

## **Semcac Client Success Story**

*by a Kasson food shelf team member*

A married couple came to see me on January 30, and they were desperate because they were out of propane, and it was bitterly cold. The woman's job is irregular with few hours, and she has been unable to find another. The husband had a decent paying job for a few months, which had ended. He now was working part time for a low wage. I am familiar with them, so I knew that he had been significantly under-employed before that decent paying job. So they had been "playing catch-up" with previous bills. However, when they applied for Energy Assistance in early January, they were over the income guidelines due to the income he had been receiving during the previous 3 months. They rent an older home in the country.

The day they came to see me was the height of the propane crisis; costs were nearly \$5 a gallon, and their fuel company would not deliver without a cash payment due to an outstanding bill. Energy Assistance had not yet relaxed the income guidelines. I developed the following plan: Our office does the applications for a local fund serving the community in which they live, so I sought permission to use the maximum of \$500. Then I contacted their fuel provider, asking them to put the entire amount toward a delivery, instead of putting it toward the previous bill, which they agreed to do. Finally, I reminded the couple that they should send in their Energy Assistance application on February 1, because we had determined that they would then qualify.

We also discussed fuel-saving measures, like turning the heat very low when they both were gone, and turning it down while they slept. I posited that the 110 or so gallons of propane that they did receive would last them until crisis from Energy Assistance, and that proved to be the case.