

## Inside the March Issue

Our March Youth Led Forum .....	2
Welcome New Board Members .....	2-3
Updates from Family Support & Remembering Aubrey .....	4
Teen Writing Workshop Showcase .....	5
Community Updates & Coalition Calendar .....	6-7
nbCC staff .....	8

Northern Berkshire Community Coalition

# Coalition news

An update from nbCC

March 2022, Volume XXXVI, Number 5

## February Forum Reveals Ample Opportunities & Resources for Job Seekers in the Berkshires

On Friday, February 11th, roughly 40 members of the Northern Berkshire Community came together, virtually and in person, to attend a community forum on the topic of Workforce Development. The morning started with introductions and announcements, in the typical nbCC Forum style, followed by a networking break before moving on to the main topic, Workforce Development!

It should come as no surprise that the labor shortage that is being reported nationally, is also affecting the Berkshires. Many organizations and businesses confirmed that they are facing staffing challenges and discussed some of the tactics they are using to attract new candidates. Some of these tactics include flexible scheduling, student loan payment assistance, child care assistance, and retention bonuses.

Additionally, Paul Mattingly from Berkshire Community College presented on workforce training opportunities available through BCC. These trainings and certifications are free to engage in and fall under three categories: Healthcare; Hospitality and Tourism; and Advanced Manufacturing. Under the Healthcare umbrella are long-term training programs like a Phlebotomy program, a CNA training program, and Community Health Worker certification, or short term programs like Foundations for Mental Health.

Under the Hospitality and Tourism track there are certificate programs in Hospitality Core Skills, Hospitality Supervision, Beverage Service, and Culinary Skills. Lastly, under the Advanced Manufacturing area, participants get over 100 hours of in-person, hands-on manufacturing experience. In this program, participants will also get their OSHA Card. Additionally, participants will work on their resume writing and interviewing skills, which makes this program ideal for someone who is looking for an entry level position in manufacturing. Again, these trainings are free to anyone who wishes to participate.

To sign up for a certification course or training, please contact Paul at [pmattingly@berkshirecc.edu](mailto:pmattingly@berkshirecc.edu) or call 413-236-2121.

- Bri Hantman, Office Coordinator



### UPCOMING MONTHLY FORUMS

MARCH 8 - 5-7PM - Youth Led Forum

APRIL 6 - 5-7PM - Housing & Homelessness Part 2

MAY 11 - 5-7PM - Community Collaborations Assessment

JUNE 17 - 11:30AM-1:30PM - nbCC Annual Meeting @ GreylockWORKS

## SAVE THE DATE! JUNE 17, 2022

JOIN US FOR THE NBCC ANNUAL MEETING - 11:30AM - 1:30PM  
~ AT GREYLOCK WORKS IN NORTH ADAMS ~

TICKETS AND MORE INFORMATION COMING SOON!





Northern Berkshire Community Coalition  
Community Empowerment • Prevention & Wellness

## 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

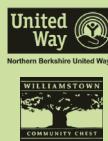
### Public Sources

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

### 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](mailto:phzine@nbccoalition.org).



## MARCH FORUM YOUTH LED FORUM



**Tuesday, March 8, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.**

Join us at 85 Main Street in the Terra Nova space to hear directly from young people in your community about the topics and challenges that are relevant to them. Members of the 2021 and 2022 Youth Health Collaborative will present a brief documentary film about the experiences of being a young person in Northern Berkshire County, as well as a presentation about the most recent Prevention Needs Assessment Data.

Can't attend in person? Email your questions to [info@nbccoalition.org](mailto:info@nbccoalition.org) or join us via Zoom at [https://bit.ly/march\\_forum](https://bit.ly/march_forum)

## Q & A with Our Newest Board Members...



▲ L-R, Newest nbCC Board Members: Maureen Baran and Michael Murphy

(Continued on page 3)

# Q & A with Our Newest Board Members...

## Maureen Baran

Q: Why did you decide to join the nbCC board?

A: I have watched nbCC do great work in the community since I moved to North Adams in 1992. Having the opportunity to work with Amber and the nbCC team at the Northern Berkshire Vaccine Clinics opened my eyes to how dedicated they are to serving our community. They are consistently the first to step up to help those in need. What hooked me was that they have fun getting the work done.

Q: Are there other organizations of local efforts that you are involved in and passionate about? If so, what are they?

A: I have served on many boards throughout the county. I currently volunteer, with many from nbCC, at the North Adams Mobile Food Truck.

Q: Is there anything else you would like the community to know about you?

A: In my leisure time, I enjoy hiking, kayaking, and gardening.

## Michael Murphy

Q: Why did you decide to join the nbCC board?

A: I have worked in human services for over 45 years. For the last 3+ years I have worked at Mohawk Forest Apartments in North Adams. I am well aware of the long history of nbCC from their grass roots beginnings many years ago to their current operations. I have always admired and respected the dedication of leadership and staff to provide programs and services to a diverse community. When approached to join the

BoD I was honored to be asked and very happy to serve. I understand the need for volunteers from the community to serve in a leadership capacity.

Q: Are there other organizations of local efforts that you are involved in and passionate about? If so, what are they?

A: Worked as health and safety services director at the local Red Cross in Pittsfield for over 20 years until chapter was closed several years ago. Currently, a select board member in Lanesborough. Approaching two years of a three year term. Many challenges facing cities and towns throughout the Berkshires, the state, and the country. Have always been dedicated to public service and giving back to the community.

Q: Is there anything else you would like the community to know about you?

A: Born in Troy, NY but moved to the Berkshires as a toddler. Raised in Pittsfield and have lived in Lanesborough for almost 30 years. Married my high school sweetheart (43 years in April). We have two grown children—a son and a daughter—they make us extremely proud each and every day for the adults they have become. Also worked as a mobile DJ for over 35 yrs. Have been involved in local theater since the early 70s and have acted in, directed, and produced shows on several local stages including the Robert Boland theater at Berkshire Community College and the Colonial Theatre in Pittsfield.

- Suzy Helme, Communications Coordinator

## Northern Berkshire Community Coalition Board of Directors Fiscal Year 2022

**JEN CIVELLO**, President  
Community Resident

**BEN LAMB**, Vice President  
1Berkshire

**BARBARA MALKAS**, Treasurer  
North Adams Public Schools

**CRAIG BARD**, Executive Committee  
Community Resident

**STEVE GREEN**, Executive Committee  
Community Resident

**MAUREEN BARAN**  
Adams Community Bank

**RABBI RACHEL BERENBLAT**  
Congregation Beth Israel

**ANNA FLYNN**  
Greylock Federal Credit Union

**JOSH FREDETTE**  
Community Resident

**SARA LALUMIA**  
Williams College

**SPENCER MOSER**  
Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts

**MICHAEL MURPHY**  
Community Resident

**MARISSA PARKER**  
Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts

# Family Support Comes in all Shapes and Sizes

Parenting is part nurturing and part learned. Here at nbCC's Family Resource Center, staff provide parenting classes to all families. The center has a multitude of parent education classes to fit a variety of needs with a focus on positive discipline. Staff believe in teaching parents to be the best parents they can be. Here are some examples of classes that the FRC has to offer: How to care for your newborn babies, Happy Mealtimes, Healthy Kids, Safety Starts at Home, and Surviving your Adolescents. Each class is done with staff of the Family Resource Center. Classes can be on a weekly basis or as needed. Staff work closely with parents/caregivers to ensure the classes are tailored to their needs. The majority of the classes have a "homework" component to expand upon the skills taught in class. Some of the classes are offered in a one-on-one setting where others are a group setting. A group setting is important as parents can learn and hear from other parents. Staff also hosts a variety of workshops to teach "life-skills". These life-skills workshops range from basic sewing skills to financial literacy.

If you have any questions or want more information, please reach out to Stephanie Puc at 413-663-7588 or [spuc@nbccoalition.org](mailto:spuc@nbccoalition.org).

- Stephanie Puc, Family Support & Neighborhood Coordinator

## nbCC's Parenting Workshop Series

### The Parenting Journey



**Topics:**

- Reflect on your own upbringing & work on overcoming past trauma
- Learn skills that make you a better, more positive parent
- Develop your inner strengths & life skills
- Build a support network

**When:**  
Thursdays  
March 10 - May 26  
4:00 pm - 6:00 pm

**Where:**  
Terra Nova  
85 Main Street,  
North Adams

To Register, contact:  
Stephanie Puc  
(413) 663-7588  
[spuc@nbccoalition.org](mailto:spuc@nbccoalition.org)

**Registration is free, but space is limited.**

**nbCC**  
Northern Berkshire Community Coalition  
Community Empowerment • Prevention & Wellness

**Family Resource Centers**

# Remembering Aubrey Armstrong



▲ **Aubrey Armstrong (1982-2022). In lieu of flowers**  
**Abrey's family requests that random acts of kindness be done in her memory.**

There are many things that I am grateful for from my time working at the Coalition. While the community-based work I did is still a source of joy and pride for me, the greatest privilege I had was to work alongside and with countless individuals who came from all walks of life, experiences and backgrounds. I can honestly say that each and every person I encountered truly impacted my life. However, I'd be remiss not to point out that some individuals impacted my life more than others. These were the ones whose character and resolve taught me some of the greatest lessons in my life and helped shaped the person I am today. Aubrey Armstrong was one such individual.

Aubrey optimized the heart of a Community Outreach Volunteer and helped lay the foundation for the creation of the UNO Community Center by loving sincerely, caring deeply, and by welcoming everyone. I, like so many others, have countless stories about how she helped her neighbors without judgement; how in the early days of planning, she walked her neighborhood listening and gathering ideas that would inform the work of the UNO Community Center; and how her ability to talk to anyone broke down barriers and inspired friendship.

Although the world only had Aubrey for 40 short years, we have in her stead a profound legacy each one of us can carry on- to love sincerely, care deeply, and to welcome everyone. Rest peacefully, my friend.

- Annie Sunshine Rodgers, Community Outreach Volunteer Coordinator

## Celebrate St. Patty's with Health & Wellness!

Join Barb Malkas and Jessi Byrne on Monday, March 14th, for a free, two hour workshop with a Celtic twist, on the Monday before St. Patrick's Day. This free workshop will begin with an hour long yoga class, modified with chairs and assists, provided for those comfortable.

The second half of the evening, we will share Celtic recipes, light refreshments and nutrition of traditional Celtic foods. Bonus points for wearing green! Please bring a mat as nbCC has a limited number to offer.

This event will be held at the Terra Nova Community Space at 85 Main Street, North Adams.

To register, please reach out to Jessi at 413-663-7588 or [jbyrne@nbccoalition.org](mailto:jbyrne@nbccoalition.org)

- Jessi Byrne, Health & Wellness Coordinator

# TWW Showcase: Growing our Creative Youth Community

On Wednesday, February 16th, the Teen Writing Workshop held its first showcase of the year. This group began meeting in October of 2021 to grow as writers and creators, find a supportive and shared space to learn different writing styles, try new story ideas, and share their passion for creativity with others. The group does two public showcases a year, one in the winter and one in the spring. One of the components of the group itself is supporting the young people in learning how to share their writing with others both in the group as well as the community through practice and encouragement that can build confidence!

This February's showcase was extra exciting because a lot of the young people sharing their work are brand new to the Teen Writing Workshop program and this was their first time sharing their writing and art publicly. There were different kinds of creativity shared that night, some young people brought digital art to show, some had traditional art sketched on paper. For the writers, there were poems about growth and heartache and fiction stories about medieval quests and pirate ships! It is always so exciting and rewarding to hear the young people read the writing they worked so hard on, and to see the final artwork after weeks of sketching and creating. February's showcase had more than 20 guests that came to support the group and cheer them on. It is always moving to see and meet the participants' families and friends that were there to support their young creators!

The spring Teen Writing Workshop showcase will be on May 18th and will be the last before we break for the summer! We are so excited to see how much the teens continue to grow and build their skills in the oncoming months.

- Carrisa Sacherski, Youth Support Associate



▲ Clockwise from Top: Chandler performs a piece for the crowd; 2021-2022 Teen Writing Workshop Group with leadership team, Carrisa Sacherski & Harry Seven; Jeffrey shares his artwork; Danielle shares a poem; attendees at the TWW Showcase.



## COVID -19 Updates & Resources

### FREE COVID TESTS:

The Biden Administration has made free at-home COVID-19 rapid tests available to all residents through a new web-based ordering platform. Each household is entitled to 4 testing kits through this program. These rapid antigen at-home tests can be ordered from the U.S. Post Office at: <https://special.usps.com/testkits>

### Digital Vaccination Records: [MyVaxRecords.Mass.Gov](#)

This new tool, called My Vax Records, allows people who received their vaccination in Massachusetts to access their own vaccination history and generate a COVID-19 digital vaccine card, which would contain similar vaccination information to a paper CDC card. The COVID-19 digital vaccine cards generate a QR code that can be used to verify vaccination.

### Need transportation to get a vaccine?

AdLib, Inc., in collaboration with County Rainbow Taxi (CRT), is offering no-cost transportation to receive Covid-19 vaccinations. This service is for Berkshire County residents with disabilities. If interested, please call AdLib at 413-442-7047 and leave a message. This is for residents county-wide.

## Nominate someone now! THE NEIGHBORLIES

An Annual Community Recognition Ceremony

**Celebrate someone who has made a positive impact in your life or community!**

**Accepting Nominations for 2022 Neighborlies.  
Deadline Nov. 11, 2022**

**To nominate someone online, visit  
[http://bit.ly/nbcc\\_neighborlies](http://bit.ly/nbcc_neighborlies).**

## Hoosac Harvest Subsidized CSA (Community Sustained Agriculture) Shares Available

High quality, fresh produce grown locally available now through a CSA. Shares are usually for 20 weeks (June-October). Lower Cost Shares Available based on income through Hoosac Harvest at local farms. Shares are available at Many Forks Farm in Clarksburg, contact Sharon at [manyforksfarm@pobox.com](mailto:manyforksfarm@pobox.com) or Full Well Farm in Adams, contact Meg or Laura at [fullwellfarm@gmail.com](mailto:fullwellfarm@gmail.com) or Wildstone Farm in Pownal, Vt. With deliveries to Williamstown or North Adams if enough people are interested, contact John or Joy at [wildstonefarmvt@gmail.com](mailto:wildstonefarmvt@gmail.com).

Contact Hoosac Harvest via [kathykeeser@gmail.com](mailto:kathykeeser@gmail.com) for more information on lower cost shares.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

### Berkshire Food Project

Berkshire Food Project is seeking volunteers that are willing to make a commitment to 1 to 5 days a week for 1 hour to 5 hours. We are really in need of volunteers that can commit to a regular schedule. For more information contact Mark at [director@berkshirefood-project.org](mailto:director@berkshirefood-project.org)



## 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](mailto: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](http://bit.ly/WorkAtNBCC) for more information about these positions.

### Family Resource Center Family Support Worker:

The Family Support Worker is responsible for providing support to individuals and 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.

### Family Resource Center Clinician:

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.

### HEALing Communities, Community Coordinator:

A temporary 18 month, full time position. The Community Coordinator role focuses on collaborating with the HEALing Communities Study(HCS) Community Engagement Facilitator (CEF) on coalition building, coordination, and stakeholder engagement 2) Data and Monitoring 3) Communications and 4) Fiscal responsibilities.

# Coalition Calendar

## March Forum: Youth Led Forum

Tuesday, March 8, from 5:00pm-7:00pm Terra Nova, 85 Main St., North Adams

Join us at 85 Main Street in the Terra Nova space to hear directly from young people in your community about the topics and challenges that are relevant to them. Members of the 2021 and 2022 Youth Health Collaborative will present a brief documentary film about the experiences of being a young person in Northern Berkshire County, as well as a presentation about the most recent Prevention Needs Assessment Data. Can't attend in person? Email your questions to info@nbccoalition.org or join us via Zoom at [https://bit.ly/march\\_forum](https://bit.ly/march_forum)

## March DIY Craft: Make Your Own St. Patrick's Craft

March 1 - 14

Please register with Stephanie Puc to receive your craft kit. Open to kids of all ages and their families. Share your finished craft on our Facebook page for a chance to win a prize!

Call Stephanie to register for your FREE craft kit: 413-663-7588 ext. 11

## Working on Wellness Workshop: Nutrition & Beginners Yoga. Celtic Fest!

Monday, March 14, from 5:00pm - 7:00pm  
Terra Nova, 85 Main Street, North Adams

Join Barb Malkas and Jessi Byrne for this FREE 2 hour workshop with an hour yoga class, modified with chairs and assists provided for those comfortable. Bring a mat as a limited number will be provided. The second half of the evening, we will share celtic recipes, light refreshments and nutrition of traditional celtic foods.

What to expect:

- \* an hour all levels yoga practice with hands on assists (if so comfortable)
- \* light snacks and refreshments
- \* learn why nutrition is important and how it effects and sustains the body and mind
- \* learn how food can heal, sooth and yes, even deteriorate the body and mind.

RSVP at 413-663-7588 or [jbyrne@nbccoalition.org](mailto:jbyrne@nbccoalition.org)

## Family Resource Center Parenting Workshop

### Series: The Parenting Journey

March 10- May 26, 4:00 pm -6:00 pm  
Terra Nova, 85 Main Street, North Adams.

Free, 12-week series. The journey to being the parent you want to be starts with knowing who you are. Reflect on your own upbringing & work on overcoming past trauma. Learn skills that make you a better, more positive parent. Develop your inner strengths & life skills, and build a support network. Transportation and childcare available upon request. Snacks provided. Registration deadline: March 1st. Contact Stephanie Puc, 413-663-7588 ext. 11 or [spuc@nbccoalition.org](mailto:spuc@nbccoalition.org)

## Open Mic Nite! ROOTS Teen Center + nbCC

Friday, March 18, from 5:00pm - 7:00pm  
ROOTS Teen Center, 51 Ashland Street, North Adams

Free! All types of performances are welcome! Transportation available upon request. Contact [lbush@rootsteen-center.com](mailto:lbush@rootsteen-center.com)

## nbCC Bike Collective Open Hours

Mondays, 3:30-5:30pm (check FB for weather closures)  
The Armory, 206 Ashland St., North Adams (look for the garage doors in the back)

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 residents from Northern Berkshire are welcome! For more info, call us at 413-663-7588.

## Beacon Recovery Resource Community Meetings:

All-Recovery meetings are currently by phone-in/Zoom meetings on Mondays, 1:30pm-2:30pm.

The information for logging in follows:

ZOOM meeting link: [bit.ly/BRCCmeet](https://bit.ly/BRCCmeet)  
MEETING ID #: 859 1443 5166  
or call in: 929 205 6099,  
One-tap mobile:

+19292056099,,85914435166#

+13017158592,,85914435166#

If you have any questions about this meeting or other recovery resources available during these challenging days, please contact us at 413-663-7588 or [sbarrow@nbccoalition.org](mailto:sbarrow@nbccoalition.org).

## Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

First & Third Tuesdays, 4:00pm - 6:00pm  
nbCC's Family Resource Center at 61 Main St., Suite 218, 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. Free pizza and childcare are provided, but you must register beforehand. Unvaccinated children, and those under age 12, must wear masks. For more information or to register, call 413-663-7588 or email [dsenecal@nbccoalition.org](mailto:dsenecal@nbccoalition.org).

## nbCC Youth Empowerment Program

Mondays, 4:30-6:30 PM, 61 Main Street, Rm. 213, North Adams.

Free and open to youth, 6-8th grade, who live in or attend school in North Berkshire. A weekly group to talk about school, emotions, navigating teen years, making friends and more. Snacks provided; transportation available. Register online: [bit.ly/nbccyouth](https://bit.ly/nbccyouth) or call 413-663-7588

## Youth Leadership Program

Tuesdays, 5:00pm - 7:00pm, 61 Main Street, Rm. 213, North Adams.

Free and open to youth ages 14-19 who live in or attend school in North Berkshire. Young people are changing the world and you can too. Make a positive change in yourself and the world around you. Develop leadership skills, discuss what drives you, meet other young leaders and plan projects in your community. Snacks provided; transportation available.

Register online: [bit.ly/nbccyouth](https://bit.ly/nbccyouth) or call 413-663-7588

## Teen Writing Workshop

Wednesdays, 5:00pm - 7:00pm, held at either 61 Main St., Rm. 213, or the UNO Community Center, 157 River Street, 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 from a professional with your writing and performance style. Opportunities to perform and be published. Snacks and supplies provided; transportation available. Register online: [bit.ly/nbccyouth](https://bit.ly/nbccyouth) or call 413-663-7588

## UNO Community Center Coffee Time

Fridays, 1:00pm - 4:00 pm, 157 River St., North Adams

Come on over and join the UNO neighbors for coffee and conversation. All are welcome. Please wear a mask.

MAKE YOUR  
MARCH 1 - 14 OWN  
ST. PATRICK'S  
CRAFT



## Northern Berkshire Community

Resource Guides are now

available in Spanish at

[www.nbccoalition.org](http://www.nbccoalition.org).

Or stop by and pick one up at  
the nbCC office!

## Coalition Staff

### Executive Director

Amber Besaw: abesaw@nbccoalition.org

### Business & Administrative Staff

Liz Boland: lboland@nbccoalition.org  
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### Prevention & Recovery

Stephen Barrow: sbarrow@nbccoalition.org

### Family Resource Center

Stephanie Puc: spuc@nbccoalition.org  
Donna Senecal: dsenecal@nbccoalition.org

nbCC is  
supported by:



**nbCC**

# MARCH FORUM YOUTH LED FORUM



**Tuesday, March 8, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.**

**Terra Nova, 85 Main Street, North Adams**

or Current Resident

online at [www.nbccoalition.org](http://www.nbccoalition.org)

Find this newsletter

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



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