

TCAPtivating News

Nelson adds CEO to list of titles

By **Mike Santillo**
Public Relations Officer

The year was 1981. Van Nelson, a 22-year-old college dropout was in the middle of a long term layoff at his fiberglass factory job in Defiance, Ohio.

He wanted a change.

Responding to a job ad in his hometown of Warren, Ohio, Nelson walked into the office of James W. Abicht with no expectations.

He walked out with a part-time job as an intake worker. "It was fine for the time. I thought I'd be at TCAP for six months and leave," Nelson said.

That didn't happen.

Instead, he worked his way up the ranks and is now the CEO of the agency.

Fittingly, it was Abicht, who retired as president of TCAP in December of 2016, handing over the reins to Nelson.

"I left the agency in good shape and in very capable hands. I know how much he (Nelson) loves TCAP and how loyal he is to the mission of the agency. I fully expect TCAP to be innovative and a major force in Trumbull County," Abicht said back in January.

Nelson officially took over on January 1, 2017 after serving as interim CEO for three months. Prior to that, he was vice-president for 10 years.

Nelson's role in the agency has always demanded he be in the public eye—and he has not disappointed. His success and popularity in Trumbull County is widely recognized. Since taking over as CEO, Nelson accepted an invitation to serve on the Board of Directors for the Trumbull County United Way. His term began in June.

Nelson is also treasurer of the local Warren-Trumbull NAACP, a position he has held for the past 15 years. The there's his music.

Nelson serves as the music director with Vocal Quintet "For Grace," the director of the TCIMA 60-Voice Interdenominational Community Choir (19 years) and leads three choirs at the East Side Church of Christ (his home church).

As for his personal life—it's just as full as his professional life.



Van Nelson took over as CEO of TCAP on January 1, 2017, after serving as vice-president for 10 years.

Husband. Father. Grandfather—all titles Nelson so proudly carries.

So how does he balance his time?

"I've been able to do so because of an understanding and supportive wife. She lets me have my space; she doesn't want to do all the running. She tried and it didn't agree with her," said a laughing Nelson.

Now six months into the job and in the full swing of running an organization, Nelson knows he is expected to make critical decisions on a daily basis.

"The impact of my decisions holds a tremendous amount of weight. Everything I say, do, approve, disapprove, makes a big difference," said Nelson who explained that the significant impact of his daily routine has been the biggest surprise thus far.

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TCAP expanding Head Start program



Trumbull Community Action Program (TCAP) is expanding its award-winning Head Start Program.

The agency is opening a new location at Wildare United Methodist Church (7211 North Park Ave., Cortland, Ohio 44410).

The new Head Start Center, Trumbull Northwest Head Start, will be open for the upcoming 2017-18 school year. The classroom at Trumbull Northwest will be an all-day classroom.

All-day classes run from 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., Monday-Friday. The new addition gives TCAP a total of seven Head Start Centers across Trumbull County. Locations

include: Warren West, Niles, Hubbard, Newton Falls, Hartford, Kinsman and now Trumbull Northwest. In addition to the all-day classroom at Trumbull Northwest, Warren West will feature four all-day classrooms, while Niles will have two and Newton Falls will have one.

Enrollment is now open for the 2017-18 school year. Classes begin on August 23. Registration can be completed at TCAP, 1230 Palmyra Road, Warren, OH 44485 or online at <http://tcaphelps.org/menu/head-start.html>.

For further information contact the registration office at 330-393-2507 ext. 222 or 271.

Community Reading Day celebrates Head Start

Trumbull Community Action Program (TCAP) celebrated Head Start's 52nd birthday with a Community Reading Day on May 18 to raise awareness of the impact and importance of Head Start.

Festivities ran throughout the day at all six TCAP Head Start Centers simultaneously as part of a national celebration.

The National Head Start Association partnered with Scholastic Books to organize community reading days across the country.

"Head Start partnered with Scholastic Books to help celebrate Head Start's 52nd birthday. They donated 50 books to our program. Literacy is the foundation of learning for preschool children. As we teach our children literacy skills they are also learning in many other domains," said TCAP Head Start Director Janet Diegan.

Volunteer readers for the day included: Trumbull County Commissioners Frank Fuda, and Mauro Cantalamessa; City of Warren Mayor Doug Franklin; City of Hubbard Mayor John Darko; Assistant to the Mayor (Hubbard) Marianne Hallapy; Brookfield Schools Superintendent, Velina Jo Taylor; Brookfield Schools Special Education Supervisor, Stacey Filicky; Fiscal Officer for Kinsman Township, Marge Crupi; Olivia Jones

(Librarian, McKinley Memorial Library); Lori Faust (Warren Public Library); Audrey Hogan (Warren Public Library); Nicole Bowden (Children's Librarian, Brookfield Branch of the Warren Public Library); Chrissy Braun (Youth Services Librarian, Newton Falls Library); Dianne Piper, (Children's Librarian, Kinsman Public Library); and several TCAP staff. The TCAP Head Start Program serves over 600 students annually. Beginning in August of 2017, TCAP will operate a seventh location at Wildare United Methodist Church (7211 North Park Ave., Cortland, Ohio 44410) giving the agency a total of seven Head Start Centers.



On May 18, 2017, Trumbull Community Action Program (TCAP) celebrated Head Start's 52nd birthday with a Community Reading Day at all six of its Head Start Centers. Above, Trumbull County Commissioner Frank Fuda reads to students at the TCAP Niles Head Start Center.

Summer Crisis Program will run through August

Trumbull Community Action Program (TCAP) will be operating its Summer Crisis Program (SCP) through August 31, 2017.

Eligible households may qualify for one or a combination of the following: an air conditioner and/or fans (if no air conditioner or fan was received from TCAP in 2014, 2015, or 2016); a one-time payment up to a total maximum benefit of \$300 towards the electric bill from a regulated utility company or up to a total maximum benefit of \$500 if the utility company is non-regulated. Total household income must be at or below 175% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines and is based on gross income over the past three months or the past twelve months.

Income eligible households must also meet one of the following criteria:

- A household member aged 60 and over
- A household member under the age of 60 with a medical condition that requires air conditioning as verified by a physician
- Households served by regulated or unregulated utilities with or without a disconnection notice on the electric bill may receive assistance. PIPP PLUS customers are not eligible for a monetary bill payment

For all appointments clients must provide:

- Social Security cards and/or birth certificates for all household members
- Medical documentation from physician (TCAP can provide forms for completion)
- Landlord agreement for air conditioning (TCAP can provide form for completion)
- Copy of most recent gas or heating bill and electric bill
- Total household income for past 13 weeks or 3 months (gross earnings)

Appointments are available at TCAP Tuesday through

Annual Income Guidelines

| | |
|---|----------|
| 1 | \$21,150 |
| 2 | \$28,420 |
| 3 | \$35,735 |
| 4 | \$43,050 |
| 5 | \$50,365 |
| 6 | \$57,680 |
| 7 | \$64,995 |
| 8 | \$72,310 |
| For households with more than eight members, add \$7,315 to the yearly income | |

Friday. Call 1-866-747-1041 to schedule an appointment. Callers must wait to receive a confirmation number to secure an appointment.

On Mondays only at TCAP, walk-in applicants will be seen on a first-come, first-served basis for those that are 60 and over.

A minimum of 25 applicants will be seen from 7-11

a.m.; a minimum of 25 additional

applicants will be seen from 1 – 3:30 p.m.

Three convenient weekly satellite sites are available to anyone who cannot apply at TCAP in Warren.

You must contact the following to schedule an appointment:

Monday:

Newton Falls United Methodist Church
(330) 393-2507 ext. 232

Tuesday:

Niles Community Services - (330) 393-2507 ext. 227

Wednesday:

City of Hubbard Municipal Building
(330) 393-2507 ext. 229.

For all other questions call TCAP at 330-393-2507 ext. 225.



SCP featured on WFMJ Community Connection

On Sunday, July 9, the TCAP Summer Crisis Program (SCP) will be featured on the WFMJ Community Connection broadcast. TCAP Client Services Director, Sarah Edmonds, left, spoke on behalf of the agency. The broadcast will air at 6:30 a.m. on WFMJ-TV channel 21 and 11 a.m. on the CW channel. Joan Trgovac, the energy services coordinator at MYCAP, joined Edmonds on the broadcast.

Senior computer class all about the students

By Mike Santillo

TCAP Public Relations Officer

Erin Baker took over the weekly Senior Computer class at TCAP with no teaching experience.

When she entered the computer lab on the first day of class, an overwhelming feeling came over her.

When reflecting back on that day now, she can't help but to smile.

"I never taught before. I was looking forward to it. I had no idea what I was walking into," Baker said. "Now to see the growth and the impact this class has had not only on me, but more importantly, the individuals, it's a rewarding feeling," Baker said.

She continued, "Senior Computer class is not about what I want to teach. Class lessons are designed on student suggestion. By using their suggestions, I am able to use teaching techniques based on the subject matter to accomplish class goals."

Under her direction, the class size tripled in just one year.

She's developed a particular teaching style that is able to reach everyone.

Denise Spencer, a regular attendee, had her doubts initially. Now, she's seen tremendous results and is quick to credit Baker for her success.

"She (Baker) is very patient and that's important. We are all here to learn. She answers questions thoroughly and that makes a difference. I was a little skeptical at first, but now, I love it," Spencer said.

Pat Harris, who was in class that first day, echoed Spencer's thoughts.

"I would encourage anyone who wants to learn about



TCAP Senior Computer Class instructor, Erin Baker, right, assists a student during a recent lesson.

computers to attend this class. We don't just play computer games here. We do have fun, but we do it while learning. To have someone on site to help you right on the spot is a great asset. Any questions or issues are addressed right there," Harris said.

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GED program

accepting new students

Enrollment for new students into the TCAP RISE Aspire/GED Program is now open. Prospective students pay nothing for instruction. The Program is open to anyone living in Trumbull County. Classes run from 9 a.m.—noon, Tuesday through Thursday. Fall classes are scheduled to begin tentatively on August 29. Call and leave a message for RISE/Aspire Coordinator Kathy Hutton at 330-393-2507 ext. 240.

Enroll today for Head Start

Enrollment for the 2017-18 school year is open for all seven locations of TCAP's award-winning Head Start Program! Classes begin on August 23.

Registration can be completed at TCAP, 1230 Palmyra Road, Warren, OH 44485 or online at <http://tcaphelps.org/menus/head-start.html>.

For further information contact the registration office at 330-393-2507 ext. 222 or 271.

Employability lab offered at TCAP

Trumbull Community Action Program (TCAP) and Trumbull Career and Technical Center (TCTC) have a long, successful record of collaboration, most notably, the RISE/ABLE GED Program.

Now, the two have teamed up again, this time to help individuals in the community prepare for and gain employment.

An employability lab is available at TCAP, open to anyone in need of employment skills or assistance in pursuing a career. Completion of a one-day orientation is required prior to being eligible to attend the lab. Once completed, individuals will receive a paper indicating a start date.

“Our ultimate mission is to help people prepare for and get into a wage sustaining career versus a job,” said TCTC ABLE Director, Beth Trace.



The lab consists of four stations, covering all aspects of the job-searching process one would need. Stations include: Working hand-in-hand with and access to Ohio Means Jobs profiles; a career assessment area; a resume and cover letter building station; and an interview table, where job seekers

will conduct mock interviews with TCTC ABLE instructors in the lab.

“We want to create a productive career environment” Trace said.

The lab will be open from 9 a.m. – noon, Tuesday through Thursday, beginning August 29.

Orientation locations are in numerous areas throughout Trumbull County.

Anyone wishing to learn more or set-up an orientation date can contact TCTC 330-847-0503 ext. 1611 to begin the process.



Cynthia Walker, housing and financial literacy counselor at Empowering and Strengthening Ohio's People (ESOP) conducts Senior Financial Education Workshops every Thursday from 10-11:30 a.m. in the TCAP Senior Center.

Senior financial education workshops are underway

Senior financial education workshops are now available at Trumbull Community Action Program (TCAP).

TCAP has partnered with Empowering and Strengthening Ohio's People (ESOP) to present the workshops.

Cynthia Walker, housing and financial literacy counselor at ESOP conducts the workshops every Thursday from 10-11:30 a.m. in the TCAP Senior Center.

There is no cost to attend the workshops and all the material is provided. The workshops are open to everyone, not just senior citizens.

Topics for the month of June included: Financial Planning, Budgeting and Goal Setting, Understanding Credit and Debt, and Building Savings and Protecting Assets.

Classes will run through July 24. For further information, contact Walker at 330-469-5426 or the TCAP Senior Services Department at 330-393-2507 ext. 251.

Confidence, friendliness define Rossi

By Mike Santillo

TCAP Public Relations Officer

Teresa Rossi started at TCAP 39 years ago, fresh out of high school. Throughout her tenure she has earned multiple promotions, making an impact in each role.

But she's not one to brag.

Instead, she quietly sits back with her friendly smile and goes about her business.

Now, she has the opportunity to make arguably her biggest impact to date.

Her latest promotion of overseeing the Food Buying Club at TCAP certainly comes with its challenges.

But she's ready to do what she's always done—succeed.

"It was a little scary at first knowing I would be the one taking over. However, I have full confidence in myself that you need that to be successful," said Rossi, who officially took over on January 1, 2017.

"Joan (Galloway) and Wanda (Nelson) essentially trained me for this position over the years. The two of them have been instrumental in helping me not only prepare, but allowing me the confidence to do this job and do it effectively," Rossi said.

Galloway and Nelson both retired in December of 2016.

Galloway was vice-president of Transportation and Clerical while Nelson ran the day-to-day operations of the Food Co-op and Food Buying Club, respectively.

Rossi is now charged with coming up with new and innovative ways to help the programs thrive.

She is responsible for taking orders and knowing the amount of bags she will have for each Buying Club day (twice a month). Each day has a theme, dictating what items will go in each bag. After doing price comparisons and deciding what items will go in each bag, Rossi will often need to pick up the items herself—and that's just fine with her.

She may have a new leadership position, but Rossi hasn't forgotten how she got to this point and continues to assist where needed.

She fills in at the receptionist desk, produces work orders for staff and assists with the monthly Senior Luncheon. This, in addition to producing a monthly billing report for the CATS Transportation Department and her daily responsibilities in the clerical department that she had prior to the promotion.

"I've always been eager to help out in any way I can and just because I now oversee a department doesn't mean I'm above helping out when needed. For this agency to be successful we all need to work together, and I'm just a small piece of the puzzle," she said.



Teresa Rossi oversees the Food Buying Club at TCAP.

Overcoming Adversity

In 1985, Rossi left the agency to care for her two boys, and did so for six years with no regrets.

However, in 1991, her husband unexpectedly lost his job three days before the family was scheduled to move into its new home. With two young boys and a new mortgage, Rossi knew she had to go back to work.

"It was a very difficult time. I always loved working at TCAP. It's not that I wanted to ever leave, but I needed to take care of my family. Ironically, I had that same mindset by coming back," said Rossi who was not guaranteed anything when she originally left.

"I approached Mr. (James) Abicht and explained my situation, not knowing how he would react. Fortunately, he was very understanding and gave me my job back on the spot; I am forever grateful to him for that," Rossi said.

Rossi continued on page 7

Nelson continued from page 1

With so much responsibility, Nelson expressed his gratitude for the TCAP staff.

“Our seasoned staff makes my job so much easier. Everybody knows what to do, when to do it and how to do it. I trust them every day to continue doing what they know how to do and do it well with compassion and with care. That is truly a blessing,” said Nelson, who also highlighted the TCAP Board of Directors as a central piece of the agency’s overall success.

Those who know him well would say it’s no surprise Abicht saw something in him that day in 1981.

After all, the well-spoken Nelson even charmed a United States President.

“I saw President (Jimmy) Carter as I was getting off an airplane and couldn’t believe it. No one else approached him, but I had to speak to him. I introduced myself and asked him for a picture. I was incredibly nervous, but Mr. Carter was gracious enough to accept,” Nelson said. “It’s one of the fondest memories I have.”

But as he reflects back, Nelson can’t help but be reminded of that young man interviewing for a job, searching for a change in life. Unbeknownst to him, he was preparing to embark on a rewarding career centered around bringing change to the lives of others.

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She returned to the clerical department in a part-time role, needing to work her way back up — and that’s exactly what she did. Rossi continued to grow with the agency over the years, working in several locations over numerous departments including HEAP, CATS and Head Start before circling back around to the clerical department.

“I answered phones, sent reports to the gas and electrical companies for HEAP; I scheduled rides for CATS; and was the main point of contact at the Head Start Cafaro office. So, yes, I did a little bit of everything,” Rossi said.

And she did it with a smile.

It’s that attitude that has connected with people both internally and externally.

“I’ve always been on the quiet side, but at the same time, I’ve also been a positive person. People would (and still do) say to me, ‘How can you be so happy early in the morning,’ ” said a laughing Rossi.

“I remember when a client was so happy just by speaking with me over the phone. Apparently, she was having a rough day and I made her feel better, brightened her day. Those type of things stick with you. I’m proud to make an impact in people lives. That’s what TCAP is about, so if I can do that in any way, I’m excited.”

Fun Fact

When’s she not making a difference in the lives of others, Rossi can be found gardening.

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Class scheduling is broken down into two-month lesson plans. According to Baker, this is by design and has worked nicely.

For example, 2016 focused on the basics of using a computer and creating projects of their own design. Microsoft Publisher was featured in multiple classes to make creative designs like flyers and greeting cards. As the year progressed, more “now” topics were covered.

Topics included a Scratch demo (free computer animation program developed by MIT), along with crafting sites like Pinterest, music streaming services, and using Google and its tools.

But the class offers more than just a hands-on-approach. This past fall, Baker set up a Skype meeting (video chat) with a Wikipedia specialist who walked the class through using Wikipedia as a learning tool. This set the tone for other basic user-friendly hardware demonstrations to be covered throughout the course. Baker noted the strategic scheduling process that makes it feasible to implement such unique learning tools into the class.

“Sure, there are challenges, but that’s what’s so great about this class. I think a lot of the reason the class has grown is because I take the time to really break the lesson down. At the same time, I don’t talk down to anyone and they truly appreciate that,” she said.

“It’s important to be able to see technology and people in real time, as opposed to just sitting in front of a computer screen. The fact that TCAP can now provide the opportunity to see people in real time and communicate is significant.”

And like her students, Baker has also enhanced her skills.

She recently earned her Certified Microsoft Innovative Educator Certificate from Microsoft, which allows her the ability to access different learning and teaching tools like to request guest speakers from all over the world via Skype.

Once a month, a free day or discussion day is available where students can work on individual projects. Baker defines discussion topics as popular computer topics that can be explained further so students can gain a better understanding.

During discussion days, the class also recognizes students’ birthdays.

“It’s just as important to celebrate the students as individuals. This is part of the learning connection. I had a student recently tell me the party we had was the first time in 20 years someone threw them a party. This really is a tight-knit group and we’re hoping to expand on it in 2017,” Baker said.

The class runs from 10-11 a.m. every Thursday at the Warren West Community Center. Classes will resume tentatively in August. There is no fee to attend and walk-ins are welcome. Contact Baker at 330-393-2507 ext. 270 if interested in attending.