

## ***CASH: Creating Assets for Success and Happiness***

**Patricia K. Gorman<sup>1</sup>**

*Creating Assets for Success and Happiness (CASH) is a unique financial education class that was developed by a consortium of 20 community agencies and non-profit organizations in response to a stated community need. The CASH course provides a proactive response to the problems associated with limited resources and lack of personal financial education.*

This educational program poster will focus on a unique on-going financial education course called CASH: Creating Assets for Success and Happiness. Part of the uniqueness of this course is that it is a four week sequential program that runs continuously, allowing participants to start at any given week and still be able to complete the course. CASH is taught every Tuesday night at the local YWCA, with the first Tuesday of each month dedicated to basic money management concepts using the Gateway curriculum to teach values, goals and spending plans. The second Tuesday of each month covers the area of credit and provides information on credit reports and credit scoring, applying for credit and the red flags of credit abuse. The CUNA Credit curriculum is used.

The third Tuesday of each month teaches about Identity Theft and uses the Rutgers curriculum developed by Barbara O'Neill, and the last Tuesday covers Housing Issues and includes information about housing concerns and predatory lending. If there is a fifth Tuesday of the month, special classes on subjects such as the Earned Income Tax Credit or how to open and maintain accounts at local financial institutions are provided.

All of the classes are taught by volunteers from local credit unions, CAP agencies, credit counseling services, and ISU extension, thereby allowing the program to continue even with small numbers of participants. The classes are free to everyone, and day care and transportation are also provided free of charge. All classes are translated into Spanish, and both Spanish and Bosnian translators are available. Incentives such as gas cards, Habitat for Humanity Sweat Equity Hours, financial education books and one-on-one money management counseling are provided to those participants who complete all four classes. Light refreshments are also provided during the classes.

Funding for these classes was obtained through a grant from a local credit union and from Opportunity Works, a local movement whose objective is to eliminate or reduce poverty in a six county region in NE Iowa. It was the research conducted by Opportunity Works with over 5000 people that showed the need for a community model of financial education, and provided the basis for the CASH course.

### *Endnotes*

<sup>1</sup> Family Resource Management Field Specialist, Iowa State University Extension, 703 F Avenue, Suite One, Grundy Center, IA 50638, tel. 319-824-6979, fax. 319-824-6601, [pgorman@iastate.edu](mailto:pgorman@iastate.edu)