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Northern Berkshire Community Coalition

Coalition news

An update from



May 2025, Volume XXXIX, Number 11

The Heart of the Community: What Happens When We Gather

In a world that often moves too fast, with too much to juggle and not enough time to connect, something powerful happens when people simply come together. Whether it's over a shared meal, at a park clean-up, or during a community forum, the act of gathering brings more than just warm conversation—it builds the foundation of a strong, healthy community.

Here in Northern Berkshire County, we know that connection matters. That's why we at the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition work hard to create spaces where people can show up just as they are—whether they are looking for resources, community support, a chance to get involved, or simply a friendly face.

When we gather, something shifts. A parent finds out about an after-school program. A resident sees their voice reflected in a town-wide conversation. A newcomer feels like they've finally found their place. These small moments aren't just feel-good extras—they're the heartbeat of a thriving community.

At nbCC, our events are designed to be welcoming, inclusive, and rooted in the needs of our neighbors. We believe that access to connection should be easy—whether you stop by a neighborhood meeting, join a wellness workshop, or swing by a community picnic. These events create ripple effects: stronger relationships, greater resource sharing, and a deeper sense of belonging.

As we look ahead, we invite you to be a part of what happens when we gather. Whether it's your first event or your fiftieth, there is a place for you at the table. Because when we come together, even for an hour, we're not just attending—we're building something lasting.

We hope to see you there!



▲ Community members gathered for a breezy March picnic in the Eagle Street pocket park.

Upcoming Community Events

Every Saturday - North Adams
& Williamstown Farmers
Markets | 9am - 1pm



5/2 - FIRST Fridays: Flower Power
@ downtown North Adams |
5-9pm



5/4 - FIRST Sundays FREE @ the
Clark | 11am-5pm

5/8 - Youth Led Forum @
Greylock Glen Outdoor Center |
4-6pm

5/8 - FREE Outdoor Family
Movie @ the Clark | Dusk



5/11 - Mothers Day Activities @
the Clark | 1-3pm

5/14 - Teen Writing Showcase @
Norad Mill | 5-7pm

5/21 - Outdoor Recreation
Forum @ Greylock Glen
Outdoor Center | 5-6:30pm



5/26 - Williamstown
Memorial Day Parade





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.

A Letter from the Director's Desk



Executive Director, Amber Besaw

This April, we proudly hosted the 413 Youth Conference—an inspiring day of connection, creativity, and empowerment for young people across Northern Berkshire County. The energy in the room reminded us of something we hold dear at nbCC: when we invest in our youth, we're investing in the future of our entire community.

Our Youth Development work is rooted in Positive Youth Development principles. That means we focus on strengths, elevate youth voice, and create opportunities for all young people to grow into healthy, capable, and compassionate adults. Through programs like our Teen Writing Workshop and Showcases, annual Youth-Focused Workshops, Youth Development Training, and the Berkshire Youth Development Project partnership (413 Youth Conference), we're building a network of support that uplifts, equips, and celebrates youth every step of the way.

This work doesn't happen in a vacuum—it takes collaboration, consistency, and a shared belief that young people deserve a seat at the table. Whether we're analyzing community data through the Prevention Needs Assessment or gathering local partners through the Youth Health Collaborative, our commitment is long-term, and it's strong.

Join us by supporting youth. What can you do? The number one thing we hear is: they need us to listen. When we center youth, we build a better now—and a brighter future.

Warmly,

Amber

413 Youth Conference at MASS MoCA

On Tuesday, April 15th, the Berkshire Youth Development Project (BYDP) partnership and three student interns hosted the annual 413 Youth Conference at Mass MoCA.

The BYDP partners who led the coordination of the conference include the Gladys Allen Brigham Community Center, the Railroad Street Youth Project (RSYP), and the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition. Other BYDP partners who supported the planning include the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC), 18 Degrees, and Berkshire United Way. The 413 Youth Conference, formerly called the 411 in the 413, has been supporting and growing youth leaders in the Berkshires since 2007.

This year's 413 Youth Conference interns were from Drury High School, Monument Mountain Regional High School, and Pittsfield High School. The conference was attended by students from BART Charter School, Drury High School, Hoosac Valley High School, Lee High School, Lenox Memorial High School, McCann Technical High School, Mount Everett Regional High School, Monument Mountain Regional High School, Mount Greylock Regional High School, and Wahconah Regional High School, with only a few Berkshire high schools not represented among the group.

This year's theme was "World Tour," and featured globally-inspired snacks, lunch including tofu rice bowls and Korean Bulgogi, and thematic swag items for attendees.

(Continued on next page)



▲ From top: Youth Health Collaborative participants present data from the 2025 Prevention Needs Assessment survey to the group of students attending the conference.

Participants take a lunch break, enjoying rice bowl options from North Adams restaurant, Nara Sushi.

Northern Berkshire Community Coalition Board of Directors Fiscal Year 2025

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A total of 109 high-school students from across Berkshire County attended the conference and enjoyed a day of networking and attending a variety of workshops to help learn new skills, be creative, and have fun!

The workshops included:

- Sustainable Fashion & Upcycling with Greenagers
- “Shining without Glitter” makeup tutorials
- Business Learning with Leslye’s Chucherias
- Post-High School Panel Discussion
- “From Clash to Connection” Active Listening and Communication Skills with Upside 413
- Building A Healthy Community
- Strength & Coping Mask-Making
- LGBTQIA+ Rights in School: Massachusetts and Beyond
- Naloxone Training with Berkshire Harm Reduction
- “Preparing Easy, Healthy, and Tasty Food on a Budget” with the Food Bank of Western MA
- Erasure Poetry: The Banned Books Edition

We would like to thank all those involved who helped to make this year’s 413 Youth Conference possible! A special thank you to our host, MASS MoCA and their staff for helping ensure everything ran smoothly and for providing such exciting spaces to hold the workshops. We look forward to next year’s 413 Youth Conference!

If you’re interested in hearing a more in depth presentation of the 2025 Prevention Needs Assessment(PNA) data that the Youth Health Collaborative presented at the beginning of the conference, please join us for the annual Youth-led Forum: Prevention Needs Assessment Presentation on Thursday, May 8, from 4:00-6:00 p.m at the Greylock Glen Outdoor Center in Adams. The event is free and open to the public.



◀ Left and below: Students participate in the Erasure Poetry Workshop using pages from banned books to create new poetry and artwork. nbCC’s Youth Support Worker, Carrisa Sacherski facilitated this workshop.



▲ Above: Groups of students collaborated on creating new products that help teens in their daily lives in this “Shark Tank” workshop presented by Leslye’s Chucherias.



▲ Clockwise from above: Students upcycle denim jeans into tote bags with Greenagers; A panel discusses the different career paths after high school, including alternatives to college; Students listen intently to a presentation about make-up as a form of art and expression before creating their own creative looks; Teens enjoyed prepping a delicious stir fry meal from start to finish using common food bank items with nutrition educators from the Food Bank of Western Mass; Group photo of most of the attendees who weren't too shy to hop in; The first session participants show off their finished products of the Greenagers upcycling project .



Drop-In Art Club Returns

The Clark, MASS MoCA, and nbCC Present: The Return of the UNO Drop-in Art Club!

After a fall and winter hiatus, we're thrilled to welcome back the UNO Drop-in Art Club, a free weekly art program for youth, back by popular demand!

- **Wednesdays, May 7 – August 27, 2025**
- **3:30–4:30 PM**
- **UNO Community Center, North Adams**

Young artists are invited to join us every week for a fun, supportive space to explore their creativity. Each session features a new hands-on project using a variety of art media and techniques—from painting and drawing to sculpture and mixed media.

- **No registration needed**
- **All materials provided**
- **Snacks included**

Come create, connect, and express yourself through art—drop in anytime!

EVERY WEDNESDAY | 3:30 - 4:30 PM

DROP-IN ART CLUB

UNO COMMUNITY CENTER, 157 RIVER ST., NORTH ADAMS



In partnership with the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition, the Clark Art Institute and MASS MoCA offer a free weekly art-making club on Wednesdays from May 7 through Aug. 27, 2025.

Snacks and supplies are provided. Children under age 8 must be accompanied by an adult. Program facilitators are not responsible for child care. MORE INFO: 413-663-7588 or info@nbcccoalition.org

nbCC Northern Berkshire Community Coalition
Community Engagement • Prevention & Wellness

THE CLARK

MASS MoCA

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@nbcccoalition.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: \$38-40k/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 Partner -Family Resource Ctr/Northern Berk. Community Coalition: Rate: \$23.31/hr

Family Partner is a staff with lived experience assigned to the Family Resource Centers to provide supportive services to families and parents to advocate, support, educate, coach, and assist families in accomplishing their Care Plan goals and to negotiate and assist families in working with the Wraparound team and to help implement the Family Support Plan. Family Partner works closely with the Child Requiring Assistance (CRA) System.

Coalition Events

First Fridays North Adams: Flower Power

Friday, May 2, 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.

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.

3:30-4:30PM on Wednesdays (thru Aug. 27)

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

Monthly Forum: Annual Youth-led Forum

Thursday, May 8, 4:00 - 6:00 PM, Greylock Glen Outdoor Center, Gould Road, Adams

FREE & open to the public. All are welcome!

Join us for the annual forum planned, presented and led by the Youth Health Collaborative students. Once again we will gather in the beautiful Greylock Glen Outdoor Center to hear the YHC present their findings from the 2025 Prevention Needs Assessment, a survey taken every other year by Berkshire 8th, 10th & 12th graders.

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

Learn Through Play: How a Garden Grows

Saturday, May 10, 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

Teen Writing Workshop Showcase

Wednesday, May 14, 5:00 - 7:00 PM, 3 West Event Space, Norad Mill, 60 Roberts Road, North Adams

FREE & open to the public. All are welcome!

Please join us on Wednesday, May 14th, from 5 to 7 PM for the final Teen Writing Workshop Showcase. Experience true creative expression from our incredible group of teens, and see the unveiling of the 28th edition of Somewhere Between. Light refreshments will be served.

RSVP requested, but not required! For RSVPs:

(413)663-7588 or csacherski@nbccoalition.org

Outdoor Recreation Forum

Wednesday, May 21, 5:00 PM - 6:30 PM, Greylock Glen Outdoor Center, Gould Road, Adams

Join us for a special forum panel discussion on outdoor recreation in northern Berkshire County. Keep your fin-

gers crossed for some lovely weather so we can present this gathering outdoors at the Greylock Glen Center.

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 info@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.



Registration starts in June

FREE!

Open to all northern Berkshire youth, ages 9 - 13.

SUMMER NEIGHBORHOOD BASKETBALL LEAGUE



IT'S FARMERS MARKET OUTDOOR SEASONS BEGIN IN MAY!

5/17 - North Adams

Every Sat. on Main St.

9AM-1PM

DOUBLES SNAP UP TO \$30/WEEK

& HAS 2 HIP VENDORS, ACCEPTS WIC & SENIOR COUPONS

Williamstown -Every Sat at end Spring St.

9AM-1PM

DOUBLES SNAP UP TO \$30/WEEK

ACCEPTS WIC & SENIOR COUPONS

Coalition Staff

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nbCC is
supported by:



annual youth-led forum

5/8
4-6PM

nbCC
Northern Berkshire Community Coalition
Community Empowerment • Prevention & Wellness

THE YOUTH HEALTH COLLABORATIVE PRESENTS THE 2025 PREVENTION NEEDS ASSESSMENT DATA COLLECTED FROM 8TH, 10TH & 12TH GRADERS IN BERKSHIRE COUNTY

at the greylock glen outdoor center

FREE & open to the public. We'll provide light snacks
MORE INFO: 413-663-7588 | info@nbcccoalition.org

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



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