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Capital Region Education Council

Laura Gonzalez
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Kim O’Brien Green
Director of Development

Troylyn Grimes
Administrative Assistant

Beckah Kilpatrick
Development Assistant

Melissa Mendoza
Community Programs Specialist

Regina Petrine
Finance Manager

Rebecca Scorso
Director of Finance and Administration

Operation Fuel Staff

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Beckah Kilpatrick
Development Assistant
Executive Letter

Dear Friends,

This past fiscal year, Operation Fuel provided more than $3.1 million in energy assistance to more than 7,200 Connecticut households. We were able to accomplish all of this because of you, our generous donors and community partners.

Thank you for your dedicated support!

We know, however, that the energy affordability crisis is not going away. With Operation Fuel’s limited funds, we can only help a fraction of the 320,000 Connecticut households that are struggling to pay their energy bills.

Families and individuals are forced to choose between paying their energy bills, buying nutritious food, or paying their rent or mortgage. Many of our applicants are working families, people with chronic illnesses, and the elderly on a fixed income. This is not surprising as Connecticut has a high cost of living.

Operation Fuel is continually looking for ways to meet the needs of our applicants. In April, we started a pilot water assistance program with the Metropolitan District (MDC). With funding from the MDC, Operation Fuel has provided water utility assistance grants to over 100 lower-income MDC customers who were struggling to pay their water bills and were facing termination of service. We hope to grow this program in the coming year.

Our Home System Repair and Replacement program is another way that Operation Fuel is helping people with their energy needs. The program, which helps homeowners with the repair or replacement of furnaces and water systems, has been very successful and extremely beneficial for households that otherwise could not afford these critical resources.

Our organization has a very tight budget so we need to be extremely cost-efficient. We currently are streamlining our application process. When this is implemented, it will save Operation Fuel money while increasing our ability to meet our applicants’ needs and make it possible for energy vendors to submit their invoices electronically.

In early 2019, Operation Fuel will allow the public to experience what living in a freezing home is like by holding the first Connecticut event of its kind: Operation Fuel – Ice House Presented by Eversource Energy. We will be building a house made of ice to showcase the critical importance of heat and electricity during the year. The event will be held on the grounds of the Old State House in downtown Hartford and will give people a chance to experience how thousands of Connecticut families and individuals live during the winter. We want to raise awareness of this serious issue of surviving without heat and lights at the coldest time of year.

Operation Fuel will continue to advocate for Connecticut’s most vulnerable population. More than half of our recipients are elderly, children under the age of 18, premature infants and people with chronic illnesses. With the generosity of our supporters and partners, we will keep the heat and electricity on for as many households as possible.

Sincerely,

Brenda M. Watson
Executive Director

We Advocate. We Collaborate. We Serve.
A Year in Review

We are extremely grateful to all of our donors and supporters who made it possible for Operation Fuel to provide more than $3.3 million in energy assistance to 18,163 individuals from 7,732 Connecticut households this past fiscal year. Almost half of the people we helped were either elderly or children under the age of 18. Our recipients are families and individuals who are in financial crisis and have nowhere else to turn.

Operation Fuel is the only year-round, statewide emergency energy assistance organization in Connecticut. We assist with all types of energy including heating oil, natural gas, electricity and propane. We partner with other nonprofit organizations, businesses, individuals, and government agencies to ensure that Connecticut households have year-round access to affordable energy.

In recent years, Operation Fuel has become the voice for lower-income households that are struggling with the high cost of energy. There are now over 300,000 Connecticut households that can’t afford their energy bills. It is our mission to keep Connecticut families and individuals safe in their homes and to make sure that everyone has heat and electricity.

Fuel Banks Play Significant Role
Our fuel banks make it possible for households statewide to have access to emergency energy assistance from Operation Fuel. We have 109 fuel banks that are located strategically across the state. They are part of municipal human and social service departments, community agencies, nonprofits and religious organizations. It is because of our fuel banks and their dedicated staff that Operation Fuel is able to serve so many people throughout Connecticut.

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Add-a-Dollar Program
Our Add-a-Dollar program is an easy way to support Operation Fuel. Through the years, it has grown into a significant source of funding. Operation Fuel uses 100% of all Add-a-Dollar donations for energy assistance. We encourage all utility customers to consider adding one dollar or more for Operation Fuel to their monthly bill.

This past fiscal year, Operation Fuel raised $671,585 through the Add-a-Dollar program; $536,585 was from utility customers’ monthly bill. $135,000 was in utility provided shareholder-matching funds. Connecticut gas and electric utilities, which serve more than 75,000 customers, participate in Operation Fuel’s Add-a-Dollar program. Some utility companies have a shareholder-matching program that adds additional funds to the money raised through the Add-a-Dollar program.

Energy Affordability Crisis
Home energy costs continue to be a tremendous burden for more than 320,000 Connecticut households, according to the Home Energy Affordability Gap: Connecticut (2017) report. Many of Operation Fuel’s applicants have reported being late on rent or mortgage payments in order to pay energy bills, while some households keep their homes at unsafe temperatures to lower their energy costs.

Operation Fuel continues to look for ways that people can reduce their energy expenses. Our Home System Repair and Replacement program helps lower-income homeowners save money on their energy bills by repairing or replacing older furnaces and water systems. This program has been very successful and extremely beneficial for homeowners who otherwise could not afford these critical resources.

We are also advocating for a comprehensive strategy that will help lower energy bills long-term, such as getting households to participate in energy efficiency programs and using renewable energy options.
Statewide Energy Assistance Conference

Operation Fuel held its annual statewide Energy Assistance Conference in October to help fuel banks and their staff prepare for the upcoming winter. The conference focused on the availability of energy assistance and various programs that are offered by the utility companies to help lower- and moderate-income households manage their energy expenses.

The conference was held in partnership with Eversource Energy and Avangrid subsidiaries: United Illuminating, Southern Connecticut Gas, and Connecticut Natural Gas. Along with Operation Fuel and our fuel banks, representatives from the utility companies and key state agencies participated in the conference.
As part of its mission, Operation Fuel works with other nonprofit organizations and business partners to ensure that vulnerable families and individuals are able to keep their heat and electricity running.

Our Community Partners

As part of its mission, Operation Fuel works with other nonprofit organizations and business partners to ensure that vulnerable families and individuals are able to keep their heat and electricity running.

Keeping Families from Being Homeless

Operation Fuel’s Homelessness Intervention and Prevention Program (HIPP) helps to prevent and eliminate homelessness that results from unaffordable home energy costs. This past fiscal year, HIPP provided $23,488 in energy assistance grants to 31 families and individuals who were either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

HIPP provides energy assistance grants to people who need to pay past due energy/utility bills to either remain in their home or move back to permanent housing after being homeless. Applicants for HIPP must be below 75% of the state median income to qualify for the program.

Since it began, HIPP has provided $181,314 in energy assistance to 376 Connecticut households and made it possible for 688 people to either resume or maintain housing. HIPP is an example of how Operation Fuel works with other nonprofits to help households with their energy needs. Operation Fuel’s community partners for HIPP this past fiscal year were: Inaprica, Inc. in Stamford, Mercy Housing and Shelter Corporation, which serves Greater Hartford and Middlesex County, and Operation Hope in Fairfield.

Water Assistance Program with MDC

In April, Operation Fuel started a pilot water assistance program with the Metropolitan District (MDC). To date, Operation Fuel, with funding from the MDC, has provided more than $44,000 in water utility assistance grants to 111 lower-income MDC customers who were struggling to pay their water bills and were facing termination of service. We hope to grow this program in the coming year.

Partnering with Eversource Energy on New Start

For the past few years, Operation Fuel has partnered with Eversource Energy to increase enrollment in the utility’s New Start program, which helps to eliminate an outstanding balance for lower-income customers who meet specific eligibility requirements, including income. This year Operation Fuel assisted 1,012 households with a New Start enrollment, re-enrollment or budget payment.
New Partnership with The Tiny Miracles Foundation

Operation Fuel began partnering with The Tiny Miracles Foundation, of Fairfield County, to help families who are struggling financially and are at risk of losing heat or electricity while caring for their premature infants. The Tiny Miracles Foundation helps families with premature babies by providing support, information, services and supplies for the families during and following their hospital stay. Since becoming aware of Operation Fuel’s programs, The Tiny Miracles Foundation has been referring families, who need energy assistance, to their local fuel banks.

Staff Update

This past fiscal year, two new employees became part of the Operation Fuel team. Rebecca Scorso joined Operation Fuel in September 2017 as its new Director of Finance and Administration after our previous director retired. For the past 11 years, Rebecca had served as Managing Director of the Charter Oak Cultural Center in Hartford. She holds a BA degree from the University of Hartford and brings more than two decades of experience to Operation Fuel.

Troylyn Grimes joined Operation Fuel in April 2018 as an Administrative Assistant. She provides administrative, clerical and project support to Operation Fuel’s leadership staff. Before joining Operation Fuel, Troylyn worked for eight years at the Community Renewal Team including two years as an energy intake specialist. She said, “I am honored to be a member of the dedicated team at Operation Fuel.”

Rebecca and Troylyn have significant experience with nonprofits and we are very happy they are part of the Operation Fuel team.
Financials

Statement of Financial Position
For the year ended June 30, 2018

ASSETS
Cash and Cash Equivalents 2,266,155
Grants and Other Receivables 119,180
Prepaid Expense 17,825
Security Deposit 3,341
Total Current Assets 2,406,501

OTHER ASSETS
Property and Equipment 70,383
(Net of depreciation)
Total Assets 2,476,883

Liabilities and Net Assets
For the year ended June 30, 2018

LIABILITIES
Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities 110,611
Charitable Gift Annuity Payment Liability 5,783
Total Current Liabilities 116,394

NET ASSETS
Unrestricted 2,258,519
Temporarily Restricted 101,970
Total Net Assets 2,360,489
Total Liabilities and Net Assets 2,476,883
Revenue and Expenses
For the Year Ended June 30, 2018

REVENUES AND SUPPORT FOR PROGRAMS

Energy Related Industry 14,815
Governmental Grants - State 2,100,000
Add-a-Dollar 536,585
Foundation Grants 317,469
Individuals 354,927
Utility Shareholder Match 135,000
Corporations and Small Businesses 37,596
Faith Communities 23,941
Program Contracts 121,488
Special Events 24,425
Interest Income 7,236

Grand Total Revenue and Support 3,673,483

EXPENSES

Energy Assistance Programs 4,104,347
Administrative 195,835
Fundraising 289,841

Total Expenses 4,590,023

Financials

- Energy Assistance Programs: 89.4%
- Fundraising: 6.3%
- Administrative: 4.3%
- Governmental Grants - State: 57.2%
- Add-a-Dollar: 14.6%
- Individuals: 9.7%
- Foundation Grants: 8.6%
- Utility Shareholder Match: 3.7%
- Corporations and Small Businesses: 3.3%
- Faith Communities: 0.7%
- Special Events: 0.6%
- Energy Related Industry: 0.4%
- Interest Income: 0.2%