

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Source: Community Action Partnership of Greater St. Joseph**

Rachel McCoy, Director of Development and Communications

(816) 233-8281, ext. 110; (816) 244-2662 (cell)

[rmccoy@endpov.com](mailto:rmccoy@endpov.com)

[www.endpov.com](http://www.endpov.com)

### **Car Angels provides help with car repairs to get low-income families back on the road; Uses local partners to help break the cycle of poverty**

(March 5, 2009 - Savannah, Mo.) Can a new spark plug be the difference between keeping a roof over your head and shoes on the kids? Absolutely.

Community Action Partnership of Greater St. Joseph, established in 1965, works to remove barriers to individuals and families who are on their journey out of poverty. One of the most consistent barriers families face is transportation.

“If your car isn’t running, you can’t get to work. You may not be able to take your child to school, if you live in a rural area. You might miss a doctor’s appointment. The list goes on and on,” said Sally Green, community outreach specialist, Community Action Partnership of Greater St. Joseph, Savannah office. “Sometimes not having the money for repairs puts your entire journey to stability on hold.”

Individuals who qualify for Car Angels can receive up to \$300 for car parts at designated repair locations. Participants must be income-eligible (living below 125% of Federal Poverty Guidelines), show proof of title and insurance, and live in Andrew County, Mo. Funds are allotted only if the vehicle is used for maintaining a job, pursuing education or maintaining independent living for families on a fixed income. Four Andrew County families have already been helped through Car Angels, with additional families currently beginning the process.

Andrew County Ministries “Sparks of Hope” program is a Car Angels partner. Local car repair partners are L@M Auto Repair and Chuck’s Service in Andrew County. Render Auto Glass in north St. Joseph is also a partner, and CAP St. Joe is searching for additional partners whose business is located in Andrew County.

“Beyond just the car repair, we strive to educate families on how to make an informed purchase when it comes to a vehicle, and how to know what’s appropriate for their budget,” says Green.

Participants (and the community) learned recently how to prevent costly repairs at an Auto Purchasing Class in February. A local mechanic instructed the class in what to look for in purchasing a quality vehicle -- and how to determine what you need in transportation, and what you can afford. Future classes will include ways to make minor car maintenance and repairs on your own.

Once a qualified candidate for Car Angels is identified, CAP staff will schedule an appointment with a partner mechanic to have the vehicle problem diagnosed. The estimate is faxed to the CAP office for approval, and the partner mechanic can then invoice the CAP office for parts up to \$300 per calendar year.

CAP St. Joseph is seeking licensed mechanics in Northwest Missouri who will volunteer their labor for the Car Angels program to provide repairs on at least one car per year. **(more)**

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Volunteers are also needed to be “on-call” mechanics, with no mechanics’ license required. On-call volunteers would travel in pairs to the site of the vehicle, make small repairs or adjustments, and help determine which major repairs are needed (one day per week, or less).

For more information about enrolling in or volunteering with Car Angels, call Sally Green, community outreach specialist, Community Action Partnership of Greater St. Joseph, Savannah office, at (816) 324-2341 or email [sgreen@endpov.com](mailto:sgreen@endpov.com).

Community Action Partnership has provided programs to move low-income families out of poverty since 1965, serving nearly 16,000 people in poverty in Northwest Missouri. Head Start is one of the core programs managed by the agency, and the St. Patrick’s Center is one of 12 Head Start centers available to low-income families across Northwest Missouri. The Head Start child development program strives for success for the whole family, and is currently serving 500 low-income children in the Northwest Missouri area. Additional services provided by Community Action Partnership to low-income families include utilities assistance, affordable housing, financial literacy and home ownership classes, life skills and workforce training.

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