

News Release

Lifeline for the Empowerment and Development of Consumers, Inc.

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Lifeline Concludes Tax Season, Prepares over \$190,000 in Returns for Lake Co. Residents April 26, 2011

PAINESVILLE, Ohio—Lifeline, Inc. has concluded its 2011 tax season with great results, according to the agency's administration.

"We had a very busy, but very productive tax season," said Carrie Dotson, Executive Director. "Our VITA volunteers prepared tax returns for 162 Lake County residents, totaling \$194,737 in tax returns into our community."

Final statistics for the VITA Program for the 2011 tax season show that 162 residents had their taxes prepared at a Lifeline VITA tax clinic and that 92 of them received the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). Total returns generated at Lifeline's VITA clinics were \$194,737, of those \$154,963 included the EITC. The average return generated for all returns was \$1,202 and for returns that included the EITC was \$1,684. Twenty-seven returns were for greater than \$2,000.

The EITC is a federal income tax credit for low to moderate income working families and individuals. Congress originally approved it in 1975. Eligibility factors include how much you earned in 2010 and how many children you have. Even single adults and couples without children can qualify for the credit, although families with children receive larger credits

"We're really excited about the number of people that we served with free tax preparation services this season," Dotson said. "We're also really pleased to bring that kind of revenue back into the Lake County community."

Lifeline, Inc. uses volunteers trained and certified by the IRS through its Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. VITA volunteers provide free income tax assistance to low-income, elderly and disabled people. Throughout the 2011 tax season, volunteers donated 371 hours to Lifeline's VITA Program covering 273 appointments.

"Our volunteers were fantastic. We were very fortunate to have found 20 eager volunteers from college students to retirees to help us this year," said Tiffany Johnson, VITA Site Coordinator at Lifeline, Inc. "I am so grateful for their hard work, dedication and commitment to the program. They certainly surpassed our expectations. I'd like to thank our volunteers for donating over 370 hours of time that allowed us to provide a vital service to the low-income families in our community. The VITA program would not have been a success without them."

Lifeline, Inc. does anticipate hosting VITA tax clinics beginning again in January 2012. While specific clinic details will not be available until December 2011, Lifeline is already looking for volunteers who are interested in preparing taxes next season. Anyone interested can contact Michelle Mezaris, Lifeline's Consumer Education Coordinator, at (440) 354-2148.

Lifeline for the Empowerment and Development of Consumers was founded in 1973 with the mission of helping Lake County residents by providing them assistance and life skills programming that is designed to increase self-sufficiency. In 1980 Lifeline became a participating agency of the United Way of Lake County, UWLC, and in 1987 was designated a community action agency by the Ohio Department of Development, ODOD.

Today Lifeline continues with the same mission of helping Lake County's low-income residents break the cycle of poverty and make the transition from agency-dependency to self-sufficiency. Lifeline's current programming includes services in the health, housing, energy and consumer education areas. Our motto is 'first to help, then to teach.' Lifeline is currently funded by the UWLC and by grants through the ODOD, the Lake County Board of Commissioners, the Western Reserve Junior Service League, the CVS Foundation, Bikers Aiding Local Diabetics and through private donors.