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Northern Berkshire Community Coalition

# Coalition news

*An update from*

**nbCC**

March 2025, Volume XXXIX, Number 9

## MCLA Takes the Lead on February's 'Building Belonging' Forum

February's community forum kicked off a series of community conversations that will be co-presented with MCLA throughout the next year, led by MCLA's Vice Provost for Institutional Equity and Belonging, Andre Lynch. The series will culminate in a celebration at next January's MLK Jr. Day of Service.

It was great to see new faces and younger faces among the 55 attendees gathered into the conference space that Hotel DownStreet provided for the afternoon. Everyone found a seat within one of the seven groups the room had been divided into to accommodate more intimate discussions before Andre greeted the crowd, kicking off the forum.

After introductions were made, groups shared with each other what's bringing them joy right now, before diving into deeper discussions. From that point on the groups followed a series of prompts curated by Mr. Lynch. Topics included an activity

to illustrate the "Like Me" bias. This bias shows that we trend towards close circles of friends that are similar to ourselves. Not just in race, but beliefs, socioeconomics, and education among other factors. This bias was evident among many individuals in the room, though not all. This isn't necessarily bad, it's just reflective of some of the reasons it can be challenging to create a sense of belonging that feels true to all members of a community.

The crowd was challenged to push themselves to be purposeful in spending time in less familiar places that could expose them to more community members that look different from themselves. This was the stopping point for this initial conversation. The series continues in April on the 17th, from 4:00pm to 6:00 pm. The specific topic and location will be announced in upcoming e-zines, press releases and social media posts.



▲ MCLA Vice Provost for Institutional Equity and Belonging, Andre Lynch, leads the conversation.

Join us for the March forum and presentation on the Portrait of a Graduate grant and learn more about what this means for youth attending Hoosic Valley and North Adams Public Schools. The forum takes place on Thursday, March 13, from 4:00pm to 6pm at the Greylock Glen Visitors Center in Adams.





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

# nbCC Out and About in the Community in February

The weather in February brought plenty of wind, cold, ice and snow, but we managed to have a lot of fun out and about in the community!

We share hot cocoa, popcorn and fun on the ice with over 250 friends at our free Family Skate Day during February break, and played jumbo Jenga and Connect Four out on the streets during the annual WinterFest celebration.

The annual UNO neighborhood Valentine's Party, organized by the UNO Steering Committee, saw several dozen residents gather for heartwarming crafts, activities and free pizza!

March will be a bit quieter, but we look forward to a busy April when we'll celebrate Easter with the 3rd annual Easter Festival in coordination with the City of North Adams, as well as the annual scavenger hunt on Spring Street in Williamstown.



Family Skate Day



WinterFest



UNO Valentine's Day Party



## Photos from the Teen Writing Workshop Showcase



### Northern Berkshire Community Coalition Board of Directors Fiscal Year 2025

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## Thanks Friends! You've Made a Positive Impact Right in Your Own Community!

Since its inception, nbCC has been a crucial link between those in need and those who can help. With your assistance, we can continue to provide Northern Berkshire residents the tools needed to improve their lives and their neighborhoods. We understand that not everyone is able to make a financial contribution to the Coalition, but we want you to know that no amount is too small to be helpful. Thanks for all you do to support nbCC!

## The 2024-25 Friends of the Coalition (as of 2/25/2025)

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Mark & Karen Daigle  
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## WOULD YOU LIKE TO BECOME A CONTRIBUTOR TO THE COALITION?

**Contributions can be mailed to: Northern Berkshire Community Coalition  
 61 Main Street, Suite 218, North Adams, MA 01247**

Champion: \$5,000 & above	Benefactor: \$250 – \$499
Advocate: \$2,500 – \$4,999	Booster: \$100 – \$249
Leader: \$1,000 – \$2,499	Associate: \$50 – \$99
Guardian: \$500 – \$999	Supporter: \$1 – \$49

**Donations can also be made online: [nbccoalition.org](http://nbccoalition.org)**



# Bits of History from the Coalition Archives

## ***Excerpts from nbCC's 25th Anniversary book***

### **Genesis - Vignettes from the Start of nbCC**

Organizations such as the Northern Berkshire Health & Human Services Coalition don't just materialize. They need definition. They need a plan and people to carry out the plan. And they have to start somewhere. The community Coalition began thanks to the efforts of many. The following represent stories of the early days and activities of the Northern Berkshire Health & Human Services (NBHHSC) later to be renamed as the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition.

#### **Humble Beginnings - Finding a Home for the Coalition**

NBHHSC had very humble beginnings. Having hired a person to lead it, there was a need to consider where the Coalition was to be housed. During its early days, Al Bashevkin, Myles Whitney and Steve Green approached the president of North Adams State College (not yet named Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts) to see if the College could be the home for the Coalition.

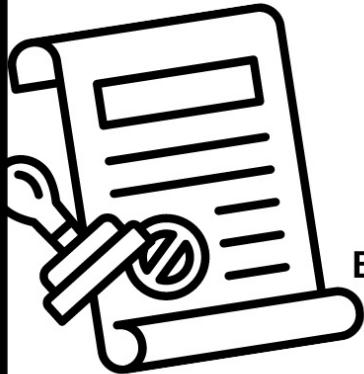
What does it mean to be a home? In the early years, the college provided office space for the Coalition, first through an academic office in Murdock Hall and later, as the needs grew, to a residential townhouse. Newsletters were copied and mailed by the College. There was a phone, access to a fax machine and eventually an Internet account. The College hosted many of the early annual meetings, celebrations and other gatherings within its facilities.

Eventually, the College needed its space and the Coalition needed more space, so in 1997 the nbCC moved to its present location at 85 Main Street in North Adams. The Coalition budget now provides for all the services that the College provided in the first decade.

The NBHHSC has North Adams State College to thank for its early success. The College saw the benefits, in terms of providing an active education for its students and the tremendous service opportunities the Coalition afforded. It also saw its donation to nbCC as a necessary contribution to the greater Northern Berkshire community by its local public liberal arts institution. Without the generous donations by NASC, nbCC would not have had the start it did and probably would not be the community leader it is today.

# Did You Know?

**The nbCC offers a  
FREE Notary Service.**



**BY APPOINTMENT ONLY. TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT  
PLEASE CALL OUR OFFICE AT 413-663-7588 OR  
EMAIL: [LBOLAND@NBCCOALITION.ORG](mailto:LBOLAND@NBCCOALITION.ORG)**

## Coalition Events

### First Fridays North Adams: Cabin Fever

Friday, March 7, 5:00-9:00 PM, Downtown, North Adams

Join in the First Friday Fun! Visit downtown businesses for specials, sales and check out the new gallery exhibitions of 2025.

### Learn Through Play: Rainbow

Saturday, March 8, 10:00 - 11:00 AM, UNO Community 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, but we appreciate RSVPs. Contact us at 413-663-7588 or nkennedy@nbc-coalition.org

### Monthly Forum: Portrait of a Graduate

Thursday, March 13, 4:00 - 6:00 PM, at the Greylock Glen Visitors Center, 135 Gould Road, Adams

FREE & open to the public. All are welcome!

Join us this month for a presentation & discussion about the Portrait of a Graduate grant and how it will affect your child/ren's education. The forum will include introductions and opportunities for announcements throughout the discussion.

Light refreshments served. More Info: 413-663-7588 or info@nbccoalition.org

### nbCC Youth Empowerment Program

Mondays, 5:00-6:30 PM, 61 Main Street, #218, 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: call 413-663-7588

### Youth Leadership Program

Tuesdays, 5:00 - 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: call 413-663-7588

### Teen Writing Workshop

Wednesdays, 5:00 - 7:00 PM, held at nbCC, 61 Main St., 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. Opportunities to perform and be published. Snacks and supplies provided; transportation available. Register: 413-663-7588

### 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 judgement-free, confidential space. Snacks provided. Children welcome.

### Youth Health Collaborative

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

(14-19 Yrs. Old) This program is intended to engage young people in supporting the health of their peers in the region. The aim of this program is to benefit the community by directly engaging young people in the act of bettering their environments. This is the only program with a limit on attendance, as there are only ten spots available!

Participants will receive a stipend for completing this program. **Please call or email to apply:** 413-663-7588 or bmccarthy@nbccoalition.org

### 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.

## 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](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 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.

### Health & Wellness Coordinator: Salary: \$44-47k/annually, PLUS a \$1,000 sign on bonus

The Health & Wellness Coordinator will oversee and lead the implementation of community health work to support integration of environmental, policy and systems changes to advance active living, healthy eating and sustainable systematic change in Northern Berkshire. The Health & Wellness Coordinator will also oversee the planning, implementation, and evaluation of health and wellness programming through nbCC.

# Coalition Staff

## Executive Director

Amber Besaw: abesaw@nbccoalition.org

## Business & Administrative Staff

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## Health & Wellness

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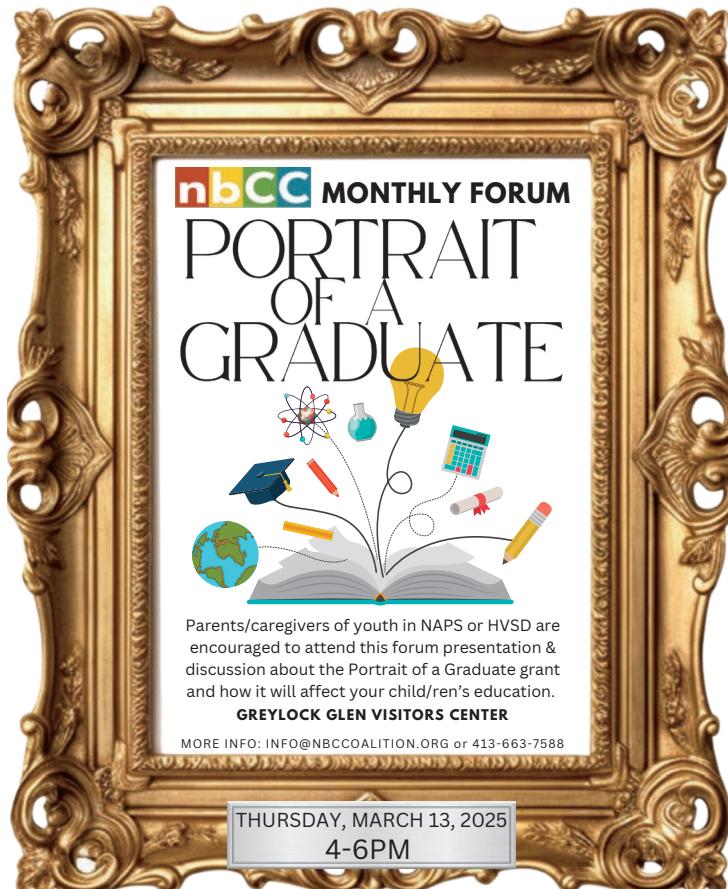
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