## ProAction Helping People. of Steuben and Yates, Inc. Helping Lives.

"Plant seeds of happiness, hope, success and love; it will all come back to you in abundance." ~ Steve Maraboli

### PRO ACTION OF STEUBEN & YATES 2022 Impact Report

www.proactioninc.org

### **The Promise of Community Action**

Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.

#### The Mission of Community Action Partnership

To ensure the causes and conditions of poverty are effectively addressed and to strengthen, promote, represent, and serve the Community Action Network.

#### The Vision of Community Action Partnership

A nation that creates opportunities for all people to thrive, builds strong, resilient communities, and ensures a more equitable society.

#### **The Values of Community Action Partnership**

We believe all people should be treated with dignity and respect and recognize that structural race, gender, and other inequities remain barriers that must be addressed.

We believe that this nation has the capacity and moral obligation to ensure that no one is forced to endure the hardships of poverty.

We believe that with hope, adequate resources, and opportunities, everyone can reach their fullest potential, and we are committed to achieving that vision.

We pledge ourselves to creating an environment that pursues innovation and excellence through multi-sector partnership and collaboration.

#### Special thanks to the Pro Action Board of Directors:

Michael Gabrielli, Board President Kathryn Muller, Board Vice-President Linda Jolly, Board Treasurer Judy Duquette, Board Secretary Debbi Deats Edward Bronson Bonnie DeKay Casandra Foley Deborah Hafleigh Carolyn Johnson Donna Johnston Hilda Lando Amy Miller Eric Rose Carey Spara



United Way of the Southern Tier Pro Action is a Proud Partner of United Way of the Southern Tier (UWST.) Not only does UWST fund a number of programs that you will read about in this report, but it provides leadership for the Southern Tier Kids On Track initiative, which is instrumental to Pro Action's community-level work.



### **Message from the CEO**

#### Dear Friends,

Two of Pro Action's core values are hope and resilience. We believe that with hope, supportive relationships, adequate resources and opportunities, everyone can build resilience, overcome adversity, and prosper.

It is easy to turn on the news at the end of the day and hear the bad reports of what is happening locally, nationally, and internationally. This can easily make us feel hopeless, but at Pro Action we witness hope every day. We see HOPE when:

- We hear stories like Brenda's. Brenda is a hard working single mom who is doing everything she can to support her two children with special needs. HOPE came in the form of a life changing event with the gift of transportation. This gift provided Brenda and her family with the ability to get to medical appointments, school, the grocery store, and work.
- Older adults in our communities can stay in their homes independently. Older adults like Mary, who is able to utilize multiple services from the Yates Office for Aging Services to assist her in living independently.
- Strong partnerships like the one Pro Action has with Steuben County Department of Social Services. By combining resources, we can better assist individuals like Shawn to go from being unemployed and living with family, to being employed and living on her own in stable housing.
- We see the amazing faces of the children our programs serve being provided with education, social/emotional support, and fun that they not only need, but deserve. Those young faces are truly the HOPE of the future.

HOPE is described as the courage to take one more step, to try one more time, and believe things will get better! I would argue resilience is the same, it is believing that things will be better and learning from any setbacks that may be experienced. To us at Pro Action, hope and resilience go hand in hand.

"You may not always have a comfortable life, and you will not always be able to solve all the world's problems at once, but don't ever underestimate the importance you can have. Because history has shown us that courage can be contagious, and hope can take on a life of its own." Michelle Obama

I want to express how proud I am of the both the quantitative and qualitative information in this report. It demonstrates all of our agency values, and most importantly that the work our staff, board and partners are dedicated to....changing lives for the better. I cannot think of a better career to have than leaving the world better than how we found it.

With Gratitude,

hama



Laura Rossman Chief Executive Officer

"HOPE is described as the courage to take one more step, to try one more time, and believe things will get better! I would argue resilience is the same, it is believing that things will be better and learning from any setbacks that may be experienced. To us at Pro Action, hope and resilience go hand in hand. "

# Faces of the Future



Pro Action builds a community of resilient individuals and families who can meet their basic needs, overcome adversity and prosper.

#### **Our Values**

Our Values

### Innovation, Excellence, & Accountability

## Hope & Resilience

### Diversity, Equity, Inclusivity, & Belonging

### Hope & Resilience

We believe that with hope, supportive relationships, adequate resources and opportunities, everyone can build resilience, overcome adversity, and prosper.

### Innovation, Excellence, & Accountability

We pledge ourselves to create an environment that pursues innovation, excellence, and accountability.

### Diversity, Equity, Inclusivity, & Belonging

We believe the diversity of experiences, ideas, individuals, and organizations in our community makes us stronger. We recognize that structural race, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and other inequities remain barriers that must be addressed. To create more just and engaged communities, we must embrace and celebrate diversity, practice inclusion, and exercise our role as a champion of equity.

#### Introduction

Pro Action creates solutions that improve people's lives, homes, and communities throughout Steuben & Yates Counties in New York State.



## PROSPEROUS Futures

In Steuben and Yates Counties, certain conditions restrict, rather than create, economic opportunity. These conditions are identified as causes of poverty. They include: (1) lack of an available, engaged, and qualified workforce with skills to match available jobs; (2) alcohol/opiate/heroin/painkiller or other drug abuse/addiction (3) limited access to transportation to get to work, and (4) availability of adequate, safe and affordable child care. Pro Action customers earn low incomes despite working. Of 3,178 individuals over the age of 18 receiving Pro Action services, 42% are working. Despite this, 70% of households served by Pro Action programs have incomes below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. Among families participating in Head Start, 59% have at least one or both parents working, and 41% have neither parent working. 76% of enrolled families are living in poverty or receiving public assistance.

At Pro Action, we're firm believers that people have what it takes to create the future they want for themselves, even in the face of limited opportunities and barriers to advancement. Pro Action programs in the Prosperous Futures domain help pave the path to economic opportunity and support people as they bounce back from adversity. These programs provide guidance and tools for job seekers to find and secure good jobs, while helping them develop skills and supporting their success in the workforce.

#### The Local Need

**Unemployment** in our service area is higher than the national rate. **42%** of survey respondents stated the need for **more higherpaying** jobs, and more **fulltime** jobs.

Average **weekly wages** and median household income are **lower** than **state rates** in both counties.

**Transportation** is identified as a top barrier, with **nearly 20%** of respondents needing access to a reliable vehicle.

**14,923** individuals (**12.6%** of the population) in the service area live in poverty. More than **1 in 4 children** under the age of 5 in Steuben and Yates Counties **live in poverty**.

#### **Our Reach**

**675** TANF applicants received **case management** and gained **skills for employment**.

683 participants in the Youth Empowerment Program completed training, 193 accessed financial literacy education, 192 searched for a job.

**94** Summer Youth program participants completed **pre-employment skills** training.

**31** people age 55+ enrolled in the **Senior Community Service & Employment Program** and entered subsidized **employment.** 

**32** individuals received assistance through **Wheels for Work.** 

**16** adults were matched with an **Adult Literacy tutor.** 

#### **Our Annual Impact**

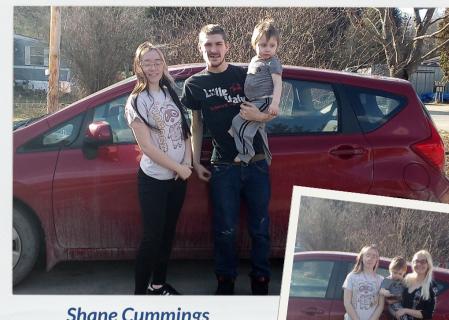
**275** program participants **obtained employment**, **including:** 

- **125** TANF Case Management Participants
- **42** Youth Empowerment Program Participants
- **7** Senior Community Service and Employment Program participants
- **7** Wheels for Work participants
- **94** Summer Youth Employment Program participants

**5** Adult Literacy tutors provided **1,354** hours of **tutoring.** 



#### **Working Wheels**



Shane Cummings and Family



#### **Prosperous Futures**

Shane is a high school graduate and a voung father of 3, who had been working at a local factory through an employment agency. After he completed his probation period, the employer hired him (with a slight increase in salary) directly, but it was not enough to sustain his growing family's household needs. The family was receiving SNAP benefits to help with food insecurity, but did not have a vehicle. Shane was temporarily using an older vehicle which belonged to a family member to get to and from work. The vehicle was often unreliable, and sometimes he had to depend on friends for last minute rides. He even rode his bicycle to work, five miles away, a few times. Thanks to the Wheels to Work program. Shane was able to obtain a nointerest vehicle loan, which allowed him to purchase a more reliable used vehicle and sustain his employment. Shane and his family are so grateful for the vehicle loan and the opportunity to maintain their independence without the added stress of unreliable transportation.

#### A New Start

In 2022, Shawn Sullivan found herself jobless, and without a place to call her own. While living with her niece she sought help from Steuben County Department of Social Services (DSS), until she could get back on her feet. DSS referred Shawn to Pro Action's Employment and Training Services to job search. Shawn got connected with Samantha, who is a caseworker at Pro Action. With Samantha's help, Shawn created a resume and worked to apply for local positions. When the opportunity for an interview came, Shawn didn't have the proper professional clothing necessary for the interview. Samantha helped provide resources to purchase dress clothes, and worked to ensure that Shawn had the proper skills to have a successful interview. Shawn was offered the position and now works full time. She was able to get her own apartment, and Pro Action is also helping Shawn get her driver license. Shawn credits Samantha and Pro Action for giving her the help she needed to be able to "keep climbing to the top and reaching her goals." Shawn says, "I couldn't do it without this agency and the wonderful staff there. Thank you for the support, and all you have done for me."



**Shawn Sullivan** 



Children are more likely than adults to live in poverty in Pro Action's service area. Child care costs, lack of living wages, costly housing, and other factors put economic opportunity out of reach for many families. At the same time, low educational attainment is becoming a generational problem holding people back from achieving their potential. Programs in the Resilient Children and Families domain use a two-generation approach to set the stage for child and family development. Children's programs cultivate settings that foster growth and learning, while family programs support families as they set goals, discover and use their personal strengths, and reinforce relationships. Pro Action is rooted in the spirit of hope. Children and families in our service areas have pushed through the most difficult years in recent history, demonstrating their resourcefulness and their resilience. We know that we are just beginning to notice the toll that the pandemic has taken on all of us. Pro Action's Resilient Children & Families teams are committed to providing responsive service with input and leadership from participants. We are committed to delivering HELP that HELPS.

#### The Local Need

22% of Yates and 18% of Steuben families with children live in poverty. Single female headed households and households with children are more likely to live in poverty.



**Less than HALF** of 3rd graders in the service area are proficient on state ELA exams.

There is a **shortage of 1,100** slots of quality, regulated child care for infants and toddlers and **3,689** slots for school-age children.

The rate of **children or youth** in indicated reports of **child abuse** in the service area are **higher than the state rate.** 

**1 in 5** have **3 or more** Adverse Childhood Experiences.

#### **Our Reach**

530 individuals from 220 households participated in Home and Community Based Two-Generation Services to enhance family well-being and child development.

**456** infants, toddlers, and preschoolers participated in **Birth To Five** Head Start programs to develop **school readiness skills.** 

**1,112 children** participated in community-based activities to develop school readiness skills and **8,299 free books** were distributed.

11 new child care providers

providers attended training and

530 parents received referrals

became registered, 168

for child care programs.



Start and Kids On Track (K participants demonstrated on-track development and school readiness skills. Kids on Track Steuben

is a cross-sector partnership. **91 children enrolled** in KOT coordinated services.

217 individuals improved skills related to the adult role of parents/caregivers and 92 participated in one or more workshops or programs supporting effective parenting.

**19 individuals** completed training of trainers certification in **N.E.A.R Science.** 



access to child care through child care fee assistance, and child care quality improved when 168 trained providers gained knowledge and changed practices after receiving training.

**Our Annual Impact** 

**395 Birth To Five Head Start and Kids On Track (KOT)** participants demonstrated

### Helping People, Changing Lives

Life changing help was available at the Pro Action Hornell Family Resource Center (FRC) for Jessica Stephens and her two-year old son, Ben, and they didn't even know it!

Jessica was referred to the Hornell Family Resource Center for their Get Ready to GROW health and developmental screening event after noticing some concerns with Ben's speech and behavior. FRC staff helped Jessica register for the event and explained what to expect. While Ben didn't finish the entire screening, Jessica shared that staff were very patient, reassuring and understanding throughout the process.

After the screening, Jessica made an appointment with her son's pediatrician to seek more help. Ultimately, Ben was diagnosed with high-functioning autism and was provided medical resources and support.

Following the GROW screening at the Hornell FRC, Tonya, the coordinator, approached Jessica with information about upcoming "What You Do Matters" classes and encouraged her to attend. Jessica credits the classes with helping her understand what was happening with Ben's brain and they helped her to build coping skills within herself and Ben. What she learned in the workshops helped her rid herself of the self-doubt she was carrying and build confidence in her skills as a parent. She also learned ways to better manage her own emotions, and help Ben manage his. Tonya made recommendations to incorporate small changes to their reading and bedtime routine which made story time more enjoyable, and helped Ben begin sleeping in his own bed! Jessica credits Tonya, and the FRC staff with providing great advice, helpful recommendations and being there to validate her as a parent.

Jessica says "Overall, my experience with the Hornell Family Resource Center honestly has been life changing. My family runs smoother day-to-day, we have more coping mechanisms for my son, I am a calmer, more understanding mother now, and my family is significantly happier overall."





#### Jessica Stephens, and her son Ben

## BASIC NEEDS Support

By providing basic needs support, Pro Action reduces obstacles on the path to prosperity. Pro Action programs providing basic needs support alleviate the stress of adversity and scarcity, empowering people to advance their goals with the peace of mind that they will be nourished, warm and able to provide for the basic necessities of life. Even though 35% of individuals over age 18 served by Pro Action work, 83% have incomes below 200% of the poverty level. At the same time, the costs associated with living and working – including child care, transportation, housing and food – are out of reach. Community members surveyed identified, "Access to enough food," as their greatest need. With respect to housing, 32% of survey respondents told Pro Action that they needed help with repairs and improvements, and 53% said they needed lower utility costs. Both food insecurity and inefficient home energy systems are linked with poor health outcomes.

#### The Local Need

Nearly **13,000** people in the service area are **food insecure. 20%** of children in Steuben, **18%** of children in Yates **are food insecure.** 



**32%** of Yates and **24%** of Steuben households are Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. (ALICE)

Of households receiving SNAP, **39.3% have** children.

Nearly 70% of housing in our service area was built before 1980. Inefficient energy systems are linked with **poor health outcomes**.

**Steuben and Yates** counties both rank **below** the state average for **quality of health.** 

#### Our Reach

**1,985 WIC** participants received **supplemental food** (**1,413** infants/children).

**1,306 older adults** received a meal or farmers market coupons. **97,312 meals** were prepared and distributed.

**662 older adults** received nutrition education and or/counseling to **improve health** outcomes.



450 households in Yates County received food assistance and more than 5,945 food boxes were distributed. An

additional **7,050 boxes** of fresh food was distributed through a **self-serve program.** 

**102** customers received **Empower** or **Weatherization** services.

**303 families** received **assistance with HEAP** applications; **262** received **heating or cooling services** through HEAP.

#### **Our Annual Impact**

**572** women received prenatal nutrition, health education, breastfeeding support and education to provide ongoing nutritional quality to their family.

11,756 volunteer hours were contributed toward building a community where basic needs are met.

Total **volunteer hours** donated were **valued a**t



**74 Empower** or **Weatherization** customers preserved safe, affordable housing.



#### **Basic Needs**

#### Healthy and Healing at Home



**Donna Colvin** 





Donna Colvin has been a long-time educator, parent, and volunteer for many organizations throughout Steuben County. She loves to be active and on the move!

A year ago, Donna suffered a devastating injury after a fall down the stairs while substitute teaching. This forced her to slow down significantly and left her struggling to do tasks like grocery shopping and meal preparation.

Donna is active at the Presbyterian Church in Pulteney and knew that the church was a nutrition site for the Pro Action Senior Nutrition/Meal on Wheels Program. She had volunteered to assist in serving these meals at the church in the past and was familiar with the meals. Donna called the Pro Action Meals on Wheels program and explained her situation. She was immediately signed up for the program. She expected the need to be short-term, but almost a year later, the meals are still assisting Donna to remain independent. The daily meal deliveries act as a helpful check-in, every Monday through Friday. Donna's children appreciate the peace of mind knowing that their mom is checked on regularly and can remain healthy and healing at home. The best part of all, is that Donna reconnected with both a high school friend and a former student when they delivered her meals!

The Pro Action Senior Nutrition/Meals on Wheels program truly is "more than a meal" and assists nearly 900 older adults every year with home-delivered or congregate meals. Donna's story is one of so many and a reminder of how much a knock on the door can provide to a local senior. It brings hope. It brings health. It brings nutrition and care that can completely make their day. Donna says, *"it is good to have this healthy nutritional program available to folks who may need it at a time in their life."* 

### **THRIVING** Seniors

Social and geographic isolation, compounded by poor access to transportation, limits engagement in available health care and human services. This is true, particularly for Pro Action's Yates OFA customers. Large portions of the service area have no urban population (implying social and geographic isolation). Furthermore, Yates OFA participants link both driving and living alone as factors in their overall ability to live independently and participate in community life, and they rate transportation and food insecurity among their top needs.

Pro Action empowers seniors to thrive after age 60. We're sensitive to the unique needs of this age group and have assembled a range of programs to address them. Pro Action's Thriving Seniors family of programs provide information and services that help people over age 60 live life to the fullest while preserving their safety, health, independence, and quality of life. A truly comprehensive resource for residents in this age group, Yates Office for Aging (Yates OFA) provides everything from information and referral to life-saving communications devices to social opportunities to caregiver support and coordination.

#### The Local Need

**28%** of the population in Steuben and 29% of the population in Yates is **over** the age of 60.

20% of residents in the service area over age 60 live in poverty.

At least 162 Yates OFA customers are **frail** and 188 are **disabled**.

201 customers are over the age of 85.

Yates OFA customers rate transportation and access to food among their top needs.



#### **Our Reach**

261 seniors enrolled in Safety & Transportation Services.

**152** seniors received **emergency pendants** to guickly call for help, and 7 received radio tracking devices so they could be located if lost.

**102** participants received medical and 26 received non-medical transportation **C** services.



**1.529** older adults received information and assistance. including 341 who received unbiased insurance counseling; 14 had their cases accepted for free legal assistance.

**101** older adults participated in evidence-based wellness programs.

30 individuals received inhome services, including **case** management and personal care.

#### **Our Annual Impact**



At least 450 individuals maintained safe, independent living as a result of Yates OFA services.

**17 caregivers** received stress-reducing services including respite and counseling.

662 older adults received nutrition education or counseling to improve health outcomes and quality of life.

**37** older adults received telephone reassurance to increase social inclusion.



#### **Thriving Seniors**

#### Aging in Place

Pro Action's Office for Aging Services are never one-size fits all. Services are customized, and often change over time. Mary Hubbell's story is a good example of this, and it begins in 2009. It was at that time that Mary became a full-time caregiver to her husband. The Office for Aging provided support to Mary in the form of respite care, housekeeping assistance, and home delivered meals. This allowed Mary to focus on enjoying time with her husband, along with getting the rest she needed to support her own health and well-being. After Mary's husband passed away in 2015, Mary continued to utilize services to stay safely independent in her home. There are many ways that Pro Action Office for Aging assists Mary, along with numerous older adults residing in Yates County.

The Personal Emergency Response System (PERS) provides Mary with a medical alert system that can connect her to emergency professionals with the single push of a button! This provides reassurance to Mary, and to her loved ones, that help will be on the way quickly if she was to need it.

Mary can still drive locally but utilizes the OFA Transportation Services for out-of-town doctor visits. The Office for Aging Transportation Services travels to medical facilities in Geneva, Canandaigua, Rochester, Bath, Corning and more.

Health Insurance Information, Counseling, and Assistance program (HIICAP) and NY Connects have helped educate and support Mary in making the best health insurance related decisions for her situation, along with assisting with various paperwork and applications over the years. Both programs aim to help older adults stretch fixed incomes.

Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly Program (EISEP) provides light housekeeping and organizational assistance. This has been helpful to Mary as she is working on cleaning out her home and downsizing her belongings.



#### **Mary Hubbell**

Finally, to provide companionship and regular checkins, Mary receives calls from the Telephone Reassurance program which utilizes local volunteers to make regular calls to older adults throughout the community. These calls provide a vital link to not only assessing well-being, but often companionship and friendship too!

Mary is very appreciative of the services she receives from the Office for Aging and often says *"I don't know what I'd do without them."* We hope Mary can continue to enjoy living at home independently with her best cat companion Zuzu, for many years to come!

#### **Images & Moments of Action**

#### **Recycled Rides**

A deserving local mom experienced a life-changing event when she was presented with a new vehicle thanks to a partnership between Pro Action, GST BOCES, and car donor GIECO, along with the National Auto Body Council <sup>TM</sup> Recycled Rides<sup>®</sup> program. Brenda Martinez is a single mom of two special needs children and a full-time college student. Brenda had a vehicle until a wiring fire that left her without transportation. This made getting the proper medical care for her children Julia and Mason, quite difficult. As an infant, Mason has had several close calls that required trips to the emergency room, and it sometimes took the ambulance upwards of 45 minutes to reach her due to her rural residence. Julia has a history of seizures, and they often happen at school requiring Brenda to call for a cab to get her from school. Up until Mason's birth, Brenda was working along with going to college. After some time off, Brenda has returned to the workforce. Brenda says that having a car has change their lives...giving her to take the children for medical treatment, go to the grocery store and other appointments, and has allowed her to return to work to support her family.



### Pictured: Brenda Martinez and her children, along with students and instructors who coordinate the repair and gifting of the vehicle.

"Students in the program make the repairs on the car, do all of the cleaning and preparations up to this day. It's a big collaboration with our vendors, students, staff, and Pro Action. We teach the students day in and day out how to work on cars, and to be able to see them provide this act of service and gift back to the community is an amazing feeling." GST BOCES Instructor

#### **Images & Moments of Action**



New WIC Space at Pro Action's Bath Offices 117 E. Steuben Street

#### **Youth Development Program**

#### **WIC Improves Access**

After nearly 25 years of residing on the second floor of the Pro Action Bath building, the Women Infants and Children (WIC) program moved to their new home on the first floor, making it more easily accessible for families visiting for services. The new permanent clinic site features a comfortable waiting room and private exam rooms to meet with caregivers and their children. Yearly, Pro Action's WIC program serves over 1,400 children from infant to age 5 in Steuben County.

The Pro Action Youth Development Program (YDP) in Bath meets a variety of needs for children ages 8-18 in the Bath community and celebrated the grand opening of its permanent location at the St. Thomas Episcopal Church in the summer of 2022. Reverend Melanie Duguid-May of St. Thomas called the opening, a *"dream come true,"* adding that the Parish had a long-standing vision to serve as a community hub.

The center provides a safe, supervised place where young people can get homework help, play outdoors, do crafts, participate in STEAM and other enriching activities, or just relax! The program also supports the food security of participants by offering snacks and self-serve light meals for youth through a partnership with Food Bank of the Southern Tier. Together with community partners, this program will continue to enrich the youth experience and engage families in multi-generational services to support family strength and stability for many years to come.



#### **Images & Moments of Action**

#### **New Family Resource Center in Dansville**

The Dansville Area Family Resource Center opened last year after Dansville Central School District reached out to help them meet a need in their community. They had heard positive reviews from Hornell City School District about the Pro Action Family Resource Center they sponsor at one of their buildings, and wanted something similar for their school community. The school district brought this to the attention of regional funder EnCompass, who determined it had interest in investing in the Dansville Area Family Resource Center, and fully funded it for the first 18 months of operation. Since opening, they've hosted many events and activities for both children and their families, along with drop-in and play days for children and their care givers to have fun and learn, all while building new friendships!









#### **Answering the Call for Food**

**Over 2,400** boxes of fresh and perishable food was distributed in Yates County through pop up food pantries throughout the year, an estimated 8-10,000 pounds of food each month.









#### **Spreading Holiday Cheer**

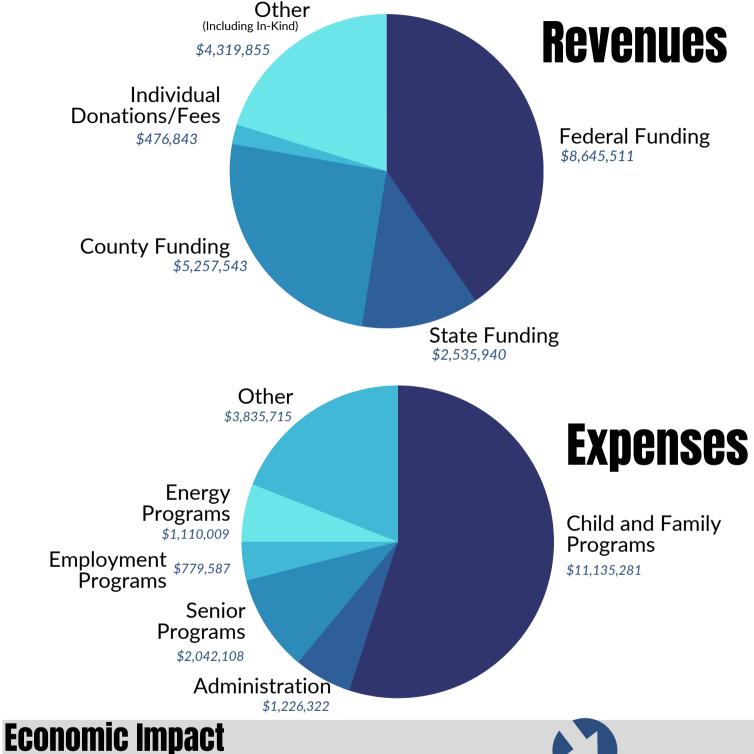
With the help of many community volunteers, Pro Action's Community Action Angels (formerly CHAMP) Holiday program provided assistance **135 children** and **41 families** in 2022.

#### **Staff Service Recognition**

Pro Action staff were honored for their years of service. **Congratulations and thank you** to the following staff for their dedication to Pro Action!



\*Financial report reflects a period of 1/1/2022 to 12/31/22 while program service and outcome figures reflect a period of 10/1/21 through 9/30/22



Employees	501
Employee Salaries	\$8,489,373
Senior Employment Salaries	\$223,017
Youth Employment Salaries	\$157,334
WIC Coupons Redeemed	\$1,166,369
Paid to Daycare Providers for Subsidized Care	\$2,791,160



#### **Community Action Works**

#### **Coming Full Circle**

Ta'nayzah, affectionately known as "Tay", was just 14 when she had her first interaction with Pro Action as a youth participant at the Hornell Area Concern for Youth Center. This was the youngest age to qualify for a spot in Pro Action's Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP). Tay was already attending the youth center, so she thought why not work there. This was the beginning of an opportunity that would change her life in even bigger ways!

Growing up, Ta'nayzah's family consisted of her mom, grandma, brother, and in 2014 came a little sister. Ta'nayzah's mom struggled with drug addiction, leaving Tay bouncing between her mom and grandmother's home. In 2018, her mom was incarcerated for two years, so during those two summers, working in SYEP really helped her and her family financially. Tay had to buy school clothes for her little sister and had to help her mom with commissary personal care needs.



During her involvement with the SYEP program, Ta'nayzah learned about job applications, interviews, how to dress at work, and even how to shake hands properly. It was her first experience learning how to be a successful employee in the workplace.

After graduating from high school, Tay was looking for a place where she could share her love of working with youth. She attended a Pro Action open interview event and was first offered a position at the Dansville Family Resource Center. Later Tay was asked to assist at the Youth Development Program (YDP) in Bath where she

now holds the position of Program Assistant.

Since Ta'nayzah's arrival to the YDP program, she has brought her positivity and youthful perspective to serving youth ages 8-18. Tay provides homework help and assists with social and physical recreation activities daily. She has taken on the challenge of starting new programs to provide youth development opportunities. She is a role model and leader. Her leadership guided the youth in writing a successful Triangle Fund grant proposal to purchase a new ping pong table for the YDP called, "Operation Ping Pong". Her enthusiasm for this project inspired all youth participants to brainstorm a request for Healthy Habits Through Social Recreation. Ta'nayzah was instrumental in building self-efficacy in the youth attending YDP, that through their efforts of brainstorming and grant writing, they now see that their actions have made a difference in their afterschool community.



Ta'nayzah, and Youth Development Program participants

When asked about working at the Youth Development Program Tay says, "*I feel right at home.*"



### CHAMPIONS OF EQUITY ProAction of Steuben and Yates, Inc.

Pro Action is 1 of over 1000 Community Action Agencies throughout the United States, and has been serving Steuben and Yates Counties since 1964.

#WeR1000Strong