

March/April 2010

Chittenden Community Action/CVOEO

Phone: 863-6248 TTY/TDD Fax: 859-3462/ web: [www.cvoeo.org](http://www.cvoeo.org)

# Community Action Newsletter *"It's In The Can"*

## **Gardening Scholarships**

If you are interested in growing your own vegetables this season, you have the option of purchasing a plot through the Burlington Area Community Gardens (BACG) program. It is administered through the City of Burlington's Parks and Recreation Department. There are many plots located throughout the Burlington area. If interested, please call the Burlington Parks and Recreation Department at 864-0123. We may also have applications available as well. Once you have the application, come to our office and assuming you are income eligible, we will stamp that application so that you can get a 50% off scholarship for your plot.

## **Crisis Fuel Assistance**

As the winter comes to a close, we want to take this time to remind you that the last day for Crisis Fuel Assistance, if you have bulk fuel is Friday April 9<sup>th</sup> and if you have metered fuel, it is Friday April 30<sup>th</sup>. There will be some financial assistance available through the WARMTH program until the funding runs out, which is usually some time in May.

We would like to take this time to thank everyone who remembered to bring in a copy of their disconnect notice and/or sought assistance with a bulk fuel delivery before they ran out of fuel. We would also like to thank those of you who remembered to bring in your proof of income this heating season. We are able to help you more quickly and save the program money when these steps are taken.

Thank you,  
Crisis Fuel Staff

## **Make Yourself Count!!! 2010 Census Questionnaire Assistance Center -**

There will be a census worker available here from 3/19 through 4/19 to help people who would like help filling out their census forms on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9a.m. – 3 p.m.

## **Holiday Closing**

We will be closed on Tuesday March 2<sup>nd</sup> in observance of Town Meeting Day.

**What is the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)?** The Earned Income Tax Credit or the EITC is a refundable federal income tax credit for low to moderate income working individuals and families. The amount of the credit is based on income, filing status and number of qualifying children, if any. A tax credit reduces the amount of tax you owe. The EITC may also give you a refund. The EITC has no effect on certain welfare benefits.

For tax year 2008, the number of Vermont net EITC recipients was 40,962 people. The average net EITC amount was \$1,631.10 per Vermonter, and the total net EITC amount throughout Vermont was \$66,812,970.00.

If a taxpayer is eligible for EITC on his/her federal tax return, do not forget about EITC on the state tax return as taxpayers are eligible for an additional 32% of the federal EITC amount on the state tax return.

To qualify, taxpayers must meet all of the following rules:

- Must **file a tax return**, even if they did not earn enough money to be obligated to file a tax return
- Must have a valid **social security** number.
- Must have **earned income** from employment or self-employment.
- Filing status cannot be **married filing separately**.
- Must be a **U.S. citizen** or resident alien all year, or a nonresident alien married to a U.S. citizen or resident alien and filing a joint return.
- **Cannot** be a **qualifying child** of another person.
- If no qualifying children, taxpayer must:
  - be age 25 but under 65 at the end of the year,
  - live in the United States for more than half the year, and
  - not qualify as a dependent of another person
- **Cannot file Form 2555 or 2555-EZ** (related to foreign earned income)
- Must **meet the EITC income thresholds** and limitations
- **Investment income** must be **\$3,100** or less for the year.

**Earned Income Threshold Requirement:**

Earned Income and adjusted gross income (AGI) must be at least \$1 and less than:

- \$43,279 (\$48,279 married filing jointly) with three or more qualifying children.
- \$40,295 (\$45,295 married filing jointly) with two qualifying children.
- \$35,463 (\$40,463 married filing jointly) with one qualifying child.
- \$13,440 (\$18,440 married filing jointly) with no qualifying children.

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Earned income includes all the taxable income and wages you get from working

- Wages, salaries, and tips;
- Union strike benefits;
- Long-term disability benefits received prior to minimum retirement age;
- Net earnings from self-employment.

Tax Year 2009 maximum credit amount:

- \$5,657 with three or more qualifying children
- \$5,028 with two qualifying children
- \$3,043 with one qualifying child
- \$457 with no qualifying children

If you need help with filing your taxes please call **2-1-1** to set up an appointment with one of our VITA tax sites. It is free. The returns are submitted electronically for your convenience. Our tax site is located at **279 North Winooski Avenue in Burlington on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.**

**Qualifying Child:** If the taxpayer is using a qualifying child to meet the threshold limits, the child must meet the relationship, age, and residency test:

**Relationship Test** – The taxpayer’s child must be his/her:

- Son, daughter, stepchild, eligible foster child, adopted child or a descendant (for example, your grandchild) of any of them, including adopted and foster children, or
- Brother, sister, half brother, half sister, stepbrother, stepsister, or a descendant of any of them (for example, your niece or nephew).

**Age Test** - The child must be:

1. Under age 19 at the end of the year and younger than the taxpayer or spouse if filing a joint return,
2. A full-time student under age 24 at the end of the year and younger than the taxpayer or spouse if filing a joint return, or
3. Permanently and totally disabled at any time during the year, regardless of age.

**Residency Test** - The child must have lived with the taxpayer in the United States for more than half of the year.

To find out more about the qualifications for EITC, call 1-800-829-1040 or visit the Internal Revenue Service website at: [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov). Additional state information is available at 1-866-828-2865 or on the Vermont State Tax Department website at: [www.state.vt.us/tax](http://www.state.vt.us/tax).

In addition, if you qualify for EITC, you may be eligible for 3SquaresVermont (formerly known as Food Stamps). To apply for 3SquaresVermont or for more information, contact the Department of Children and Families (DCF) at 1-800-479-6151 or go to: [www.vermontfoodhelp.com](http://www.vermontfoodhelp.com).

**Advanced Earned Income Tax Credit:** The taxpayer may prefer to get some of next year’s EITC throughout the year, rather than wait and get EITC after he/she files his/her tax return. To get EITC, complete Form W-5 and give the lower part of the form to the employer. Keep the top part for your records. The **maximum Advance EITC** workers can receive from their employers is \$1,826.

Source: [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)

## **Ham and Potatoes Au Gratin** (source: allrecipes.com)

### **Ingredients:**

**2 cups potatoes, peeled and cubed**

**1 cup diced cooked ham**

**1 Tablespoon minced onion**

**1/3 cup butter or margarine**

**3 Tablespoons all-purpose flour**

**1½ cups milk**

**1 cup shredded cheddar cheese**

**¾ teaspoon salt**

**1 dash white pepper**

**Chopped fresh parsley**

### **Directions:**

1. Combine potatoes, ham and onion in a greased 1 quart casserole: set aside. In a saucepan, melt butter over medium heat; stir in flour until smooth. Gradually add milk, stirring constantly until mixture thickens and bubbles. Add cheese, salt and pepper; stir until the cheese melts. Pour over potato mixture and stir gently to mix. Bake at 350 degrees for 35-40 minutes or until bubbly. Garnish with parsley.

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Chittenden Community Action  
Is proud to be a United Way Agency.