

JFS reaching out to the community with Ohio Benefit Bank

In an effort to better serve their clients and to reach out to the community, Perry County Job & Family Services (Perry JFS) teamed up with the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks and AmeriCorps to host trained Ohio Benefit Bank counselor, Cassandra Argo.

Argo, a graduate of Crooksville High School, understands the needs within Perry County. "We live in an area of Ohio where businesses are closing, prices are rising, and people are struggling," says Argo, "but there is help out there."

Through the Benefit Bank, a web-based computer program used to connect low and moderate-income Ohioans to public benefits and tax preparation, Argo can help community members file FAFSA, register to vote, sign up for the Golden Buckeye card and Ohio's Best Rx, apply for HEAP, and file their taxes. "The best part, says Cassandra, "is that all of these services, including the tax preparation, are free to the community."

Aside from the partnership with the Benefit Bank, Perry JFS, under the leadership of new Director Cheryl Boley, is finding ways outside of their traditional service role to meet the needs of the community. One such example was



Cassandra Argo

the first annual County Wide Hunger Awareness food drive that Cassandra organized for Make A Difference Day. During the two weeks leading up to Make A Difference Day, Perry JFS collected 3,727 cans of food to be distributed to six of the area food pantries in Perry County.

With 13 year lows on food donations to the pantries and record high numbers of daily clients, Perry County's food pantries are representative of the needs of the community. Community members who are in need and would like help are encouraged to call Perry JFS Monday through Friday 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. at 740-342-3551 or to stop by their offices at 212 S Main St., New Lexington.

Anyone interested in tax preparation or other Benefit Bank assistance can call Cassandra directly at 740-342-3551 ext 684 to schedule an appointment.