

Tompkins Community Action, Inc.

Fall 2025 Newsletter



2025 Joe Cassaniti Community Service Award



Rhoda Brown & Joe Cassaniti attended our July Board of Directors meeting to celebrate.

Rhoda will begin her college career in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. We wish her the best in her future endeavors. Thank you for your service~

Congratulations Rhoda!

The **Joe Cassaniti Community Service Award** is a \$350.00 award presented each year to a graduating high school senior in Tompkins County who has demonstrated their commitment to the community through volunteerism.

This award was established at TCAction in 1996 by Walter Gangl, a former Ithaca resident to honor the work of local businessman and community activist, **Joe Cassaniti**. Joe is well known for his work with young people.

The 2025 JCCSA winner is Rhoda Brown! Rhoda was nominated by Kris Erickson of New Roots School. Kris describes Rhoda as *"...a trusted peer, a thoughtful collaborator, and an advocate for civic responsibility."*



Community Parades



We had beautiful weather for the **Ithaca Festival Parade** this year. TCAction staff and Early Head Start/Head Start families from our Ithaca Childcare Centers- Harriet, Sally and Longview participated in the parade down Cayuga Street. The theme was Enchanted so the children were dressed as gnomes and the adults were mushrooms.



In early June, TCAction staff and Early Head Start/Head Start families from our Groton and Dryden Childcare Centers participated in the annual **Dryden Dairy Day** parade. This year the children dressed up as cows and distributed books to other children watching the parade.

Adopt A Highway

This year we had our largest volunteer group of 31 staff, friends and family for

our **Adopt A Highway** service project. We cleaned up 2 miles of Bostwick Road. The weather was perfect, and we finished in record time!



Annual Staff Awards

Our 2025 Staff Team!



Our Leadership Award

This award honors a staff person who consistently exhibits leadership, initiative and commitment to the agency's mission, vision and values. This year, Jennifer Rohwedder nominated **Kylie Kilts** for her continuous leadership in the classroom.



Our Coakley Award

The Coakley is presented to an employee who consistently exhibits honesty, work ethic, patience, and problem-solving skills in their work. Corey Brewster nominated **John Westbrook** for his compassionate approach to his daily work.



Summer Care Package Initiative

We secured \$15,000 from New York State Department of State- Community Services Block Grant to provide 200 Head Start and Supportive Housing participants with Summer Care Packages. The packages included diapers/pull ups, wipes, toothbrushes, toothpaste, sunscreen, books, applesauce, peanut

butter crackers, granola bars and fruit snacks based on household size and preferences. The goal was to provide items that would help stretch financial resources through summer. TCAction staff made the project successful by helping to organize items, pack orders, and deliver to program sites for pick up by the families.

Participants had this to say:

"This is a lifesaver!"

"Three kids in diapers- very thankful!"



"Snacks & sunscreen- awesome!"

"This helps get us through until program starts again"

"This is amazing!"

Victory Garden Project

This year our Victory Garden Project provided 157 households with garden plants. There was a variety of tomatoes, peppers and herbs!

All plants were provided by Cornell University. Cargill employees volunteered over three days making sure everyone got what they needed.

We are grateful for such a longstanding partnership with Cornell University and Cargill who make this important project a success!





Program Highlight: Supportive Housing Program

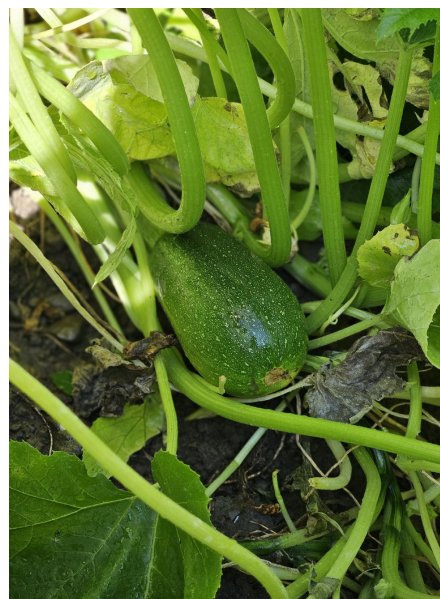
What is supportive housing? Supportive Housing combines affordable housing with supportive services to help individuals or families experiencing homelessness achieve and maintain long-term housing stability.

As part of NY-510 Ithaca Tompkins Continuum of Care, TCAction operates four program sites in the City of Ithaca- Chartwell House, Magnolia House, Amici House and The Corn Street Apartments. Staff partner with residents to actively support housing stability through goal planning and resource navigation activities.



"Better choices, better living."- a Corn Street Resident

"No matter what stage of life you're in, there's always hope." - a Corn Street Resident

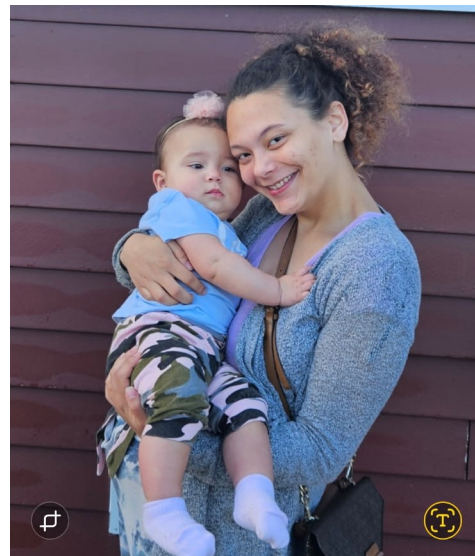




"Staff want us to be successful even when we don't want it ourselves."- a Magnolia House Resident



"Staff are great, even when we don't acknowledge how great they are." - an Amici House Resident



"The staff on Meadow are inspiring, uplifting, caring and empowering" - a Magnolia House Resident



**Supportive Housing...because
an active community can
produce powerful change!**

Community Highlight: NY-510 Ithaca Tompkins Continuum of Care



CoC Funding At-Risk:

\$ 1,618,888

This funding supports:

- Permanent Supportive Housing
- Local Planning
- Data Collection and Monitoring
- Youth Specific Housing Programs

Affordable Housing Fast Facts

**Tompkins County Census
population: 105,602**

**Population of People
Experiencing
Homelessness: 210**

**Wage Needed to
afford 2 Bedroom
Rental: \$34.23**

**Number of Hours at
Minimum Wage: 88**

**Total Permanent
Supportive Housing
Units: 204**

**Total Rapid Rehousing
Vouchers: 41**

**Total Housing Choice
Vouchers: 2,193**

To learn more about the CoC's mission to make homelessness rare, brief and one time visit:
<https://hsctc.org/housing/>

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607-273-8686**



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