

d'i'a'l'o'g'u'e



Dane County Department of Human Services
Division of Economic Assistance and Work Services

October 2005
Volume XXX Number 2

The Empty Stocking Club

The Empty Stocking Club serves children year-round through the Wisconsin State Journal's Youth Services, Inc. In 2004, Youth Services distributed over \$50,000 to area organizations concerned with the welfare of children.

But the Empty Stocking Club's best-known project is the purchase and distribution of Christmas toys. The Empty Stocking Club has been giving away new toys to needy families for the holidays for 87 years. And for 87 years, the Wisconsin State Journal has been there to help.

Funds for the program are collected from readers of the Wisconsin State Journal and used to benefit the children of families in need. Last year, more than 8,000 children received gifts from the Empty Stocking Club.

Each year, the Empty Stocking Club receives applications from as many as 3000 families in need. If you need assistance in providing gifts for your children on Christmas morning, complete the application included with this newsletter and mail it to Empty Stocking Club, PO Box 8058, Madison, WI 53708, **NO LATER THAN MONDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2005.**

Applications will be verified for eligibility by the Dane County

Department of Human Services. If you apply, make sure you complete



Volunteers help sort some of the toys which were distributed to area kids in 2004.

the entire form and send it to the correct address, which is listed at the top of the application.

Eligible parents will have a toy voucher mailed on or before December 5, 2005. The voucher will specify the date to pick up one toy for each child 13 years of age and under. The Toy Depot will be held at the Alliant Energy Center. Toy distribution will take place on December 13 & 14, 2005.

For those of you wishing to contribute to the Empty Stocking Club, checks can be sent to the following address: Empty Stocking Club, PO Box 8058, Madison, WI 53708 or donations are accepted online at www.emptystockingclub.com

I need to talk to my worker, how can I get through?

By **Liz Green**, Economic Assistance and Work Services Manager

We hear this concern more often now than ever before. It can be difficult at times to reach your worker on the phone, or get through to the Change Reporting Center. We are committed to serving you as well and quickly as we can, but our caseloads continue to grow much larger making it even more difficult to get through. Here are some helpful hints about how to reach us:

Please continue to use the Change Reporting Center at **242-7500** to report:

- o Address changes
- o Changes in income or assets
- o People moving in or out of the household
- o Birth of a baby
- o Changes in expenses
- o Other changes in circumstances.

We understand there is sometimes a wait to be served, however our recently repaired equipment queues the calls for service in the order in which they are received.

See **Contact Us**, page 2

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Dialogue is published by the Dane County Department of Human Services (DCDHS).

Its purpose is to help foster economic self-sufficiency and family and community strength by informing families who use the services of the Economic Assistance and Work Services Division, community-based agencies, schools, and others interested in economic assistance and work services of changes in services, new programs, client successes and available resources.

For information on copy deadlines or circulation, contact: David Carlson, Editor, 242-6424

For information on mailing list and circulation contact:

Irma Smith, Circulation Coordinator, 242-6401

Dane County Department of Human Services is a publicly-funded agency that provides economic assistance and work services, services to older individuals and individuals with disabilities, child protective services, services to juveniles, and public health services.

The department is committed to promoting individual, family and community strength and provides equal access to services without regard to race, gender, age or handicapping condition.

If you would like a copy of this publication in large type or an alternate format, please contact Irma Smith, 242-6401.

Energy Help Available

Help is available to pay expected high energy bills this winter.

A federal program called Low Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP), provides fuel assistance grants and emergency fuel deliveries for low income individuals.

Services include: negotiation settlements with fuel companies; furnace replacement assistance; weatherization information and a clearing house for other available energy programs.

Applicants for energy assistance will need to provide:

- Social Security or Forward cards and proof of income for all household members for the previous three months.
- A copy of current heat and electric bills
- If heat is included in rent, a copy of your lease.

For more information contact: Energy Services for Dane County, located at 1225 S. Park Street in Madison, 267-8601.

Families who have income slightly above the LIHEAP guidelines should still complete an application for assistance. They may be eligible for help through a program called Keep Wisconsin Warm.

Christmas Help Available For Your Family
See inserts in this newsletter

Contacting Us

Continued from Page 1

You may submit changes to your worker in writing if you wish. You may do so in person at our offices, or via US Mail. Be sure to include as much detail as needed including your name and case number or social security number, and to firmly attach and label any verification. You may also wish to ask your worker about contacting then via e-mail if you have access to a computer.

2. If you call and leave us a message, please be sure to leave your name, phone number and times you can be reached, your case number or social security number, and what you are calling about, including all details. Once you have left a message, we generally try to respond to it within one workday. Please do not call back within that time because it will only delay the response time further.

3. Please do not call multiple workers or supervisors with the same concern. A message left for a worker will be responded to in the

order in which it arrives. Calling other staff will only further lengthen our response time.

4. If you have a computer, you may wish to begin using the **ACCESS System** to find out what is happening on your case. If you have questions like:

- o How many FoodShare benefits am I getting this month?
- o Is my child eligible for medical assistance?
- o What information does my worker need?

You can find that information by going to the Access web site at: <https://access.wisconsin.gov/access/> and creating your own account. Creating an account is an easy 5-step process all done on line. The only information needed is your name, birth date, social security number, case number or Wisconsin Forward Card number. E-mail address is optional.

6. Before coming to the office to report changes or ask questions of your worker, try calling first. It can save you a trip and get your questions answered quicker.

Dane County Human Services

Key Contact Numbers

CONNECTIONS PHONE LINE: 608 242-7441

The connections phone line is available at the Dane County Job Center through Dane County Human Services. Someone is available M-F from 8-4. Individuals within the community can call with questions regarding our programs, such as Medical Assistance, Child Care, Food Share and W2. Customers may call find out about eligibility requirements.

CHANGE REPORTING CENTER: 608 242-7500

The change reporting center is now available at the Dane County Job Center M-F from 8-4. When a customer has a change to report they should call the change reporting center instead of their worker. There are three workers answering the phones throughout the day to take changes, act on them and send out to the customer any necessary information or request for verification

that relates to the change reported. Changes that might be reported are address, household composition, birth of a baby and income ie: new employment or employment ending, etc.

REVIEW SCHEDULER: 608 242-7530

Dane County Human Services now has someone on staff who schedules most of the certification reviews for the workers. Customers can call this line directly to schedule review appointments. The line is available M-F from 9-4. This should cut down phone calls that the workers receive and also make it easier for customers to reach someone when it is time to schedule a review.

BENEFITS DESK: 608 242-7429

Homeless customers may call this number to see if they have mail or benefits to pick up at our office. The

phone is answered daily from 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm. The benefit desk is open for pick up from 12:30 to 5:00 pm, M-Th, and 12:30 to 4:30 pm on Fridays. Customers must have a picture ID in order to pick up mail or benefits.

ONLINE ACCESS: www.access.wisconsin.gov

Access is an internet program that is easy to use, for recipients to check their FoodShare benefit amounts, check to see who is eligible for medical assistance and to see what information their worker needs. Customers need to create an account to access the information.

Access can also be used for potential customers to determine if they may be eligible for Food Share, Medical Assistance, Family Planning Waiver, WIC, school meal programs and tax credits in WI.

Using Your Medicaid

By **Andy Heidt**, Dane County Human Services Ombudsman

There are a variety of ways to get help making sure you can get the health care services you and your family members need. Medicaid and Badger Care recipients have a right to medically necessary services. EDS has a new ombud who will assist people on regular MA with billing

issues and service questions. Charmaine Henderson, the fee for service ombud can be reached at 221-4746 ext. 3328. For transportation to medical appointments, if you are **not** in an HMO you can call Dane County's MA ride line at 242-4566.

For people in HMO's each HMO has an MA advocate

dedicated to helping HMO MA members access services. HMO's also will provide transportation to all medical related appointments if necessary. This is done through the HMO's customer service department. The specific telephone numbers are in the chart on page 4 of this newsletter.

See **MA Contacts**, page 4

MA Contacts

Continued from Page 3

Automated Health Systems AHS) has an Enrollment Specialist, Kellie Bennett. Kellie will be based in Dane County at the Job Center. Her telephone number is 242-7432. She can help MA customers with HMO enrollment and other service questions.

HMO NAME	Medicaid Advocate- Phone, fax and Customer Service	Mental Health & AODA Contact Numbers
Dean Health Plan	Babette Casey 827-4221; (f) 836-1210 Customer Service- 828-1301 or 1-800-279-1301	MH 252-8226; Tom Crabb and Joe Cousins 252-7722 AODA- Gateway Recovery 278-8200 Charlene Bedford/Margie Duncan
GHC of South Central WI	Narissia Harrison 257-9700 ext. 1188 Cindy Brunig ext. 1118 Customer Service- 251-3356	MH Intake 257-9700; John Strezlec/Richard Adelman AODA Gateway Recovery 278-8200 Charlene Bedford/Margie Duncan
Unity Health Plans	Carola Peterson-Gaines 821-4214 Pager 275-1738 (f)821-4207 Daphne Daniels 821-4212 Customer Service- 1-800-362-3310	MH/AODA- Services through Mental Health Center of Dane County; 280-2700; Jim Vandenbrandt- Children Bill Greer- Adults
EDS State Health Care-Ombudsman	Pam Rabe (800)760-0001 or 221-4746 ext. 3412 Jan Downing ext. 3411 Charmaine Henderson ext. 3328	Call for complaints, grievances and advocacy. Call Mary Lou Anderson @ ext. 3105 for assistance with exemption requests



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Madison, WI 53704

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Toy Depot Application

the **empty** stocking
club



Please mail application by **Monday, November 14, 2005** to:

The Empty Stocking Club
PO Box 8058
Madison, WI 53708
 Phone: 608.252.6103
 Fax: 608.252.6038

Sorry, but Dane County Department of Human Services cannot accept applications.

TOY VOUCHERS will be mailed out on or before **December 5, 2005**

TOY DEPOT will be held **December 13 & 14, 2005**

PRINT information **CLEARLY** and fill in all spaces. **INCOMPLETE** forms will not be processed.

MOTHER First Name (or Guardian):	Last Name:	Middle Initial:	Date of Birth:
FATHER First Name:	Last Name:	Middle Initial:	Date of Birth:
Mailing Address:	City:	Zip:	

Please list children **age 13 and under** (children born **BEFORE 1992** are ineligible)

Child's First Name	Last Name:	Male or Female	Date of Birth

I hereby give my permission for Dane County Department of Human Services to release information concerning any Wisconsin Works, MA or food stamp eligibility to the Empty Stocking Club.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Office Use: **DSS**

