



FACA Newsletter

Message from Executive Director Faith Pullen

Greetings Members, Partners, and Friends,

Welcome to the first FACA newsletter of the year. I'm so excited to share with you in this space news and events happening within the organization and in our partner networks. As we begin the new year, I would like to thank our members, partners, and supporters for making 2018 one of the best for FACA. The past year brought us increased interest and participation at our annual training conference as well as other events. I look forward to a productive 2019 as we strive together to give hope, improve communities, and change lives.



Register now for the 39th Annual Training Conference

If you enjoyed last year's conference, get ready for a repeat at this year's gathering! It's time to register for the 39th Annual Training Conference, May 14-17. This year's conference theme is "FACA...Inspiring Hope through Excellence in Action!"

The Florida Association for Community Action welcomes the Florida Community Action Network, the Florida Weatherization Network, and all affiliates to come together in the beautiful city of Tampa at the Grand Hyatt Tampa Bay for three days of education sessions, informative plenaries, and networking opportunities.

We're aiming to crush last year's record attendance, so please register today and spread the word!

To register, visit <http://www.cvent.com/d/r6q91k>



Book Your Hotel Today

Set on 35 acres of waterfront property, the Grand Hyatt Tampa Bay makes for a stunning setting for this year's conference. Just minutes from Tampa International Airport, shopping, and Tampa's booming downtown, the Grand Hyatt offers spacious rooms, fine dining, and free parking.

The room rate at the Grand Hyatt Tampa Bay is \$159 per night.

To reserve a room, contact the hotel at www.hyatt.com or call at (813) 874-1234.

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Reminder to submit applications for funds for financial literacy programs



**Working
for
You**

The Florida Community Action Network recently received \$661,250 from the Florida Attorney General. Both private and public agencies are invited to apply for monies available from this pool for financial literacy/assistance programs.

These funds are a part of a settlement agreement entered into by Western Union as a result of wire transfer practices. The money, which will be administrated by FACA, will be used by the state Community Action Agencies to provide financial literacy/activities for its clients.

Applications with plans for agency financial literacy/assistance programs to be supported with the funds are **due by Feb. 15** for private agencies and **March 15** for public agencies.



“One who gains strength by overcoming obstacles possesses the only strength which can overcome adversity.” – Albert Schweitzer

The above quote perfectly describes our Building Strong Families client Jasmine. She

Agency Spotlight

The Building Strong Families Program – along with other social services – stepped in and offered Jasmine utility assistance, rental assistance, and helped her along with the process of obtaining Supplemental Security Income for her sick child. She also began to receive steady child support checks from the Department of Children and Families.

Over the course of two and a half years, Jasmine received rental assistance, utility assistance, and Christmas presents for her daughters from the Building Strong Families Program. This allowed her to save some of her money for a larger living

came to us in June 2015 seeking rental assistance. Jasmine had poor credit and no family help. At the time, the single mother was bouncing from hotel to hotel her five daughters ages 12, 10, 7, and a pair of two-month-old preemie twins, one of whom was developing liver problems. Her weekly rent was about \$225, hard to pay on a cashier's meager salary, especially with no child support. Her job was in Orlando, which she drove to five days a week in a car that had seen better days. Jasmine was in crisis.

The first step was to stabilize her living arrangement. The Building Strong Families Program quickly found her a two-bedroom apartment in Kissimmee with a landlord sympathetic to her issues. The program paid for her deposits and moved Jasmine and her family into their new home. But soon came a downturn: the health of her two-month-old baby with liver problems worsened, and eventually she needed a transplant.

Jasmine took a leave of absence from her job under the Federal Medical Leave Act to take care of her daughter. This required her to drive between Kissimmee and Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami, an eight-hour round trip in her unreliable car. The vehicle eventually broke down and could not be repaired. The baby's paternal grandmother stepped in to help with driving to Miami after the child received her transplant.

Things were looking up until Jasmine's leave of absence expired. She had to return to work, but her now four-month-old baby needed constant medical and parental care. After missing too many shifts, Jasmine was fired from her job. Without a job and a car, Jasmine now was in danger of losing her apartment because she could not pay the rent.

space, which was needed as her family was outgrowing its small apartment. When Jasmine was denied assistance from HUD's Section Eight program, she did not let that deter her from achieving a better home for her and her daughters. She also was not deterred when a newer car that replaced the old vehicle was destroyed in an accident. She persevered, and so did the Building Strong Families Program. In April 2018, Jasmine qualified for and was placed on the list for a home provided by HUD's Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP). She did not wait long. In June, Jasmine was awarded a newly-built four-bedroom townhouse in which she and her family moved into on July 1. Her patience and perseverance paid off. She now has a home large enough to accommodate her growing daughters' need for space.

The future for Jasmine and her daughters looks brighter now than it did three years ago when she was bouncing around from hotel to hotel. The Osceola Council on Aging's Building Strong Families Program helped stabilize her living arrangements by first getting them into an apartment and providing rental and utility assistance and then moving them into a more permanent situation by placing Jasmine and her daughters into a NSP home.

Now Jasmine can begin the process of improving her self-sufficiency abilities through job training and education opportunities, both of which are services provided by the Building Strong Families Program. Through all of the obstacles she faced over the years, Jasmine gained the perseverance to ensure a better quality of life for her and her daughters and the strength to overcome any adversity.