployment and financial insecurity. But for the millions of families and individuals living in poverty, financial insecurity is a scenario they face daily. For them, it is more than just not being able to eat dinner occasionally at a restaurant; it is whether or not they can afford to eat at all. And it's more than just forgoing a vacation or other luxuries, it's a matter of should they buy medication or pay rent? Put gas in the car or pay the electric bill? Buy food or shoes for their child? "The financial crisis has been really hard on everyone, but it has hit low-income people the hardest," said **George Davis, Executive Director of the Human Services Department**. "They live paycheck to paycheck, have little or no savings, often don't qualify for unemployment benefits, and have no health insurance. They already lack financial resources, but the loss of a paycheck or home just makes the situation worse."

The City of Rockford's Human Service Department offers a variety of programs to help low-income individuals and families. Many of these services have been expanded in response to the current economic crisis. Another important activity of the department is to create awareness of poverty in the Rockford area during occasions like National Community Action Month, commemorated in the month of May. "Poverty and financial insecurity have been present all along in millions of people's lives, but with the country facing the worst economic conditions in years, it seems everyone is worried about their financial futures and the economy is the foremost thought on their minds," said **Davis**.

The national office of the Community Action Partnership designates May as National Community Action Month to recognize the work of Community Action Agencies that are fighting poverty on the local level. Each year, Community Action Agencies help over 13 million Americans escape poverty and achieve financial stability through programs such

as Head Start, job training, financial planning, and housing. “In the spirit of City of Rockford’s Human Services Department and other CAAs across the country, the national office of the Community Action Partnership also maintains long-lasting collaborations that have significantly helped call attention to the plight of low-income Americans,” said Don Mathis, President and CEO of the Community Action Partnership. “And we have called on your Human Services Department and these CAAs to help us enhance these relationships by placing op-ed articles on poverty, testifying about local economic problems, and writing letters to their elected officials in support of critical programs and services. These local and national partnerships prove that working together we can really make a positive impact on the lives of others.”

Over the last year, our Community Action Agencies have seen many new faces needing assistance, people who’ve never had to ask for help before. And there has also been a significant increase in requests from the families we serve regularly. It’s been tough all around, but we are so fortunate to have Community Action Agencies like the City of Rockford’s Human Services Department ready to help people change their lives.

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