

News Release

Lifeline for the Empowerment and Development of Consumers, Inc.

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Lifeline Concludes Tax Season, Prepares over \$100,000 in Returns for Lake Co. Residents May 5, 2014

PAINESVILLE, Ohio— Lifeline, Inc. has concluded its 2014 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 75 Lake County residents, totaling \$101,368 in state and federal tax returns into our community."

Final statistics for the VITA Program for the 2014 tax season show that 75 residents had their taxes prepared at a Lifeline VITA tax clinic and that 46 of them received the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). Total returns generated at Lifeline's VITA clinics were \$101,368, of those \$53,164 included the EITC.

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 2013 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 2014 tax season, volunteers donated 348 hours to Lifeline's VITA Program. Volunteers included community members and students from Lake Erie College.

VITA Site Coordinator Laura Behnke agreed that the volunteers really provided great service to the clients who participated.

"The success of this year's VITA program can be directly attributed to the hard work of a very dedicated group of volunteers," said Behnke. "It was a privilege to work with such committed and enthusiastic individuals and a wonderfully rewarding experience to be able to put crucial revenue back into the community."

Lifeline, Inc. will host VITA tax clinics beginning again in January 2015. While specific clinic details will not be available until December 2014, Lifeline is already looking for volunteers who are interested in

preparing taxes next season. Anyone interested can contact Michelle Mezaris, Lifeline's Director of Community Services, 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. In 2008, Lifeline was designated as a mental health agency by the Ohio Department of Mental Health.

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 healthcare, housing & energy assistance, information & referral services and consumer education & job training areas. Our motto is 'helping people, changing lives.' Lifeline is currently funded by the UWLC and by grants through the ODSA, the Lake County Board of Commissioners, the Lake County ADAMHS Board, Lake County Department of Job & Family Services, the City of Mentor, the Western Reserve Junior Service League, Bikers Aiding Local Diabetics and through private donors.