



# Ozarks Area Community Action Corporation

*Carl Rosenkranz, Executive Director*

## **OACAC History and Accomplishments**

In November, 1965, the Ozarks Area Community Action Corporation was organized as a not-for-profit agency to work toward alleviating the causes and conditions of poverty in the Ozarks. At that time OACAC sponsored Head Start, Manpower/Work Experience Programs, Neighborhood Youth Corps and Adult Basic Education. Today, funds are allocated through the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG).

OACAC reached out into the community in 1969 when Neighborhood Community Centers were organized. The purpose of establishing a center in each of the counties was to better facilitate the OACAC mandate of organizing and focusing all available resources and community facilities on the causes and results of poverty. Neighborhood/Community Centers seek to meet the special needs of each county as well as provide outreach and referral services for the low income population.

New programs came under OACAC's sponsorship, meeting the varying needs found among the low income in Southwest Missouri. In 1972, the Foster Grandparent Program began, serving elderly citizens and handicapped children throughout the area. Weatherization began in 1974, completing only 65 homes in that year. Family Planning started in 1979 and now operates 11 clinics, and provides information and supplies in 12 counties in southwest Missouri.

Community Food and Nutrition programs were started in 1975, serving a variety of needs from nutrition education to growing and marketing. Other programs included Homebound Shoppers, Housing Assistance, Commodity Food Distribution and Home Health Care. In 1977, OACAC began sponsorship of the Energy Crisis Intervention Program (ECIP). This program provides utility assistance, fans and air conditioners for needy families and the elderly.

Throughout the years, as needs and conditions changed, some OACAC programs were completed or spun off to be supported by the community or to receive other funding. A few notable examples include the Adult Basic Education Program which was completely assumed by the State, the Homebound Shoppers Program which is now a program staffed by volunteers, and the highly successful Home Health care program which was formally transferred to St. John's Regional Health Center in 1982.

The agency has grown from a budget of \$2 million in 1965 to a budget of \$35 million in 2010. OACAC continues to research needs of the low income population in the ten county area and operates programs to meet those needs. OACAC serves Barry, Christian, Dade, Dallas, Greene, Lawrence, Polk, Stone, Taney and Webster Counties. The mission today is to enrich the lives of families and individuals within our communities by providing opportunities, offering assistance, and empowering people to make positive change. OACAC offers seven programs: Family Planning, Foster Grandparents, Head Start, Housing Assistance, Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Neighborhood Centers and Weatherization.