



Let us help you learn how to live your best life!

FSS Program Newsletter Spring 2007 Edition

FSS Program Graduates Receive Thousands in Escrow Funds

When Lelia Taylor joined the Family Self-Sufficiency Program in March of 2004, she was interested in repairing her credit, learning how to manage and save her money, and eventually purchase a home for herself and her two children.

Three years later, Lelia is almost \$15,000 closer to making her dreams come true. When Lelia first joined the FSS Program, she was not working. Soon after, she found a great job and began receiving a monthly escrow deposit of over \$450!

Since joining FSS, Lelia has completed all the Money Smart workshops and Home

Buyer's Education, joined the Savings Plus Program, and is actively saving towards a home.

This month, Lelia graduated from Family Self-Sufficiency and received a check for nearly \$15,000. She plans to use the money to pay off outstanding debt, and save the rest for a down payment for her family's dream home.

Congratulations, Lelia!



Becky Lively recently received an escrow check of over \$8,000 after spending five years on FSS, working hard at her job cleaning houses. Becky used the money to pay off her car and other debts, open a retirement account for herself, and invest in a high-yield savings account. Next up for Becky: she hopes to join the Savings Plus program and begin saving towards buying a home for herself and her 3 children.



Website Spotlight

Check out these great websites!

www.feedthepig.org
Great site about debt, savings, and more!

www.moneycentral.msn.com
Check out their credit score estimator, quizzes, and articles for great tips!

www.needymeds.com
Links you to programs that help low-income families get the medicines they need without breaking the bank.

www.ourkidsonline.org
Henderson County's site to help parents find local resources, and find great parenting tips!

WCCA's Family Self-Sufficiency Programs:

- Self-Sufficiency
- Family Self-Sufficiency (tied to Section 8)
- Savings Plus matched savings program
- Section 8 Home Ownership Voucher Program
- FREE Money Smart Workshop Series

Call 693-1711 to learn more about our great programs!

Savvy Financial Consumers 2006-2007

Completing the Money Smart Workshop series is a very important part of being a participant in the FSS and SavingsPlus Programs. The classes are fun, easy ways to learn about managing your money while meeting new friends and finding new resources to help you achieve your goals.

The following participants completed all the Money Smart Workshops:

- Ryan/ Marcia Barger
- Rachel Buchanan
- Jessica Cox
- Amy Croteau
- April Killough
- Valerie Koch

- Barbara Layman
- Becky Lively
- Tanya McCall
- Tamra Smith
- Lelia Taylor
- Lorrie Whaley

Congratulations for all of your hard work!



Calling all Family Self-Sufficiency Program Participants!

—If you haven't already completed and returned the FSS Program Survey, please do so ASAP!

We are always trying to find ways to make the FSS Program more successful, and we need your feedback to find out what you like, and what you'd like us to work on!

If you need another copy of the survey, please call me at 693-1711 or 866-670-9222 and I'll send one your way. Thanks a million for your help!



—All participants should have signed the FSS Action Plan Addendums by now, but there are several stragglers who have not returned theirs yet! The Goal Plan Addendum outlines very important changes to FSS Program rules and timelines. If you did not receive the addendum, or need another copy, please call me so I can send you another right away.

-Don't forget about the FSS Program Advisory Committee meeting, at 6:00 pm on Weds, April 18th! This is your chance to talk with the FSS Program staff about your ideas, your suggestions, and your favorite parts of the FSS Program. We'll be meeting in the 2nd floor conference room at the Hendersonville office of WCCA. We'll serve a pizza snack.

Small Business Spotlight

While many folks are working towards buying a house or going back to school, more and more participants on FSS and SavingsPlus are building up their own small businesses.

For almost 10 years, Tokisha Ingram has owned her own salon on 8th Ave. in Hendersonville. Thanks to her hard work and dedication, the rapidly growing full-service hair salon now serves more than 25 dedicated clients and walk-ins.

Jessica Cox is a participant in both SavingsPlus and FSS. Last year, Jessica opened a daycare substitute referral service called A Hand to Help. Jessica helps short-staffed child care agencies (or parents!) find an extra "hand to help" watch the kids. She is already considering an expansion into neighboring counties, things are going so well for her! She is also a student, and home-schools her 3 children.

Ready to get started on your own business? Contact Mountain Bizworks, (formerly Mountain Microenterprise Fund) at 828-692-5826 to learn about the small business development courses they offer to the community.



How to Save \$500 (and why it's important!)

Having an emergency savings account is a crucial step in achieving financial freedom and relieving stress. With just \$500 in the bank, you are prepared for car or home repairs, emergency illness, or anything else that comes your way. Having money in emergency savings also eliminates the need to borrow using credit, or from friends or family in case of an emergency.

Here's how to get started saving the money.

- *Use your tax refund to open a savings account.
- *Try a "buy nothing" month, where only REAL necessities are purchased (no eating out, no movies, no new clothes!)
- *Save your spare change. It adds up!!
- *Sell stuff. Have a yard sale!
- *Review your bills. Can you trim down the cell phone, internet, or cable costs?
- *Set up your paycheck to direct deposit a small amount into savings each month.
- *Before spending, ask, Is it really an Emergency? Can I use other resources to meet this need?

Ready to start getting serious about saving? Talk to your Self-Sufficiency Coach today about developing a savings plan of your own!



MANNA Produce Distribution Provides Fresh Veggies to All!

Eating fresh fruits and vegetables every day has been proven time and again to help adults and children lead healthy, happy lives. Fresh produce provides important vitamins and minerals that our bodies need to survive.

Been wondering lately how you can fit more fruits and veggies in your family's diet without spending a lot of money?

WCCA has partnered with MANNA Food Bank to offer a FREE produce distribution once a month to the community.

All you have to do is come to WCCA's King Creek Head Start Center Community Room (across the street from our Program Services building) on the first Wednesday of each month, from 11 am to 12 pm, or until the veggies are gone!

Bring your own bags or boxes to take home your goodies!

For more information, or to receive a schedule of upcoming produce distribution dates, please call us at 693-1711.



GARDEN VOUCHERS ARE READY FOR PICK-UP NOW— STOP BY WCCA TO PICK UP YOURS, AND GROW YOUR OWN VEGETABLE GARDEN THIS SPRING!

College Students Prepare for Graduation in May 2007

This May, two SavingsPlus graduates will graduate again— this time, from college!

Rachel Buchanan will graduate from AB Tech's Dental Hygiene Program after working with the Savings Plus Program for almost four years on her goals. Rachel used Savings Plus funds to help her pay for a computer, uniforms, and equipment for her program as well as helping pay her tuition and books.

Jessica Cox, in FSS and Savings Plus, stands to complete her AA Degree in Early Childhood Education this spring at BRCC. Jessica then plans to begin work on her Bachelor's degree through Appalachian State in their Birth-Kindergarten program.

Tanya McCall, another recent graduate of Savings Plus, will receive her Bachelor's Degree in Business Leadership from Brevard College. Tanya first joined SavingsPlus in 2002, and used the money she saved plus her matching funds to pay for her senior year at Brevard College. She has maintained a 4.0 GPA while working full-time and raising her son, and was recently inducted into the Alpha Chi Honor Society.

Says Tanya: "Savings Plus is a great program. It has helped me achieve my dreams. All of the people involved in the program are a great source of moral support and information. They are always extremely helpful. I have learned a lot from the classes, and

have encouraged my friends to take advantage of this great resource."

Watch for our Fall 2007 workshop on College Funding Ideas to help you get a jump-start on your education!

Rachel Buchanan



Tanya McCall

Upcoming Money Smart Workshops

Investing Basics

Tues, March 27, 6:00-8:00 pm
WCCA H'ville
2nd Floor Conference Room
(Required for Savings Plus)

All About Insurance

Monday, April 2, 6:00-8:00 pm
WCCA H'ville
2nd Floor Conference Room
(Required for Savings Plus)

Credit

Monday, April 16, 6-8 pm
WCCA Brevard
1st floor Conference Room
(Required for FSS & SP)

Coming Up; Post-Ownership Workshop for Present and Future Homeowners!

Let Us Help You
Learn How to Live
Your Best Life!

WCCA
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(866) 670-9222

We're online!
www.wcca.net



Four Myths about Your Credit Score

As important as it is to maintain or achieve a good credit score (above 650, usually), exactly HOW you do that remains a mystery for many of us. The advice seems to change all the time! If you're serious about building good credit, read these four credit-scoring myths from Liz Pulliam Weston, a financial analyst for MSN Money.

Myth # 1. Closing Accounts Can Help Your Credit Score. Actually, closing an account may HURT your score! Your credit score is based on the amount of debt you have, compared to the amount of credit you have available to use. (So, if you have two credit cards that total \$10,000, and have only spent \$1,000 on those cards, you're in OK shape.)

Myth #2. Checking Your Credit Report & Score Hurts Your Credit. Ordering your own credit report and score doesn't hurt you. Having lots of cell phone companies, banks, car dealerships, etc pull your credit score CAN hurt you. Shop around and compare rates and prices BEFORE you have a company run your credit!

Myth #3. Credit Counseling Hurts Your Score As Much as Having a Bankruptcy. Actually, credit counseling isn't factored into the calculation of your credit score. And having a non-profit such as Consumer Credit Counseling Services help you straighten out your credit is a great way to get back on track (or stay on track!) with your credit.

Myth #4. Your FICO Credit Score Isn't The Only Score You Should Check. Actually, each of the 3 main reporting agencies, Equifax, Transunion, and Experian, all use the FICO score. They just give it different names, and the information each agency has on you can change your score slightly. It IS a good idea to pull a credit report from each agency every year, to check for any mistakes.

To pull a FREE copy of your credit report, call 1-877-322-8228 or log online to www.annualcreditreport.com. A credit score costs about \$7.

Need FREE professional advice about your credit? Call Consumer Credit Counseling Services at 828-255-5166.

