



## **Community Action Program of Lancaster County**

601 South Queen Street • P.O. Box 599 • Lancaster, PA 17608-0599

T: (717) 299-7301 • F: (717) 299-9341 • (800) 732-0018

[www.caplanc.org](http://www.caplanc.org)

Contact: Brian Sweigart  
Communications Officer

Phone: (717) 299-7388 x3032

Email: [bsweigart@caplanc.org](mailto:bsweigart@caplanc.org)

Fax: (717) 299-9341

**For Immediate Release: April 5, 2011**

### **Given Self-Sufficiency Award by State Association** **Local Woman Recognized for Turning Life Around**

(Lancaster, PA) – Barbara “Barbie” Dabbs was honored by the Community Action Association of Pennsylvania (CAAP) with a Self-Sufficiency Award at the organization’s state conference in March. Dabbs was nominated for the award by the Community Action Program (CAP) of Lancaster County and was one of 14 recipients from the 43 community action agencies in Pennsylvania. CAAP gives the Self Sufficiency Awards to recognize the significant accomplishments of the award winners and to demonstrate what community action agencies do to help people move themselves toward self-sufficiency.

In the not too distant past, Barbie Dabbs was a divorced mother of two young children looking for meaningful employment. Her position in sales had come to end placing Barbara on unemployment compensation. Unfortunately, by the time her unemployment benefits expired her only income was from a couple of part time jobs that included waitressing and pizza delivery. Neither of these positions generated enough income to meet the minimal needs of the family.

At one point while trying to make ends meet, she sought assistance from CAP of Lancaster County as she looked for a food bank to help supplement her overstretched budget. Dabbs says, “I went there hoping to get food to help us make it through for a few more weeks, but I came away with so much more.”

CAP of Lancaster County’s Outreach staff asked Dabbs if she had enough fuel oil for the heating season.

**-More-**

She did not and so the Outreach staff arranged a delivery of fuel for later that week. Dabbs recalls, “We made that oil delivery last all winter and the boys and I were warm.”

Fast-forward 3 years. Dabbs joined the workforce at the Armstrong World Industries ceiling manufacturing plant in Marietta in November of 2008 where she found meaningful employment. She quickly immersed herself in the work of the United Steel Workers Local 285 Unit 441 that represents the employees at the plant. The union recognized her “can do” attitude and asked if she would serve as a loaned labor representative for the Lancaster County United Way Campaign. Armstrong fully supported her selection to represent both organizations. She agreed and fulfilled that role for the last two campaigns.

As a loaned labor representative, Dabbs travelled throughout the county telling her personal story and asking for donor support of United Way agencies. She is now a member of the United Way Leadership Giving Society (household contribution of \$1,000 or more).

Coming full circle, she returned to CAP of Lancaster County as the agency’s United Way representative where she shared the story of how the agency offered her a bridge to reach self-sufficiency. Dabbs commenting on the award says, “I am living proof that with a little help anything is possible. I thank God there are organizations like CAP of Lancaster that can give people a *hand up*.”

Community leaders formed CAP of Lancaster County in 1966 to assist low and moderate-income individuals with the resources, skills, and knowledge needed to become self-sufficient. CAP of Lancaster County has a budget of over \$46 million and employs 340 people who provide services to qualified individuals throughout Lancaster County.