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Northern Berkshire Community Coalition

Coalition news

An update from



July 2025, Volume XL, Number 1

nbCC Celebrated Our 39th Year Building Community

On Friday, June 13th, over one hundred community friends and partners joined us for our annual “meeting” luncheon, where we marked our 39th year as a community organization. This year’s theme focused on our community connections with neighbors, friends, family and everything special that bind us together.

The keynote speaker was actually four speakers! This year we invited community members Kristen Tool, Nick Mantello, Lucian Keagle and Hilary Sweeney to speak, reflecting on what community means to them, and sharing stories about how the Coalition has impacted their lives.

The speakers offered unique perspectives, but all shared a common thread of finding a sense of belonging and community by participating in programs and events

hosted by the coalition. Kristen Tool was inspired by attending the annual Neighborlies Awards and now makes sure to submit her own nominations each year, ensuring the people she sees making positive impact in their community know their work is seen and appreciated.

Hilary Sweeney spoke about the impact participating in the Community Outreach Volunteer Program had on her life and how it was the first experience that made her feel like she really belonged and had found a home here in the northern Berkshires. She ended by saying while the impact of the program might not lead the participants to immediately jump into more active roles in their community she was sure each graduate would be making a meaningful positive impact in the future.



(Continued on page 2)



▲ Clockwise from Top Right: Photographer Nick Mantello speaks about community; Mayor Macksey and members of the Fire Department; Casey Pease presents the Northern Berkshire Hero Award to the North Adams & Williamstown Farmers Markets; nbCC staff and volunteers surround the new puzzle completed as this year’s interactive activity.



Our Mission

"Empowering the Northern Berkshire region to enhance the quality of life through our efforts at connecting, convening, and supporting all facets of the community."

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

- Strengthening neighborhoods and community life
- Preventing alcohol/substance abuse and supporting recovery
- Promoting health and wellness
- Helping families to be strong and resilient
- Supporting positive youth development
- Building bridges between residents and service agencies

Coalition Supporters

Public Sources

- MA Dept. of Children & Families/EOHHS
- MA Cultural Council
- MA Department of Public Health
- MA Department of Public Health, Bureau of Substance Addiction Services

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 E-zine:

The **Coalition E-zine** is a weekly e-blast, published every Thursday, with news and announcements from Northern Berkshire agencies and organizations. Submissions must be received by 9:00 am Tuesday morning to be considered for inclusion in that week's issue. All submissions are subject to editing and should be 50 words or less. All events related to Northern Berkshire community public health will be considered for publication. Banner ads are available. For more information, please call 413-663-7588, or to submit an announcement, please email phzine@nbccoalition.org.

(Continued from cover)

Nick Mantello, a local well known for his photography documenting large local events spoke about the joy he feels capturing these moments of community and how the nbCC was involved in so many of the events.

The final speaker was Teen Writing Workshop participant Lucian Keagle, a newcomer to the area whose family has recently relocated from Texas. They spoke to the crowd about how finding the Coalition and the Teen Writing Workshop turned a new place into a home for them. Lucian said, "They show me, by example, how to become the safe person I always looked up to... They are a small team with a big impact. They turn cities into homes."

This year's Northern Berkshire Hero recipients were the North Adams & Williamstown Farmers Markets. Representatives from each markets' volunteer committees were present to accept the awards on behalf of their markets. The markets received a very special surprise when they were also presented with Senate Citations from the office of Senator Paul Mark, presented by his Director of Constituent Services, Casey Pease. While presenting the citation Pease shared with the crowd that he was also a graduate of the Community Outreach Volunteer Program that speaker Hilary Sweeney had highlighted.

The markets were honored for their role as a community hub, connector, incubator for fledgling businesses and their collective work making healthy local food options more accessible to all residents through their incentive programs like Market Match.

Market Match is a SNAP doubling program that matches SNAP benefits spent at the market 1:1 up to \$30 per market, per SNAP customer. In just the past year, the Market Match program has supported the purchase of over \$60,000.00 worth of fresh, healthy local foods at the markets, by customers using their SNAP benefits.

Our annual meeting wouldn't be complete without some kind of game or brain teaser and this year was no different. In celebration of connection and community each table was given a large puzzle piece to decorate with images and words that reflect what they think of when they think of this community. The pieces were joined to together to form a large 4'x8' nbCC puzzle that we hope to hang in our new building once it is completed in a few years.

As we closed out our 39th year together, Executive Director Amber Besaw shared reflections that acknowledged how hard it can be to find the right words in difficult times. She spoke about the temptation to focus on what's broken, but instead invited us to turn our attention to what we can build, and to hope. To honor the young writers in our Teen Writing Workshop, she read a poem she had written about hope—describing it as something active and discoverable, something that flourishes in light and survives in darkness. Her words reminded us that hope can be found in the laughter of a child, in a helping hand, in the feeling of belonging. "Hope is alive, hope is shelter, hope is community," she said. And in that moment, with over a hundred neighbors gathered to celebrate connection, her words rang true.

here comes

SUMMER!

FREE July Community Events



- **North Adams July 4th Fireworks** - July 4th after the SteepleCats game (rain date July 5th)
 - **July 4 | 5-9PM | FIRST Fridays** @ downtown North Adams
 - **Williamstown July 4th Celebration 9AM-9PM** @ Spring St.
 - **Mondays July 7/14/21 | Free Movies by Images** @ various locations
 - **Mon & Wed | 12-5PM | ROOTS Teen Center Drop-in (13-19yrs)** @ 51 Ashland St., North Adams
 - **Tues & Thurs | 2:30-7PM | ROOTS Teen Center Drop-in (13-19yrs)** @ 51 Ashland St., North Adams
 - **Tuesdays starting July 8 | 6:30-8PM | Free Concerts** @ Adams Visitors Center Lawn
 - **Wednesdays | 6:30-8PM | Free Concerts** @ Windsor Lake, N. Adams
 - **Wednesdays in July | 6-7:30PM | Musics on the lawn** @ the Clark
 - **Every 3 Thursdays | 7:30-9AM | Coffee in the Courtyard** Adams
 - **Fridays | 7:30-9AM | Eagle Street Coffee Date**, North Adams
 - **Friday July 18 | Dusk | Free Outdoor Movie** @ Adams Visitors Center
 - **Friday July 25 | Free Outdoor Movie** @ Noel Field North Adams
 - **Every Saturday:**
 - **9AM-1PM | North Adams Farmers Market & Makers on Main** Market @ Main St.
 - **9AM-1PM | Williamstown Farmers Market** @ Spring St.
 - **9:30-11AM | Growing Healthy Gardens Group** @ UNO park
 - **Sat. July 12 | 4-8PM | Cheshire Hoedown**
 - **July 13 | 11AM-4PM | Community Day** @ the Clark
 - **Sat. July 19 | 3:30 -10PM | Eagle St Beach Party** @ North Adams
- 

Northern Berkshire Community Coalition Board of Directors Fiscal Year 2026

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BFAIR

Congratulations, 2025 COV Graduates!

It was a hot June evening on Monday, June 23rd when the 2025 Community Outreach Volunteers (COVs) gathered with family and friends at the UNO Center for the last time after six long months of training. The group of five participants all completed the entire course, meeting every Monday evening for three hours to learn leadership skills and all about the resources in the community, in preparation to be better advocates and community leaders. Running since 2010, the Community Outreach Volunteer Training has successfully trained over 100 individuals within the community, fostering their roles as neighbors, volunteers, and leaders.

It was a bittersweet occasion for the group who were proud of their accomplishment, but said they weren't quite ready to stop their weekly meet-up. Co-facilitator and nbCC Community Connections Coordinator, Gabby Glasier, noted that this group had become particularly close and were very loyal to each other. It was clear that everyone was going to miss each other.

Lead facilitator, Annie Rodgers welcomed North Adams Mayor Macksey to address the graduates. The mayor let the graduates know how proud she was of their commitment to themselves and the community. She pointed out that while she may be the mayor, she could not succeed in the work she does without the commitment, support and love for community, that people like the Community Outreach Volunteers provide.

Each year, graduation includes two guest speakers, a former COV graduate and a community leader, this year both speakers were former graduates of the program. Rebecca Dodge, Program Director for the Have Hope Peer Recovery Center, offered words of wisdom as the recent COV program graduate, and Jessica Sweeney, founder of Common Folk Artist Collective, local business owner and executive director of the ROOTS Teen Center presented the keynote speech. Both delivered inspiring words of encouragement that left the room close to tears.



▲ Above Group photo of the 2025 graduates, presenters and program facilitators.

The celebration was concluded with the presentation of the diplomas, celebratory photos and plenty of sweet and savory treats. That was the end of another year of COV training, but we're sure the group is going to find excuses to get together again soon!

What's new for next year? nbCC plans to restructure the Community Outreach Volunteer Training program, previously a six-month, weekly program featuring presentations from external organizations and service providers. It will now be condensed into a 10-week curriculum. This shorter training will be supplemented by monthly, open-to-the-community panel discussions. These discussions will feature relevant organizations and service providers, focusing on the following key areas: Local Government, Food Access, Housing/Homelessness, Substance Use/Mental Health, Employment/Education, Parenthood/Youth, Emergency/Crisis Services, and Healthcare.

The panels will serve as an opportunity for the community to gain knowledge about available resources and services in Northern Berkshire County. The core training, however, will concentrate on cultivating leadership skills essential for community outreach. This training is rooted in asset-based community development principles, which leverage the inherent strengths and assets of individuals and communities to address their own needs.

If you would like to be a part of the Community Outreach Volunteer Training, please reach out to Gabby Glasier at gglasier@nbccoalition.org or call the nbCC office at (413) 663-7588.

The Fitness Challenge Returns! All Month Long.

Are you ready? This year the fitness challenge looks a little different. You'll still be counting up points, but suggested activities won't necessarily be on a specific day at a specific time and activities are throughout the north Berkshire area. This isn't just a North Adams challenge anymore. All north Berkshire residents are welcome! As usual there will be points, winners and prizes, but the real point is to make a conscious effort to be a bit healthier in our choices, spend more time outdoors enjoying all the beauty our Berkshire home has to offer, and hopefully, enjoying these moments with teammates and friends.

This year you can still earn points if you love attending the farmers markets, outdoor community concerts, and the Bike Collective's open hours, but Jo-Ann has collected a whole bingo card worth of suggested locations throughout the northern Berkshire towns where you can, hike, walk, swim and sightsee at your leisure throughout the month.

It's easy to participate. Register as an individual or gather a team of friends, family, even co-workers to make the challenge even more fun. Participants can register at nbCC during office hours on Monday, June 30 or Tuesday, July 1. Don't worry if you can't get here. You can also register by calling us, or emailing Jo-Ann, our new Health & Wellness Coordinator.

Once you are registered you'll receive a t-shirt (while supplies last) and a tracker to track your points. Keep track of your activities and nutrition throughout the month, then turn in your tracker on July 31- Aug1. There will be a celebration to wrap the event up and announce the winners. Those details TBA. Winners will be announced in both Individual and Team categories, and prizes will be awarded.

If you have any questions about events and activities or are interested in joining the fun, reach out! We'd love to have you join us this year. For more info, call us at 413-663-7588 or email info@nbccoalition.org



A Letter from the Director's Desk

As we turn the page to July, we also kick off our new fiscal year-and with it, a fresh chapter of energy, ideas, and connection at nbCC.



**Executive Director,
Amber Besaw**

Our calendar is already buzzing with exciting events and programs. From engaging youth opportunities throughout the summer to our beloved community celebrations like National Night Out in August and Downtown Trick-or-Treat this fall (plus a spooky Haunted House in the works!), there's something for everyone. And of course we always look forward to our annual MLK Day of Service in January-a meaningful day that brings people together to give back and reflect.

We're also thrilled to share that our Bike Collective is back in action, with new energy and fresh wheels. Community members can earn a bike by volunteering their time-a win-win that supports both mobility and connection.

At nbCC, we believe in building community through every season, every age group, and every opportunity to show up for one another. We can't wait to see what this year brings, and we're so glad you're with us for the ride.

With gratitude,
Amber

NURTURING HOPE 10AM-12PM TUESDAYS STARTING JULY 1 THROUGH SEPT. 16

Nurturing hope is designed to help families with children with special needs:

- explore their hopes and fears
- develop effective parenting skills
- enhance communication
- develop strategies for facing challenges
- recognize opportunities for celebration



The goal is to develop a foundation of cooperation that will carry families through challenging times and create opportunities for growth and celebration.

Active Parenting of Teens

5:30-7:30 PM | Mondays (7/7 thru 8/11)

This program provides the guidance and support you need to turn the challenges of raising a teenager into opportunities for growth. You'll learn:

- Methods of respectful discipline
- Skills for clear, honest communication
- Concrete strategies to prevent risky behavior
- How to be an encouraging parent



Family
Resource Center



**REG. REQUIRED: 413-663-7588
or nkennedy@nbccoalition.org**

Classes held at nbCC, 61 Main St., Suite 218, N. Adams

We're Hiring! Open Positions at nbCC

Apply via mail to Amber Besaw at 61 Main Street, Suite 218, North Adams, MA 01247 or email jobs@nbccoalition.org. Please include a cover letter, resume, and contact information for 3 references. For more details about our open positions please visit our website at bit.ly/WorkAtNBCC for more information about these positions.

Family Resource Center Clinician: Rate: \$29-30/hr, PLUS a \$5,000 sign-on bonus after completion of 1 year

The Family Resource Center (FRC) Clinician will provide Comprehensive Mental Health Assessments, including the Family Strengths and Needs Assessment (FSNA) assessment; short term treatment; and Care Planning to Youth and Families of the FRC.

Youth Support Worker: Salary: \$40-43k/annually

The Youth Support Worker is responsible for providing support, networking services, and programming to youth. The Youth Support Worker will provide services at the nbCC FRC program, in the community, and in the schools and homes of youth, when applicable.

Family Support Worker: Salary: \$40-43k/annually

The Family Support Worker is responsible for providing support to families who have engaged with nbCC. They will provide services at The Family Resource Center site, in schools, in the community, and in the homes of families, when applicable. When you apply, please include a cover letter detailing your qualifications and why you're interested in this position, along with three references..

Coalition Events

Northern Berkshire Fitness Challenge

ALL MONTH LONG! JULY 1 - 31

SIGN-UP: JUNE 30 1-6PM in front of Ramontos & JULY 1, 10:00AM - 3:00PM, nbCC 61 Main Street, Suite 218, North Adams

This year the fitness challenge looks a little different. You'll still be counting up points, but suggested activities won't necessarily be on a specific day at a specific time AND activities are throughout the north Berkshire area! This isn't just a North Adams challenge anymore! All NB residents are welcome! For more info, call us at 413-663-7588 or email info@nbccoalition.org

Nurturing Hope Parenting Series (7/1 - 9/16)

Tuesdays starting July 1, 10:00 - 12:00 PM, nbCC 61 Main Street, Suite 218, North Adams

Nurturing hope is designed to help families with children with special needs:

- explore their hopes and fears
- develop effective parenting skills
- enhance communication
- develop strategies for facing challenges
- recognize opportunities for celebration

The goal is to develop a foundation of cooperation that will carry families through challenging times and create opportunities for growth and celebration. Registration required. Contact us at 413-663-7588 or nkennedy@nbccoalition.org

Youth Summer Session

Tuesdays, 2:00-4:00 PM, nbCC, 61 Main Street, Suite 218, North Adams

FREE and open to youth ages 14-19. a space for young people to hang out, meet others, go on adventures & have fun! July 1-Aug 19. Registration is limited! Register soon! Transportation available. Snacks provided. For questions or to register: Give us a call us at 413-663-7588, email Carrisa at csacherski@nbccoalition.org

Summer Neighborhood Basketball League

Mondays & Wednesdays, starting July 7, 5:00 - 6:00 PM, Location rotates through community basketball courts in North Adams (Your family will get a schedule when you register)

Open to all northern Berkshire youth, ages 9 - 13. 1 game & 1 or more Practices each week, July 7 - August 5. There's still time to register: 413-663-7588 | info@nbccoalition.org

Active Parenting of Teens Parenting Series (7/7 - 8/11)

Mondays starting July 7, 10:00 - 12:00 PM, nbCC 61 Main Street, Suite 218, North Adams

This program provides the guidance and support you need to turn the challenges of raising a teenager into opportunities for growth. You'll learn:

- Methods of respectful discipline

- Skills for clear, honest communication
- Concrete strategies to prevent risky behavior
- How to be an encouraging parent.

Registration required. Contact us at 413-663-7588 or nkennedy@nbccoalition.org

Teen Writing Workshop Summer Session!

Wednesdays July 9 & 23 | 11:00AM-1:00PM, nbCC, 61 Main Street, Suite 218, North Adams

Free and open to youth ages 13-19 who live in or attend school in North Berkshire. Aspiring writers and poets! Join this incredibly supportive group and get 1-on-1 help with your writing and performance style. Snacks and supplies provided. Transportation provided if needed.

Registration is limited! Register soon! Call us at 413-663-7588 or email csacherski@nbccoalition.org for more information.

North Adams Route 2 Overpass Study: Input Session #3

Thursday, July 10, 5:00-7:00PM Courtyard A on the Mass MoCA campus, North Adams

The North Adams Route 2 Overpass Study (R2OS) will host its third community engagement event on Thursday, July 10, 2025 from 5pm-7pm. The community is invited to join the study team for a presentation of project updates and design concepts, and to share their thoughts and questions. This is the final opportunity for the public to give comments before the study team provides recommendations. Participants are encouraged to visit the online project platform for further information at <https://www.rt2overpass.info/>.

For those unable to attend the Community Visioning Session, interactive activities and opportunities for input can be found on the project website. The study is funded through a federal grant under the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Project.

Learn Through Play: Ocean

Saturday, July 12, 10:00 - 11:00 AM, UNO Center, 157 River Street, North Adams

In collaboration with Child Care of the Berkshires. Activities and circle time with sensory activities. Best for ages 0-5 years. No registration required. Contact us at 413-663-7588 or nkennedy@nbccoalition.org

Family Movie in Noel Field

Friday, July 25, at dusk (approx. 8:30PM) Noel Field, 310 State Street, North Adams

Bring the family and meet us in Noel Field by the playground and splash pad for a summer movie. Movie to be announced on our FB page. Free! Call us at 413-663-7588 or email gglasier@nbccoalition.org for more information.

nbCC Bike Collective Hours

*Tuesdays, 3:30-5:30 PM, The Armory, 206 Ashland St., North Adams

1st Tuesdays - OPEN HOURS

2nd & 3rd Tuesdays BY APPT.

Bring your own bike or work on a bike at the bike collective. You'll have the opportunity to learn from other community members on basic bike fixes, or team up with more experienced bike mechanics to rebuild a bike. Tools and stands are provided. All NB residents are welcome! For more info, call us at 413-663-7588.

Drop-In Art Club Returns!

Wednesdays, 3:30 - 4:30 PM, UNO Center, 157 River Street, North Adams

Join us at the UNO Center (157 River Street, North Adams) for this FREE weekly drop-in program facilitated by MASS MoCA and The Clark. Snacks and supplies provided!

Children under 8yrs MUST be accompanied by an adult.

Program facilitators are not responsible for child care. MORE INFO: 413-663-7588 or info@nbccoalition.org

FRC Parenting Together Group * NEW TIMES

2nd & 4th Wednesdays, 5:30 - 7:30 PM, nbCC, 61 Main St., Suite 218, North Adams

A peer-driven/peer-supported group in a judgment-free, confidential space. Snacks provided. Children welcome.

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Coffee Time

1st & 3rd Fridays, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM. UNO Center, 157 River Street, North Adams

This is a group for grandparents who are actively parenting their grandchildren giving them a safe and confidential space to share similar experiences with other grandparents. Coffee and snacks provided.



"Back-Packed" For Success!
FOR STUDENTS K-12
REGISTRATION:
JULY 8-AUG. 1
FLORIDA & SAVOY FAMILIES
8/12 5-6PM @ GABRIEL ABBOTT SCHOOL
ADAMS, CHESHIRE, CLARKSBURG, NORTH ADAMS, WILLIAMSTOWN FAMILIES
8/14 1-3PM @ NA ARMORY
REGISTRATION REQUIRED:
INFO@NBCCOALITION.ORG
or call 413-663-7588

Family Center
nbCC
Northern Berkshire Community Coalition
Community Engagement • Provision & Welfare

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



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