



ASSIST AGENCY

community
Action®

PARTNERSHIP

AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK

Helping People. Changing Lives.

2017

Annual

Report

BRIAN SETH MOUTON MAYOR



My vision for the City of Rayne is to be fiscally accountable and to achieve results that advance the City's interests. It is essential that we create a culture that embraces the wants and needs of the people who live, work, and visit Rayne.

We Can Do Better Together

Experience

- ✦ Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration
- ✦ Business Owner
- ✦ Managed \$200 Million in Annual Revenue
- ✦ Eleven years of Executive Leadership
- ✦ Mentoring Program Notre Dame and Rayne High Students

Vision

- ✦ Fiscal Responsibility
- ✦ Economic Development
- ✦ Fair and Competitive Pay for all City Employees
- ✦ Open City Hall and Promote a Democratic Engagement
- ✦ Comprehensive Review of City Contracts
- ✦ Innovative Approach to Youth Recreation and Programs
- ✦ Establish a Long-Term Drainage Plan
- ✦ Championing our Public Schools



Raised \$20,000 for the victims of the August '16 flood



Managed \$2.5 million in Federal Funds to help end Homelessness



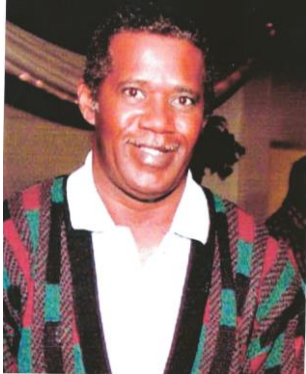
Provide \$100,000 in Resources to Local Business

ACCOUNTABILITY. CIVIC PRIDE AND ENGAGEMENT. COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS COLLABORATION.

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Message from Anthony Candler, Sr. Board President



Dear Friends,

The theme for 2017 was Recovery. Recovery from floods in 2016 and hurricanes in 2017 put a strain on every government, organization, and family budget. The recovery will continue for a long time. The ASSIST Agency is working right along with everyone in the recovery efforts.

As we recover, we see the best in our fellow man. This area is known for its generosity of spirit and tangible goods. Pitching in to clean up, rescue people, and rebuild. When tragedy strikes, we just get up and help. No one has to be told to do it, we just do it. Individuals, families, and organizations like the ASSIST Agency work together to rebuild our communities.

It is our mission to bring together individuals, families, and communities and work to improve the standard of living and quality of life for those who are economically challenged. Our Board of Directors is charged with accomplishing this mission and I assure you that we will work diligently to positively affect the lives of the people of Southwestern Louisiana through our work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony Candler, Sr." in a cursive script.

Anthony Candler, Sr.
President

Message from Sharon Clement Executive Director



Dear Friends,

We are continuing, as a community, to feel the effects of the floods of 2016 and Hurricane Harvey in 2017. The recovery process will continue for a long time. However, the people of South Louisiana are resilient and will bounce back.

The ASSIST Agency plays an integral part in the recovery from major disasters in our area. We also play an important part in the recovery of individuals and families who experience personal disasters and setbacks. Disasters for these individuals and families can be as simple as missing a few days of work or a car repair. We work hard to help people out of disasters and become more self-sufficient through a combination of wrap around services including financial assistance, financial education, and referrals to other agencies who can meet other needs.

The highlights in this year's annual report will give you a snapshot of our recent activities. Please take a moment to peruse the articles and success stories of some of our clients and continue to remember ASSIST Agency with your prayers, talents and treasures. Our successes could not have been possible without the generous support of our benefactors.

As always, we welcome your ideas as to how we can improve any aspect of our organization and you may wish to visit our website at assistagency.org and leave your comments. Thank you for your feedback and together let us work to help people and change lives. May your year be filled with blessings in abundance!

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sharon Clement".

Sharon Clement,
Executive Director

Mission

The mission of the ASSIST Agency is to raise the standard of living and improve the quality of life for economically challenged individuals, families, and communities in Southwestern Louisiana.

Vision Statement

To have the public trust and be recognized as a leader in helping to empower people in becoming more self-sufficient and to help in strengthening local communities in becoming more responsive to the needs of the people.

The ASSIST Agency carries out its mission through a variety of means including community-wide assessment of needs and strengths, comprehensive antipoverty plans and strategies, provision of a broad range of direct services, mobilization of financial and non-financial resources, advocacy on behalf of low-income people and partnership with other community-based organizations to eliminate poverty.

Everyone Is Significant

During my second year of nursing school our professor gave us a quiz. I breezed through the questions until I read the last one: "What is the first name of the woman who cleans the school?" Surely this was a joke. I had seen the cleaning woman several times, but how would I know her name? I handed in my paper, leaving the last question blank.

Before the class ended, one student asked if the last question would count toward our grade. "Absolutely," the professor said. "In your careers, you will meet many people. All are significant. They deserve your attention and care, even if all you do is smile and say hello." I've never forgotten that lesson. I also learned her name was Dorothy.

~JoAnn C. Jones, *Guideposts*, January 1996

Programs and Impacts - Success Stories

**Only their names have been changed to protect their privacy.*

Kitty – Homeless Prevention; United Way of Acadiana IDA Scholarship Program

We heard about the IDA scholarship program and my husband needed the money to enter truck driving school. He had lost his job driving a small truck and was not certified to drive big trucks. We felt that if he could get certified for big trucks, this would help our family of six become self-sufficient. We met with Ms. Edna about the scholarship and while doing paperwork, she noticed we had no income to pay the upcoming rent and utilities. At the time, I thought we would be able to find the money to pay the bills. My husband received the scholarship and began a six week driving course.

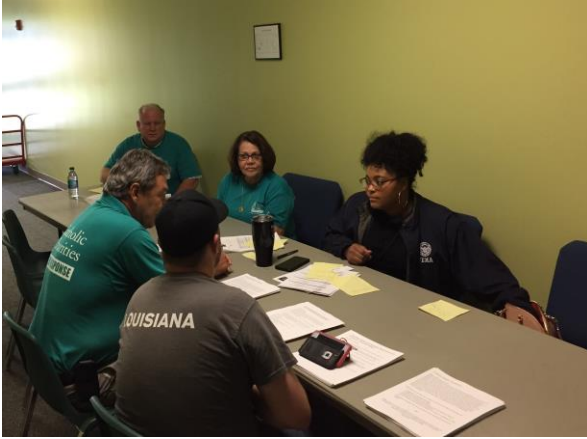
After paying the rent and utilities for first month my husband was in school, we were unable to find the money to pay the rent and utilities for the next month. I remembered Ms. Edna telling me that if we needed help to contact ASSIST for an appointment. I made an appointment with ASSIST and applied for ESG Homeless Prevention Funds. We received help with our rent and utilities and my husband finished truck driving school. He found a good job and we are still in our home and doing well. If it had not been for the help from ASSIST, ESG funds and IDA funds, we would not be making it on our own.

Amber – Shelter and Rapid Rehousing

I came to the ASSIST Shelter after living on the street in Lafayette. I was glad to have a place to live. I walked over a mile to work every day for a week to see if they had my application for employment and had made a decision on it yet. My persistence paid off and they hired me. I worked for a week and they promoted me to shift lead. I was anxious to have my own home and I applied for the ESG Rapid Rehousing funds. I qualified for assistance and found a nice house in Crowley close to work. The Rapid Rehousing funds helped me with the deposits for rent and utilities. I finally have a place of my own. I have been able to pay the rent and utilities and love my new house. The ASSIST Emergency Shelter gave me a chance to get myself together and find a stability in my life. I appreciate the Agency helping me get into my own home too. Without this assistance, I would still be homeless.

Kim – United Way of Acadiana IDA Scholarship Program

Kim is a 49-year-old male who has never worked in his lifetime. He has decided to go to SLCC to become a certified welder. He received a grant to cover his tuition, but was lacking the money for the equipment required for the course. He was referred to ASSIST by SLCC for the IDA scholarship program. We worked with Kim providing financial education along with the scholarship. He was able to purchase his equipment and began class in the Fall Semester. He is very grateful and really likes the course.



Kerry Stutes, with the ASSIST Agency, participated in the Resource Fair in Lafayette held for victims of Hurricane Harvey who had evacuated to our area. Acadiana Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (AVOAD) coordinated the fair with many area agencies.

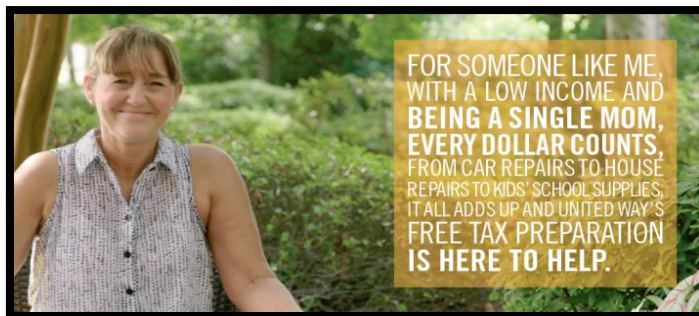
The ASSIST Agency is always ready to help in times of crisis.



As part of our mission to raise the standard of living and improve the quality of life for economically challenged individuals, families, and communities in Southwestern Louisiana, the Agency was active in bringing together resources for the people to access the many services available in the parish. ASSIST sponsored a Resource Fairs in Jeff Davis Parish (above left) and in Vermilion Parish (above right.) It brought together service providers and the public resulting in more availability of assistance for those who are struggling. A free lunch was provided for attendees.



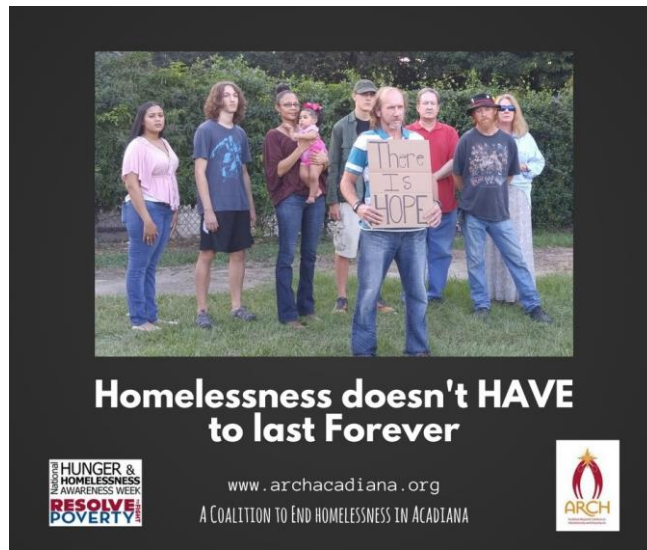
The Summer Feeding and Recreation Program held in Jeff Davis and Acadia Parishes provided a safe environment that combined learning and fun for 416 children and youth. Breakfast and lunch were served free of charge to participants with a total 20,137 meals served to children during the program. Above, the participants enjoyed a visit to Jennings Visitors Center and got to hold a live alligator.



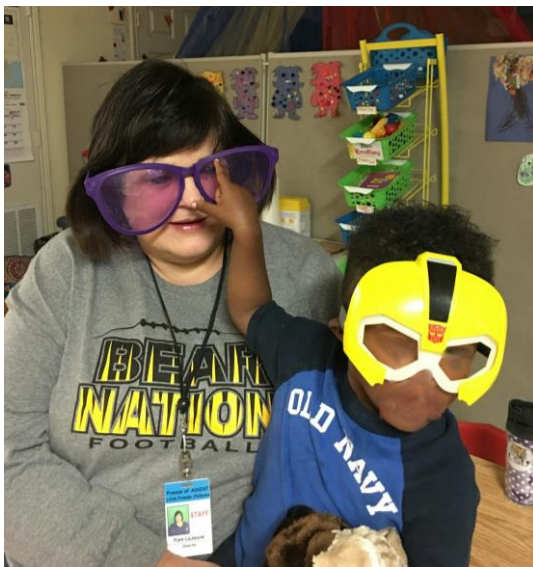
In conjunction with the United Way of Acadiana, the United Way of Southwest Louisiana and the IRS VITA program, the agency provides free tax preparation for low- to medium-income families and individuals. Last year over \$567,000 was returned to filers in Earned Income Tax Credits in Acadia, Jeff Davis and Vermilion Parishes.

In 2017, the following programs worked to raise the standard of living and improve the quality of life for our communities. Additional programs provided the following:

- Elderly Assistance program provided rent/mortgage, utility, and medication assistance to 1,013 seniors.
- Emergency Assistance programs provided rent/mortgage and utility assistance to 407 individuals and families.
- The agency distributed 768 bags of clothing and 35,346 food boxes throughout the year.
- Information and referral services to 1,883 individuals.
- Forty-five families/individuals obtained or maintained safe and affordable housing.
- As part of the financial education provided by ASSIST, 497 families/individuals developed and followed a budget for at least 90 days.



The ASSIST Emergency Shelter housed 29 families in 2017. The Shelter provides a safe environment where the residents can work toward obtaining permanent housing. We provide support and life skills training so that the residents can become self-sufficient. Twelve families moved into permanent and affordable housing upon leaving the Shelter.



Offering quality childcare at affordable rates, Class "A" licensed childcare centers are operated by the Friends of ASSIST. The centers are located in Church Point and Rayne. They are open to the general public, accept children ages six weeks to 12 years and offer full time, part time, and after school care in a nurturing environment. These daycare centers allow low- to middle-income families to gain or maintain employment by having their children cared for while they work. The centers assisted 43 families with childcare in 2017.



The ASSIST Agency Board of Directors is the guiding force behind the Agency. They meet 6 times each year to review operations and set policy and procedure for the Agency.



Board members receive training several times each year to enhance their service to ASSIST.



Thanks to the US Marines the Toys for Tots program is a big success each year. In 2017 we distributed toys to 445 children in Acadia, 113 children in Jeff Davis and 304 children in Vermilion. Thanks to Ms. Mamie's Casino and Dollar General we were able to assist 163 children who had missed Toys for Tots in Crowley. The Vermilion Chamber of Commerce members donated toys to help an additional 30 children who missed the Toys for Tots deadline in Vermilion Parish. Santa's helpers are pictured above. Seated left to right: Linda Benoit, ASSIST; Mardessa Poydras, ASSIST; Brandy Shelvin, volunteer. Standing left to right: Melissa Guidry, volunteer; Joe Dequeant, volunteer; Renee Benoit, volunteer; Lakeisha Senegal, ASSIST; Megan Guidry, volunteer.



Donations from Miss Mamie's Casino Toy Drive and Dollar General Store in Crowley.



Picking up Toys for Tots from Santa's Helpers

HISTORY of COMMUNITY ACTION

On August 20, 1964 President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Economic Opportunity Act which created a variety of programs, including Community Action Agencies, as part of his War on Poverty. He knew then as we know now, that the war against poverty must be won in the field, in every private home, in every public office, from the courthouse to the White House. "Community Action Month is a wonderful time to honor and celebrate the impact Community Action has in the lives of families and communities across the country," stated Denise Harlow, National Community Action Partnership CEO. "Agencies are successful every day in helping families achieve economic security. Given that the needs of each family and community are unique, Community Action is able to use a range of resources and programs to meet local needs in creative and impactful ways."

The ASSIST Agency was established in 1967 to wage the war on poverty on a personal level in Southwestern Louisiana, particularly in Acadia, Jeff Davis and Vermilion Parishes, by promoting self-sufficiency for those of limited income ensuring that all residents are able to live in dignity; by implementing innovative and cost-effective programs to improve the lives and living conditions of the impoverished; by providing support and instruction for everyone in need of assistance; and by being a major voice of reason in establishing welfare system reforms.

The ASSIST Agency statistics underscore the positive impact we've had on our neighborhoods. We help countless individuals improve their lives each year by providing them essential services and life-changing opportunities through Individual Development Accounts, financial education and job training as well as making available affordable housing, economic development, natural disaster relief and recovery, health care, energy assistance, and so much more.

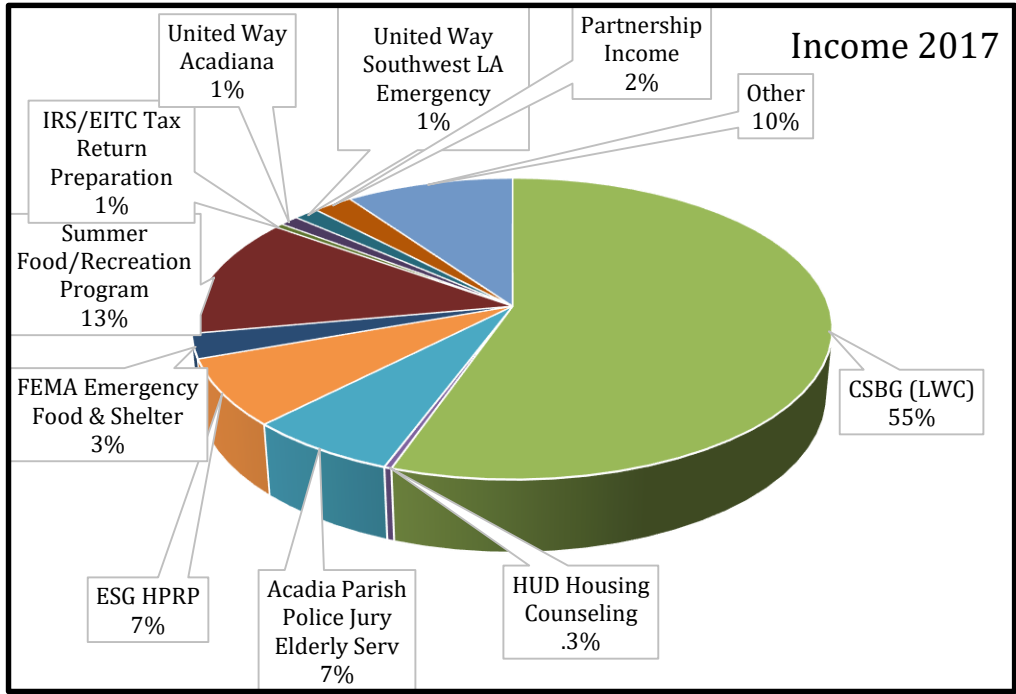


May is National Community Action Month. To commemorate the event ASSIST Agency, the staff celebrated with a crawfish boil gathering on Friday, May 26th, 2017. All board members and staff members received certificates for distinguished service.

Many families' lives were improved or changed because of the teamwork demonstrated by everyone.

We continue to fulfill our mission of helping people, changing lives, we ask that the community continue to support us.

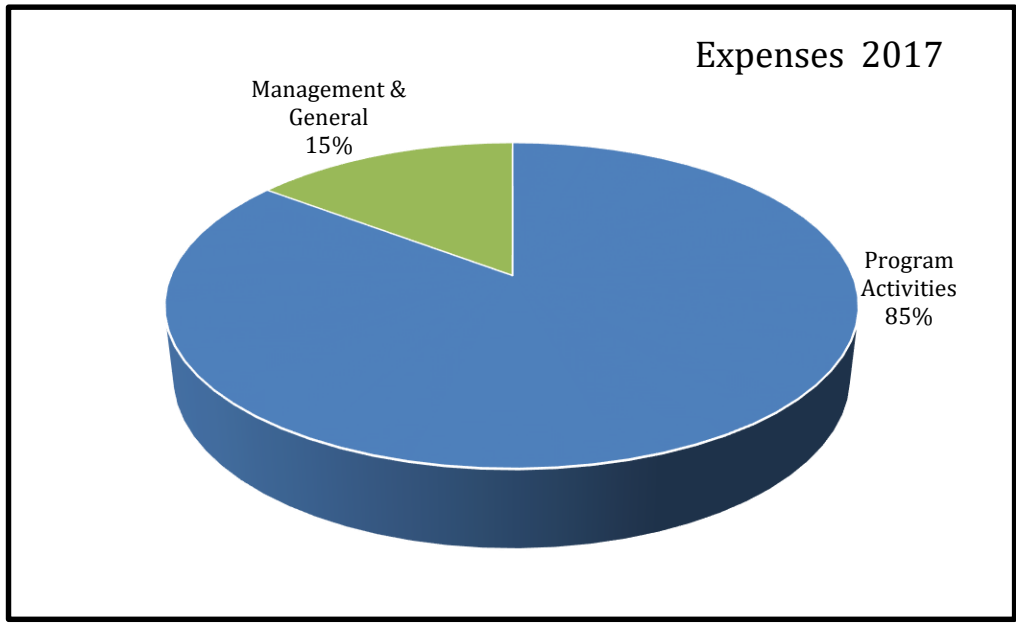
Income and Expenses



CSBG LWC – Community Services Bloc Grant/La. Workforce Commission

ESG HPRP – Emergency Services Grant Homeless Prevention/Rapid Rehousing;

EF&S Grant – National Board Emergency Food and Shelter Grant



Looking Forward

The Board of Directors and Staff of the ASSIST Agency are working to improve the quality of life in our communities for income challenged individuals, families, and communities. Focusing on programs that build up and not build dependencies is drive behind our agency. In the coming year we look forward to expanding our Financial and Housing Counseling services while continuing to provide services to those in crisis.

Board Leadership



Mr. Anthony Candler, Sr.
Board President

ASSIST Agency Staff



Mrs. Sharon Clement,
Executive Director

Officers

Mr. Aidan Broussard
Vice President
Vermilion Parish

Mrs. Curtrese Minix
Secretary
Acadia Parish

Ms. Katie Jolivette
Treasurer
Acadia Parish

Mr. Mike Kloesel
Parliamentarian
Vermilion Parish

Mrs. Glenda Woods
Chaplain
Jefferson Davis Parish

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Acadia Parish

Dr. Jack Gupta
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Ms Shari Hebert
Vermilion Parish

Mrs. Peggy Keys
Jefferson Davis Parish

Mrs. Harriet Lawdins
Jefferson Davis Parish

Mrs. Angela Lehman
Jefferson Davis Parish

Mr. Christopher Mayfield
Acadia Parish

Mr. David Trahan
Vermilion Parish

Mrs. Linda Benoit
Eligibility Service
Coordinator II, Acadia

Ms. Carla Billups
Eligibility/Service
Coordinator III, Jeff Davis

Ms. Crystal Caillet
Eligibility/Service
Coordinator I, Acadia

Mrs. Christine Dugar
Fiscal Director

Ms. Kercia Huntly
Eligibility/Service
Coordinator II, Vermilion

Mrs. Mardessa Poydras
Personnel/Physical Resource
Officer

Ms. Kellie Rankin
Eligibility/Service
Coordinator I, Vermilion

Ms. Edna Semar
Community Services Director

Ms. Lakeisha Senegal
Homeless Shelter/Case
Management Coordinator

Mr. Kerry Stutes
Planning/Budgeting
Director/EOO

Mr. Jimmie Wilson
Property/Utility Specialist

We Need Your Help

The ASSIST Agency needs volunteers in several areas. If you would like to volunteer, please contact us by using the form below.

Every Penny Matters

\$100 provides one child with 6 weeks of Summer Recreation and Feeding Program

\$50 provides one week at our women and children's shelter for one person.

\$25 provides one session of financial counseling and education

Please visit our website: www.assistagency.org to make a monetary donation or use the form below. Thank you.

Volunteer and Help Make a Difference

I would like to make a difference in my community:

- Volunteer with the ASSIST Agency
- Make a monetary donation: \$_____

Please visit our website www.assistagency.org to learn more, or call us at 337-788-7550 ext. 138. Send this form by mail to our office at P O Box 1404, Crowley, LA 70526.

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- Ocean Marine
- Inland Marine
- Fidelity & Crime
- Directors & Officers
- Employment Related Practices
- Flood

Personal Insurance



- Automobile
- Homeowners
- Motorcycles
- Four Wheelers
- Personal Umbrella
- Flood
- Boats/Yachts
- Tenant’s Policy
- Valuable Items Floater
- Fine Arts

Financial Coverage



- Life Insurance
- Group Health Policy
- Individual Health Policy
- Retirement Plans
- Annuities
- Long Term Care

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Thanks to the
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For making a difference
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-Dr. Jack Gupta



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Re-Elect Chuck # 65 November 6th



Charles E "Chuck" Robichaux, Mayor

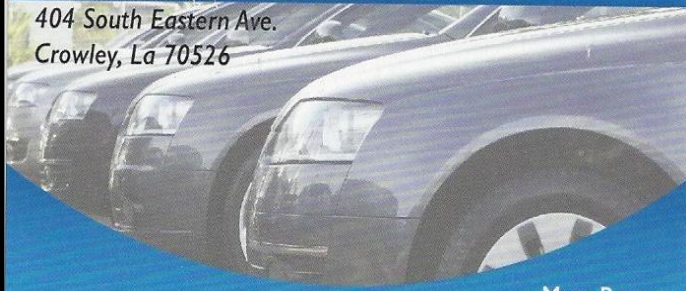
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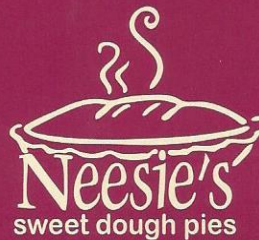


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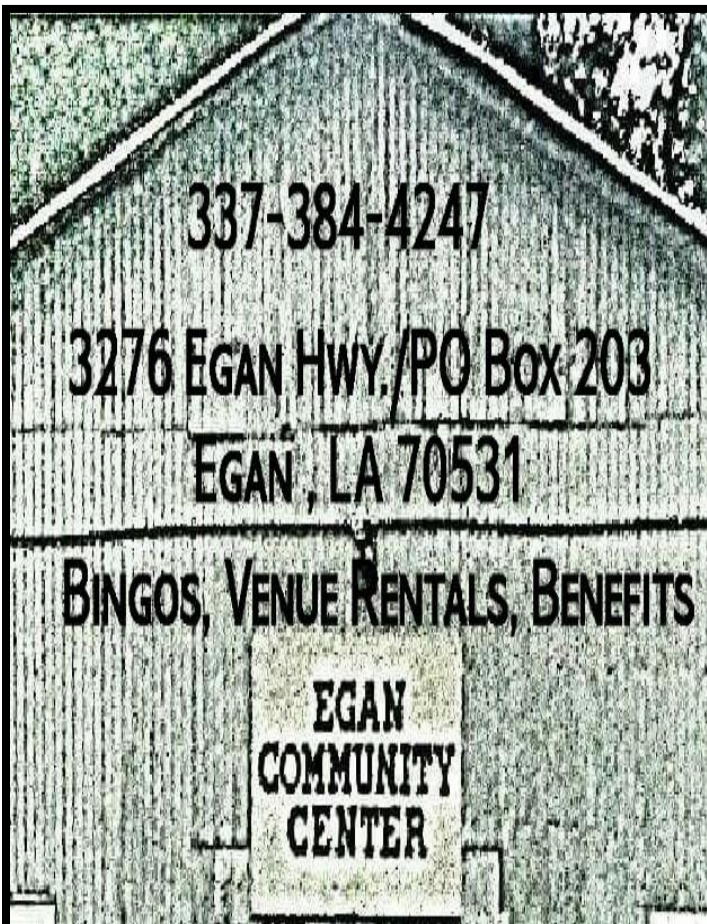
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Parish Secretary
Pashine Broussard

Religious Education Coordinator
Verlia Cormier

Baptisms

Parents must come in to
make arrangements
A Baptism class is required

Mass Schedule

Saturday Vigil Mass: 4:00 p.m.

Sundays: 9:00 a.m.

Mondays, Wednesdays,
Thursdays, and Fridays: 7:00
a.m.

Tuesdays: 5:30 p.m.



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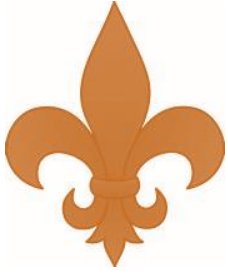
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Youth Sports

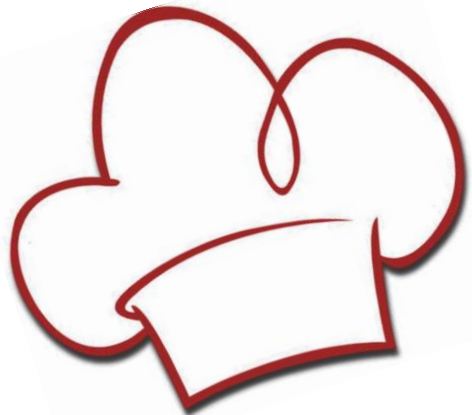
**For more information, contact
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Tony Roberts: 337-384-6163
Blake Sampay: 337-224-3997**



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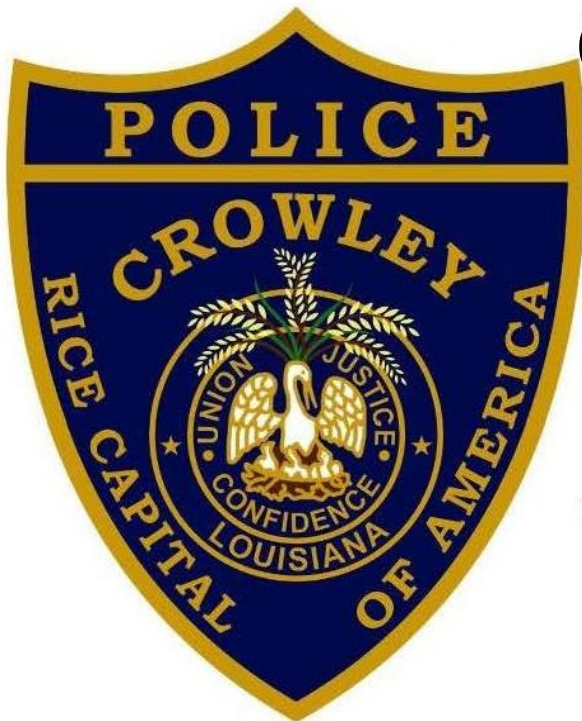
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Compliments of Ms. Terry Broussard Vermilion Parish Councilwoman District D



Kerry Stutes, ASSIST Agency accepts a grant award from Margarete Derise, Senior Vice President of Impact Strategies at the United Way of Acadiana.



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