

CONTENTS

Page 1 Health Care Reform
Page 2 Free Tax Preparation
Page 3-4 Earned Income Tax Credit
Page 5 Rothenburg School
Page 6 US Census
Page 7 Announcements

**HEALTH CARE REFORM
ROUND-UP**

With health care reform legislation now in its final stages, grassroots leaders from Contact Center, representing low-income working families in Cincinnati, are urging Members of the House of Representatives and Senate to make affordability a priority in the merging of the House and Senate versions of the health care legislation.

Contact Center leaders along with 200 leaders from across the country gathered on January 13th at the Rayburn Building on Capitol Hill to hold a “National Health Care Affordability Summit”.

“It is not enough to make health care accessible. We need to also make coverage affordable to protect low-income working families from cost they cannot afford,” said Cassandra Barham. Ms. Barham attended the Summit and will be directly affected by the health care bill. The House bill helps working families. The Senate bill leaves them behind. The National Health Care Affordability Summit on Capitol Hill was sponsored by PICO National Network, SEIU, Health Rights Organizing Project, Community Catalyst, and Families USA.

FREE TAX PREPARATION DAYS
at Contact Center , 1227 Vine St. , Cincinnati
Sunday, January 24 , 1 - 3 PM
Sunday, February 7 & 21, 1 - 3 PM
Sunday, March 7 & 21, 1 - 3 PM

Call 381-4242 to register for tax preparation appointment.

What to Bring when having your taxes prepared

- Valid Picture ID
- Copy of 2008 tax return (if you have it)
- Social Security Numbers or Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITIN) for you, your spouse and any children born before Dec. 31, 2009
- Income documentation including :
 - W-2 Forms from all jobs worked in 2009
 - All 1099 Forms showing other income received in 2009
- If having direct deposit, bring Checking or Savings Account number and routing number

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

- Child care expenses, including provider's address and federal ID #
 - Mortgage company statements
 - Adoption expenses
 - Alimony paid or received
- any notices received from the IRS or state tax office
- Property tax bills
 - College tuition and student loan interest statements.
 - Additional forms of income such as: Prizes and awards; Scholarships and fellowships; Lottery/gambling winnings

Many thanks to Tom Gilday, Professor, and his students at Thomas Moore College for their volunteer tax preparation services!

The Earned Income Credit and the Child Tax Credit:

You Could owe Less in Taxes and Get Cash Back from the IRS!
If you worked in 2009- full-time or part-time- you may qualify.
Even if you don't owe income tax you can get the credits.

If You Had Children Living With You for More than Half of 2009:

- o For the **Earned Income Credit**, children must be under 19 in 2009. (Full-time students can be under 24, children who are permanently and totally disabled can be any age.)
- o For the **Child Tax Credit**, children must be under 17 in 2009.

If You Did Not Have Children Living With You:

- o You may claim the EIC if you were between ages 25 and 64 in 2009.

Question: How Much Can I Earn? How Large a Tax Credit Can I Get?

- o For the EIC, if you have 1 child and you have earned income less than \$35,463, you could claim an EIC up to \$3,043.
- o For the EIC, if you have 2 children and you have earned income up to \$40,295, you could claim an EIC up to \$5,028.
- o For the EIC, If you have NO children and have earned income less than \$13,440, you could receive \$457.
- o For the Child Tax Credit (CTC), if you have 1 or more children and you have earned more than \$3,000, you can claim a CTC up to \$1,000 per child.

- o NOTE: EIC income limits for married workers are \$5,000 higher.

Question: What if I'm Not a U.S. Citizen?

Immigrants who work and meet other guidelines may qualify.

For the EIC: worker, spouse and any child claimed needs a valid Social Security Number.

For the CTC: either a Social Security Number or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) is needed.

Also - Make Sure You Get Your Making Work Pay Credit-an extra \$400!

Many workers got the new Making Work Pay Credit in 2009 in their paychecks. But if you were self-employed, or didn't earn enough to have income tax withheld, you can claim this credit on your tax return.

If You Work, You Can Get These Tax Credits and Not Lose Other Public Benefits.

EIC, CTC and Making Work Pay Credit refunds won't count as income when you apply for or renew benefits like Food Stamps (now called SNAP), SSI, Medicaid, cash assistance, or public housing. Some benefit programs may have a limit on how long you can keep your refund in a bank account.

PARENTS AND FRIENDS OF ROTHENBERG

by Will Wallace, Organizer

Over-the-Rhine for Education in Public Schools (OTREPS) would like people to know we want all families including low and moderate-income families to have access to a quality Cincinnati Public School. That was and is our vision for the kids, students and parents in the Over-the-Rhine community. Over the last eighteen months and through a lot of hard work by parents of school-aged kids, concerned residents, community volunteers and others, we now believe a Cincinnati Public School in Over-the-Rhine can and will be realized.

That School is Rothenberg Preparatory. OTREPS was not only instrumental in preventing this school from being demolished, we also helped lead the charge toward production and renovation. And while we are proud of our accomplishments, we refuse to stand pat or sit on our hands. We realize there is much work to be done. One of the things we talk about is the renewed spirit etched on the faces of many of the kids that attend this school. We will be working really hard to communicate that message to families and neighbors in the Over-the-Rhine community as well as surrounding areas like Mt. Auburn, and hope those families and neighbors will tell other families and neighbors so that their kids will choose

to attend this great public school. Everyone is excited about Rothenberg's future. Everyone is equally excited about the renovation. However, the renovation will not happen overnight. The architects and builders will need a lot of time to accomplish this task. In the meantime, OTREPS will be doing several things:

1. We plan to continue to work closely with and build on our relationships with members at the Parent Resource Center.
2. We welcome partnering with the "redesigned" Rothenberg staff and administration and Principal Alicia Smith to help bring quality education to Rothenberg Academy.
3. We think our ability to employ outreach in the school and the community by talking to parents of school-aged kids will be key. We believe this will enable us to help muster increased support for and lead to increased enrollment at Rothenberg Preparatory Academy.

JOBS! JOBS! JOBS!
THE CENSUS IS HIRING!
Call Toll-free 1-866-861-2010

GET READY FOR THE CENSUS!

The Census is a count of every-one living in the United States every 10 years.

The next census will be on April 1, 2010.

It takes less than 10 minutes to complete the Census and it has just 10 questions.

Federal law protects the personal information you share during the census.

Census data is used to make decisions about what community ser-

vices to provide, and to distribute \$300 billion in federal funds to local, state and tribal governments each year.

Cincinnati is estimated to be undercounted by approximately 45,000 people.

For each person not counted, the City of Cincinnati loses \$2,263 per year in federal funding. This results in a loss of about \$104 million over a ten-year period!

Census forms will arrive in mail boxes in mid-March 2010.

visit www.census.gov For more information

FAMILY VIOLENCE OPTION MONITORING PROJECT

If you have applied for Ohio Works First (OWF) public assistance benefits in 2008 to present, were you asked by the caseworker to see if you had been battered?

Were you told about special rights you have in the State of Ohio if you are a victim of domestic violence?!!

Only 25 counties have so far trained their caseworkers in how to assist domestic violence victims.

This is too important a concern to ignored or left to chance!!!

**Call Lynn or Cassandra at
1-877-862-5179.**

We want to hear from you!!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BENEFIT RIGHTS ADVOCACY GROUP (BRAG)

Meetings are held the
1st Thursday of each month
Potluck first at 12:00 noon

Feb. 4

Mar. 4

April 8



*Memory Royal leads a BRAG Meeting
Strategy Planning Session*



*Contact Center and OEC leaders
attend a Kentucky conference to learn
organizing skills*

**JANUARY
OEC STEERING
COMMITTEE
CONFERENCE
CALL
Wednesday, Jan.
27, 3:00 PM**