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Coalition

An update from

news



May 2023, Volume XXXVII, Number 11

April Forum Offered How to Safely Navigate the Digital World

On an unseasonably gorgeous Thursday evening in April, a few dozen residents gathered for a special presentation by Tyler Cote, founder and director of Operation250.

Operation250 is a nonprofit, educational program aimed to protect youth from coming into contact with threatening materials and individuals online. Their work is predominantly done with students and teachers through their workshop and lecture series offerings, but this is the second time that Tyler has come out to present to the community at large through the Coalition. Last year, the Coalition hosted a similar presentation at GreylockWORKS.

The forum covered a lot of ground including; trends of unsafe online behavior in adults and youth; identifying misinformation and the risks of fake online information; the realities of risks online and ways they are different from expectations; Massachusetts-specific trends with online risks, particularly online and offline hate; and the psychological changes caused by the internet and their relation to risk.

Tyler kept the group engaged with interactive polling and fascinating examples of just how tricky misinformation and disinformation can be to identify online. The group learned to pay closer attention to

the sources of information they encounter online, even noting that many pieces of disinformation make themselves look more legitimate by adding bogus and unreliable sources, counting on the viewer to not dig any further into whether or not the information being shared is accurate or if it is coming from a biased source with a specific agenda.

The group learned that despite being thought of as a “liberal” state, there are an alarming number of hate groups present and active here including the white supremacist group, Patriot Front. Many groups like the Patriot Front use subtle covert language to appeal to a wider audience with outreach and information that does not appear overtly racist upon first glance.

As the forum concluded there were several key takeaways that stood out for many attendees. It’s not just our youth that are highly susceptible to the dangers and negative influences of our cyber world; adults and specifically the elderly are often targeted by scams and dis/misinformation. We all must be diligent in protecting ourselves online by critically analyzing the information being presented to us and the sources it is coming from, especially before sharing that information, which can spread

online like wildfire. Also, while it’s the younger generation that often gets the reputation of being addicted to their screens, the reality is a large percentage of adults are just as addicted to their technology and equally susceptible to the dangers that lurk there.

Technology and the digital world will play an even larger role in our culture and community in the future. Education and awareness are the key to keeping yourself and your family safe while online. To learn more about how to stay safe visit the Operation250 website at **operation250.org**. The site is a wealth of resources for everyone and includes resources and lesson plans specifically curated for educators and parents to learn from and share. For any other questions about the forum or accessing resources for online literacy and safety please give us a call at 413-663-7588. We would love to share this useful and important information with you.

~Suzy Helme, Communications Coordinator





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.

May Forum: Prevention Needs Assessment Report & Discussion

For the past 37 years, nbCC's mission has been to empower the Northern Berkshire region by enhancing the quality of life through the efforts of connecting, convening and supporting all facets of the community. More specifically, in regards to prevention, nbCC has been funded since 2002 to focus on the prevention of early initiation with substances and has continued to do this work over the last two decades. nbCC's Prevention Needs Assessment indicates that youth misuse rates of alcohol are above the national norm, while marijuana and cigarette use is on a downward trend, and e-cigarette/vaping use is at an all time high. Are you concerned? Would you like more information? If so, then please join us on May 12th 4:00 PM at the Terra Nova Church. Tim Schiebler and Lindzie White will be presenting on the Prevention Needs Assessment Survey.

~Lindzie White, Youth Prevention Coordinator

THURSDAY, MAY 11
MAY COMMUNITY FORUM:
PREVENTION NEEDS
ASSESSMENT SURVEY
FREE! ALL ARE WELCOME!
4-6PM | TERRA NOVA
85 MAIN ST., NORTH ADAMS

Accepting submissions for 2023 Neighborlies.

An Annual Community Recognition Ceremony

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

To recognize someone online, visit:

<https://bit.ly/2023Neighborlies> or Call Us! 413-663-7588

SAVE THE DATE!
Registration 6/1
Kick-off 6/2



North Adams
**Mayor's Fitness
Challenge**

SAVE THE DATE!
FRIDAY, JUNE 16, 2023
nbCC's 37th
Annual Meeting

11:30am-1:30pm | Greylock WORKS

Keynote Speaker: State Senator, Paul Mark

Reserve your tickets TODAY! \$25/person

Scholarships available

Give us a call at 413-663-7588 | <https://conta.cc/40HKN9I>

**Northern Berkshire
Community Coalition
Board of Directors
Fiscal Year 2023**

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Arts

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Massachusetts College of Liberal
Arts

Annual 413 Youth Conference Takes Over MASS MoCA

On April 11th, the Berkshire Youth Development Project (BYDP) hosted the 413 Youth Conference at Mass MoCA in North Adams. This conference was the first under this name, having been called the 411 in the 413 in years past. This was a particularly special event in a variety of ways. It was the first time that the event was held in North County, and the first at Mass MoCA. This year's event also marked a return to the full day conference that young people had experienced prior to the COVID19 pandemic, which caused the cancellation of two years of the program, and the reduction of the scale of the conference after that. Overall, it was a powerful and inspiring day, bringing together over 70 young people from all across the county, representing 9 different Berkshire high schools.

This year's conference, like those in years past, was influenced and shaped greatly from the efforts of three Berkshire County young people acting as interns for the three BYDP partners. The interns worked alongside their BYDP counterparts representing North, South, and Central counties. Their efforts and insights helped to shape the scope of the day, in ways both big and small. Their involvement did not end once the conference began, however. Two of the interns, Bhumi and Liza, led the young people in attendance in a variety of ice breaker activities, as a way to encourage interaction amongst the assembled students. Harley, our North County youth intern, was unfortunately



▲ Above: Over 70 youth from all over Berkshire County gathered at MASS MoCA for this year's conference.

unable to attend due to illness, but left his mark on the conference in a variety of ways.

One of the most important roles the interns played throughout the process was helping to identify workshop topics that they felt would be engaging and relevant to their peers. This year's conference once again featured a wide range of workshops from local community members. From "Blackout Poetry" to "How to Take Control of Your Online Life", workshops provided participants with a wide swathe of topics, skills, and creative outlets to engage in for the day. This year's workshop slate even included a workshop from Urban Bush Women, a dance group in residence at Mass MoCA during the conference.

The planning team is still debriefing and reaching out to conference goers for feedback, but the initial returns suggest that those in attendance enjoyed the conference, and found it to be a unique and engaging experience. One conference goer found the experience to be "a great opportunity for students to share their minds, ideas, and allow them to express themselves". Many of the respondents enjoyed meeting their peers

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: Salary: \$52,000 annually, PLUS an \$8,000 sign-on bonus

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.

from across the county, and having an opportunity to make new friends. Another young person who attended the conference summed it up this way: “The conference today was honestly a great experience, and allowed me to express myself in an environment I was comfortable in. It is scary to willingly express myself in school and with that it gave me a break from school and it made my day!”.

This conference would not have been possible without the efforts of the Mass MoCA staff, our partners within the schools, and all of the workshop facilitators who offered their time and services. Above all else, the event would have fallen well short of the experience that it was without the time, energy, and insights of our youth interns. We couldn't have done it without them!

For more information about the internship, or ways to get involved with the conference next year, contact Tim at nbCC. tshiebler@nbcccoalition.org.

~Tim Shiebler, Youth Development Coordinator



▲ Counter clockwise from Top Left: Breakout groups brainstorm new product ideas Shark Tank style; youth participated in an interactive canvas swap where they each painted portions of a canvas then traded and added to each other's work; nbCC youth staff, Carrisa, led two “Black-out Poetry workshops that were among the most popular of the day according to the post event survey; close to 20 youth registered for the Narcan Training workshop led by Sarah DeJesus; Mark Stewart led workshops in the Gunnar Schonbeck exhibition space, bringing youth together to create impromptu bands and original works using the vast collection of found object instruments in the exhibition.

Food Access Collaborative Updates

A limited number of copies of the E3 Cooks! cookbook and/or the Flexible Pantry cookbook, as well as less-limited copies of the food information cards, are currently being delivered to sites that requested them. Sites that would like materials and have not yet arranged a delivery time with Mauricio, please contact Anne Goodwin at anne.goodwin@mcla.edu so delivery or pickup arrangements can be made! Many thanks to Berkshire County AHEC, the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, and the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition for getting the cookbooks printed, and to the E3 Academy staff & students and the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts for creating the content. The food information cards (English and Spanish) are the result of efforts by Jessi Byrne, Mauricio Quizhpi, Mariana Bolivar and Anne Goodwin. Digital versions of these resources can be found on the NBCC's Health & Wellness page at <https://nbcccoalition.org/health-wellness/>, and custom sets can be created by emailing Anne Goodwin with requests.

Great news - a house budget amendment supporting food literacy was submitted today by Rep Vargas! This request would fund a staff person at the Dept of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to support teachers in implementing food system education. It would also fund a staff person at the Dept of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) to focus on connecting schools with the food system through field trips, farmer visits etc., provide funding for field trips, and enable five school districts to hire food literacy coordinators.

To help support the inclusion of this budget amendment in the House budget, please reach out to your representative and ask them to co-sponsor budget amendment #461. Click here to find your representative and see suggested language for emails, phone calls, social media posts, and newsletter articles. Thank you for your continued advocacy! Find your legislator here: <https://malegislature.gov/Search/FindMyLegislator>

And please register for the Food Literacy Virtual Lobby Day on May 15 at 4pm. https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0vcOioqzspHtb6Aqn2kE2lvH8uTNV7R9_3#/registration

CELEBRATE MAY
Mother's Day
Cinco de Mayo
Memorial Day

Find gifts, flowers, party platters and more for your gatherings at Wild Oats Market, your local 40+ year old cooperatively owned, organic, sustainable, specialty & bulk item grocery store that services our community.

Wild Oats Market
 20th Anniversary

Everyone can shop. **Shop the Co-op * Eat in the Café * Join & Save** Anyone can join!
 Wild Oats Market, 320 Main St, Williamstown, MA 01267 • (413) 458-8050 • wildoats.coop

secondchancecomposting.com

(413)
207-2745

SECOND CHANCE COMPOSTING

SATURDAY MAY 6

9AM -1PM

North Adams Farmers Market

85 Main Street, North Adams

DOUBLE SNAP

up to \$30!

HIP Vendor: Full Well Farm



**NORTH ADAMS
MOBILE FOOD
BANK**

Friday, May 5th & May 19th
 10-11 am

Brien Center Parking Lot
 American Legion Drive

All are welcome!

Free grocery and produce items provided
 by the Food Bank of Western MA

Coalition Events

May DIY Craft: Spring Butterfly!

All month long

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 our office to register for your FREE craft kit: 413-663-7588

1-2-3 Magic: Effective Discipline for Children 2-12

Starting Thursday, May 4, 2:00pm-4:00pm, nbCC, 61 Main Street, Ste. 218, North Adams

An easy-to-learn, evidence-based parenting program for 2-12 year olds.

Learn how to discipline without arguing, yelling, or physical discipline. Manage troublesome behavior with

reason, patience, and compassion. Encourage and respect children's growing independence. Learn strategies for growing self-esteem. Snacks are provided. Transportation and child care available upon request. Contact us at 413-663-7588 or nkennedy@nbccoalition.org

Rail Trail Rides!

Days and times vary from week to week, Meet at the Adams Visitors Center. Friday May 5, 11AM-1PM; Thurs. May 25, 8-10AM

Are you looking to get more comfortable riding your bike? Want to ride the Rail Trail, but not sure where to start? Want to take advantage of a midweek adventure? Beginning May 5th, Jessi Byrne will be leading many Rail Trail group rides. We will meet at the Adams Visitor Center and ride the trail together as a group. Bring your bike and safety gear. Don't have a bike? Stop by the Bike Collective on Mondays 3:30-5:30 to get fitted with the perfect bike for you and the whole family. For more info: 413-663-7588 or jbryne@nbccoalition.org

Learn Through Play: Things That Roll

Saturday, May 13, 10:00 am - 11:00 am, UNO Community Center, 157 River Street, North Adams

In collaboration with Child Care of the Berkshires. Activities and circle time will focus on cars and building things like ramps. Best for ages 0-5 years. Registration required. Space is limited. Contact us at 413-663-7588 or nkennedy@nbccoalition.org

May Forum: Prevention Needs Assessment Presentation

Thursday, May 11, 4:00-6:00 pm, Terra Nova, 85 Main Street, North Adams

All are welcome! A presentation & discussion led by nbCC staff members, Tim Shiebler and Lindzie White. They will be presenting data from the most recent Prevention Needs Assessment, discussing its relevance, and listening to feedback from forum attendees about the information learned about our youths risk factors and prevention needs. The presentation will be preceded with a round of introductions, and opportunity for everyone to share announcements. For questions or more information give us a call at 413-663-7588.

All Babies Cry

Thursday, May 25, 10:00am-11:30am, nbCC, 61 Main Street, Ste. 218, North Adams

Learn what babies are communicating when they cry. Strategies to calm & comfort babies. Ways to calm yourself when your baby is fussy. Signs of colic & other issues that cause distress. Registration is FREE, but space is limited. Snacks are provided. Transportation and child care available upon request. Contact us at 413-663-7588 or nkennedy@nbccoalition.org

More 1-2-3 Magic: Encouraging Good Behavior, Independence, and Self-Esteem

Starting Thursday, May 25, 2:00pm-4:00pm, nbCC, 61 Main Street, Ste. 218, North Adams

A continuation of this easy-to-learn, evidence-based parenting program for 2-12 year olds. In addition to controlling difficult behavior, parents need to know how to encourage good behavior so they can enjoy their children and relate to them with warmth and affection. In More 1,2,3, Magic, Dr. Phelan explains how to get your children to do the good things you want them to do, such as getting up and out in the morning, eating, going to bed, and picking up after themselves. You will also learn practical, down-to-earth strategies for encouraging your children's growing independence and for promoting reasonable, healthy self-esteem.

Snacks are provided. Transportation and child care available upon request. Contact us at 413-663-7588 or nkennedy@nbccoalition.org

W.o.W. Workshop: Backyard Foraging

Wednesday May 31, 2:00 - 3:00 pm, UNO Community Center, 157 River Street, North Adams. Meet Molly Racette from Molly & Herbs and Jessi Byrne of nbCC at the UNO center lawn for backyard foraging May 31st, 2-3pm. The group will walk around the gardens and parks hunting for plants. Learn about the plants growing around us that are great for medicinal uses, topical healing and many more! Bring a notebook and pen for notes. Dress for the weather as this is an outdoor activity. Questions? 413-663-7588 or jbryne@nbccoalition.org

nbCC Bike Collective Open Hours

BACK TO EVERY WEEK! Mondays, 3:30-5:30pm, The Armory, 206 Ashland St., North Adams

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.

Downtown Bike Around

Mondays, 5:30 pm- 6:00 pm, Meeting at the Armory, 206 Ashland Street, North Adams (check FB for weather closures)

Join us for the return of the Downtown Bike Around, a free, weekly, community group bike ride, suitable for all ages. Meeting at the Armory garage lot. Weather permitting. Bikes available if needed. Call us at 413-663-7588 or jbryne@nbccoalition.org

nbCC Youth Empowerment Program

Mondays, 5:00-6:30 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: call 413-663-7588

Drop-in Art Club

Tuesdays, 3:30 pm-4:30 pm, UNO Community Center, 157 River Street, North Adams

A weekly after school drop-in Art Club, for youth, ages 8-19. Supplies and snacks provided. No registration

required. Caregivers do not need to attend, but the program facilitators are not responsible for child care. Call us at 413-663-7588 or email gglasier@nbccoalition.org for more information.

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

1st & 3rd Tuesdays, 4:00pm - 6:00pm. nbCC's Conf. Room, 61 Main St., Suite 213, 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. 663-7588 or email dsenecal@nbccoalition.org.

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: call 413-663-7588

Teen Writing Workshop

Wednesdays, 5:00pm - 7:00pm, 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: call 413-663-7588

FRC Peer Parenting Group

2nd & 4th Wednesdays, 3:30 pm -4:30 pm, UNO Center, 157 River Street, North Adams.

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

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.

Coalition Staff

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Amber Besaw: abesaw@nbcccoalition.org

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Bonnie Clements: bclements@nbcccoalition.org

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Jessi Byrne: jbyrne@nbcccoalition.org

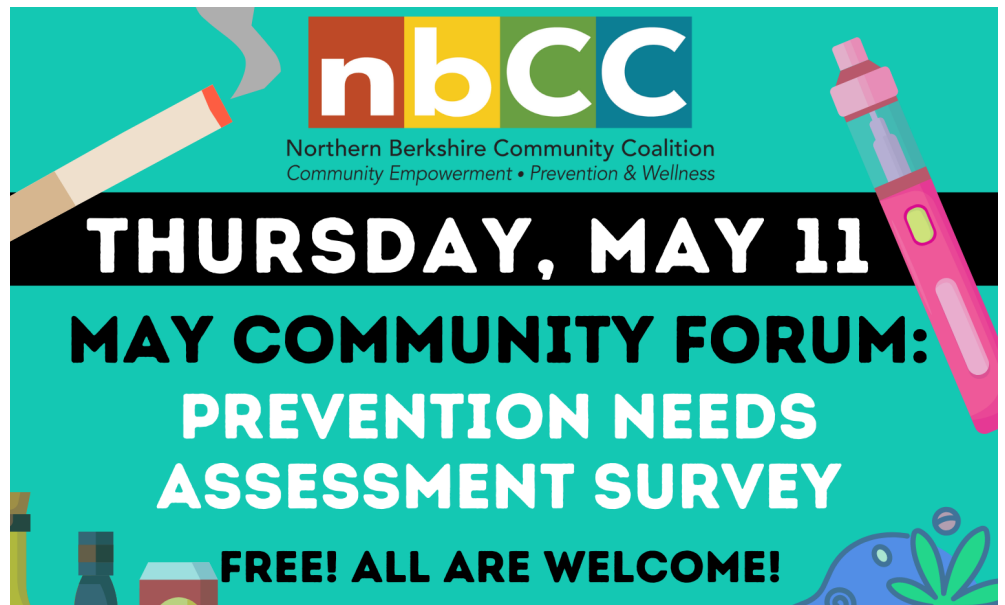
Youth Prevention

Lindzie White: lwhite@nbcccoalition.org

Family Resource Center

Donna Senecal: dsenecal@nbcccoalition.org
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Nancy Kennedy: nkennedy@nbcccoalition.org
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Andrew Rosenberg: arosenburg@nbcccoalition.org
Cat Record: srecord@nbcccoalition.org

nbCC is
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4:00-6:00 pm, Terra Nova, 85 Main Street, North Adams

All are welcome! A presentation & discussion led by nbCC staff members, Tim Shiebler and Lindzie White. They will be presenting data from the most recent Prevention Needs Assessment, discussing its relevance, and listening to feedback from forum attendees about the information learned about our youths risk factors and prevention needs. The presentation will be preceded with a round of introductions, and opportunity for everyone to share announcements.

For questions or more information give us a call at 413-663-7588.

*Find this newsletter
online at www.nbcccoalition.org*

Northern Berkshire Community Coalition
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