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Martin Luther King Day Celebration!

Monday January 18

9 a.m. registration at St. John's (details on p.2)

Save the Date: February 5 will be our next monthly forum, and we will "Meet the New Mayor!"



Caring For Our Caregivers

Despite the frigid temperatures outside on Friday, December 11, 52 community members braved the cold to come to the December forum for a discussion about "Caring for our Caregivers." As usual, a round of introductions and announcements began the meeting, until the formal discussion about the challenges of caring for others ensued. Those in attendance heard from both those caring for family members in their own homes as well as those employed by community agencies that provide formal care for local residents. Many issues are common to all caregivers, whether it is their job or whether they are caring for a loved one as a volunteer.



L to R standing: Cynthia Costello, Barb Cece, Jeff Johnson, Erin Cote, Pat Morrissey, and Diane Niles. Seated: Mark Rondeau. Key forum participants stand together following our community discussion.

Mark Rondeau, a local resident who cared for his mother through an illness in the last year of her life, spoke first with an overview of his experience as a caregiver. He mentioned the strains placed upon him, and the many questions he did not have time to research at the time of suddenly becoming a caregiver. Barb Cece, who cared for both of her parents in her home for five years, shared Mark's sentiments and talked about the trials and tribulations of becoming a caregiver literally overnight. Formal caregivers at the meeting included Cynthia Costello and Pat Morrissey, both of Elder Services, Jeff Johnson from the Department of Developmental Services, Diane Niles from the VNA & Hospice, and Erin Cote of United Cerebral Palsy. These formal caregivers all agreed that the need for giving care to another person can happen immediately, and will also generate various new elements to the lives of all involved, and can last for an indefinite amount of time.

If this topic is of interest to you, please join us for a follow-up meeting to continue the conversation. This meeting will take place at 10 a.m. on Friday, January 15, in the conference room at the nbCC office. There are two agenda items for the follow-up meeting that warrant particular note: We want to create a resource guide for caregivers along with a distribution plan for that guide. We are also looking to form plans to host a television show geared toward supporting caregivers, to include many more participants than were able to be a part of Northern Berkshire Tonite in December.

Thank you to all who participated in our December monthly forum; we wish you all a happy new year, and hope many of you will join us for our follow-up meeting to discuss supporting our caregivers!

-- Jenna Dickinson

nbCC Thanks Our January Newsletter Sponsor:

ADAMS CO-OPERATIVE BANK
 Courteous Service
 Borrowing or Saving
 Since 1895



Our Mission

“Dedicated to improving the quality of life for people in Northern Berkshire by organizing, supporting, and empowering the community.”

In pursuit of this mission, we place particular emphasis on the following:

- Strengthening neighborhoods and community life
- Preventing alcohol and substance abuse
- Fostering economic development
- Mitigating poverty
- Supporting positive youth development
- Building bridges between residents and service agencies

Coalition Supporters

Public Sources

- MA Department for Children & Families
- MA Cultural Council
- US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- MA Department of Public Health
- MA Department of Public Health, Bureau of Substance Abuse Services

Foundation Supporters

- Fund for North Adams
- Catholic Campaign for Human Development

Local Support

- North Adams Human Services
- Contributions from our many individual supporters

The Coalition is a member agency of the **Northern Berkshire United Way** and the **Williamstown Community Chest**.

To submit announcements to the *Coalition News*:

The *Coalition News* is a publication of the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition. We encourage submissions of announcements from local organizations.

February Newsletter Deadline January 18, 2009

Please submit announcements (100 words in paragraph form) via e-mail to: jcece@nbccoalition.org or abashevkin@nbccoalition.org. If necessary, announcements may also be faxed to **413-663-9877**. Thank you!

January Coalition Event: Martin Luther King Celebration Calls For A Community “Day of Service”

On Monday, January 18, 2010 the Northern Berkshire community will celebrate the life, principles, and ideals of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King. Everyone is welcome to join us as we remember the life and legacy of Dr. King and explore peace in our community. We hope you will help in contributing to the MLK Day of Service. There are many ways that you can contribute to this special event. If your organization is in need of service projects, please contact us so we can help accomplish your needs. If your business can put together a group of two or more people to volunteer on a service project, that will be a huge help. Individuals that would like to volunteer can also contact us so we can place them at a service project location. Projects will consist of volunteering at the Louison House, a needs drive for Elizabeth Freeman Center, a canned food and warm clothing drive and knitting warm hats and gloves for those in need. There will be other placements as well for children of all ages and abilities. The agenda for the day includes 9:00-9:30 Check-In and Coffee (St. John’s), followed by service projects from 10:00-12:30 at on-site locations, and concluding with 1:00 lunch at St. John’s. By volunteering as little as an hour we can accomplish many small projects within the Northern Berkshire community. Please be a part of this event that will build strong bonds within the community. If you would like to participate or have any questions, please contact Ashley Benson at abenson@nbccoalition.org or 663-7588.

– Ashley Benson

Mt. Greylock CMCA Will Continue Lecture Series @ MGRHS in January

A 4-part lecture series addressing the issues surrounding underage drinking is well underway this Winter in the meeting room at Mt. Greylock Regional High School, sponsored by Mt. Greylock CMCA (Communities Mobilizing for Change on Alcohol). The goal is to bring to light some of the important issues regarding underage drinking as well as new research on the impact these issues have on our children and our communities. There have been two lectures in November, and two lectures are slated to be held in January.

The next lecture will be on **January 14**, and is entitled “Alcohol and Human Performance: Alcohol’s Effect on the Body and It’s Potential Consequences Relating to Athletic Performance.” Our presenter will be Justin Moore, Assistant Professor of Physical Education and Head Coach of the Women’s Crew Team at Williams College. This 4-part series will culminate on **January 28** with a community forum which will include a panel of experts in the area of child psychology, addiction & law enforcement as well as parents, teenagers and others. This will give us all a chance to discover ways in which we can talk to our young children, teenagers and students about these very complex issues.

These lectures will include valuable information for parents, teachers, coaches and anyone who has or works with children. Please join us. For more information, please contact Mt. Greylock CMCA’s Strategy Team Leader, **Odette Klass** at oklass@nbccoalition.org or call nbCC at **663-7588**.

Improving the quality of life for people in Northern Berkshire by organizing, supporting, and empowering the community.

Northern Berkshire Youth Collaborative Receives Presentation on Emerging Tobacco Products

At the December meeting, held on 12/2/09, Joan Rubel, Project Coordinator for the Northern Berkshire Tobacco-Free Community Partnership at Berkshire AHEC, presented on emerging, non-cigarette tobacco products. Joan shared background information on the negative health impacts of tobacco and the particular consequences of beginning smoking during the teen years. She also brought samples of these new tobacco products to show people. Many of these items are not easily recognized as tobacco products, such as dissolvable tobacco products that look more like Tics-Tacs than anything else. Some were flavored or decorated in ways that are designed to make them more appealing to kids and teens—such as strawberry-kiwi blunt wraps in pink packaging. The group was taken aback by these products and left the meeting able to identify and speak about them to colleagues and youth. Many thanks to Joan for her detailed presentation. The NBYC is open to anyone who is interested in youth work or youth issues; meetings are held on the 1st Wednesday of each month, 11am-12:30pm.

The NBYC is accepting SAY It Proud nominations on a rolling basis. SAY It Proud (“SAY” stands for Supporting and Acknowledging Youth) was a recognition award created by the NBYC a few years ago in response to the suggestion in the PNA results that youth don’t feel recognized by adults in the community for positive actions. Any community member can nominate a young person for a SAY It Proud award. Awards will be presented four times a year at public community events. For a nomination form, please visit nbccoalition.org/forms. You can nominate individuals or groups of young people ages 11-19 for participating in positive activities, making healthy choices, and/or working hard. For more info, please contact Kate Merrigan at kmerrigan@nbccoalition.org or 663-7588.

-- Kate Merrigan

You Can Be A Special Education Surrogate Parent

Are you interested in supporting the kids in your community? You can help to solve the puzzle by volunteering to become an important member of the special education team for a student in the custody of the Department of Children and Families (DCF). You can piece together their special education program by becoming a Special Education Surrogate Parent. Involvement will include collaboration with DCF, the child’s school and community providers to ensure the student will have access to educational services and support systems. Join a free training where you will learn about the role of a Special Education Surrogate Parent, the special education process, resources in your community, and how you can make a difference in the life of a child! For additional information and an application to become involved, please call **508-792-7679**. You may also visit the website at www.sespprogram.org. Please consider helping to piece together the puzzle; you can start today!

-- Deanna Forist

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July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010

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101 Things To Do Without Alcohol!

Never let your teen say, "I'm bored!" again! Teens that are bored may feel the temptation to drink, just because "there's nothing to do around here."



Choose from this list of 101 fun things to do:

1. Go to a movie.
2. Read a book.
3. Learn a new skill.
4. Find a hobby.
5. Go bowling.
6. Make a meal for someone and deliver it.
7. Learn a new card game.
8. Do a random act of kindness.
9. Play video games.
10. Invent something.
11. Play miniature golf.
12. Watch an old movie.
13. Be a mentor for an elementary student.
14. Learn a foreign language.
15. Play a board game with a group of friends.
16. Go for a bike ride.
17. Update your Facebook.
18. Help a neighbor.
19. Learn how to change a flat tire.
20. Join a club at school.
21. Meet friends at a coffee house.
22. Call your grandma.
23. Buy something funny at a dollar store.
24. Volunteer.
25. Become a big brother or big sister.
26. Go to a thrift store, and find great vintage wear.
27. Bake something.
28. Play basketball.
29. Lift weights.
30. Work out to a hilarious 80's exercise video.
31. Go for a walk.
32. Play solitaire.
33. Get a part-time job.
34. Visit someone in a nursing home.
35. Write a list of things you like about someone, and give them the list.
36. Create a video.
37. Make s'mores.
38. Write a letter using only letters cut out from newspapers and magazines.
39. Brighten someone's day by leaving encouraging notes in library books.
40. Try to break or set a world record.
41. Play a game online.
42. Make a new version of an ice cream sundae.
43. Go on a scavenger hunt in the mall.
44. Write a song, and take turns performing your new tunes.
45. Call someone you haven't called in awhile.
46. Put a new ring tone on your cell phone.
47. Sing (even if you can't!).
48. Write your own biography.
49. Ask a neighbor in need how you can help.
50. Make your own family portrait poster.
51. Plan a party, and have some friends over.
52. Host a backyard Olympics for kids in your neighborhood.
53. Create your own blog or Web site.
54. Twitter.
55. Tutor after school.
56. Create an after-school club.
57. Learn to play a musical instrument.
58. Create your own goofy infomercial.
59. Research colleges to see where you'd like to go.
60. Search online and apply for scholarships.
61. Make up nice nicknames for all of your friends.
62. Get outside and enjoy nature.
63. Read the newspaper.
64. Search online for current events.
65. Volunteer for a political campaign.
66. Build something.
67. Learn about a different culture.
68. Write a letter to the President.
69. Paint your room.
70. Watch a sunset.
71. Plan a water balloon fight.
72. Make a craft.
73. Take some interesting pictures.
74. Smile.
75. Do a science experiment.
76. Go to a restaurant you've never experienced.
77. Meet a group of friends at a video arcade.
78. Paintball.
79. Cheer at one of your school's sporting events.
80. Practice driving with your parent.
81. Participate in a fundraiser.
82. Send a letter to the editor of your local newspaper.
83. Start a collection.
84. Go shopping.
85. Learn a new recipe.
86. Clean out your closet.
87. Take a dance class.
88. Watch your favorite TV show.
89. Volunteer at a vet clinic.
90. Make a scrapbook.
91. Wash a car.
92. Go swimming.
93. Skateboard.
94. Go to a skating rink.
95. Put up posters around your school about safe driving.
96. Walk a dog.
97. Go to a play.
98. Check out a museum.
99. Play with a Frisbee football at the park.
100. Thank your parents for something.
101. **DRIVE SAFELY!**

From www.underyourinfluence.org

Take Charge Hosted Community-wide Environmental Forum

On Friday, December 4, 2009 Take Charge hosted our first community-wide Environmental forum at the 1st Baptist Church, North Adams, MA where local residents, students of all ages, and community members joined together to voice their questions and concerns involving current environmental topics. With the U.N. International Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark upon us, many people are thinking about what this means for the United States and more directly, how these changes will impact our daily lives. Among more than forty attendees at the forum were Mike Boland of the North Adams City Council, Keith Davis along with his Drury High School Green Technology class, and various MCLA and Williams College affiliates. Forum panelists included Massachusetts State Representative Dan Bosley, Philip McKnight, an adjunct professor at Williams College and MCLA, Stephanie Boyd, Director of the Zilkha Center for Environmental Initiatives at Williams College, and Lauren Moffatt, Coordinator of the Berkshire Environmental Resource Center at MCLA.

The initiative behind the forum was to create a dialogue about current environmental topics, both local and international, that would be widely accessible to the Berkshire community and where people could ask questions and voice their concerns on a personal level. Popular topics that were addressed at the forum included; potential improvements to local grassroots organizations targeting greater community involvement and outreach initiatives, discussion about the current problems with the North Adams city-wide recycling program, and future sustainability initiatives on a feasible scale for the Berkshire area. From here, the pace of the forum picked up quickly and there seemed to be no shortage of conversation. Forum panelists provided direction and insight to the topics being discussed while attendees spoke enthusiastically about our capacity for change and possibilities of adapting green initiatives in North Adams. It is encouraging to see that the forum was used as a platform for community members to come together and brainstorm openly about these pressing topics with the opportunity to be heard by local leaders. Take Charge hopes that by providing this sort of personal dialogue within the local community, it will shed light on some of the issues that can be improved upon in our city. We hope to use the information gathered at the forum to target key environmental issues in North Adams and re-vamp Take Charge initiatives to cater to the changing community needs. While the U.N. Conference in Copenhagen seeks to identify what leading countries intend to do in regards to future climate change initiatives, the motivation shown at the Take Charge environmental forum indicates a growing interest for progressive, environmental change in North Adams *now*.

Take Charge is a student run project and a partner of the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition (nbCC). For more information or to get involved with Take Charge, please contact Madeline King (msk1@williams.edu) or Jaimie Wallace (jw2606@mcla.edu).

-- Jaimie Wallace

Calling All Parents!

If you have taken the Safe Homes pledge, and you would like to be more involved in promoting the Safe Homes of North Berkshire program in your community, contact us at the Coalition office. We have scheduled a Safe Homes Parents Committee meeting for **Tuesday, January 26th at 5:00 p.m.** at the Coalition office (61 Main Street, Suite 218, North Adams). Let's meet and brainstorm ways to encourage other parents of children in grades 6-12 to be part of the Safe Homes network. Just as a reminder, here is the pledge:

PARENT PLEDGE

- **I (we) will not allow teen parties in my home or on my property when I am not present.**
- **I (we) will not allow the illegal use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs by teens in my home or on my property.**

Contact **Lois Daunis**, ldaunis@nbccoalition.org or **Jenna Dickinson**, jcece@nbccoalition.org for more information. Or call the Coalition at **663 -7588**.

-- Lois Daunis

Groove Hosts Touring Bands at St. John's

In December, Groove hosted a concert at St. John's Parish Hall featuring six bands, several of whom were touring (including one from as far away as Wisconsin!). The show, which was experimentally held on a school night in order to capitalize on the mid-week availability of touring bands, drew about 25 audience members. Coming up, Groovers are excited to again be working with staff at MASS MoCA on holding a show sometime in February in collaboration with MoCA performing arts staff and interns. Stay tuned for details on the show date or check myspace.com/thegroovecafe for updates.

Youth Leaders Psyched for Meeting with New Mayor and Skateboard Park Advocacy

In December, Youth Leadership Program members focused a lot of their energy on discussing and researching the viability of a skateboard park in North Adams. The group did internet research, held internal discussions, and had a meeting with new City Councilor Mike Boland, who is also interested in the issue. YLP sessions also focused on communication, with group members taking a quiz to find out how assertive they are and then doing role plays to practice clearly asking for what they need and want. Looking ahead, the group is very excited to meet with Mayor Dick Alcombright on Thursday, January 26th to discuss youth issues with him before the City Council meeting. The group will then stay for the meeting and have the opportunity to address the Council. In his Inaugural Address on New Year's Day, the incoming Mayor stated that he hopes this will be the beginning of youth involvement in city government.



Left: Ben, Brittany and Aubry lead the group in an activity on assertiveness



Right: Dana and Lauren were quick to volunteer for a role play on speaking your mind in a way that is respectful to yourself and others

SAVE THE DATE: 411 in the 413 Youth Conference

This year's countywide youth conference, created by and for high school students in the Berkshires, will be held overnight at the YMCA Camp Becket-Chimney Corners Friday, 4/9 to Saturday, 4/10. The planning committee—which includes youth and staff from UNITY, Railroad Street Youth Project, the District Attorney's Youth Advisory Board, the Pittsfield Youth Commission, and Berkshire Creative—will be contacting schools in January in order to spread the word and register participants. The conference, which is in its 4th year, is sponsored by the Berkshire Youth Development Project.

Other UNITY Happenings Worth Noting:

*Emily Baker-White, a graduate of Mount Greylock Regional High School and current sophomore at Oberlin College, is interning with UNITY for the month of January. Emily will be focusing on providing support to the Youth Leadership Program, particularly in regards to skate park advocacy/research. If you are interested in working toward creating a skate park in North Adams, please get in touch with Emily at ebakerwhite@nbccoalition.org.

*The Teen Writing Workshop is on a roll, with over 20 youth having participated in sessions in the months of November and December. Youth are encouraged to attend every week, but are welcome to join at any time. The group meets on Thursday afternoons, 4 p.m. - 5:30 p.m., at the nbCC conference room at 61 Main Street in North Adams. For more information, contact Kate Merrigan at kmerrigan@nbccoalition.org or 663-7588.

-- Kate Merrigan & Robin Lehlitner

"The mission of NBN is to connect and support residents within neighborhoods to build community, create stronger neighborhoods, and make linkages to groups, institutions and other resources."

NORTHERN  BERKSHIRE
NEIGHBORS

A Brayton Hill Video Showcase

On December 15 & 17, Tim Briggs, Nate Williams and Brayton Hill residents had a reason to celebrate great accomplishments for their 21st Century, Brayton Hill After School Program in collaboration with North Adams Public Schools. On Tuesday, December 15, children in grades 1-3 displayed the photograph documentaries they created. The children proudly stood by their work describing their efforts to family and friends of Brayton Hill. On Thursday, December 17, 2009 the older children in grades 4-6 had an opportunity to showcase their first film that they created together with help from the staff of NBCTC. The 20-minute video is entitled "Things You Didn't Know About Brayton Hill." The video will be aired on community television and on our website in the month of January. Both groups, through the use of art and media, explored themselves as individuals, families and as a community. "All of the children who participated showed great gains in self-esteem and in their sense of community," stated Tim Briggs, the Brayton Hill Afterschool Program Coordinator. The After School program will resume in late January; for more information, please contact Ashley Benson at nbCC, 663-7588 ext 13.



Above: Nate Williams (L) and Tim Briggs (R) celebrate with youth who produced the video

NBN Welcomes Janitza Williams!

NBN welcomes Janitza Williams as a Community Outreach Worker for the Northern Berkshires, specializing in outreach to the hispanic population in the region. Janitza is helping the Coalition become more accessible to the growing hispanic population in our community. To begin the task, she has translated our resource guide to Spanish. You can access the spanish version of our resource guide if you visit our website at www.nbccoalition.org, under the further resources link. Janitza is one of seven outreach workers that will be hired in the upcoming month as we put forth our full efforts in engaging the community and assisting neighbors in gaining access and resources that they need to become successful, both individually and as a community.

Greylock Valley Came Together for the Holidays

On Saturday, December 19, nbCC and the Northern Berkshire Housing Authority (NBHA) collaborated to bring the magic of the season to residents of the Greylock Valley Neighborhood. Forty residents, young and old, congregated at the Greylock Club to celebrate the holidays. The event was catered with a hot turkey dinner that all enjoyed together. Santa visited the children and brought each child a gift, and each of the kids had a moment to share their wishes with Mr. Clause. NBHA recently hired Bill Schrade, a full time project manager for the Greylock Valley apartments. While Bill has been present in the neighborhood for a few weeks, it was a great time for he and others from the Housing Authority to break bread with the residents and get to know one another. Kellie Morrison, a resident and community outreach worker for nbCC, stated "It felt like home, it had a really nice familial tone. It was a nice way to celebrate the holiday with administration of the Housing Authority and tenants. It was a welcoming, celebratory day for all." The residents were appreciative of the event and the generosity of the agencies. It was a step forward for the neighborhood, coming together as a community and making Greylock Valley a better place to be a part of.

Walk On!

We would like to invite you to be part of NBN's New Year's Resolution. To become more informed about your neighborhood and the needs of the community, we have created a program called "Walk On!" Coalition staffers toured local neighborhoods to kick off our walking tour during the first week in January; please join us soon for fitness, friends, fun and community! We will continue to walk at different times of the week in various neighborhoods. A schedule to let you know how to get involved will soon be on our website, or call 663-7588 for more information.

-- Ashley Benson, Natalie Cain & Tim Briggs

COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

Improving the quality of life for people in Northern Berkshire by organizing, supporting, and empowering the community.

Media Contacts for Northern Berkshire

All news outlets in Northern Berkshire are happy to receive press releases by e-mail. Be mindful of the deadlines for each outlet, and make sure the important details -- who, what, when, and where -- are clear in the beginning of your release. Include a contact name and phone number.

Sometimes a follow-up phone call is helpful, and if you have a relationship with a reporter, make sure he or she gets a copy, too.

| | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
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| Berkshire Eagle | news@berkshireeagle.com |
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| Gazette | gazette@berkshire.net |
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| N. Adams Tourism Office (Rod Bunt) | tourism@northadams-ma.gov |
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The Parent-Child Home Program Has Openings

Want to start the new year out right for your toddler? Open your door to a caring and friendly home visitor. The Parent-Child Home program has openings. During these indoor, cold winter months enjoy this voyage with free books and toys that you keep. This is a wonderful way to play with your child. A trained home visitor will come to your home for 1 hour each week. If you have a child between 18 months and 3 years old, please give us a call to arrange enrollment. We can schedule visits on Saturdays and up until early evening, if needed. Please call Child Care of the Berkshires at **663-6593** and ask for **Gretchen** or **Jennifer** for more information.

Have You Been Touched By Suicide?

Are you a survivor yourself, or have experienced loss of a loved one, friend, family member, or co-worker? Do you work with suicidal clients? Suicides not only affect the individual, but the whole community. In Massachusetts, suicide deaths are three times the rate of homicides deaths. The suicide rate in rural areas like Berkshire County is higher compared to other areas of the state. Yet, evidence-based research shows that suicide is preventable. The Berkshire Coalition for Suicide Prevention (BCSP) is having its second meeting to help reduce the suicide rate in our community. All members are invited – youth, professionals, public officials, and concerned citizens. The purpose of this coalition is to network & create partnerships to increase awareness of suicide, as a preventable public health problem, reduce stigma associated with suicide as a significant barrier to seeking help, influence the provision of services directed at populations at high-risk of suicide, and to create strategies, goals & objectives to reduce the incidence of suicide. What: Berkshire Coalition for Suicide Prevention Meeting; When: **Tuesday, January 19, 2010 from 6:00 - 8:00 pm**; Where: **Pittsfield Public Library, 1 Wendell Ave, Pittsfield, MA 01201**. Refreshments will be served. Please RSVP to **Sheila Dargie** at sdargie@berkshireahec.org or **(413) 447-2417**; for questions contact **Jon Phillips**, Project Coordinator at jphillips@berkshireahec.org or above number.

Northern Berkshire Adult Basic Education Program Begins Spring Enrollment

Enrollment is beginning at the Northern Berkshire Adult Basic Education Program for January start of classes. GED, English for Speakers of other Languages, and Basic Skills classes are offered. Computer Skills and Next Steps, a class to build skills for college and career success, are offered to students enrolled in at least one other course. A new class, GED Fast Track, a twelve week test preparation class, will be offered this spring. All classes, books and materials are free. Classes are held in North Adams, Adams and Williamstown. For more information or to enroll, please call **662-5314** or **662-5310**.

Collaborate With Berkshire County 4-H

The Berkshire County 4-H Program is always looking for people who are interested in starting clubs or groups who are interested in collaborating. Please call **Angelica** to discuss the possibilities at **413-448-8285**. Information about the program can also be found by visiting www.mass4h.org.

nbCC Has Office Space Available For Rent

The Northern Berkshire Community Coalition has a small office space available for rent, effective immediately. If interested, please contact **Al Bashevkin** at **663-7588** for more information.

Improving the quality of life for people in Northern Berkshire by organizing, supporting, and empowering the community.

The Annual United Cerebral Palsy "Starfest" '10 Telethon is Fast Approaching!

United Cerebral Palsy's "Starfest" Telethon is scheduled for **Sunday, January 31, 2010**. It will be live at the **Crowne Plaza** in Pittsfield from **1 – 5 p.m.** and will also be televised on Pittsfield Community Television/Time Warner Cable, Channel 16 during that time. It will be shown on NBCTC/Time Warner Cable, Channel 15 (North County) and on CTSB/Time Warner Cable, Channel 16 (South County) from 3 - 7 p.m. UCP's goal is to raise \$35,000. All money raised remains entirely in Berkshire County. It will help UCP's mission of advancing the independence of children and adults with physical and developmental disabilities by providing numerous services for them. UCP is looking for help for this fundraising event. The day should prove to be a fun one with the people in the community benefiting directly from funds raised. Individuals or groups are welcome to be on our Telethon to speak about their experience in supporting our agency. For information, call **Christine** or **Joni** at **(413) 442-1562**.

Wordplay @ Papyri Books

Held the second Saturday of each month at 7 p.m., Wordplay hosts a guest author each month, followed by refreshments, open mic and a visit to Papyri Gallery to see the work of local artists. Our featured authors for February will be Jana Laiz and Ann-Elizabeth Barnes reading from *A Free Woman on God's Earth: The True Story of Elizabeth "Mumbet" Freeman, The Slave Who Won Her Freedom*. Francis Sneed-Jones will also be a featured speaker. Papyri Gallery continues to feature the work of painter and sculptor Joel Rudnick. Open Mic is an opportunity for guests to share works-in-progress with a time limit of approximately five minutes. Join us **Saturday, February 13 at 7 p.m. - Papyri Books, 45 Eagle Street, North Adams**. Winter Hours: Tuesday-Saturday 12-6. Wordplay is free and open to the public.

A Northern Berkshire Community Resource Fair Will Be Held In February

As you may know, a student organization at Williams College, CATALYST, has been working alongside a number of community organizations interested in sharing community resources in the North Berkshires in a more efficient and effective way. Recently a number of community members have met with these students to brainstorm; the result was plans for a monthly community resource fair. The fair will be held at **St. John's Episcopal Church on Summer Street in North Adams**. This event will not only provide access to a number of services but will also serve as a pilot project and an opportunity to gather statistics and document need. Such statistics and documentation are vital to taking the project to the next level – such as envisioning a community resource center.

This event is scheduled for **February, 2010**. There is a planning meeting on Monday, January 11, at St. John's Church in North Adams. All interested parties who want to explore the opportunities for participation in this exciting new venture should contact **Madeline King at Catalyst, msk1@williams.edu**. You may also feel free to call or email **Kim McMann at Target Hunger; 413-672-1167** or kimm@foodbankwma.org, or **Valerie Schwarz at the Berkshire Food Project; 413-664-7378** or vschwarz3@verizon.net.

MCLA Will Celebrate National Girls and Women in Sports Day!

MCLA will celebrate National Girls and Women in Sports Day! The event takes place on Saturday, February 13, 2010 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The entire day is free for girls in grades 3-8, and also for adult women's programs. There will be a "Cans for Kids" drive and an essay contest, too! Participants must register in advance by visiting <http://athletics.mcla.edu/information/NGWSD> or by calling **662-5437** or **662-5411**.

Northern Berkshire Faith Institutions and Leaders

Adams

First Baptist Church 15 Commercial St. 743-5680
Pastor Donald E. Gray
First Congregational 42 Park Street 743-1677
Rev. Mike Mullany
Pope John Paul The Great Parish 21 Maple Street
Rev. Daniel J. Boyle 743-1767
St. Mark's Episcopal P.O. Box 191 743-0947
Rev. Edward A. King

Cheshire

Cheshire First Baptist Church 743-3649
Pastor Rick Newton
St. Mary of the Assum. 159 Church Street 743-2110
Rev. David Raymond
United Methodist Church 743-0133
Pastor Warren Scamman

Florida

Florida Baptist Church Road 664-6055
Rev. Roy Burdick

Hancock

Hancock Baptist Church Box 10A
Rev. Angela Buchauer

Lanesboro

Berkshire Union Chapel Route 8 445-4299
Rev. William D. Furey
St. Luke's Episcopal 20 S. Main Street 443-0165
Rev. Mary Schreiber

New Ashford

Christian Harvest Cntr 199 Mallery Rd 458-1083
Pastor Joseph D. Slonski

North Adams

Northern Berkshire Christian Church
55 Harding Ave. 663-8998
Rev. Robert Bellofatto
Blackinton Union Massachusetts Avenue 458-8302
Pastor Eugene Kemp
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Holiday
Inn Annex of Amer. Legion Drive 802-694-1726
President: Jim Law
Congregation Beth Israel 53 Lois Street 663-5830
Rabbi Jeffrey Goldwasser
COTY Center 70 Marshall Street 663-3133
Sister Eunice Tassone
First Baptist 131 Main Street 663-3780
Rev. David Anderson
First Bible Baptist 35 Notch Road 662-2107
Pastor Eric Malachuk
First Congregational 134 Main Street 663-9940
Rev. Allen M. Comstock
First United Methodist 134 Main Street 664-9655
Pastor Kim Kie
Jehovah's Witness 984 Union Street 663-5030
St. Andrews Episcopal 1438 Mass Avenue 662-2775
Rev. Peter Pierson
St. Elizabeth's of Hungary 68 Marshall 663-5316
Rev. William Cyr
St. John's Episcopal 59 Summer Street 664-9656
Rev. Edward King
Salvation Army 393 River Street 663-7987
Lts. Russell & Cynthia Crowzen

Savoy

Sovereign Grace Baptist 664 Main Road 447-8127
Pastor Kenneth Mick Jr.

(continued on page 10)

COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

Improving the quality of life for people in Northern Berkshire by organizing, supporting, and empowering the community.

Northern Berkshire Faith Institutions and Leaders (Continued)

Stamford, VT

St. John Bosco Chapel Main Road 802-694-1950
Father Joseph H. Tate
Stamford Community Main Road 802-694-1533
Rev. Bill Wilson

Williamstown

Baha'i Faith Williams College 458-8092
Sponsored by Williams College Baha'i Club
Community Bible Ch. 160 Bridges Rd. 458-5556
Rev. Douglas Duncan
First Baptist 731 Main Street 458-4811
Rev. Peter Daniels
First Congregational 906 Main Street 458-4273
Rev. Carrie Bail
First United Methodist 777 Main Street 458-3183
Rev. Michelle Grube
St. John's Episcopal 35 Park Street 458-8144
Rev. Peter Elvin
St. Patrick and Raphael 54 Southworth 458-4946
Rev. Wayne C. Biernat
Second Congregational 81 Hancock Rd. 458-3467
Rev. Penny Rich Smith
White Oaks Cong. 480 White Oaks Road 458-4633
Rev. Sue Stewart
Williams Coll. Chap. 39 Chapin Hall Dr. 597-2483
Rev. Richard Spalding

CORRECTIONS BOX:

No mistakes to report this month...please keep checking, and be sure to let me know of any corrections or updates in this and future issues!

MASS MoCA Seeks Event Volunteers

Attend films, theater, concerts, dance performances, dance parties and exhibition openings free-of-charge while mingling with patrons from all over the northeast and beyond. MASS MoCA, the largest center for contemporary visual and performing arts in the United States, located in North Adams, MA, is looking for volunteers! Volunteers help regularly with ushering at weekly performing arts events as well as monthly with administrative tasks. For more information, please contact **Meredith Boggia** at **413-334-4481, ext. 8109**, or send your email address to **mboggia@massmoca.org** to be added to the volunteer list.

The 84 Movement is Excited to Announce the 4th Annual Film Shorts Contest - Gettin' Real on Reel!

Massachusetts youth are invited to enter their original 30 second film shorts speaking out against Big Tobacco by **February 26th, 2010**. This is an opportunity for youth to share their creativity and energy with others around the State. Teams and individuals who produce the winning film shorts will win cash prizes and be part of an awards ceremony in the spring. For the application, guidelines, and all the information you need to upload your film short, go to www.the84.org/filmshorts2010.

United Neighborhood Organization (UNO) Announces Winners of the Holiday House Decorating Contest

Members of UNO's Steering Committee went out Thursday, December 17 in the evening to judge houses in their annual Holiday House Decorating Contest. The homes were beautiful. More decorations are added each year. We thank everyone who participated. The winners were: James and Lisa Morandi, 49 Hall St.; Richard and Kathryn Remillard, 102 Liberty St.; Richard Rancourt, 170 Bracewell Ave.; Mathew and Darlene Ellis, 372 Houghton St.; and Donna Bishop, 20 Chase Ave. Each winner received a \$20.00 gift certificate. For more information about UNO, call **Shirley** at **663-5516**.

Save the date ~ Saturday, March 27th

BOWL FOR KIDS' SAKE 2010

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Berkshire County is pleased to announce the date for their annual signature fundraising event ~ Bowl for Kids' Sake. Big Brothers Big Sisters is seeking participants for the event, taking place on March 27th from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Mt. Greylock Bowl on Roberts Drive in North Adams. (Other dates available in central and south counties.) No experience is necessary; however participants **MUST LIKE TO HAVE FUN**. For more information, please contact **Sarah** at bbbs@nbcoalition.org or **663-7588**, or **Ray** at bbbs@rnetworx.com or **443-9471**.

Improving the quality of life for people in Northern Berkshire by organizing, supporting, and empowering the community.

January 11, 12:00 p.m.

Neighborhood Summit

Please join your neighbors in the conference room at the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition in an opportunity for community leadership. We'll talk about community issues, and problem solve together. The public is welcome. Please call **Ashley** at **663-7588** for information.

January 15, 10:00 a.m.

Caregivers Follow-up Meeting

A follow-up meeting will be held at the Coalition office, 61 Main St., North Adams, to continue the conversation about "Caring for our Caregivers" from the December monthly forum. Please join us! For more information, contact **Al Bashevkin** at **abashevkin@nbccoalition.org** or **663-7588**.

January 26, 5:00 p.m.

Safe Homes Parents Committee Meeting

Please join Coalition staff and members of the Safe Homes program as we brainstorm ways to encourage other parents to participate in the program. Light refreshments will be served. For more information, please contact **Lois Daunis** at **ldaunis@nbccoalition.org** or **Jenna Dickinson** at **jcece@nbccoalition.org**, or call the Coalition office at **663-7588**.

January 11, 7:30 p.m.

January 15, 8:00 p.m.

Northern Berkshire Tonite

The talk show of the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition, hosted by **Al Bashevkin** and **Scott Nichols**, each month takes a look at key issues of concern to the residents of Northern Berkshire County. This month **Al** and **Scott** will discuss the upcoming celebration of **Martin Luther King Day** with their guests **Steve Green** and **Alex Daugherty**, both members of the **MLK Day organizing committee**.

January 18, 2010

Martin Luther King Jr. Day! "DAY OF SERVICE"

9 a.m. registration @ St. John's
(details on p.2)

February 3, 11:00 a.m.

Northern Berkshire Youth Collaborative

The monthly meetings are held the **first Wednesday of each month (September through June)** at **11:00 a.m.** at the Coalition, 61 Main St., Suite 218, North Adams. We hope you'll join us for the February meeting. To get on the group's e-mail list, contact **Kate Merrigan** at **kmerrigan@nbccoalition.org**.

January 18, 6:00 p.m.

Foster Family Connections

Foster Family Connections meets on the third Tuesday of each month at St. John's Parish Hall in North Adams. The time allows for foster parents to connect with one another over a topic or activity. Families interested in attending should contact **Natalie Cain** at **663-7588** or **ncain@nbccoalition.org**.

January 27, 5:30 p.m.

(Adams)

January 19, 7:00 p.m.

(Mt. Greylock)

CMCA Strategy Team Meetings

Adams Mobilizing for Change on Alcohol (AMCA) and Mt. Greylock Mobilizing for Change on Alcohol (MGMCA) are grassroots initiatives to reduce teenagers' access to alcohol. Strategy teams made up of local citizens meet monthly to guide project priorities and actions. For the Adams team, contact **Corinne Case** at **743-7455** or **ccase@nbccoalition.org**. For the Mt. Greylock team, contact **Odette Klass** at **458-5287** or **oklass@nbccoalition.org**. For information about the CMCA program, call or email **Jenna Dickinson**, Prevention Coordinator at the Coalition office, **663-7588** or **jcece@nbccoalition.org**.

February 5, 10:00 a.m.

(note: 1st Friday!)

Meet The New Mayor

Please join the Coalition and community members in conversation with the new Mayor of North Adams, **Dick Alcombright**. This meeting will be the Coalition Monthly Forum for February, and will be held at the **First Baptist Church in North Adams, at the corner of Eagle and Main streets**. Use the Eagle Street entrance.

January 2010

Coalition Staff

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Gracie Vincent: gvincent@nbccoalition.org

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Grants Manager

Lois Daunis: ldaunis@nbccoalition.org

Take Charge Interns

Madeline King: msk1@williams.edu

Jaimie Wallace: jw2606@mcla.edu

Final Thoughts . . .

For some, life just doesn't get easy. A difficult employment picture...issues at home...family illness...young children...aging parents...rising prices...the loss of essential community services.... These ingredients lead to some tough financial times. At the Coalition, we hear it in the phone calls requesting fuel assistance after other efforts are exhausted. Or we see it in the people coming into our office requesting a variety of services. Times are tough. We feel it.

It's specifically during these times that we have to hang onto those services that work with the most in need. The closing of the Prevention Office (61 Main St., North Adams) of the Family Life Support Center in December is of great concern to me. The Family Life Support Center had staff with over twenty years of experience in working with the poor. Their jobs were never easy...finding housing, preventing homelessness, helping to navigate a helping system that, not by design but rather by default, can be very confusing. The knowledge that this staff takes with them of community systems will be hard to earn back, but equally important are the relationships they had with so many that are disempowered. Healthy relationships lead to prevention of more complicated issues. Hearing a familiar voice on the phone, meeting with someone we know who cares, having someone to talk with when needed, are what may prevent a horrible decision that will lead to more terrible decisions. Losing prevention staff that knew so many in the community will be hard to replace.

I know the decision to close the prevention office was not an easy one. In these difficult economic times, we are asked to make some tough choices. These thoughts are not meant to stoke a sense of hopelessness. They're intended to put out a call to action. I'm hoping that somehow we can bring these critical staff back to provide the prevention services our community needs now, and I know that a collective community can do just that. We did it before. Ideas are welcome.

--Al Bashevkin

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Northern Berkshire Community Coalition



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