

Weatherization Works... in Texas!

by Elizabeth Hedstrom

Of the thousands of families served by the WAP network within the past few months, here is just a sample of the type of success being achieved by the local agencies working on behalf of Texas' Department of Housing and Community Affairs:

Programs for Human Services (located in Orange, Texas) weatherized Cherie' W's mobile home. Cherie's energy bills for her family have decreased by an average of \$450.00 per month. In a note, Cherie' stated, "Due to the money I have saved, I'm able to provide better for my family. Thank you so much for working with me in weatherizing my home. The service you provided couldn't be better." Connie Gray, Weatherization Coordinator for PHS relayed, "This mobile home received full weatherization services and we are very proud of the energy savings our efforts created for this family. Weatherization does work!"

Rosie Garcia, Weatherization Coordinator for Big Bend Community Action Committee, reported the three following stories. As a side note, the Big Bend CAC service area is comprised of 8 counties that encompass 28,557 square miles.

Big Bend CAC weatherized the home of an elderly disabled man in a wheelchair. The assessment of the unit revealed that the gas range and central heater produced dangerous levels of carbon monoxide. The unit's duct system was improved and the cooling system was restructured in order to cool the inside of the mobile home instead of the underside of the home. Big Bend CAC replaced the client's twenty-year-old refrigerator using funds from the System Benefit Fund. The client has experienced an overall reduction of energy consumption resulting in lower utility bills.

Big Bend CAC weatherized the home of a young family of six with children ranging in age of six weeks to five years old. Using a combination of WAP funds, System Benefit Funds, and local agency funds, the household received replacement floor panels, windows, heater, refrigerator, and doors. This family is now energy self-sufficient.

Big Bend CAC weatherized the home of a single mother, installing R-30 insulation where none existed previously. Using health and safety funds, Big Bend CAC also replaced the gas range in the home as a response to the stovetop burners producing harmful carbon monoxide readings in excess of 100 parts per million. The client felt the difference in the comfort level immediately and now uses her heaters less in the winter.

Lisa Weist of the Community Action Committee in Victoria, Texas reported the following story:

The client is a 58-year-old woman who lives alone in a mobile home. The combined electric costs for cooling based on her billing history was \$830.12 and a combined cost for gas usage of \$206.50. The initial blower door assessment indicated minimal air infiltration through the doors and windows. The back door was in poor condition and would not close correctly. With a relatively low blower door reading and such high bills, the staff decided to investigate the duct system and the central air conditioning as the culprit of the high electric bills. This unit received moderate duct repair and service measures for the central air. The final blower door reading was much improved. The client noticed that her air conditioner was not working "around the clock"

and would actually cut off. She also was very excited that she could feel the air coming through the vents and that her electric bill was noticeably lower. The only individuals not happy with the services provided by CACVT were the neighborhood animals that had previously congregated under the clients' mobile home to stay cool during the summer.

To bring partners across Texas into the outreach network, WAP Staff in the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs created a flier for potential clients, written in both English and Spanish, listing the requirements and contact information for LIHEAP and WAP within the State of Texas. They shared it with partner agencies, nonprofits, and legislators across the state – leaving room for these partners to brand the flier with their own contact information. Congratulations on a truly innovative way to build the network!

Thanks to Eddie Fariss, Peggy Colvin, and Joe Guerrero for these insights into the great work being done in Texas! If you would like to share stories of families helped by the WAP in your state, please email Elizabeth Hedstrom at hedstrom@sso.org.