

Contact Information

NYS Teacher Centers and the Far West Teacher Center Network continually provide support for lifelong learning and teacher excellence. Help your teachers reach the next level and develop the empathy, strategies and support they need to combat poverty in your community.

For more information or to request a simulation contact your local Teacher Center.

www.fwteachercenter.wixsite.com/fwtc

- Alden —Jan Millard, jmillard@aldenschools.org
- Buffalo—Melinda MacPherson-Sullivan, mmacpherson@buffaloschools.org
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- Erie-Catt—Joe Winiecki, jwiniecki@e2ccb.org
- Kenmore—Elaine Ablove, eablove@ktufsd.org
- Lackawanna—Elaine Fredericks, efredericks@lackawannaschools.org
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- Orleans-Niagara—Cheryl Herman, cherman@onboces.org
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- Southtowns—Annette Baldwin & Kathy Northway, southtowntcdirectors@gmail.com
- Sweet Home—Paul Szymendera, pszymendera@sweethomeschools.org
- Tonawanda/Gl—Judi Harris, harrisja@tonawandagrandislandteachercenter.org
- West Seneca—Kristen Frawley, wstc@wscschools.org
- Western NY—Jon Erwin, jerwin@e1b.org
- Williamsville—Lee Ferenc, lferenc@williamsvillek12.org

The Community Action Poverty Simulation is a profoundly moving experience. It moves people to think about the harsh realities of poverty and to talk about how communities can address the problem. Most importantly, it moves people to make a difference.

Together, you can be a voice to end poverty in your family, friends and community.



For more information or to request a simulation in the Western NY area, please complete the [request form](#) or contact a Teacher Center Poverty Simulation Facilitator:

- Cheryl Herman, 716-731-6800 x3772, cherman@onboces.org
- Melinda MacPherson-Sullivan, 716-816-4675, mmacpherson@buffaloschools.org

The Community Action POVERTY SIMULATION



RETHINK POVERTY



Poverty is a reality for many individuals and families. But unless you have experienced poverty, it is difficult to truly understand. The Community Action Poverty Simulation (CAPS) bridges that gap from misconception to understanding. CAPS is an interactive immersion experience. It sensitizes community participants to the realities of poverty.

CAPS is not a game. It is based on real Community Action clients and their lives. CAPS exists to:

- **Promote Poverty Awareness**
- **Increase Understanding**
- **Inspire Local Change**



How the Poverty Simulation Works

The simulation breaks down stereotypes by allowing participants to step into the real life situations of others. Poverty is often portrayed as a stand alone issue - but this simulation allows individuals to walk a month in the shoes of someone who is facing poverty and realize how complex and interconnected issues of poverty really are.

- ◆ A single parent with limited resources and no transportation must find a way to get to work and get their child to daycare.
- ◆ An elderly person must find a way to pay for both utilities and medication.
- ◆ A young adult must care for siblings while their parent is incarcerated.
- ◆ An elderly couple must raise their grandchildren and deal with their own health and employment issues.

After the experience, individuals discuss what they have learned with their peers. Through the simulation and the rich discussion that follows, participants are more inclined and better prepared to identify areas of change that can directly impact the effects of poverty on their students, families and local communities.



Living a Month in Poverty

The simulation involves participants who take on the roles of members of up to 26 families, all facing a variety of challenging, but typical, circumstances. To start the simulation exercise, each family is given a card explaining its unique circumstances. It is then the families' task to provide food, shelter, and other basic necessities by accessing various community resources during the course of four 15-minute "weeks". In addition, about 15-18 volunteers play the roles of resource providers in the community.

The Community Action Poverty Simulation is conducted in a large room. Participants are seated in family groups and community resources are located at tables around the perimeter of the room. The facilitator opens the simulation with an orientation to the activity, goes over ground rules, and answers participant questions during the exercise. The activity lasts about three hours. This time frame includes an introduction and briefing by the facilitator, the simulation exercise, and a guided debriefing in which participants and volunteers share their observations and insights from the activity.

