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Northern Berkshire Community Coalition

Coalition news

An update from



October 2010, Volume XXV, Number 2

Dialogue Flows as nbCC Forum Sets Annual Agenda



Ninety-one people including community service providers, business and civic leaders, educators, students, neighborhood activists, and concerned residents, took part in conversations led by Al Bashevkin, Executive Director of the nbCC, on Friday, September 17th, when the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition held its annual agenda setting needs assessment forum. The purpose of this forum was to encourage open dialogue about issues that face our community and to determine the agenda for future forums.

Much of the first half of the forum addressed the news that the State Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) will close its North Adams office at the end of November. Mayor Richard Alcombright updated forum members on the most recent developments on this issue. There is much concern that people would have to travel to Pittsfield for services, and with transportation too costly to be a viable option, many fear the neediest will not get the services they require. In addition, the loss of 14 employees who work at the DTA office in North Adams will cause an economic impact on the city. The mayor assured the forum that he is continuing to work with Senator Benjamin Downing, Representative Dan Bosley, and City Councilor Gail Cariddi to

keep this issue in the forefront until a better solution is found.

Al Bashevkin took this opportunity to publicly congratulate Gail Cariddi for her primary win for state representative. He thanked outgoing representative Dan Bosley for all his many contributions to the nbCC throughout his years as our state representative. He also thanked Ray Burke of DCF for his 21 years of service to Northern Berkshire. Al was also excited to announce the upcoming 20-year anniversary of UNO, the United Neighbor Organization and praised long time UNO organizer Shirley Davis.

Forum attendees brought up many issues facing our community. In the services area, people expressed the lack of transportation for the elderly, lack of "safety nets" for people facing emergencies, and a need for a workshop for service providers to handle the stress of increased caseloads. Many had concerns about parenting and would like the coalition to address the need for parent education and support for single parents, smoking and pregnancy, and the lack of foster and adoptive parents. Economic concerns included housing security, homelessness and mortgage default and the increase in addiction and small crimes and animal abuse and neglect during an economic recession.

In health, the recent cuts in dental care for MassHealth members was voiced along with concerns about the future of the North Adams Regional Hospital and our health care delivery. For children and teens issues, people would like to address the lack of jobs for teens, increased tobacco use, suicide prevention, bullying, SPED advocacy and skills needed for IEP dropouts. Others would like to keep up to date on some exciting things happening in Berkshire County like the Hoosic River Revival, the expansion of the bike trail through North Adams, and how to help sustain our local agriculture.

This forum provided an opportunity for people to network, meet others and spread the word about their local programs and services. Attendees had an opportunity to give announcements and were encouraged to provide printed material for display and distribution.

"Wow," stated Al Bashevkin, "What amazing attendance and participation. Thanks to those who will help set our agenda this coming year."

—Bert Lamb

Top: l-r: Attendees of the September kick-off forum; Mayor Richard Alcombright addresses the forum about DTA issues; Ideas abound; nbCC staff member, Gracie Vincent.

**nbCC thanks our
October newsletter
sponsor:**



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Medical Center**

www.berkshirehealthsystems.org

Nationally recognized care provided by
an award winning team of healthcare
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Northern Berkshire Community Coalition

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/substance abuse
- Fostering economic development
- Mitigating poverty
- Supporting positive youth development
- Building bridges between residents and service agencies

Coalition Supporters

Public Sources

- MA Dept. 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.

November Newsletter Deadline October 15, 2010

Please submit announcements via e-mail to: blamb@nbcoalition.org or abashevkin@nbcoalition.org. If necessary, announcements may also be faxed to 413-663-9877. Thank you!

nbCC to Host October Forum

Neighborhood Organizing in Northern Berkshire: UNO Celebrates 20 Years

Please join us on **Friday, October 8** as we celebrate neighborhood organizing in Northern Berkshire at our monthly Forum. Twenty years ago this month, neighbors in the River, Hall, Bracewell area of North Adams came together to discuss how they could improve their neighborhood. They became UNO ~ United Neighborhood Organization. All these years later, through many ups and downs, individually and as a community, many of those same folks are still working on making positive change. They have weathered many changes. They have seen great successes and still arise to meet new challenges.

Shirley Davis, one of UNO's "movers and shakers" from the start, and the 2010 Fall Foliage Parade Grand Marshall, will be

sharing a history of UNO 1990 – 2010. You don't want to miss this Forum! Come help celebrate all the hard work done in neighborhoods over the past two decades, hear about some of the current work of the Community Outreach Workers and help envision the future of healthier neighborhoods in northern Berkshire.

We will begin, as always, with a round of introductions, followed by brief announcements of your upcoming events or new projects. Please do not forget to bring flyers about your announcements also, as there will be a table available for them. We hope to see you on Friday, October 8, 10 am to noon, at the First Baptist Church in North Adams.

-Wendy Krom

nbCC Held Special Forum on Health Care Reform

Fifty Coalitioners along with Congressman John Olver, attended a special forum intended to provide information about the recent health care legislation passed by Congress this past year. Many new Coalitioners attended this session, that also included a wide ranging discussion about the financial crisis, the stimulus package, and the tone of politics in Washington DC.

There are many new components of the health care legislation that are just coming into effect. More will come into effect by the date of full implementation of the health care legislation in 2014. New components affect Medicare recipients, small businesses, and those under the age of 26 who will be able to sign onto their parent's health insurance plans. In addition, children with

pre-existing conditions will be able to obtain insurance coverage and all with pre-existing conditions will be able to receive coverage by 2014. Congressman Olver informed the Coalition audience that Congress appropriated \$13 Billion for Community Health Centers to exist, more than doubling the capacity of this venture. There are hopes for Northern Berkshire to reap the benefits from this new funding.

Thanks to Congressman Olver and his staff for attending the Coalition forum. He is very accessible to the work that we do. For more specific information about the health care reform legislation, visit the Congressman's website at <http://olver.house.gov> and look for the latest e-newsletter he sent out.

- Al Bashevkin

Northern Berkshire Youth Collaborative Reconvenes and Sets Fall Schedule

The Northern Berkshire Youth Collaborative had its first meeting of the year on Wednesday, September 15th. At this meeting, 16 members caught up on summer programming, announced upcoming events, and brainstormed topics for the 2010-2011 meeting schedule. There was significant discussion around

distracted driving and generational differences in attitude, perception, and behavior regarding text messaging. One or two meetings concerning these topics will be scheduled in the winter or spring. See page 6 for the full fall schedule. All meetings are from 11am to 12:30pm and lunch is served.

- Kate Merrigan

Nominations Sought for Fall Community Recognition Awards

The Northern Berkshire Community Coalition is accepting nominations for the Fall Community Recognition Celebration, which will be held at 5 .pm. on **October 27**, at Congregation Beth Israel Synagogue on Lois Street in North Adams.

The Coalition welcomes residents to consider community people of all ages who have performed acts of kindness or made a positive difference in their lives, in their neighborhoods or in their community. Anyone may nominate individuals or groups in one or more of the following categories: neighborly acts, neighborhood beautification, business support or pulling together on a project. Please send the name(s), address and phone or e-mail of those recommended and those making the recommendation, indication of the category and a

brief description of the reason. Each nominee will receive an invitation to the event, where the coalition staff and Mayor Richard Alcombright will present certificates of appreciation. Applications may be picked up at the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition Office at 61 Main Street. Nominations may also be called in to 663-7588, e-mailed to ncain@nbccoalition.org, or sent to Community Recognition, c/o Northern Berkshire Community Coalition, 61 Main Street: Suite 218, North Adams, MA 01247. This is a great way to thank individuals who help make a positive difference and honor the ordinary acts of kindness and cooperation that happen every day in our communities. Nominations are accepted through October 22.

For more information, please call the Coalition at 663-7588.
 - Natalie Cain

nbCC Welcomes Two New Employees

The Northern Berkshire Community Coalition is excited to welcome two people to its staff.

Roberta Lamb is our new Communications Coordinator. She will be responsible for publishing our monthly newsletter, weekly Public Health Zine and updating the information on our website. Bert is an alumni of MCLA and has worked in the printing industry for over 20 years. Call her at (413) 663-7588 or e-mail her at blamb@nbccoalition.org if you have submissions or announcements for us.

Wendy Krom joins the nbCC as the North-

ern Berkshire Neighbors Program Coordinator. For the past 12 years she has run her consulting firm, Community Consulting Services. Wendy has extensive experience in community coalition building as a means to prevent alcohol, tobacco and other drug abuse. She has helped neighborhood groups become organized and young people to form peer education groups in their schools and communities. Watch for what Wendy is working on in our featured NBN page each month in our newsletter. E-mail Wendy at wkrom@nbccoalition.org or call her at the Coalition office.

Important Transportation Stakeholder Meeting for Berkshire County

An important Transportation Stakeholder Meeting for Berkshire County will be held on Tuesday, October 19th from 8-10 a.m. at MASS MoCA in North Adams. Breakfast will be served.

The meeting is the formal launch of a rapidly growing partnership initiated by BerkshireRides and Ridebuzz.org that is providing a new shared-ride service in the region to address serious gaps in transportation. The



nbCC is a strong supporter and partner of this effort. Congressman John Olver will have staff at the meeting. **To include your**

organization as a stakeholder, and ensure access to new services, we rely upon your organization's participation at the meeting. Invited sectors include municipal, business, non-profit, human service, college & transportation. Please RSVP here: www.ridebuzz.org/berkshiremeeting.

Northern Berkshire Community Coalition Board of Directors

July 1, 2010 - June 30, 2011

JEFF GOLDWASSER, *President*
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ROBERT CALWAY, *Vice-President*
Northern Berkshire Health Systems

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Department of Children and Families

JONATHAN SECOR
Director of Special Programs, MCLA

GERALDINE SHEN
Williams College

STEPHEN SHEPPARD
Williams College

Northern Berkshire Legislative Contacts

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(413) 663-7486

Rep.DanielBosley@hou.state.ma.us

Representative Denis Guyer
12 Depot Street
Dalton, MA 01226
(413) 684-0033
denis.guyer@state.ma.us

Senator Benjamin Downing
20 Bank Row, Room 202
Pittsfield, MA 01201
(413) 442-4008
benjamin.downing@state.ma.us

Congressman John Olver
78 Center St.
Pittsfield, MA 01201
(413) 442-0946
Contact: Jason Ostrander

Senator Scott Brown
317 Russell Senate Office Bldg.
Washington DC 20510
(202) 224-4543
(202) 228-2646 (fax)

Senator John Kerry
One Financial Plaza
Springfield, MA 01103
304 Russell Senate Office Bldg.
Washington DC 20510
(413) 785-4610
(413) 736-1049 (fax)
(202) 224-2742
john_kerry@kerry.senate.gov

Governor Deval Patrick
Statehouse, Room 360, Boston, MA
02133
(888) 870-7770
(617) 727-9725 (fax)
www.mass.gov/governor

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500
(202) 456-1414
(202) 456-2461 (fax)
president@whitehouse.gov

BTCF Assists Those in Need with Neighbor-to-Neighbor Grant Program

Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation (BTCF) has undertaken a new initiative called Neighbor to Neighbor and has partnered with Berkshire Community Action Council [BCAC] to administer this grant program.

The Neighbor-to-Neighbor Program [N2N] is a flexible grant generally less than \$500, but up to \$1,000 in special circumstances, that provides financial assistance to individuals and families, who reside in Berkshire County, and are experiencing a financial or medical crisis, an emergency situation in a particular area of their lives that a one time financial intervention should help stabilize their situation and ameliorate potential extended crisis. A typical N2N grant might assist with paying an overdue utility bill, a payment towards a medical bill, short-term housing costs, car insurance/repair or other expenses that will alleviate an immediate crisis and leverage other financial support to assist a family or individual in crisis. N2N grants are not intended for long term or ongoing assistance, but for a strategic intervention to help achieve some measure of stability. The intent is to use N2N funds to assist situations



where other funds cannot and to refer client sponsors to all other possible sources of support. All applications for Neighbor-to-Neighbor grants must originate from a recognized nonprofit community based organization or Church. Applications and links to the Grant Program are available on the BCAC website at www.bcacinc.org or by calling (413) 445.4503 ext. 140.

Feel free to contact BCAC when you next have a client that is in need of emergency assistance. If you have any questions about this transition, please contact Linda Greenbush BCAC (413) 445-4503 Extension 140, Neighbor to Neighbor Hot Line or e-mail lgreenbush@bcacinc.org

Changes to SNAP/Food Stamp Program Makes Applying Easier

There is important new information regarding SNAP/Food Stamps and people who have exhausted their unemployment benefits. In response to the increasing number of people who are running out of unemployment benefits, or who have already exhausted their benefits, the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) has created a shortened application to assist these households. Additionally, DTA has extended the amount of time an applicant can receive "emergency" SNAP benefits before needing to provide additional verifications. While there are still requirements that must be met, these changes will make the application process smoother and quicker for this growing population.

If you have any clients who you think would benefit from SNAP benefits please refer them to our FoodSource Hotline at 1-800-645-8333 or through our TTY at 1-800-377-1292. Our

hotline is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 7:00 pm and Saturdays from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. We are able to assist callers in 170 languages through our interpreter service, and during the weekdays have counselors who speak Spanish, Portuguese, Farsi, and Hindi.

Counselors can screen your clients for SNAP eligibility, help them complete the SNAP application, as well as answer any questions they may have regarding the special regulations for people who have exhausted their unemployment benefits.

We hope that you will share this information with your visitors and help us to ensure that all people eligible for the SNAP program are enrolled. If you have any questions or would like outreach materials for your clients, please let us know. And as always, thank you for all the work you do for struggling families.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

First Berkshire Rx Round Up a Rousing Success

Statistics show an increase in the illegal use of prescription drugs by young people between the ages of 12-18. According to the Office of National Drug Control Policy, youth report that they most often find these drugs in the medicine cabinets of family members and friends. Unfortunately, young people often mistakenly think these drugs are safer than so-called street drugs. In response, the Drug Enforcement Agency launched a nationwide campaign to collect unused, unwanted and expired medications – the National Rx Round Up. On September 25th, twelve communities across Berkshire County worked together to help community members turn in their medications. This was a first-time countywide event and the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition worked with Berkshire County DA David Capeless, local law enforcement and Berkshire Health Systems to coordinate this event in North County. In North County, community members dropped medications at four locations in Adams, Lanesborough, North Adams and Williamstown. Local law enforcement was very instrumental in supporting this event in each community and we thank

Chiefs Don Poirot, Mark Bashara, Michael Cozzaglio and Kyle Johnson. Each police department provided an officer to supervise the collection of the medications and their safe transport to the disposal site. A special thank you to Officer Shuan William of WPD for helping with transportation. Local EMTs from ambulance services supported the event by collecting sharps and needles for safe disposal. Community groups such as the Lions, AMCA, MGMCA, and TRIAD were also very supportive. Local pharmacists and pharmacy techs volunteered their time on this day and we thank, in particular, Bob Koneru of North Adams Regional Hospital, Rick Czarnecki of Nassif's Pharmacy, Paula Benoit of Target Pharmacy and David Flashover of Rite-Aid. North Berkshire County is all about community and the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition thanks all those who turned in their medications, helped others to do the same, and all the folks around the county who coordinated this event. Watch for further news in the November issue on how you can dispose of medications and sharps on a regular basis.

-Lois Daunis



▲ North Adams- Spitzer Senior Center



▲ Williamstown Transfer Station

Take Charge Campaign To Save Energy Is Getting Started Again!

Take Charge, with student intern Jason Brown (MCLA) is getting started again! Take Charge is a partner of the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition (nbCC) that is committed to making the homes of the Northern Berkshires more energy independent. Its work revolves around education, outreach, and action based in a community campaign made up of community members, colleges, schools, local government, business-

es, and organizations. Stop by the North Adams Public Library to sign out one of our home energy audit kits or look for our email newsletter. To subscribe, email take.charge.north.adams@gmail.com and please visit our new website at www.takechargenorthadams.org.



Media Contacts

All news outlets in Northern Berkshire are happy to receive press releases by email. 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 they receive a copy as well.

Advocate

news@advocateweekly.com

Beacon (MCLA)

beacon@mcla.mass.edu

Bennington Banner

news@benningtonbanner.com

Berkshire Eagle

news@berkshireeagle.com

Berkshire Living

seth@berkshirelivingmag.com

CapNews9

news@capitalnews9.com

CBS6 Albany

mbw@wrgb.com

Gazette

gazette@berkshire.net

Hill Country Observer

calendar@hillcountryobserver.com

iBerkshires.com

info@iBerkshires.com

N. Adams Tourism Office (Rod Bunt)

tourism@northadams-ma.gov

N. Berkshire Community TV

nbctc01@gmail.com

Time Warner

albch22ad@twcable.com

Transcript

news@thetranscript.com

WAMC

news@wamc.org

Berkshire Bureau

csaldo@wamc.org

WilliNet

willinet@williams.edu

WNAW

news@wnaw.com

WNYT

releases@wnyt.com

Women's Times

berknews@thewomenstimes.com

WUPE/WBEC

news@wupe.com



Skatepark Project Voting Campaign Update

September was a full but whirlwind month for those of us working on our entry in the Pepsi Refresh Everything contest. In case you didn't hear about this elsewhere, members of the UNITY Youth Leadership Program, in partnership with MASS MoCA and the City of North Adams, entered the contest in the hopes of winning \$250K to build a skate/BMX park in North Adams that would double as a public art work. Winners of the contest are determined solely by popular vote. At press time, our entry was in 53rd place—not bad, considering we're competing against about 350 other projects for the \$250K, but not good enough as we would need to be one of the top 2 vote-getters in order to win. If we don't win the prize money, we plan to continue to search for other options for funding a park. Volunteers interested in working on this are most welcome. To help out, please get in touch with Kate Merrigan at kmerrigan@nbcoalition.org or call (413) 663-7588.

In the meantime, it's been wonderful to see the community rally around this idea and the young people who want to drive it forward. We've had substantial support in the form of press coverage, volunteers, ideas, letters to the editor, promotional assistance, and donations. We'll have as complete a list as possible in next month's newsletter, but in the meantime, special thanks to Bona Marketing, Becks Printing, and Excelsior for significant printing donations. Please thank these businesses for their support when you have a chance!



◀ YLP members Lizzie Gerry and Chris Cozzaglio display skatepark flyers at the Reggae Soul Dance Party at MASS MoCA.

YLP Looking for New Members for Year 6

The Youth Leadership Program is at the heart of what we do at UNITY. Each fall, we convene 20 diverse youth, ages 14-19, from all over northern Berkshire County. About half the members of the group are returning members who have been youth leaders for 1-3 years and about half are new. We look for all kinds of people with various levels of leadership experiences. The only requirement is that members have an interest in working to improve the community in some way.

The group meets on Tuesday evenings October 12th through May 31st, 6pm to 8pm, at the nbCC conference room at 61 Main Street in North Adams. Two adult facilitators engage the group in a wide variety of exercises related to leadership skills such as communication, problem-solving, team work, identifying community needs, and project/event planning. It's also a great environment to just discuss issues of key interest to teenagers.

The deadline for applying is October 5th. Interested youth can call Kate at 663-7588, email kmerrigan@nbcoalition.org, or download the application at www.nbcoalition.org/forms.

Teen Writing Workshop Needs Support

The Teen Writing Workshop needs your support and ideas. While we're planning to begin on Wednesday, October 20th, we'll be doing so without a dedicated source of funding. We believe that it is crucial that we continue this program—about to begin its 12th year!—given the number of youth who participate and the demonstrated impact that it has on their emotional, social, and creative lives. The Coalition Board of Directors has formed a development committee that is looking at funding and sustainability in general and is specifically helping think of ways to continue to fund this critical program. If you have ideas you would like to contribute, please get in touch with Kate Merrigan at the contact info below.

For those who would like to join the workshop or know teens ages 14-19 who could benefit from participating in a creative writing workshop, please contact Kate at kmerrigan@nbcoalition.org or at 663-7588. We meet on Thursday afternoons and all writers, regardless of experience level, are invited to attend. We hope to do more public reading events this year, so look for announcements about opportunities to see our talented young writers perform!

Youth Collaborative Fall Schedule

The following dates and topics are planned for upcoming meetings (all meetings at 11am to 12:30pm, with lunch served):

October 6th: Kelly Shuff-Heck (Affirmative Counseling) will present on the efforts that she and Sara Shuff-Heck are engaged in to offer community-based GLBTQ youth activities across Berkshire County.

November 3rd: Anne French (NAPS) will present and lead discussion and brainstorming regarding the new state bullying prevention mandates for public schools.

December 1st: Bear McHugh (Berkshire AHEC) will give an update and facilitate northern Berkshire planning efforts around youth suicide prevention.

“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.”



Community Outreach Worker Profile:

Corinne Case

Corinne Case's regular presence at monthly meetings and her involvement with Safe Homes and other programs of the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition has given her an appreciation and trust in the value of the programs initiated through the coalition.

This, as well as her natural love for people, is what led her to apply for the Community

▲ Corinne Case: Adams Community Outreach Worker

Outreach Worker training.

“It was a natural fit for me. I love to listen and to connect people with one another. Coming from a social services background, I like the social politics of networking and bringing information to folks that will help them with their lives. Since I am raising children in this community, I want to be involved and contribute to the nurturing community I want for my family.”

What was most helpful to Corinne in the training sessions was getting to meet the people from the various helping agencies who came each week to talk about the resources they offer to people in the community. She also enjoyed getting to know the diverse group of outreach workers who reflected the various sectors of the communities where they live.

“These experiences helped to fill in the blanks and to understand the Northern Berkshire Community much better. I feel more connected to my community and that my community can be connected to me. I am available to people who have questions and I can point folks in a helpful direction.”

As an outreach worker, Corinne is helping a young mother who will be out of work after surgery to find the resources she will need during her recovery time. She was able to help a woman who had lost her cell phone to get on line and guide her through the process of registering for Safe Link. She finds stopping at the Pope John Paul Charity Center in Adams a way to know certain community needs and to meet a wonderful group who is making a big difference, another place to direct people. Corinne is also involved with “Tuesdays at Stone Soup”, a job search group for unemployed people to support one another, share information and network.

“This is an excellent way to get to know the community and the agencies. I would encourage others to become outreach workers. It may provide a stepping stone toward specific work in the future.”

Corinne is always looking to connect people and help create new ways to get things done.

United Neighborhood Organization (UNO) Review of Spring & Summer Events

UNO is celebrating our 20th Anniversary this year, and part one of the celebration was UNO's annual Spring Fling. It was held on May 1st at the Eagle's Hall on Curran Highway in North Adams. There were over 40 vendors inside and out, with over 1,000 people in attendance. UNO made \$850.00 from the rental of tables and half of the 50/50. This money is used for programs in the UNO neighborhood especially for the children. Special guests were Mayor Richard Alcombright, city council members, Gailanne Cariddi, Keith Bona and Ronald Boucher. Also Al Bashevkin, Director of Northern Berkshire Community Coalition.

Face painting for the children was done by Bobbie Jo Perras. MCLA Volunteers were: Stephanie Naffah and Meghan Gleason.

On May 25th and 26th UNO distributed free flowers to over 45 UNO residents. This is an annual event held to beautify the neighborhood. Our UNO Garden Picnic was held on Sunday, July 25th at the UNO playground on Bracewell Avenue with over 50 people attending. Pete Wheeler cooked and Jennifer Munoz from REACH, Tammy Moon, and Shirley Davis served. Games for the children were led by Darlene Ellis and each child received a prize. Mayor Alcombright stopped by and got to meet everyone. Back to school/ ice cream sundae party was held on Aug. 18th at our playground. Each child got to make a sundae of their choice, and they each received a bag with school supplies and a special treat. Our final summer event and part two of our 20th anniversary celebration was the Downtown celebration on Aug 25th. We raffled off a huge party basket and sold \$107.00 worth of tickets.

Half of this money was donated to the Louison House in Adams. Winner of the basket was Inna Gertji of North Adams. The final part of our 20th anniversary will take place at the October 8th monthly meeting of the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition at the First Baptist Church. Please join us! UNO's steering committee who helped at all the above events are: Gail Nelson, Kay Clark, Edna Rudnick, Pete Wheeler, Andrea Peters, Darlene Ellis, Joan Preite and Shirley Davis.

Shirley Davis

► Free flowers were distributed to over 45 UNO residents.



◀ Neighborhood children at the UNO playground during a recent picnic.



▲ N. Berkshire United Way Executive Director Joe McGovern

N. Berkshire United Way Holds Kick-off Breakfast and Reveals Goal for 2010-2011 Campaign

On Wednesday, September 22nd, a large crowd gathered at the Williams Inn for the Northern Berkshire United Way Kick-off Breakfast for the 2010-2011 campaign.

Joe McGovern, the new Executive Director of the Northern Berkshire United Way thanked outgoing president Maureen Baran, the board of directors and the campaign cabinet for all their hard work this past year. He then introduced Tom Rumbolt, incoming president. Steve Green, the 2010-2011 Campaign Chair, revealed this year's goal of \$600,000 and explained the importance of raising this money for much needed services in the community. He stated that one in seven people live in poverty, a number which has been the highest in several decades. He spoke of the responsibility we all share in supporting our neighbors and we are all needed to help reach this goal through volunteerism, intellect and dollars.

"We are all on the team," he said, "and with our team, we will meet our goal."

The Northern Berkshire United Way helps support 23 member agencies, including the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition. In turn, these agencies provide a wide array of services to our friends and neighbors. Please help support their efforts.

- Bert Lamb

Family Caregiver Resource Guide Now Available

The Northern Berkshire Family Caregiver Resource Guide is now available. It consists of seven pages of agencies, support groups and service providers potentially helpful for those taking care of a loved one. The 12-page guide also includes a brief essay full of tips and perspective for caregivers, a page of helpful Websites and a list of recent books about caregiving.

Staff of the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition and volunteer Mark Rondeau completed the guide during the summer in consultation with area human service agencies. The guide is being distributed to local medical offices, libraries, veterans agencies and other community sites. The guide can also be found on the Website of the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition, www.nbccoalition.org, or by calling the Coalition at 663-7588 or Mark Rondeau at 664-0130.

- Mark Rondeau

Calling All Who Care For Vulnerable Children

Does your child, or a child you care about, have a serious emotional disturbance? Do you interact with youth and/or their families from birth to 21 years old who face this kind of challenge? If so, you know how difficult it is to get their needs met. You know how complicated it is to get help. We need your help to establish the Northern Berkshire Systems of Care Committee (NBSOCC). The NBSOCC will consist of families, providers, and community members who know what this is like, who live with and cope with emotional ups and downs every day, who are the true experts qualified to adequately define, prioritize, and seek to address the needs of these children. We invite you to work with us in a creative and strengths based approach to problem solving and change.

Please connect with us! A meeting will be held at the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition Office on **Friday, October 15th from 1:00-2:30 p.m.** RSVP and/or get more information on this important effort by contacting Amber Besaw (413) 398-1336 or Kathy Gaspardi at (413) 629-1295.

10 Helpful Things to Remember About School Meal Applications!

1. School Breakfast and Lunch are available to ALL students at little or no cost.
2. Your child does not need to sign up in advance to eat school breakfast or lunch, but you do need to complete an application in order to qualify for free or reduced price meals.
3. School Meal Applications are confidential.
4. Application forms are available in 26 different languages. Ask your school for a form in your preferred language.
5. You can complete a School Meal Application at ANY point during the year. Just request an application from your school.
6. If you already filled out a School Meal Application but your income has changed since then, you can fill out a new one.
7. If you have applied for unemployment insurance, you may be eligible to receive free school meals.
8. If you have applied for free or reduced price school meals for your child but were turned away because you make too much money, you may be eligible to receive SNAP (formerly food stamps). If you receive SNAP benefits, your child is automatically eligible to receive FREE school meals!
9. Schools receive state funding based on the information in school meal applications. This includes money for books, classroom furniture, school supplies, and other educational resources.
10. School meals are a great way to help families save time and money!

Please contact your child's school and request a School Meals Application to see if your child can receive free or reduced price school meals!

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

Monday, Oct. 4, 7:30 p.m.

Friday, Oct. 8, 8 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 is about celebrating neighborhoods and the 20 years of UNO. Wendy Krom, the new Northern Berkshire Neighbors Program Coordinator will join Al and Scott along with original founders of UNO, Shirley Davis and Keith Bona.

Wednesday, Oct. 6, 11:00 a.m.

Northern Berkshire Youth Collaborative

The monthly meeting will be held Wednesday 11:00 a.m. at the Coalition, 61 Main St., Suite 218, North Adams. To get on the group's e-mail list, contact **Kate Merrigan** at kmerrigan@nbccoalition.org. Kelly Shuff-Heck (Affirmative Counseling) will present on the efforts that she and Sara Shuff-Heck are engaged in to offer community-based GLBTQ youth activities across Berkshire County. (all meetings at 11a.m. to 12:30 p.m., with lunch served).

Friday, Oct. 8, 10:00 a.m.

Coalition Monthly Forum

Join us for the October monthly forum of the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition. This month's forum celebrates neighborhood organizing and the 20-year anniversary of UNO. The meeting will be held at the First Baptist Church in North Adams, at the corner of Eagle and Main streets. Please use the Eagle Street entrance.

Friday, Oct. 8, 6:00 p.m.

Youth Leadership Program

The group meets on Tuesday evenings October 12th through May 31st, 6pm to 8pm, at the nbCC conference room, 61 Main Street in North Adams. Two adult facilitators engage the group in a wide variety of exercises related to leadership skills such as communication, problem-solving, team work, identifying community needs, and project/event planning. It's also a great environment to just discuss issues of key interest to teenagers.

Friday, Oct. 15th 1:00 p.m.

Northern Berkshire Systems of Care Committee (NBSOCC)

Help is needed to establish the Northern Berkshire Systems of Care Committee (NBSOCC). The NBSOCC will consist of families, providers, and community members who live and cope with children with emotional ups and downs every day, who are the true experts qualified to adequately define, prioritize, and seek to address the needs of these children.

Come join us at the the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition Office on Friday, October 15th from 1:00-2:30 p.m. RSVP and/or get more information on this important effort by contacting Amber Besaw (413) 398-1336 or Kathy Gaspardi at (413) 629-1295.

Tuesday, Oct. 19, 8:00 a.m.

Transportation Stakeholder Meeting

A Transportation Stakeholder Meeting for Berkshire County will be held on Tuesday, October 19th from 8-10 a.m. at MASS MoCA in North Adams. Breakfast will be served. See article on page 3 for more information.

Tuesday, Oct. 19, 4:00 p.m.
(Mt. Greylock - MGRHS)

Wed., Oct. 20, 5:30 p.m.
(Adams - Plunkett Elem.)

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 Sally Sussman at 458-4670 or s.suss@verizon.net. For information about the CMCA program, call or email Lois Dainis, Prevention Coordinator at the Coalition office, 663-7588 or ldaunis@nbccoalition.org.

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 4:00 p.m.

Teen Writing Workshop

The Teen Writing Workshop needs your support and ideas. While we're planning to begin on Wednesday, October 20th, we'll be doing so without a dedicated source of funding. We believe that it is crucial that we continue this program—about to begin its 12th year! For those who would like to join the workshop or know teens ages 14-19 who could benefit from participating in a creative writing workshop, please contact Kate at kmerrigan@nbccoalition.org or at 663-7588.



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 743-1767
Rev. Daniel J. Boyle

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
245 County Road 664-6055
Rev. Roy Burdick

Hancock

Hancock Baptist Church
Box 10A 698-2230
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 Dr.
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

continued on page 11

North Adams Farmers Market Continues

The North Adams Farmers Market will continue through October 30, on Saturdays from 8 AM until noon in the municipal parking lot on St. Anthony Drive between Holden and Marshall Streets. There is still plenty of fabulous fresh produce, honey and maple syrup, meat, eggs and more! WIC and Elder Coupons and EBT Cards/SNAP benefits accepted.

Radio City Christmas Spectacular

The North Adams Regional Hospital Recreation Committee invites the public to join a trip to see the Radio City Christmas Spectacular on Sunday, November 21. Ticket cost is \$89 per person and includes bus transportation from NARH, leaving at 8 a.m. Ticket information is available by calling (413) 664-5304 or (413) 664-5405.

Community Service Fair

The Berkshire Leadership Program, a 10-week program designed to prepare individuals to become involved, committed, competent leaders working to improve the quality of life in the Berkshires, is including a Community Service Fair to highlight community organizations and the importance of volunteerism, as part of its training. The Fair will be held on Thursday, October 28th from 7:00 p.m. to 9:15p.m. at McCann Technical School. If you are interested in participating with an informational table please contact Ashley Sulok, Program Coordinator, asulock@berkshirechamber.com, by October 8, 2010.

New Staff at N. Berkshire Family Medicine

Jean Culver, MD, MPH, of Williamstown has joined Northern Berkshire Family Medicine and the medical staff of North Adams Regional Hospital. She will be providing urgent care to patients of Northern Berkshire Family Medicine and occupational health services. For information: (413) 664-4088.

Preschool Enrichment Team

Preschool Enrichment Team is now the child care resource and referral agency covering all of Berkshire County. We help all parents find care for infants through school age. Contact Sue Hamlett at (413) 736-3800 or toll-free at (877) 478-7727.

Playwright Mentoring Project (PMP)

Are you looking for somewhere to be yourself, to express what's going on in your life, to be in a place where people listen? The Barrington Stage Company's PMP is a six month program that meets for two hours a week. No prior theatre experience is required. Call Hester Kamin for more information, (413) 499-5446 ext. 118.

Special Ed. Surrogate Parent Program

The Special Education Surrogate Parent Program (SESPP) is seeking volunteers from Northern Berkshire County to advocate for the special education needs of children in the custody of DCF. Make a difference! Free training and support. SESPP www.sespprogram.org sespp@earthlink.net (508) 792-7679 Michelle Poulin, Program Director.

City of North Adams Youth Commission

The City of North Adams is looking for two members ages 13-21 to serve on the city's Youth Commission. Please contact Mike Boland if interested or with any questions. Mboland1868@gmail.com.

Help a SNAP Outreach Worker

Organizations can help a SNAP Outreach Worker at their site, to do SNAP applications. Contact Ruth Petty at the Food Bank of W. MA ruthp@foodbankwma.org or (413) 247-0312.

Berkshire Food Project

The Berkshire Food Project accepts SNAP applications via the Virtual Gateway. People can go in person or call Valerie at (413) 664-7378 to apply.

Department of Children and Families

DCF continues to need foster and adoptive parents in Northern Berkshire. Please call (413) 236-1815.

U.C.P. Teen Group

U.C.P. Teen Group will have its next meeting on Friday, October 22 at 6:30 p.m. This group is open for teens ages 14 and up with disabilities and meets one Friday a month. For more information, please contact Erin Cote at United Cerebral Palsy. (413) 664-9345.

Main Street Stage

Main Street Stage is eager to grow as a resource for the community. For example, teachers of drama as literature might want to collaborate with us to add performance to the course work. Social agencies might want to develop a theater component to their work. Or you might have a show of your own that needs a theater space. Let's dream together. Contact Ed Sedarbaum at (413) 664-0735 or e-mail at esedarbaum@verizon.net.

Railway Cafe Concert Series

Kevin So will sing with Karyn Oliver on Friday, October 8th at the Railway Cafe. All shows begin at 7:30 p.m. at the MCLA Gallery 51.

Oldies But Goodies Rock 'N' Roll Show

The Oldies But Goodies Rock 'N' Roll Show has announced their upcoming Halloween show entitled "Oldies But Ghoulies". The show will be at the First United Methodist Church, 55 Fenn Street, in Pittsfield on Saturday, October 23, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. This all volunteer cast of local entertainers invite you to a night of favorite songs of the fifties and sixties. All proceeds will benefit United Cerebral Palsy Association of Berkshire County, and remain in Berkshire County. Information: call Peggy at (413) 822-1850.

Save the Date

National Girls and Women in Sports Day will be held on Saturday, January 29, 2011 at MCLA. There will be sports clinics, lunch and an MCLA women's basketball game. Free for girls in grades 3-8. Contact: Dot Houston 413-662-5437 or dhouston@mcla.edu. Pre-registration required and groups are welcome!

WIC benefits

WIC (Women, Infants and Children), is a nutrition program that provides nutrition and health education, breastfeeding support, healthy food and other services free of charge to Massachusetts families who qualify. WIC also offers Farmer's Market coupons! Please call 663-3012 to see if you are eligible for WIC benefits. **Have you lost your job?** Are you working fewer hours? Have you applied for unemployment insurance? Your child might be eligible to receive free or reduced price school meals! If your income has changed since the last time you filled out a school meals application, make sure to request a new one and reapply!!! Please call 663-3012.

Berk. AHEC, Youth Health Service Corps

The Youth Health Service Corps (YHSC) is a health careers recruitments program that engages diverse high school students as leaders in meaningful community service learning projects. Students are exposed to professional career role models, build their resume for college or work, and participate in meaningful service while increasing academic and civic engagement. For more information contact Kara Pavone at kpavone@berkshireahec.org

Mental Illness Awareness Week

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is observing Mental Illness Awareness Week. They will meet on Wednesday, October 6 at 6:30 p.m. at the Berkshire Medical Center Auditorium, 725 North St., Pittsfield. A candlelight Vigil will follow. For more information, contact NAMI at (413) 443-1666.

HIV testing at NARH

HIV testing will be offered at North Adams Regional Hospital on Thursday, October 7, and Thursday, October 21, at 1 p.m. The service is offered on the first and third Thursdays of each month, and appointments are required. Those wishing to be tested should call (413) 447-2654 to make an appointment. The HIV testing clinic is conducted in Suite 210 of the Ambulatory Care Center (the doctors' office building) on the campus of NARH. Testing is confidential and can be anonymous. Clients must return in person to receive the results of testing, as they cannot be given over the phone or by mail. Jacqueline Roy-Elliott, BSN, RN, Director of the State Clinics at Berkshire Medical Center, will provide services. For more information call the clinic office at (413) 447-2654.

First Fridays @ First Baptist Church

Delicious food, generous portions, take-out option and friendly faces will be found at any First Friday Dinner at First Baptist Church North Adams. On October 1st, our menu will include: spaghetti pie, salad, bread, sundaes and beverages. The meal will be served from 5:00 -7:00 p.m. with Adults \$7.00 and Children Under 12 \$5.00. Proceeds from the meal will benefit the Hand Bell Refurbishment Fund of First Baptist. For more information, please call (413) 663-3780. Please use the Eagle Street Entrance.

Wordplay @ Papyri Books

Held the second Saturday of each month, 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. Gail Burns, Williamstown resident, theatre critic and regular host of Wordplay, is the featured reader for the month of October and will be reading from her collected essays. Papyri Gallery will feature the work of local artist Tony Israel for the month of October. Open Mic is an opportunity for guests to share their own work or a personal favorite with a five minute time limit. Join us Saturday October 9th at 7:00 p.m. - Papyri Books, 45 Eagle Street, North Adams. Hours: Monday-Saturday 12-6 p.m. Wordplay is free and open to the public.

Helping Hands for Helping Hands

A Helping Hands for Helping Hands is a grant program for individuals in organizations wanting to attend conferences, courses, and workshops. The description of Helping Hands as well as an application is on the nbCC website. Additional information may be obtained by calling the First Church of Williamstown at (413) 458-4273.

North Adams continued

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 Crossen

Savoy

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

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

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nbCC is supported by:



Final Thoughts . . .

I can't write these final thoughts without commenting on the latest news about the Department of Transitional Assistance office's plans to consolidate the Berkshire County services in Pittsfield. Oy. If this is the beginning of moves meant to dismantle the array of MA Executive Office of Health and Human Services resources located in North Adams, then I believe that thinking might be shortsighted. Moving EOHHS services to Pittsfield is putting the most vulnerable people at a greater distance from needed services. While there will be money saved in rent, there is a greater social cost for folks who need services but cannot get them. If you don't have a car, it costs \$10 round trip for the one hour ten minute bus ride from downtown North Adams to Pittsfield. Imagine that for folks that not only need to connect with the Department of Transitional Assistance, but perhaps Mass Rehab or job training through Berkshire Works, or have children in Protective Care through the Department of Children and Families.. all services that currently are housed in North Adams. Let's hope our elected officials can help. Stay tuned!

Those who get to see the Fall Foliage Parade should look closely for the Grand Marshall of the Parade. We have witnessed twenty years of UNO and Shirley Davis has been behind UNO for its entire history. Shirley has been nominated to be the Grand Marshall of the Fall Foliage Parade and it is indeed an honor for Shirley recognizing the work she did to build our first neighborhood organization, UNO.

Speaking of UNO, our October Coalition forum will feature a cake to celebrate UNO's twenty years and will have a focus on neighborhoods. Join us for what should be a fun and engaging discussion.

Finally, I want to welcome our two newest staff members, Wendy Krom and Roberta Lamb. Wendy has been a part of our grassroots work since she came east in the early 90's and will be leading our Northern Berkshire Neighbors program. Bert has helped us over the summer in producing our summer and September newsletters, and has been involved in communications and publications for over twenty years. Bert has been hired as our communications coordinator. I look forward to having the energy of Bert and Wendy grace our Coalition office.

- Al Bashevkin

Next Coalition Meeting!
Celebrating Neighborhoods
and the 20-year Anniversary of UNO
Friday, October 8
10 a.m.
First Baptist Church North Adams

Northern Berkshire Community Coalition
61 Main Street, Suite 218
North Adams, MA 01247
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