The Heart of a Community: Coalfield Community Action Partnership

If you ask the staff of Coalfield Community Action Partnership, they would point to Tim Salmons, Executive Director, as the glue that helps to make its many programs work. If you ask Tim, he would definitely point to the staff and volunteers that really keep things ticking. In either case, Coalfield CAP truly serves its community. Having joined organization in 2000, becoming the executive director in 2007, Tim will also tell you "You don't do this alone. We work continually to find ways to make all the programs work. We do it together."

When you look at each of the nine programs offered by Coalfield CAP, they reflect their motto, "Helping people, Improving communities, Changing lives." The programs include Head Start, Senior Programs, Weatherization, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance, Community Services Block Grant, Energy Express-Summer Food Service, Emergency Food and Shelter Program, Emergency Solutions Grants, and Services for Veteran's Families. With each program, they touch many individuals and families. It's hard to imagine a place they don't have reach. This is particularly true of the Senior Program.

As a result of the reorganization of another nearby service program in need of help to continue to assist seniors in the community, Coalfield and its team took over the meal and center operation of the Stepptown Senior Center. "There was never a thought to not assuming the responsibility of another center," said Director Tim Salmons. "We could not imagine not assisting in providing meals for both seniors who visited the center and those who received home delivered meals."

Since July of 2016, just the addition of the Stepptown center meant that Coalfield CAP would provide an additional 2,429 meals at the center and

1,129 home delivered meals. They also took on additional hours requested for transportation assistance, Lighthouse and FAIR services as well as incorporating four additional staff members. While there was some adjusting to do, everyone pitched in to ensure that seniors would not experience any interruption to their daily service or needs. Dalena Jewell, director of the Senior Program at Coalfield CAP, loves her work. “Working with seniors is a great passion for me and very much my life’s calling,” said Dalena. “I am always thinking of ways to improve our services for them. This is where I belong.”

To give you a snapshot of life at the center, Ruby Clark, 85 years young, has been a member since the doors originally opened on October 29, 1994. She is just one of the many stories members share about center life. They appreciate having a place to meet their friends for a visit and some laughter. Some have rekindled old friendships from their early school days. Wii exercise – Zumba, corn-hole toss and other movement and exercise classes are offered. Of course, even social games of Checkers, Dominoes and Bingo bring out the fun competition in everyone. The members represent a wide range of life experience backgrounds including teachers, coal miners, veterans, steel workers, and housewives. They all have different levels of ability but none of it stops them from enjoying life at the center. In fact, members often refer to Stepptown as “My Center Family.”

The moto of the Stepptown Senior Center is “Wherever you are, it’s your friends who make your world.” Staff made it their mission to make life enjoyable every day for seniors, while growing older with each other. While providing nutritious hot meals, transportation, and companionship is a primary focus, the center also knows that engaging in healthy activities, timely information and plain old fun are also part of a well lived life.

The WV Bureau of Senior Services applauds Tim Salmons, Dalena Jewell, and all CAP staff members for the pride they take in their work with seniors and their commitment to the many lives that make a community feel like family. From the Head Start program to their focus on seniors, Coalfield

Community Action Partnership is at the heart of their community. To learn more go checkout https://www.coalfieldcap.org/