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Northern Berkshire Community Coalition

# Coalition news

An update from



November 2010, Volume XXV, Number 3

## nbCC October Forum Celebrates 20 years of UNO



Twenty years ago, residents of the Bracewell/Hall/River Street area watched as their neighborhoods deteriorated. Once a desired place to live and bring up children, it was now littered with vacant properties, vandalism, and drug activity. Residents could not leave, they could not sell their homes. No one wanted to invest in a place that had secured such a bad reputation.

Determined to take back and revitalize their neighborhood, residents realized they needed to organize. UNO, the United Neighborhood Organization was born.

"This was a labor of love," said Shirley Davis, one of UNO's original members. Meetings were held and residents, landlords, city councillors, public safety officials and the press were invited. Residents were given a forum where they could express concerns regarding fears for their safety, increased litter and vandalism, and general disrespect for their neighborhood. Fellow UNO member Keith Bona explained that a big part of UNO was getting the neighbors to meet one another and form relationships based on mutual respect.

The Northern Berkshire Community Coalition helped facilitate these meetings and subcommittees were formed to address public safety, housing and family issues. Within months, the public safety subcommittee improved the relationship between neighbors and the North Adams Police Department. They met with city officials to learn more about code enforcement, building inspections and health and sanitation issues. The housing subcommittee had the vacant properties secured. A spring clean up was organized with over one hundred volunteers pulling together to make their streets more attractive. Block parties were held for neighbors to get to know one another and to better connect the elderly and youth. Grants were written to secure funds to carry out missions. A feeling of empowerment and pride began to develop.

The City turned a vacant lot into a play area, upgraded the infrastructure of the neighborhood by resurfacing the streets, increased police presence in the neighborhood and attended organized events.

Twenty years later, UNO has taken on

a life of its own, continuing the original mission of improving the quality of life for residents. Pride and ownership of taking back a neighborhood are still going strong today.

"Shirley has always been a very active voice, even to this very day", said Keith Bona. "While others have moved away, Shirley continues to hold UNO together."

Others reminisced about UNO at the forum and shared stories about the early days and how UNO has evolved over the years.

"We had no idea what this was going to be," said Al Bashevkin.

Northern Berkshire Neighbors Program Coordinator Wendy Krom spoke about the longevity of UNO, how it has become a model for community organizing and how similar things can and are being done in other neighborhoods.

- Bert Lamb

**Above, l-r: Original UNO member Shirley Davis, Shirley's scrapbook highlighting 20 years of UNO, and no celebration is complete without cake!**

**nbCC thanks our  
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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

- 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.

### December Newsletter Deadline November 19, 2010

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

## nbCC to Host November Forum

### Topic: Future of the Health Care System in Northern Berkshire

Please join us on Friday, November 12th from 10 AM to noon at the First Baptist Church of North Adams, as we talk about the current changes in our local health care systems. Northern Berkshire Healthcare (NBH) is the largest employer in the Northern Berkshire region. We all have lots at stake in keeping NBH strong and healthy as a local business. Health care in general has gone through difficult times and these challenges have been felt locally through layoffs and cutbacks at NBH. Why all these changes occurred and what is in store for the future of Northern Berkshire Healthcare is the topic of our November 12th Coalition forum. After a short presentation by our health care providers, there will be opportunities for questions and answers. Questions

can be submitted in advance by contacting Al Bashevkin at [abashevkin@nbccoalition.org](mailto:abashevkin@nbccoalition.org). We hope that forum attendees will leave with a better understanding of the vision for NBH and what we might expect five years from now for our local hospital and health care delivery system.

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, November 12, 10 a.m. to noon, at the First Baptist Church in North Adams. Please use the Eagle Street entrance.

-Al Bashevkin

## November is Family Literacy Month

### Youth Collaborative to Discuss New Bullying Prevention Laws

At the October Northern Berkshire Youth Collaborative meeting, Kelly Shuff-Heck of the Pittsfield-based Live Out Loud Youth Project (LOLYP) presented on the efforts of the LOLYP in Berkshire County. With her wife, Sarah Shuff-Heck, Kelly has been work-

ing on offering countywide community-based activities for GLBTQ youth for the past couple of years. Initially, Kelly and Sarah, who run a social work/counseling practice together, were doing this work as volunteers. Recently, they've been funded by the Community Health Network of Berkshire County's Youth Suicide Prevention Project and have been able to expand their efforts. Currently, they are offering social activities once a month in Northern Berkshire. For more information, email Kelly at [kellyheck@affirmativecounseling.net](mailto:kellyheck@affirmativecounseling.net) or look for the Live Out Loud Youth Project on Facebook.

On November 3rd, Anne French of the North Adams Public Schools will be offering information and facilitating discussion on the new Massachusetts legislation regarding bullying prevention in public schools. All school districts must submit plans for compliance to the state Department of Education by December 31, 2010.

-Kate Merrigan



## Reweaving our Community Safety Net

The September forum for the nbCC had the opportunity to list those issues that the Northern Berkshire community felt most compelled to address. The topic that garnered the most attention was entitled, Crisis in our Community: Reweaving our Safety net. . . using enhanced collaboration to preserve our safety net.

I think we all have experienced ourselves or known someone to have experienced these challenging times. I'm hoping that the December forum will offer us an opportunity to

think about those services folks need in times of crisis. How well is the Northern Berkshire community prepared to address the issues that people face? Are there available resources that we need to think about to help?

Save the date, Friday, December 10th from 10 to noon at the First Baptist Church of North Adams for a very important community discussion about how we ensure our safety net has no holes.

-Al Bashevkin

## EOHHS Committed to North Berkshire Despite Cuts

A community forum attended by over fifty elected officials, local providers and residents met with representatives of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) to explore the creation of a hub of health and human services here in Northern Berkshire. Suzanne Cray, Legislative Director for EOHHS; Marilyn Chase, Assistant Secretary for Children, Youth and Families for EOHHS; and Andrea Dodge-Pastone, Chief Operating Officer for Health and Human Services joined the forum.

Having a meeting of this level with high officials from EOHHS is encouraging for those in Northern Berkshire interested in keeping a strong state service presence in Northern Berkshire. Discussions looked at all options for how these services can stay here despite dramatic budget reductions for EOHHS. Transportation and technology were explored. The culture of face to face interactions was discussed, as well as the challenges for families without a car, or for families who lacked computer access.

It appears that a two step process will take place in transitioning from current services to creating a hub for EOHHS services in Northern Berkshire. As DTA has announced their lease on Main Street will be finished at the end of November, there will be a transition



▲ EOHHS representatives, Andrea Dodge-Pastone and Marilyn Chase speak with N. Adams City Councillor, Gailanne Cariddi.



▲ Thanks to State Senator Ben Downing and State Rep. Dan Bosley for initiating the forum.

plan in place until the contracting of space for a permanent EOHHS home is secured in Northern Berkshire in the Spring. It is hoped that the transition plan will help set the stage for a full service center that takes advantage of the private-public partnerships that are natural here in our region.

-Al Bashevkin

## Welcome Annie Kirkpatrick (that's Kirk, not Fitz!)

The Northern Berkshire Community Coalition is proud to announce its new Program Associate, Annie Kirkpatrick. Annie will be working with both UNITY and Northern Berkshire Neighbors, providing a strong link between the two programs. Annie has recently served as a District Aid for Senator Benjamin Downing. She brings her vast experience of working with

constituents here to the Coalition. Having also volunteered as an AmeriCorps VISTA, and later as a member of the College Advising Corps, she is very excited to rededicate her work to community organizing and youth development. Annie also owns Sunshine Bagels, which operates out of her home in North Adams. Join us in welcoming her!

### Northern Berkshire Community Coalition Board of Directors

July 1, 2010 - June 30, 2011

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## September Prescription Round Up Results

Berkshire County did us proud on Saturday September 25th when twelve communities participated in the DEA prescription drug take-back program. Community members removed more than 850 pounds of medications (pill and non-pill) from homes across Berkshire County. North Berkshire County had four drop off sites and the collection results are shown here. Look for more information next month about future collections and collection sites.

City/Town	Pounds of pills	Pounds of non-pills
Adams	30	59.5
Lanesborough	42.5	50
North Adams	31	61.5
Williamstown	45	71

-Lois Dainis



## MGMCA Helps Parents Learn How to Talk to Their Children about Substance Abuse

Mt. Greylock Mobilizing for Change on Alcohol (MGMCA) has been a work in progress since this community strategy team was established in 2004 in Williamstown. After a few name changes plus a few years, the team currently meets monthly at our regional high school. Members of the Lanesboro and Williamstown communities come together to work on issues surrounding underage drinking and substance abuse. With the Adams strategy team, we strive to reduce underage drinking by limiting teenagers access to alcohol and strengthen community attitudes against underage drinking.

Currently we are targeting parents of children in grades 4-9 in our school system. Again with the Adams strategy team, we have em-

braced the theme: "Talk to Them Early-Talk to Them Often - Talk to Them Again and Again". Dr. Jennifer Michaels of the Brien Center has been invited to discuss with upper elementary and middle school parents, how to talk to their children about substance abuse. Her conversation with parents and power point presentation will include the development of the adolescent brain and the effects of substances on the brain. Talking points to use with children regarding alcohol and addictive substances based on medical evidence will be part of a question and answer session. This community event takes place on Tuesday, November 9th at 7:00 p.m. in the Mount Greylock High School meeting room.

- Sally Sussman, MGMCA strategy team leader

## Use of Prescription Pain Killers

**Age 12 and Older:** The 2009 estimate of 5.3 million current nonmedical users is up 20% from the 2002 estimate of 4.4 million.

**Ages 12-17:** The rate of current nonmedical use increased 17% from 2.3% to 2.7%

As a class of drugs, the nonmedical use of prescription drugs continues to have more new users in the past year than any other class. In 2009, there were 2.6 million new users, 2.2 million of which were for non-medical use of pain relievers.

Facts from the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP)



Chris Cozzaglio, Kaitlin LaValley and Zaki Dawlat Zai are recognized by Mayor Richard Alcombright for their hard work with the Pepsi Refresh Contest, Build a Skatepark in North Adams during the nbCC Fall Community Recognition Award Night.

## Join the 2010 Friends of nbCC

Twenty-four years ago the people of Northern Berkshire first came together to face the challenges in our community. We've come a long way, but we need to do more, and we need your help. Please become a financial supporter by joining the Friends of the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition listed below. We understand that not everyone is able to make a financial contribution, but we also want you to know that no amount is too small to be helpful.

### The 2010 Friends of the Coalition (as of October 30, 2010)

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### Media Contacts

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 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

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#### N. Adams Tourism Office (Rod Bunt)

tourism@northadams-ma.gov

#### N. Berkshire Community TV

nbct01@gmail.com

#### Time Warner

albch22ad@twcable.com

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#### WNAW

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#### WNYT

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#### Women's Times

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#### WUPE/WBEC

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## Youth Leadership Program Begins Sixth Year!

The YLP, UNITY's service-learning and leadership training program, began its 6th year on October 19. The first session attracted nine returning participants from last year's program and eight new participants. Members range from ages 14 to 18, grades 9 through 12, and come from Drury, McCann, Mount Greylock, and BAiT. The night before this session, a small group of returning participants met to discuss how to run the session. Jackie Kelly, Christin Alayon, Lauren Haskins, and Kaitlin LaValley helped facilitators Kate Merrigan and Annie Kirkpatrick run a fun and energetic program of icebreaking activities. During a round of introductions, Lauren asked the following question of everyone: "If you were being chased by zombies, what music would you want playing in the background?" This sort of silly, creative getting-to-know-you question is now a classic part of early YLP sessions. Christin, Jackie, and Kaitlin ran games that helped participants get to know one another more and loosen up a bit. All in all, it was a successful evening, and now we're looking forward to next week when we'll play some more games as well as begin to explore the concepts of community and community service.



▲ Members of the YLP get to know one another.

## Teen Writing Workshop Going Strong But Needs Your Help!

The UNITY Teen Writing Workshop began its 12th year on October 20th, 2010! We're very excited to once again have the talented and engaging Robin Lehleitner facilitating the program. Robin, who holds an MFA and is formerly an English teacher at Mount Greylock Regional High School, has been facilitating the workshop since 1999. She is joined this year by co-facilitator Jake Snow, an award-winning slam poet and former student of Robin's who performs under the pen/stage name Phoenix. While we already have many returning participants and new young writers joining us, our door

is always open to new youth ages 14-19 who would like to check out the program. To join, interested writers can either just drop in on Wednesdays (4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the nbCC office) or contact Kate Merrigan at 663-7588 or kmerrigan@nbccoalition.org.

As mentioned in last month's newsletter, we do not currently have funding for this popular program. This program, which helps promote youth voices in the northern Berkshires and creates a safe, supportive space for teens to practice their creative writing, is beloved by participants. We committed to begin it this year without funding because of how much it means to participants and because of how many youth it impacts (we had over 35 youth attend last year). We are looking for ideas for new funding options. If you have ideas or if you would like to help, please get in touch with Kate at the contact info above. On a related note, we're hoping to find more opportunities for our teen writers to perform their work in public this year. If you know of any venues or events that might be good places for our writers to share their work, please get in touch!

## The Latest on Building A Skatepark in North Adams

If you read our newsletter regularly, you're aware that members and staff of UNITY, along with some fantastic community volunteers and interns, have been working regularly since last winter to advocate for and hopefully build a skatepark in North Adams for skateboarders and BMX bikers. In September, we competed in the Pepsi Refresh Everything Contest in the hopes of winning \$250K to build the park. While we didn't win the contest, I believe that we experienced a great triumph in the form of the broad community support our efforts had. We received donations of materials and volunteer hours from many sectors and individuals and are incredibly grateful for the support. In particular, I'd like to mention UNITY youth Brandi LaBelle, Kaitlin LaValley, Chris Cozzaglio, and Zaki Dalwat Zai, who all spent a ton of time in August and September working on the campaign. We also benefited from printing donations from Keith Bona (Bona Marketing), Excelsior Printing, and Becks Printing. Susan Cross, Curator at MASS MoCA, has been a committed and creative partner in this work. Chris Lapodeta, her son, Anthony, and a lot of Anthony's BMXing friends were great street volunteers as we worked on this. This list could go on and on. To all who helped, volunteered, wrote letters of support, put up posters, and voted every day in September: THANK YOU.

We might not have won the Pepsi contest, but we're not done working on this. We'll be looking for other funding options, continuing our conversations with MoCA and the City of North Adams about how we can move this idea forward, and likely reaching out to artists and skatepark designers. We're also looking for community members who would like to help us seek funding and possibly do some creative fund-raising. If you'd like to help work on this, please email Kate at kmerrigan@nbccoalition.org.

*Kate Merrigan*

"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: Aldona Adams

Aldona Adams is by nature a very outgoing gregarious person who loves to talk with people and get them involved in what is going on in the community.

### ▲ Aldona Adams: Williamstown Community Outreach Worker

When she first heard about the Community Outreach Worker program, it made a lot of sense for her as a way to

get active in her Williamstown Community.

Through her social work background and as an active Mom, she was aware of some of the services available in the community. What she especially gained from the 15-week training was knowledge of so much more.

"I had no idea that some of these services existed like Mass Rehab and specific help for Veterans. It really helped me to get to know about the resources the many agencies offer and to meet the people and even find out where the offices are located. What I learned will help me as a person as well as those I am able to connect with, providing them with resources they may not know exist."

The diversity of the outreach workers opened Aldona to an appreciation for the ways we all learn from one another and how important each one's contribution is to the group.

"I am more open minded and open to learning from others. Neighborhoods are made up of diverse peoples and we need everyone in order to make our neighborhoods work for everyone."

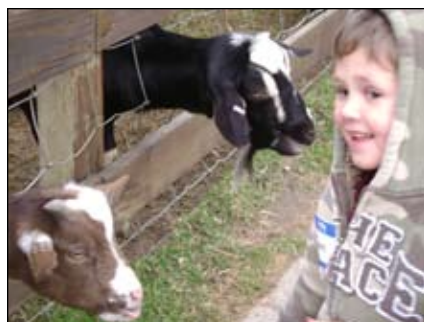
Aldona plunged into organizing an event in her Williamstown neighborhood to get the neighbors to come together and talk about things they would like to do. She came to recognize that some families are isolated and never come out of their houses. She intends to knock on doors and learn from her neighbors how they might become involved in some positive changes.

"After meeting the selectman, I was able to organize a meeting of neighbors at the Youth Center for the planners to come to talk about plans for the Williamstown branch of the Bike Path. We were able to map it out and know it is in the public library for everyone to see."

Aldona's enthusiasm is contagious and her energy provides her with a unique way of walking the walk of a Community Outreach Worker.

*Natalie Cain*

**nbCC held its Fall Community Recognition Award Ceremony on October 27. Special Recognition was given to Marie Harpin for her many years of leadership and service to many people as Director of Northern Berkshire Community Action. At right, Mayor Richard Alcombricht and Al Bashevkin congratulate Marie. ►**



## UNO visits Pumpkin Patch!

Seventeen children and adults from the UNO neighborhood went to Ioka Valley Farm in Hancock, MA on Saturday, October 23rd. It was a beautiful sunny day. The children fed the animals, went on a wagon train ride, and went through a haunted house maze. Everyone took a hayride that led to the pumpkin patch. The day ended with refreshments. Each child got to pick out a pumpkin to bring home. A fun day was had by all. UNO's next event will be in December when they hold their Annual Holiday House Decorating contest.

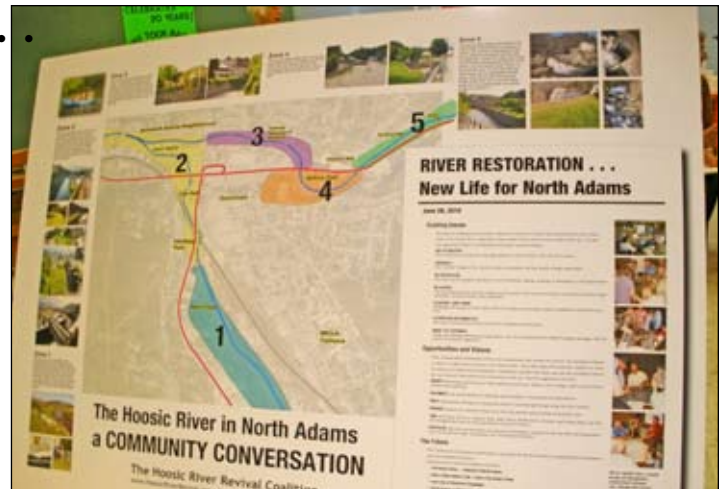
*Shirley Davis*



## Imagine a Revitalized Hoosic River. . .

In 2008, The Hoosic River Revival Coalition was born as a small group of local residents, headed by Judy Grinnell, came together in hopes of revitalizing one of North Adams' untapped natural assets, the Hoosic River. In June of 2010, they hosted a day-long event for the local community to learn about the flood chutes built by the Army Corps of Engineers in the 1950s and to brainstorm on how to integrate the Hoosic River into the revitalization of our downtown. The concrete flood control chutes that have saved our city from flooding, are unattractive, hide the river from view and destroy the river's natural ecosystem. They asked the community to imagine a downtown North Adams where the Hoosic River is suitable for fishing, boating and swimming, paralleled by a bike/walkpath with parks, riverfront cafes and where people might meet for business and socializing or just take in the natural beauty.

Since not everyone in the community could attend that meeting, the Coalition is now asking the public to offer ideas, suggestions and concerns. They have put together a poster summarizing the June meeting and are asking for further community input. These posters are displayed throughout the city with comment cards available for feedback. They can be found at the North Adams Public Library,



North Adams City Hall, Northern Berkshire Community Coalition conference room, Drury High School lobby, MCLA's Freel Library, the North Adams Transcript lobby and the Eclipse Mill (Route 2). Residents may also contact the Hoosic River Revival Coalition by e-mail at [HoosicRiverRevival@gmail.com](mailto:HoosicRiverRevival@gmail.com) or by telephone at (413) 212-2996. Imagine!  
-Bert Lamb

## Interfaith Action Initiative Progresses

The Northern Berkshire Interfaith Action Initiative made progress in several areas at its October 15 meeting. We are proceeding with a survey of faith communities in Northern Berkshire to determine what services they provide to meet basic human needs. We hope this information will help make these services better known, perhaps inspire faith communities or others to fill in gaps in available services, and also promote awareness of the Interfaith Action Initiative.

In our efforts to explore needs in our community and find agencies to help, a committee was formed to explore the possibility of setting up mentoring relationships with clients of Louison House. This is an exciting step in our effort to find ways to make a difference at a time of growing need. Our effort to explore community needs and find ways to help will continue.

Also at the October meeting, those present voted unanimously to oppose Massachusetts ballot Questions 1, 2 and 3. We composed and sent out a letter to the editor publicly stating our opposition. In addition to community service, the Initiative aims to promote interfaith understanding. To this end, the silent prayer and faith sharing portion of our meetings has really taken off, with people putting their all into meaningful presentations.

The Initiative grew out of the discussion at April's Coalition monthly forum on faith and community issues, but is an independent group, affiliated with no other organization or denomination. The next meeting of the Initiative will be held on Friday, November 19, at 10 a.m. at the First Baptist Church of North Adams (use Eagle Street entrance). People of all faiths and all people of good will are welcome to attend. For more information, e-mail [northernberkshire-interfaith@gmail.com](mailto:northernberkshire-interfaith@gmail.com), call Mark at 664-0130 or visit <http://northernberkshireinterfaith.blogspot.com>. -Mark Rondeau

## Have You Taken the Safe Homes Pledge Yet?

It's that time of year when parents of youth in grades 6-12 take the Safe Homes 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.

After signing the pledge and returning it to the Coalition, how else can you help?

**Spread the word.** When your teenager is invited to a party, give the host's parents a friendly call. Explain that your family has a policy about drugs and alcohol at parties and ask if their family follows the same rules. If they don't tell your teenagers they can't attend.

**Spread the pledge.** Tell your friends and neighbors that you've taken the pledge. Explain it to them and ask if they'd like to take the pledge, too. Keep some copies around so you'll always have the pledge on hand for them to sign.

**Spread the network.** Some parents have made a small project of spreading the Safe Homes network. You can, too. Bring some pledges to a meeting at church or synagogue; share them at sports events or practice, or a birthday party at your home.

To learn more about spreading the network or getting Safe Homes pledges, contact Lois Daunis ([ldaunis@nbccoalition.org](mailto:ldaunis@nbccoalition.org)), Corinne Case ([ccase@nbccoalition.org](mailto:ccase@nbccoalition.org)) or Sally Sussman ([s.suss@verizon.net](mailto:s.suss@verizon.net)).  
-Lois Daunis

Monday, Nov. 1, 7:30 p.m.Friday, Nov. 5, 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 the future of our health care system. NBH's Bob Calway and Paul Hopkins will join Al and Scott.

Wednesday, Nov. 3, 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. (all meetings at 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., with lunch served).

Friday, Nov. 12, 10:00 a.m.

## Coalition Monthly Forum

Join us for the November forum of the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition. This month's forum will focus on the future of our local health care system. 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.

Tuesdays, 6:00 p.m.

## Youth Leadership Program

The group meets on Tuesday evenings October 12th through May 31st, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., 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, Nov. 19, 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 Northern Berkshire Community Coalition Office on Friday, November 19th 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 Gaspari at (413) 629-1295.

Wednesdays, 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.

Tuesday, Nov. 16, 4:00 p.m.(Mt. Greylock - MGRHS)Wed., Nov. 17, 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 Adams, contact Corinne Case at 743-7455 or ccase@nbccoalition.org. For Mt. Greylock, contact Sally Sussman at 458-4670 or s.suss@verizon.net. For information about the CMCA program, call or email Lois Daunis, Prevention Coordinator at the Coalition office, 663-7588 or ldaunis@nbccoalition.org.

Wed., Dec. 1, 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.

## Neighborhood Summit

Northern Berkshire Neighbors will host a Neighborhood Summit which brings together Community Outreach Workers, neighborhood leaders and residents from the communities of northern Berkshire. We will celebrate the work that has been done and plan for the upcoming year. Come learn about Neighborhood Action Plans and participate in the effort for a healthier Northern Berkshire.

*Now is the time to get involved!* Become a Community Outreach Worker and join us for the training that begins in January. Learn about community resources and how to help people access them; practice effective communication and facilitation skills; learn how to organize your neighborhood. For more information, call Wendy or Annie at 663-7588.



▲ We are currently undergoing a strategic planning process. Facilitator Cathy Crosky of Charter Oak Consulting Group meets with nbCC staff.

## 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

**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*

**Ex-Smokers' Hall of Fame:** North Adams and Adams have extremely high rates of smoking while pregnant—about 30% of all pregnancies involve tobacco compared to about 7% of pregnancies statewide. Tobacco use can lead to premature birth, low birth weight and impaired brain and nervous system development. If you quit smoking for good because of pregnancy, contact Joan at the Northern Berkshire Tobacco-Free Community Partnership, jrubel@berkshireahec.org or (413) 447-2417. We'd like to honor you with induction into the Ex-Smokers' Hall of Fame to help inspire pregnant women to quit so babies born into our community will be healthier.

**Hoosic River Revival Coalition:** The Hoosic River Revival Coalition is displaying posters summarizing the results of their June "Community Conversation about the Hoosic River" at six locations. See page 8 for more details.

**Nonprofits!:** Make sure you are listed on Berkshirenonprofits.com (a boxcar media company, part of iberkshires.com). List volunteer jobs and update your agency listing. E-mail kathykeeser@gmail.com with any questions.

**Community Baby Shower:** A Community Baby Shower will be held on Saturday, November 13th, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Berkshire Mall Center Court. Co-hosted by Child Care of the Berkshires and Berkshire North WIC, it is for pregnant women and their partners and parents of young children. It is free and open to the public. Information will be provided on infant care, pre-natal and infant development, nutrition, breastfeeding, preparing for baby's birth, selecting child care, importance of dental health, as well as providing many community resources for families and children. For more information call (413) 663-9242 or (413) 445-4324.

**Calling all Parents, Grandparents, Foster Parents, or Guardians:** There's still time to register and possibly enroll your toddler or preschooler in The Parent Child Home Program. This adventure through literacy with free books and toys is a wonderful way to play and learn with your child. If you can spare 1 hour a week and you have a child between 18 months and 4 years, we can schedule visits from 9 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. for your convenience. For more information please call: Program Coordinators: Gretchen Wells @ Child Care of the Berkshires @ 664-4821 x20.

### BerkshireRides Youth/Community Vanpool

The BerkshireRides Youth and Community Vanpool is seeking partners. Our fleet of community vans are scheduled to meet the transportation needs of area agencies, allowing special trips and increased access to programming. Partnership, which allows an agency

priority scheduling on one of our vehicles, and use during idle time on all other vehicles, is \$1,800 per year which helps us to cover the cost of insurance and maintenance. Vans can also be reserved on a daily basis, \$100 per day. Our vans are open most weekdays until 2 p.m. and most weekends. For more information, call BerkshireRides, (413) 664-0300

**Allergen Awareness Training:** Berkshire AHEC has been selected as an allergen awareness training verification program to provide video training online and in classrooms. A certificate will be issued upon viewing a training video about serving customers with food allergies and with celiac disease-related food intolerance and procedures that restaurants should follow in educating customers about food allergies and celiac disease and steps that restaurants should take if a customer has an allergic or celiac disease-related reaction to food. For more information call (413) 447-2417.

### Wound Healing Center Hosts Open House

The Wound Healing Center of the Berkshires at North Adams Regional Hospital will host a community open house on Wednesday, Nov. 10, from 3 to 6 p.m. The event will include tours of the Wound Healing Center and its hyperbaric oxygen therapy treatment room, refreshments and a door prize raffle. This Center, located on the ground floor of NARH, specializes in the treatment of non-healing wounds, and hyperbaric medicine. It also offers highly specialized treatments including negative pressure wound therapy, bio-engineered skin substitutes, biological and biosynthetic dressings, and other scientifically based therapies. For more information: call (413) 664-5690.

### Railway Cafe to feature Amy Speace:

On Friday, Nov. 19, at 7:30 p.m., the Railway Cafe in North Adams will feature NYC-based singer-songwriter Amy Speace. Speace toured with the prestigious National Shakespeare Company and ran her own theater company before turning to songwriting. Her music has been described as a "habit-forming combination of eloquent songwriting and a passionate voice" with a little bit of twang. The Railway Cafe is in MCLA's Gallery 51 at 51 Main Street. To reserve, email railwaycafe@juno.com or call (413) 664 6393. www.railwaycafe.org.

**Berkshire County 4-H:** Volunteers are sought for 4-H clubs throughout Berkshire County. 4-H is for youth 5-18 years old, and club projects can range from photography to agriculture to science to health & fitness and anything in between! If you are interested in starting a group, spending a few hours a month changing the lives of youth in your area, call the 4-H office to learn more. (413) 448-8285. Or check us out on the web at www.mass4h.org.

### New Blog, Exploring Health Now:

Berkshire AHEC announces its new blog, Exploring Health Now. Learn the in's and out's of the fastest growing careers in health care, and highlights of healthcare in the news. Plus, discover resources and

tools to help you navigate the path to your future. Please visit [www.exploringhealthnow.blogspot.com](http://www.exploringhealthnow.blogspot.com).

**Help FRC Plan for the Future:** The Family Resource Center of Northern Berkshire County (FRC) is going through a strategic planning process. We are looking for community input on the needs of families and children to guide us in planning for the next three years. FRC provides support for children and families with a focus on supporting family stabilization and promoting school readiness, healthy development and emotional well-being of children. Please take a few moments to follow this link to complete our planning survey:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/familyresourcecenter>. Or, you can attend one of our focus groups listed below. Please call us at 664-4821 to let us know if you plan to attend any of these events.

#### FRC Focus Groups

In Williamstown at the Milne Public Library

- Nov. 3rd 4:00 to 5:30

In North Adams at the Haskins School Building

- Nov. 3rd 6:30 to 8:00

In Cheshire at the Cheshire Senior Center

- Nov. 4th 5:30 to 7:00

**The Berkshire Food Project:** The annual Thanksgiving dinner will be on Monday, Nov. 22nd located in the dining hall of the First Congregational Church North Adams. Serving will begin at 5:00 p.m. and is free to the public. Local restaurants will once again be providing food and volunteers. For more information call 664-7378.

#### First Fridays @ First Baptist Church:

Delicious food, generous portions, good company and take-out will be found at any First Friday Dinner at First Baptist Church North Adams. On November 5th, our menu will include Shepherd's Pie, salad, biscuits, warm apple crisp w/vanilla ice cream, and beverages. The meal will be served from 5:00-7:00 p.m. with Adults \$7.00 and Children Under 12 \$4.00. Proceeds from the meal will benefit the Camp Ashmere Scholarship Fund. 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. Authors from Slate Roof Press will be sharing their work this month. Papyri Gallery will feature the work of local artist Gillian Jones for the months of November and December. 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 November 13th at 7:00 p.m. - Papyri Books, 45 Eagle Street, N. Adams. Hours: Mon.-Sat. 12-6 p.m. Wordplay is free and open to the public.

**The Wish List:** The North Adams Transcript is restarting The Wish List, a service through which nonprofits, social service agencies, schools, libraries,

etc. in need may "wish" for what they need. Examples range from office supplies, furniture and computers to books, appliances and even volunteers. The Transcript will print those needs and ask the community to contribute what they can. Send any requests to Glenn Drohan at [gdrohan@thetranscript.com](mailto:gdrohan@thetranscript.com).

**HIV Testing:** HIV testing will be offered at North Adams Regional Hospital on Thursday, November 4, and Thursday, November 18, 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.

**Free Dental Care:** Massachusetts residents whose incomes are under 200% of the federal poverty guidelines and who are enrolled in the health safety-net can get free dental care at dental programs located at community health centers in Massachusetts. The closest is the Hilltown Community Health Center in Worthington. They will see referrals in emergency situations. There is about a month wait for non-emergencies. They ask that patients bring a full set of x-rays with them, if available. The phone number for the Hilltown Health Center is (413) 238-5511. For more information you can call Ecu-Health Care at 663-8711.

**VNA & Hospice Bazaar :** The Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice of Northern Berkshire will hold its fourth annual VNA & Hospice Bazaar on Saturday, November 6, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the VNA & Hospice Community Room, 535 Curran Highway, North Adams. The bazaar will include a silent auction and craft tables; raffles including a 50-50 raffle; a baked goods table; and popcorn and hot dogs. Face painting and lollipops and raffle will be offered for children. Also on display will be the VNA & Hospice Holiday Tree and a five-foot tall nutcracker. Information: (413) 664-4536 and on Facebook.

**Blood Drive:** North Adams Regional Hospital and Berkshire Health Systems will host a blood drive on Wednesday, November 17, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at North Adams Regional Hospital. To schedule a convenient appointment to give blood, call the BHS bloodmobile at (413) 447-2114, ext. 3981. Walk-in donors are also welcome. The drive is open to the public. All blood types are needed. Potential blood donors should be in good health the day of the drive, be at least 17 years old and weigh at least 110 pounds. Donors should not have given blood in the previous 56 days (eight weeks).

#### Images Cinema International Family

**Film series:** Saturday, November 20 at 10 a.m. - KIDS FLIX MIX is a collection of international animated shorts assembled by the New York International Children's Film Festival, targeted at ages 3-8, but fun for all ages. Images Cinema is located at 50 Spring Street, Williamstown, MA, and on the web at [www.imagescinema.org](http://www.imagescinema.org).

#### 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 Crowseen

#### 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 . . .

November is here and we have lots going on in the Northern Berkshire region. Thanks to State Senator Ben Downing and State Representative Dan Bosley for their assistance in ensuring that state offices remain in Northern Berkshire County. Inside you can read more about a recent gathering hosted by the Coalition to talk about the need for local services. With the support of our elected officials, I'm hoping that we can see better access to services come from these discussions.

It's time to reflect on what a good friend Marie Harpin has been to many in the Northern Berkshire region. Marie announced her retirement earlier this month. After seventeen years serving as the Director of Northern Berkshire Community Action, one can be thankful on behalf of the hundreds of households that have benefited from the food pantries, emergency assistance, fuel assistance, housing services, and love that Marie and her office-mates have given out. In my 25 years here at the Coalition, I have known two directors for the local Community Action office, Marie Harpin and Theresa Louison. Both have my great respect for doing what I believe to be, one of the hardest jobs in our field in the Northern Berkshire region. We thanked Marie for her service at the Neighborlies this past week, and it was a well deserved thanks.

With the addition of smiling Annie Kirkpatrick, the Coalition office is once again fully staffed. Annie will be helping Kate Merrigan and Wendy Krom as a Program Associate for Northern Berkshire Neighbors and UNITY. She certainly has the disposition to make it work here. Thanks for joining us, Annie.

This month's forum (Nov. 12 10 a.m. to noon at the Baptist Church) about the future for Northern Berkshire Healthcare is one that I think we all will benefit from. I forget that NBH is the largest employer in Northern Berkshire as well as the institution that can care for us when we most need it. They've gone through some hard times lately that at times split the community apart. Come to our forum and hear from NBH about what's happened and what's to come. I hope that this forum will be a discussion that many are involved in.

- Al Bashevkin

## Next Coalition Meeting!

The Future of the Health Care  
System in Northern Berkshire

Friday, November 12  
10 a.m.  
First Baptist Church North Adams

Check us out on Facebook! Click below.

<http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Northern-Berkshire-Community-Coalition/271548555609>

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