

Free Tax Preparation

GECAC VITA Site Will Open January 23rd

For the fourth year in a row, GECAC will be a walk-in Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site. Fifteen GECAC staff members have completed or are in the process of completing their IRS training to become certified preparers.

GECAC's walk-in site is open every Tuesday—Thursday from 9-11 and 12:30-3:30 from January 23rd until April 15th. Individuals and families earning up to \$48,000 (with children) or \$25,000 (without children) are eligible to have their taxes prepared for free. When coming to the VITA site, people should bring the following:

- Valid **picture ID** – Your driver's license or other state issued photo ID card, and for spouse if applicable.
- Copy of **last year's tax return** (if you have it).
- Social Security cards** for yourself and everyone in the household you support, including your spouse and children, grandchildren, relatives and foster children.
- Income documentation including:
 - W-2 Forms** and other wage statements you and your spouse received.
 - All **1099 Forms** showing other income received in 2011.
- The **dates of birth** for all people you are claiming as dependents.
- For direct deposit of your refund or to split your refund into more than one account, bring your routing number or bring a **blank check** from your bank account.

If any of the following apply to you, bring documentation with you:

- Receipt for day care expenses** paid in the past year, including the provider's name, address and federal ID # or Social Security Number.
- If you received Advance child tax credit payment in 2011, bring in **Notice 1319**, showing proof of amount received.
- Mortgage company statements**
- Adoption Expenses**
- Alimony paid or received**
- Any notices received from the IRS or state tax office.
- Property tax receipts**
- College tuition & student loan interest statements** (Form 1098-T)
- Additional forms of income such as:
 - Prizes and awards
 - Scholarships and fellowships
 - Lottery/ gambling winnings

If you lost or do not have all of these items, you can still get your taxes prepared. Call the IRS help line at 1-800-829-1040 to find out what you need to do and how to obtain replacement documents. If filing jointly, both the filer and spouse must be present to sign.

**EARN
KEEP
SAVE it**

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*An informational newsletter
for GECAC employees*

Georgia Del Freo, Editor

Employee of the Month



Annjerrica Prince

January's Employee of the Month is **Annjerrica Prince**, Education, Training & Community Services Division. As a Housing Counselor, Annjerrica is responsible for assisting clients with their housing and utility needs. Her nominator noted her strengths as not only helping clients with receiving needed services but also with "taking the time to listen with a sympathetic ear." Annjerrica also has served as the Activities Association President for the past year. In this role, Annjerrica "makes sure that every detail is taken care of in all association events." Her nominator believes that "the morale has increased because of the life that she brings to the agency when decorating and the special touches she brings."

*Way to go Annjerrica,
GECAC Employee
of the Month!*

Aging — Rep. Lauri Jordan-Jewell

Welcome to the Aging Division: **Barry Shapiro**, who will be an Aging Assessor, and **Mary Lynam**, who will be a Waiver Case Manager. Great to have you both!

Child Development — Rep. Mae Roberts

Head Start and Pre-K Counts need your help. If you know of a 3 or 4 year old child, please call **Lisa Bryant** at extension 490 for Head Start or **Maria Candelaria** at 548 for Pre-K to get the child enrolled in one of our preschool programs.

Executive/Finance — Rep. Vivian McCullum/ Linda DeFelice

The Family Action Team, a part of Erie Together, is currently accepting applications for families interested in participating in the program. To be eligible, families must have an income below 200% of the poverty guidelines and live within the Snoops neighborhood (East 12th to East 15th, French to Wayne Streets). Contact **Kathy Stearns** at ext. 652 or **Ed Sitter** at ext. 439 for more information.

ET&CS — Rep. Linda Waid

An on-site performance review of the agency was conducted by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development program specialist on January 9th. All requirements were met & GECAC has passed to remain a HUD certified counseling agency.

Workforce Dev. — Rep. Lori Zampogna

The PA CareerLink[®] Erie County will be offering new workshops. They range from interviewing and job searching to industry-specific presentations. All of these workshops are available to anyone interested. Those interested can go to the PA CareerLink[®] Erie County website at www.cwds.state.pa.us. To access the events, simply scroll down through the page, and click on "Search Events". You can then search on events by date, or click on "county" to see what is available in Erie County. If you have any questions regarding signing up for an event, you can call 455-9966 x502.

For your information, the hours for the PA CareerLink[®] Erie County have changed. The hours are Monday through Thursday from 8:30-4:30. Friday hours are from 8:30-2. This will unify the schedules across a six county region to better serve customers and provide for regional staff development.

GECAC Activities News

The 2011 Activities Association Representatives and Officers would like to thank you for all of your support and participation in 2011. We are in a new year, and hope we can continue to bring more new and innovative ideas your way in 2012.

New representatives and officers to be announced soon.

Techno Tidbit: Avoid a Cyber Attack

Home computers are a common target of cybercriminals. There are actions you can take to help protect your family's privacy and decrease your odds of a cyberattack.

Keep a Clean Machine.

- ◆ **Keep security software current:** Having the latest security software, web browser, and operating system are the best defenses against viruses, malware, and other online threats.
- ◆ **Automate software updates:** Many software programs will automatically connect and update to defend against known risks. Turn on automatic updates if that's an available option.
- ◆ **Protect all devices that connect to the Internet:** Along with computers, smart phones, gaming systems, and other web-enabled devices need protection from viruses and malware.

Protect Your Personal Information.

- ◆ **Secure your accounts:** Ask for protection beyond passwords. Many account providers now offer additional ways to verify who you are before you conduct business on that site.
- ◆ **Make passwords long and strong:** Combine capital and lowercase letters with numbers and symbols to create a more secure password.

Be Web Wise.

- ◆ **Think before you act:** Be wary of communications that implore you to act immediately, offers something that sounds too good to be true, or asks for personal information.



StaySafeOnline.org
National Cyber Security Alliance