

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



Schoharie County
Community Action Program, Inc.

Building stronger, healthier communities and empowering families that experience economic and social challenges through strategic partnerships, education, services, and compassion.

2020—a year like no other is how it can be best described! When mid-March hit, the phrase ‘business as usual’ was no longer applicable. Communities and economies were turned upside down and the push was on to see how much needed services could continue to be delivered in a new work environment. Through diligence and dedication, SCCAP’s staff made the necessary adjustments and the families of Schoharie County continued to be served. THANK YOU—to the staff who made sure our families remained a priority in such uncertain times.

Jeannette Spaulding, Executive Director

Overview of SCCAP’s annual impact during 2020

\$58,882	Reimbursed to day cares so they could provide nutritious, balanced meals
\$30,425	Energy cost savings was facilitated through home energy reduction measures
961	Employment training services were provided
663	Individuals and families participated in supervised or monitored visitations focused on building parent-child bonds
484	Families were assisted through the Food Pantry
402	Individuals on average per month were served through Healthy Families/WIC programs
1,990	Farmer’s Market coupons were issued, with a total value of \$7,960 that benefitted both clients and local farmers
339	HEAP (Home Energy Assistance Program) applications were processed
277	Income tax returns were prepared at no cost to the client
52	Families engaged with a family partner offering support in skill building to strengthen the family unit

SCCAP’s services support the agency mission of building stronger, healthier communities and empowering families. The agency offers comprehensive supports through seven direct-service divisions that administer a diversity of emergency assistance; health and safety; employment skills; nutrition supports; energy reduction measures; child, youth, and family development; and other supportive programs geared toward individual and family self-sufficiency, employment, and community economic stability.

795 East Main Street, Cobleskill, NY 12043
518-234-2568 | www.sccapinc.org



Child Care Resource & Referral

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) provides resources and information that is helpful to parents, child care providers, employers, and the community to improve the availability of quality child care in Schoharie County. The department offers training workshops and technical assistance to existing providers to help them stay in compliance with NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) training requirements. SCCAP's CCR&R provides feedback to local and state agencies regarding community child care needs and policy. SCCAP is also a sponsoring agency for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), which reimburses providers serving nutritious meals to children in a day care setting. We are also a legally exempt enrollment agency, enrolling and monitoring child care providers who are paid through subsidies.

2020 Accomplishments

Child Care Resource & Referral

771 Technical Assistance (TA) hours provided to child care providers

71.5 Intensive Technical Assistance (ITA) hours provided to child care providers

49 Child care referrals provided to families

1 Child care provider received a Best Practice Grant

147 Informational mailings to providers

\$36,102 CARES 1 Essential Worker Grant money to 7 providers with 23 families assisted

\$9,000 CARES 1 Supply Grant money to 11 providers

\$68,400 CARES 2 Temporary Operating Assistant Grant money to 3 providers

\$5,323.97 CARES 2 Reopening/Restructuring Grant money to 4 providers

\$26,887 CARES 3 Essential Worker Grant money to 6 providers with 18 families assisted

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

\$58,882 Dollars reimbursed to child care providers supplying healthy food options

26 CACFP monitoring visits

9 CACFP participants



Through the certification of Child Care Resource and Referral staff, Melissa Bevins and Dawn Garvey, SCCAP is now a Registered Safe Sitter® course site. The Safe Sitter® training will enable them to teach young teens the skills they need to be safe while home alone, watching younger siblings, or babysitting.



Before the COVID-19 pandemic shut everything down, Child Care Resource and Referral offered CPR and First Aid training, in which ten participants received certification

Child Care Resource & Referral



Each April as part of Child Abuse Prevention Month, CCR&R creates activities to celebrate the Week of the Young Child. These activities include Pinwheels for Prevention public awareness campaigns. The pinwheel is the national symbol of child abuse awareness. In communities across the county, CCR&R's plant pinwheel gardens to bring awareness to the need for prevention efforts. In the beginning of March, before COVID shut everything down, we were able to do some of these activities with our providers.

Success Story

CCR&R has been very busy during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 as we successfully helped all 11 of our providers with supplies and Essential Worker daycare assistance by utilizing the CARES 1, 2, and 3 funding. CARES 1 funding assisted 2 centers and 5 home daycares with childcare payments for 23 Essential Worker families. Using the money from the CARES 2 Supply Grant, we were able to provide 2 childcare centers and 9 home daycares with the cleaning supplies they needed to keep their daycares in compliance with the new safety standards set out by the Office of Children and Family Services. Finally, CARES 3 money provided 2 centers and 4 home daycares with childcare payments for 18 Essential Worker families. CCR&R also continued to provide support and trainings to all of our providers throughout the pandemic by using Zoom, Video Chat, Facetime, and the mail.



Here are some quotes from Schoharie County Childcare providers to the CCR&R:



"All of my families are very pleased that they had the opportunity to save money. Whatever the dollar amount or the amount of time, that they were covered. I and they are very grateful. So thank you SO much from all of us at Morning Star Learning Center."

"Just wanted to say thank you for all the supplies we received from you and really just all the help and support you've given during this trying time, to let you know we appreciate all that you do and how grateful I am to the both of you. God Bless and stay healthy."

Laura & the Entire Sprout Team

Community Services Department

The Community Services Department provides emergency services for basic life needs including utilities, housing, clothing and food, financial literacy, community resources, referrals and advocacy. The department also provides application assistance for HEAP and Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA). Special activities include back to school supplies, food drives, and emergency diaper and formula assistance.

2020 Accomplishments

- 38 Food pantry referrals
- 259 Referrals to other programs/services
- 32 Emergency diaper assistance
- 169 Emergency food pantries provided to clients
- 204 Supplemental food pantries provided to clients
 - 4 Food purchases to meet special dietary needs
 - 2 Clients received prescription assistance payments
 - 4 Housing advocacy non-payments to prevent evictions
 - 8 Heat assistance – SCCAP payment
 - 5 Electric shut-off prevention or reconnection payments to maintain client electric accounts
- 16 Clients received assistance with transportation and bus tokens
- 94 Children received new backpacks containing school supplies
- 145 Referrals to Department of Social Services
- 59 Advocacy and continued support through direct service to clients in need
- 339 Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) applications processed
 - 8 Clients assisted with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) applications
- 4,198 Telephone contacts
 - 5 Utility advocacy, service retention – SCCAP payment
- 20 Homeless payments for advocacy, 4 housing advocacy non-payments to prevent evictions
- 277 VITA income tax returns completed
 - 3 Individuals received new clothing for employment
 - 2 Federal phone applications
- 111 Local share food pantry, which includes formula, provides assistance to households who do not meet program income guidelines but have an immediate need
- 79 Households received personal care items through the SCCAP Food Pantry

Community Services Department

Multi-Agency client success story:

Mr. B. called requesting services on June 1, 2020 and was given food pantry items and a list of referrals for services. Upon follow-up, it was discovered that he did not apply for any of the referred services and he indicated that he was having trouble writing.

The following services were provided:

- SCCAP purchased Mr. B. a phone and 1 month of service. We could not get him enrolled in the SafeLink program without income verification or a government program and will follow up later on this. For now, he is feeling better having a connection.
- Together we completed a SNAP application and made copies of his ID, residency confirmation, and an electric bill which we mailed to DSS.
- The STAR real estate application was submitted for him online.
- We worked with Eilene Fisher at Schoharie County Veterans Services to determine what VA programs he may qualify for.
- The Social Security Administration was contacted to determine his age. He is 61 and turns 62 in October. He applied for SSI in 2011 and was denied due to excess assets (land). He did not qualify for SSD as it has been more than 10 years. He will come back in the fall to apply for early retirement as he has no other income. Follow-up correspondence revealed Mr. B. later applied for Social Security Retirement benefits on his own.
- SCCAP and Catholic Charities are sharing his electric bill payments and are paying them in full to ensure his safety until his Social Security can start.
- Mr. B. needs a new furnace and has to contact DSS and complete the questionnaire for potential eligibility.
- He does not qualify for HEAP and his primary heat source is broken. He can apply next season if his boiler is repaired/replaced.
- SCCAP provided gas for his vehicle through CSBG and a donated card.
- We assisted Mr. B. in applying for his stimulus payment. This required multiple phone calls for research, but was completed using the SCCAP VITA system.
- SCCAP provided food pantry items and personal care products. Staff loaded the items into his vehicle per his specifications to meet his physical needs.
- With permission from Mr. B., a written request was sent to Schoharie County Office for the Aging for a need's assessment. OFA can look into safety, insurance, Meals on Wheels, and other senior programs to assist him.

Mr. B. relied on personal savings for an extended amount of time and when his funds ran out, he was hesitant to request help. He is appreciative of all the services provided, and the phone was the biggest concern for him. Mr. B. is continuing to work with SCCAP for additional services.



Denelle Baker



Melissa Pawlak



Tracy Gertzberg



**Regional
Food Bank**
OF NORTHEASTERN NEW YORK



VITA
Volunteer Income Tax Assistance

Community Services Department

VITA Success Story:

In 2017, a married couple came to SCCAP through a referral to the SCCAP VITA program by the Internal Revenue Service. The wife is a U.S. Citizen and the husband is a legal immigrant. This couple lived abroad for several years and returned to the United States in 2014. They filed an income tax return on their own for the tax year of 2014, but the return was missing information and was never corrected. In 2015, the couple paid a preparer to do their 2015 income tax return. The preparer completed the 2015 return, but never corrected the 2014 return. The couple received letters from the IRS for monies owed on the 2014 return, and the 2015 income tax return could not be processed out of need for identity verification that the IRS required after several years of non-filing. The couple spent a lengthy amount of time trying to meet the IRS requirements without success and out of frustration, they stopped filing returns. In 2018, the couple came to SCCAP.

The SCCAP VITA program completed the following:

- Amended 2014 tax year tax return, paper filed.
- Contacted an IRS tax advocate in Albany to receive the forms needed for the advocate to research the missing 2015 refund and meet identity requirements.
- Prepared and filed the income tax returns for 2016 and 2017. The outcome: Back taxes were paid in full, and they received tax refunds from both federal and state.

Mrs. H. called SCCAP in August of 2020 to say that they had straightened out all their financial issues and purchased a home during the previous month. She needed information regarding property tax exemptions. Community Services staff helped her through the NYS Star Real Property tax application successfully, and she was also provided with a referral to Weatherization and Western Catskill for home repair.

Mrs. H. said that it took many months to untangle the income tax problems that snowballed through the years, but once free, they were able to purchase a home and now file their own tax returns. Mr. H. said this is all possible thanks to SCCAP.

Client Success Story:

Ms. J. called SCCAP. She works five days per week, mostly outdoors, year round. She is a widow of a career military veteran. She supports her household working full time in a low-paying job, and with her deceased husband's veteran's benefits. She had the flu and couldn't work, so she called SCCAP. She was advised to go to her doctor, and was diagnosed with the flu and pneumonia. She stopped at SCCAP on her way home. Her needs were assessed; she hadn't had fuel oil in months, no hot water, and needed food and medication. She had a wood stove, but the house was still cold. Her adult son lives with her and he is undergoing drug addiction recovery and can't work.

Services:

- Referral for both the client and her son to Fidelis for health insurance. Outcome; son was put on Medicaid the same day, Ms. J. will be covered starting March 1, 2020 under a minimal payment plan.
- SNAP application for her son, Ms. J. will not qualify. Outcome; son is SNAP approved.
- SCCAP food pantry.
- HEAP application processed as emergent. Outcome; fuel oil delivery so they have hot water and can run the furnace.
- SCCAP paid for three prescriptions at CVS.
- They were almost out of wood, so SCCAP arranged for a delivery of a cord of wood through the EFSP program. Both the furnace and wood stove are vital for maintaining warmth.
- Completed and filed her 2019 income tax return through VITA.

Ms. J. said, "It was so nice to be able to take a hot bath when I was sick. You are angels." She has been advised that there are emergency HEAP benefits too, should she have a further need of fuel oil during this winter. She can contact Social Services to see if she qualifies. Ms. J. is back to work and feeling much better. The support services while she was out of work for two weeks were a big help.

Employment Training Center

Brief Summary of Services:

NYS Displaced Homemaker Program (DHP):

- Provides displaced adults with the guidance, training, and support needed to enter the labor market. Services provided include hands-on computer workshops, job development, resumes, interviewing, career exploration, and financial literacy workshops.

Staff computer training:

- In-house computer training provided on an as-needed basis to SCCAP staff.

Customized Business Computer Training (Fee-for-Service):

- Customized, billable computer classes for the community.

2020 Accomplishments

NYS Displaced Homemaker Program

- 961 Employment training services provided
- 9 Participants enrolled
- 57 Training workshops held
- 29 Workshop attendees
- 14 Participants secured employment
- 12 Number retaining employment 90+ days

Note: some obtained jobs in the previous year

Customized Business Computer Training

- 13 Fee-for-service individuals served
- 1 Training workshop attended



Marcy Holmes and Sarah Euler

Displaced Homemaker Program Success Story:

The Coronavirus Pandemic has had a devastating effect on employment across the country, with Schoharie County being no exception. For several months, the ETC has been working with a young woman who lost her long-term job due to business closure. Having been in the same field for many years, she felt unprepared to venture into other areas. We immediately took stock of her soft and transferrable skills and began introducing new Microsoft Office software to her.

She was already familiar with Microsoft Word, and is now very comfortable using Outlook, Excel, and Access. We helped her create a polished and professional resume, and she immediately started receiving interview requests. Her confidence improved, and she was no longer intimidated with using new software.

Her story, however, does not end there. She recently received and accepted an excellent offer of employment with a facility in Oneonta utilizing not only the skills she already possessed, but the ones she learned in class. Her newly acquired skills in Microsoft Access, through the Displaced Homemaker Program, provided her with the database knowledge and skills to get the job. We received a very nice thank you card from her expressing her gratitude to the Displaced Homemaker Program staff for helping to make her job search so successful.

Energy Services Department

The Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) and Energy Services Department is committed to reducing energy costs for low-income families by improving the energy efficiency of their homes and ensuring their health and safety.



2020 Accomplishments

Energy Savings

- 33 Homes receiving Weatherization services
- 10,961 Gallons of fuel usage saved (approximate)
- \$30,425 Energy costs savings (approximate)

Improvements including Health & Safety

- 4 Refrigerators installed
- 4 Heating systems installed
- 81 Carbon monoxide detectors installed
- 137 Smoke detectors installed
- 269 LED bulbs installed
- 17 Air conditioners installed
- 3 Entire house ventilation systems installed



Rick Hagadorn, Norm McHargue, Ed Hurn, and Adam Smith in their new workshop!

Family Support & Resource Center

The Family Support & Resource Center is a strength-based, family and child-focused set of programs with the goal of wrapping community supports around children and their families to help maintain family stability, and to keep children safe in their homes and community. We offer Family Partners that work one-on-one with families to provide support, advocacy, education and liaison with providers. Skill Building sessions are offered individually or for families focusing on communication, discipline interventions, anger management, and different parenting styles. Family Team Conferences provide families and providers an opportunity to develop goals and work towards strengthening the family unit. We continue to work collaboratively with other agencies for the benefit of the families we serve.

2020 Accomplishments

- 52 Number of families who worked with a Family Partner
- 660 Face-to-face contacts with families
- 49 Number of families who participated in Family Team Conferences
- 119 Number of Family Team Conferences held
- 38 Number of individuals who participated in Skill Building
- 150 Skill Building sessions held
- 3,751 Total collateral contacts



Client Success Story:

January 2020 at the Family Support and Resource Center and The Parent and Child Connections Center began with families needing help, children visiting with their parents, clients attending classes, and staff taking it all in stride. March and COVID-19 brought questions and concerns about how SCCAP would be able to support our clients.

Throughout the pandemic, our staff has continued to provide services to families, and the clients we work with are appreciative of having their needs met. Technical difficulties, service availability, and sometimes just the lack of computer skills or knowledge were some of the challenges both families and staff encountered. But, with determination and a bit of laughter and tears, we have “conquered” our uncertainties and our staff has been able to continue to meet our families’ needs throughout this pandemic.

When visitations with children were stopped due to COVID-19, families were able to come up with suitable solutions and find their own supervisors so they could continue visits with their children outside of SCCAP. Once clients were allowed back into FSRC and PCCC, families were more than willing to abide by COVID protocols which included screening and wearing masks. For those who are not comfortable meeting in person, Zoom has become the answer, and people seem to like receiving services and not having to travel, especially those who don’t always have transportation available. We are proud to say that our families and staff, although skeptical at times, have adapted to this new way of life.

We are proud that we were able to persevere through this past year, and we look forward to a future without COVID-19. Here’s to another successful year at SCCAP!

Healthy Families/WIC

The Healthy Families department administers the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program which is a federal supplemental food program that provides low income families with healthy foods along with nutrition and breastfeeding education. The WIC program serves approximately 500 participants. Our staff consists of two nutritionists, two certified lactation consultants, one nutrition assistant, and one part-time outreach coordinator. The department networks with other community partners including Community Maternity Services, Head Start, and the Schoharie County Department of Health to offer a plethora of services including breastfeeding, nutrition education, and lead screenings.

The Healthy Families department is the official New York Milk Bank at Mothers Milk Depot of Schoharie County. The Mother's Milk Depot of Schoharie County adheres to the guidelines of the Human Milk Banking Association of North America (HMBANA) to provide safe, pasteurized milk from carefully screened donors to New York's fragile and sick infants; thus improving their potential to survive and thrive.

2020 Accomplishments

- 454 Participants enrolled during 2020
- 402 Participants served on average each month receiving food packages ranging from \$75 to \$150 per person
- 4 Breastfeeding classes held with 12 women attending, 4 were WIC participants, 8 were non-WIC participants
- 2 Hospital-grade, electric breast pumps loaned to participants
- 1,990 Farmer's Market coupons (398 coupon books) issued with a total value of \$7,960
- 80 eWIC cards issued to new or returning WIC participants
- 2,010 Ounces (15.70 gallons) of breast milk donated by 6 milk depot donors

Farmers Market Nutrition Program Redemption rates for Schoharie County was 42.8 %.
Redemption rate was decreased due to COVID-19.

Success Story:

Following local Department of Health COVID-19 regulations, WIC hosted our World Breastfeeding Photoshoot Event at Schoharie County Farms/the Carrot Barn in Schoharie, NY. A total of 14 mothers enjoyed refreshments and had time to mingle as they waited for their photoshoot. The featured photographer was Heather Lasky of Brunette Black and White Photography.



Parent and Child Connections Center

The Parent and Child Connections Center provides the means for children and adults, usually the non-residential parent, to have the opportunity for safe, conflict free contact in the presence of a third party. The Center offers a child-friendly, comfortable environment for supervised or monitored visits and exchanges that allow children and parents who have been separated due to child abuse and neglect, substance abuse, domestic violence, or custody or visitation issues to maintain or rebuild positive relationships. Visiting parents are assisted in developing and improving their parenting skills and have an opportunity to implement those skills during visits.

The Parent and Child Connections Center receives referrals from the Schoharie County Department of Social Services, and our staff works closely with Foster Care, Child Preventive, and Child Protective caseworkers.

2020 Accomplishments

- 71 Families participated in the supervised visitation program
- 663 Supervised or monitored visitations
- 12 Families have moved to unsupervised visitations or supervision by family members



As quickly as Covid-19 safety protocols allowed, the Parent and Child Connections Center resumed supervised visitation, allowing parents to be reunited with their children .

SCCAP and COVID-19

SCCAP's Executive Director, Jeannette Spaulding, immediately established and implemented safety protocols for staff and clients in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Remote work schedules were quickly put in place and staff were provided with equipment and the tools needed to work from home while maintaining virtual contact with their clients. Service plans were communicated regularly on the website.

The administration team procured hard-to-find sanitation supplies and PPE for staff and clients. This included plexi sneeze guards for work areas so that the agency could continue to provide services while being compliant with COVID-19 regulations.

The finance team administered CARES funding, Payroll Protection Plan, and other pandemic-related funding.

As plans were made to begin allowing clients back into the agency, a screening area was established. SCCAP hired 2 part-time Community Greeters to screen clients before they moved on to their appointments with staff.



SCCAP's Board of Directors moved to Zoom meetings so that they could maintain contact with the agency and its day-to-day operations.

SCCAP was recognized by the NYS Community Action Association for showing exemplary dedication and perseverance to its clients, and being a guiding light throughout the pandemic.

The year 2020 presented many challenges to the health and well-being of staff, families served, and the community at large due to the pandemic. SCCAP rose to the challenge by rapidly establishing procedures conforming to NYS Forward guidelines to ensure there would be no interruption to client services and that they would be delivered in the safest way possible. The agency received CARES Act funding to assist essential workers with child care expenses and day care providers with PPE supplies and facility



enhancements for safe operations. The agency's federal emergency assistance funding was also increased to address food insecurity and other stabilization services for those COVID-19 impacted. Knowing the pandemic will have long-term effects on the needs of those we serve, continued donor generosity is helping to assure SCCAP will have adequate resources to address these impacts in the days ahead. Thank you for your continued support!

SCCAP and COVID-19

Staff and clients were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic: What self-care did the Community Services staff do after work hours during the pandemic to lower stress?

Melissa Pawlak: I spent a lot of time with my four children. We played board games, took walks, cooked together, watched movies, and spent a lot of family time. “For my own sanity, I kicked back with a good book.” I bought an e-reader and connected online for free books.

Denelle Baker: I took up hiking with a group of friends. We met at different trail heads throughout the Capital District area every Saturday morning and only missed one Saturday due to weather. I also enjoyed a lot of new cooking adventures, running, cycling, reading, and watched way too much TV. My home projects included sidewalk repair (thank you, YouTube).

Tracy Gertzberg: I got a new puppy, Otis, who is a red and blue heeler mix. We spent a lot of time outside, playing in his kiddie pool, learning to play fetch, and taking sticks out of the yard. I also did a lot of crafting. I like to make new things out of old things, such as repurposing house shutters or an old coat rack. Whatever I find, I use my imagination to create projects. I did a lot of paint-by-numbers kits, which my family enjoyed receiving as gifts.

Administration

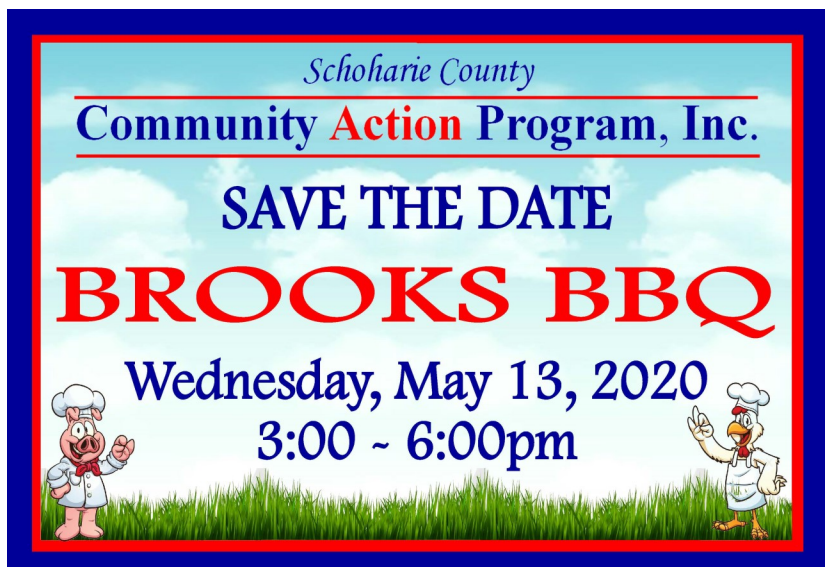


Through the use of social media, SCCAP has significantly expanded its outreach opportunities. As many as 7,000 people have been reached with just a single post. Multiple service organizations have shared SCCAP’s messages, creating a vital outreach collaboration.



Congratulations!

Congratulations to Justina Farris, who achieved her Master’s degree in Finance in 2020 from SUNY Empire State College. We are proud of your achievement and continued leadership as our Finance Director!



SCCAP would like to thank everyone in our community who generously supported our Brooks barbecue fundraiser in May of 2020!

Board & Staff

Board of Directors as of December 31, 2020

PRIVATE SECTOR

Rhonda Ferris

Secretary

Jason Evans

Vice Chair

PUBLIC SECTOR

George McDonnell

Treasurer

Richard Lape

Chair

CONSUMER SECTOR

Judith Warner

Member

Board of Directors members who served during 2020

Dolores Jackson—10 years

Jonathan Litzner—8 years

Karen Simmons—2 years

Anna VanDerwerken—10 years

Staff members during 2020

Lara Ackley

Dawn Garvey

Carlina Morales

Denelle Baker

Tracy Gertzberg

Debbie Palmatier

Nancy Becker

April Glass

Melissa Pawlak

Sarah Beekman

Rick Hagadorn

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Amanda Forslund

Norman McHargue Jr.

Rhonda Wilty

Heather Fretto

Thank you!

***SCCAP thanks our donors, volunteers,
employees, board members and
corporate supporters!***

*With your help, SCCAP continued
its work toward building a stronger
community and empowering families
during 2020.*

*We appreciate your support and
look forward to another
great year in 2021.*

Donate to Support SCCAP's Work — 4 easy ways!

1. Stop by our office (above Subway) located at 795 E. Main Street, Suite 5, Cobleskill, NY 12043.
2. Mail a check to SCCAP at the address above.
3. Visit our website at www.sccapinc.org and click the "Donations" tab to make a donation via PayPal.
4. Donate a portion of your purchase using Amazon Smile. Sign into Amazon using <http://smile.amazon.com> and choose Schoharie County Community Action Program as your supporting organization.