

SANGAMON COUNTY BOARD OFFICE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**COMMUNITY ACTION AND DISTRICT #186 TO HOLD POVERTY SIMULATION
DURING COMMUNITY ACTION MONTH**

What choices would you make if you had too little time and money to meet your needs? On May 14, District #186 administrators and principals will participate in a unique workshop to experience walking in someone else's shoes.

Sangamon County Community Resources and District #186 will partner during Community Action Month to experience the virtual realities of poverty in a unique simulation. Participants will role-play a month in the lives of low-income individuals and families including TANF recipients, disabled individuals and senior citizens. They will be faced with the stressful task of providing for basic needs and shelter on a limited budget during the course of four 15-minute "weeks". They will interact with human service agencies, grocers, pawnbrokers, bill collectors, job interviewers and police officers. After the "month", participants will explore the impact of poverty, meet community service providers and consider how awareness, collaboration and action help.

"This program helps people understand the complexities and frustrations of living in poverty day to day. By gaining awareness of the impact of poverty, we can more effectively address the causes of poverty in our community. Community Action Month is a time to use a wide range of resources and programs to meet local needs in creative and impactful ways", said Sharmin Doering, Executive Director of the Community Action Agency serving Sangamon County. In Sangamon County, the number of individuals living in poverty is 29,693, or 15.2% of the population.

"It is important for our administrators to understand what families in our district face every day," said Superintendent Jennifer Gill. "These challenges affect students' readiness to learn, and we need to be prepared to support them so they can continue to grow and realize their full potential."

The Illinois Association of Community Action Agencies (IACAA) will facilitate the event designed to sensitize District staff members who frequently deal with low-income families and create a broader awareness of the realities of poverty. According to Dr. Dalitso Sulamoyo, CEO and President of IACAA; "The Poverty Simulation has the potential to create opportunities to change how institutions engage with people experiencing poverty. This level of influence can only be surfaced through participation in the Simulation experience."

Sangamon County Community Resources (SCCR) helps communities, families and individuals remove the causes and conditions of poverty. For more information, about SCCR, see <http://www.co.sangamon.il.us/departments/a-c/community-resources>

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