



# Putting Together the Pieces

2013 Couleecap Annual Report

**Couleecap**  
your local community *action* program

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

A collection of light green puzzle pieces scattered on a white background. The pieces are of various shapes and sizes, some showing interlocking tabs and blanks. The lighting is soft, creating gentle shadows and highlights on the pieces.

**"There are no extra pieces in the universe. Everyone is here because he or she has a place to fill, and every piece must fit itself into the big jigsaw puzzle."**

**-Deepak Chopra**

## Couleecap - Putting Together the Pieces

Completing a puzzle takes time, energy, motivation, and patience. Without all of the pieces in place, a puzzle is not complete and the work is not finished.

A puzzle is a good metaphor for Couleecap's approach to fighting poverty in our area. People need all the pieces to achieve self-sufficiency: housing, food, transportation, employment, and education.

Couleecap strives to offer programs that address the needed pieces of that puzzle. We can not expect people to succeed when pieces are missing.

Couleecap serves Crawford, La Crosse, Monroe, and Vernon counties in western Wisconsin.

### Our Mission

Couleecap fights poverty and promotes self-sufficiency, economic development, and social justice.

We are **People Helping People**, and everyday our **actions** make a difference in the lives of people and families throughout the Coulee Region.



**Grace Jones**  
**Executive Director**

## Local Leadership

### Couleecap's Current Board of Directors

Ellen Barum  
Bob Brague  
Rick Blasing  
Karen Dahl  
Maureen Freedland  
Mari Freiberg  
Terry Hicks  
Karen Joos  
Monica Kruse  
Janet Kusch  
Celesta Leis, Secretary  
Karen Long  
Barbara Martinez  
Mary Masters  
Kellie McElroy  
Anne O'Connor  
Bill Rudy, Vice Chair  
Jane Schaaf  
Gary Thompson  
Brian Turben  
Albert Wee  
John Young, Chair

Putting together the pieces needed to help people begins with a key piece of the puzzle: local leadership.

The Couleecap Board of Directors is a diverse group of men and women coming together for a common purpose. These men and women volunteer their time and talents to our cause. For Couleecap, the payoff is a strong, vibrant agency with 47 years of experience helping to solve the puzzle of poverty in our area.



**John Young, Board Chair**

## Community Partnerships

Putting together the pieces to fight a complex problem like poverty means that no one organization can do the work alone. It takes a community of people to address all of the needed pieces.

Community partnerships are an invaluable piece of the puzzle. By establishing over 160 community partnerships in our area, Couleecap ensures that we can find ways to better serve people.

**34,968**

people, or 16,973 households, benefitted from the valuable services of Couleecap.

**\$7,871,956**

was expensed by Couleecap to provide services to our communities.

**119,265**

hours were volunteered to Couleecap by community residents.

**160**

community partnerships were established and maintained between Couleecap and other entities.

Community partners are a big part of the puzzle. Thank you to Vernon Electric Cooperative and our other community partners for helping us fight poverty in our area!



## Homelessness

**124**

homeless households received supportive housing, case management, and supportive services.

•

**106**

households received eviction prevention or emergency rental assistance.

•

**10**

homeless households were assisted with applying for Social Security disability payments.

Putting together the pieces means that Couleecap is committed to finding homes for the homeless.

When you have a home it can be easy to take for granted what an important piece of the puzzle this is. Offering people who are homeless a safe and stable home is probably one of the most important programs we offer.

Once people have stable housing they can begin to address the other pieces of the puzzle. They can set goals, find employment, enroll in school, and move forward on the path to self-sufficiency.

Housing is an important part of the puzzle. Couleecap's basic needs drive provided needed items to our homeless participants during the holiday season.



## Housing

**642**

people received housing counseling.

**100**

households received housing rehabilitation assistance.

**39**

households received homebuyer counseling, and down payment and closing cost assistance to purchase homes.

**26**

households received water well system repair or replacement.

**11**

single family homes were developed and sold to low and moderate income home buyers.

Putting together the pieces means we must address the housing needs of current homeowners.

Couleecap helps people get the handicap accessible ramp they need or the well that will allow them to drink water from their taps. Addressing deferred home repairs keeps housing stock safe and affordable for future generations.

Couleecap also works to address the issue of affordable housing. Couleecap helps first time homebuyers by making homeownership affordable and offering housing counseling.



ReNEW La Crosse is a joint partnership between the City of La Crosse, Habitat for Humanity of La Crosse, and Couleecap which works to improve housing in the City of La Crosse.

## Food

**3,090,329**

pounds of food were collected and distributed.

•

**18,417**

people received emergency food assistance.

•

**828**

Farmers Market coupons were distributed to food pantry recipients in Crawford County.

•

**24**

cooking demonstrations were held at the Monroe County food pantry.

Putting together the pieces means we must address the issue of food insecurity and hunger in our area.

Couleecap operates The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and distributes over 3 million pounds of food locally to pantries, meal sites and shelters. Couleecap also operates food pantries in Sparta and Prairie du Chien.



Couleecap's emergency food program provides another piece of the puzzle for our community. This holiday season, volunteers and staff distributed food baskets to people in need.

Putting together the pieces means we must help when people are faced with an emergency situation.

Offering programs and referrals to programs that provide a safety net for people is an important piece of the puzzle.

Couleecap's energy assistance and emergency utility payment programs offer such assistance.

Couleecap's Bargain Boutique clothing center offers shoppers quality clothing and household goods while shoppers support the emergency food pantry and other Couleecap programs.

100% Nonprofit: Couleecap's Bargain Boutique takes community donations of clothing and household items and turns them into revenue that supports the local food pantry and other programs.

## Emergency Assistance

**1,781**

households received energy assistance payments.

•

**381**

households received crisis energy assistance payments.

•

**124**

households received emergency utility bill payment assistance.

•

**6,411**

people were served at the Bargain Boutique thrift store.





Putting together the pieces means addressing people's need for access to affordable transportation in our area. For many families this piece, reliable transportation, can be the difference between keeping or losing a job.

Couleecap's Work-N-Wheels Program offers zero interest car loans and car repairs for those struggling with transportation and transportation issues.

For many families a reliable vehicle can be the difference between keeping or losing a job.

## Transportation

**6**

households received loans to purchase vehicles for work.

•

**61**

households were assisted with car repairs for work.

•

**185**

rides were provided to clients to get to work.



## Home Weatherization

**326**

homes are warmer and more comfortable from home weatherization.

•

**136**

households received emergency furnace repair or replacement.



Couleecap weatherization crews prepare to weatherize a home.



Putting together the pieces means addressing the needs of people in new and unique ways.

When it began in the 1970's, home weatherization was a new way to help people conserve energy and reduce the amount of their home energy bills. The savings helped the person have more money available for other needs and it helped the community by decreasing the demand for energy from those high energy users.

No longer a new concept, home weatherization continues to provide an important benefit to participants and can often reduce energy consumption by as much as 40%.

## Prevention

**2,064**

youth attended alcohol, tobacco, and other drug education and training programs in Monroe County.

Putting together the pieces means addressing issues such as substance use in our area.

Couleecap works with the Drug Free Communities program, a collaborative effort between Couleecap and the Monroe County Safe Community Coalition (MCSCC).

Substance use prevention is an important community effort, and the MCSCC, together with the community, are key pieces.



Wes Revels, Monroe County Safe Community Coalition Co-Chair and Natalie Carlisle, Couleecap's DFC Coordinator attended the CADCA National Leadership Conference in Washington DC.

Monroe County Safe Community Coalition members are an important piece of the puzzle in Monroe County.



## Education & Jobs

**\$18,000**

was loaned for business start-up or expansion.

•

**14**

people received business development technical assistance.

•

**2**

jobs were created.

•

**30**

people were assisted with education or training to improve earnings.

Putting together the pieces means offering educational and job and business opportunities to people.

Couleecap's Job and Business Development Program helps people by offering technical assistance to business start-ups and entrepreneurs.

Couleecap's Skills Enhancement Program is a workforce development program. Low-wage earners who are working at least 20 hours per week, and interested in obtaining further education or training, may qualify for assistance designed to fill the gaps not covered by student loans or other programs.

## Programs in Action

Samantha came to the Couleecap Skills Enhancement Program seeking a pathway to self-sufficiency. She had recently become a single mother and found that supporting her family on the wages from working in a fast food restaurant wasn't possible. Quickly she found herself seeking assistance in the form of rental subsidies, energy assistance, and SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program). She knew that she needed to do something different but felt trapped by her circumstances. One day, on her way to work, she heard a radio news story about Couleecap's Skills Enhancement Program. She reached out to make contact with the staff. She didn't feel she could embark on a multi-year program, yet she needed something better than her minimum wage fast food job.

Samantha met with the Skills Enhancement Program Coordinator and

### Increased Earnings

Before Skills Program  
Fast Food worker

After Skills Program  
CNA at nursing home  
Income increased  
\$4.60/hour

Annual Income  
increased \$8,000/year

looked at the job possibilities. The Coordinator showed her a variety of positions that only required short training periods, but had the potential for a significant increase in wages. Samantha settled on becoming a Certified Nursing Assistant. The Coordinator helped her work through the qualifying requirements, find a class, and provide assistance for childcare and uniforms that are required for the training. While enrolled in this training program

Samantha became discouraged a number of times, but with the help of the Coordinator, she was able to identify solutions to challenges such as finding time to study, working with her fast food employer to get time off for training, and dealing with the challenges of being a single mom. Samantha completed her training program approximately three months after enrolling in the Skills Enhancement Program, and earned her CNA license about a month after that. The final hurdle she encountered was finding the resources to pay for her CNA test and license. Couleecap worked with another funder to use their funds to pay for the license and testing.

Today, Samantha works as a CNA for a local nursing home. She is employed full-time. Her income has increased \$4.60/hour which means this year she will make almost \$8,000 more than she made before enrolling in the Skills Enhancement Program. She is no longer enrolled in SNAP and no longer receives rental subsidies. She also has access to health insurance for the first time.



# Finance Report (unaudited)

## Consolidated Statement of Financial Position December 31, 2013

### Assets:

Cash	\$1,002,564
Investments	\$30,853
Grants Receivable	\$694,315
Other Receivables	\$459,769
Weatherization Materials	\$242,111
Assets Held for Resale	\$17,086
Prepaid Expenses	\$52,943
Restricted Reserves	\$30,006
Deferred/Revolving Loans Receivable	\$6,884,802
Property and Equipment, Net	\$3,144,599
	<hr/>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$12,559,047</b>

### Liabilities:

Accounts Payable	\$305,341
Accrued Expenses	\$255,653
Rental Deposits	\$43,721
Refundable Advances	\$247,746
Mortgage Payable	\$3,162,544
Construction Loans Payable	\$536,163
Deferred/Revolving Loans Refundable	\$7,057,963
	<hr/>
Total Liabilities	\$11,609,131

### Net Assets:

Restricted	\$41,085
Unrestricted	\$908,831
	<hr/>
Total Net Assets	\$949,916

<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$12,559,047</b>
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## Consolidated Statement of Activities Year Ended December 31, 2013

### Revenue:

Grant Revenue	\$5,753,022
Program Service Revenue	\$1,494,141
Rents	\$291,754
Interest	\$5,467
Contributions	\$81,109
Other Revenue	\$444,322
Total Revenue	\$8,069,815

### Expenses:

Specific Assistance to Individuals	\$2,597,117
Personnel	\$3,219,154
Professional Fees	\$180,746
Supplies	\$109,937
Telephone	\$48,410
Postage and Shipping	\$18,559
Occupancy	\$59,028
Printing and Publications	\$21,889
Travel	\$84,693
Other Expenses	\$1,775,061
Total Expenses	\$8,114,594

Change in Net Assets	\$(44,779)
Net Assets - December 31, 2012	\$994,695
<b>Net Assets - December 31, 2013</b>	<b>\$949,916</b>

Our puzzle would never be complete without the important piece that is friends, supporters, and donors. Those who give of their time, talent, and treasure to make their community a better place are a vital piece of our puzzle, and we thank you for playing a role in our success.

**\$100,000+**

Otto Bremer Foundation

**\$25,000+**

Robert & Eleanor Franke  
Charitable Foundation

**\$5,000+**

Anonymous  
George and Elizabeth Kruck

**\$2,500+**

David and Kathryn Thompson  
Catholic Campaign for Human Development  
Laurel High School Poverty Awareness Project  
Peoples State Bank, Prairie du Chien

## United Way Agencies



Great Rivers United Way  
Prairie du Chien Area United Way

Every contribution is important to us, and your continued support makes our work possible. Regrettably, space limitations force us to confine the donor listing to donations of \$2,500 or more.

Couleecap makes every effort to ensure accuracy. Please contact Couleecap at 608.634.7363 with any errors or omissions.

## Funding and Donors

For the year ending  
December 31, 2013

Couleecap's People Helping People Initiative helps raise money for unmet client needs.

**84**

households assisted  
through our Client  
Needs Fund.



# Couleecap

your local community *action* program

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