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# Coalition

An update from

## news



January 2024, Volume XXXVIII, Number 7

## Reverend Mary Frances Curns Chosen as 2024 Peacemaker

The Peacemaker Award is given annually to an individual or group in Northern Berkshire. The award, which originated as part of the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service, is made to persons who have contributed substantially to peace in our region. In general, the Peacemaker Award recognizes persons who have a history of working with people and/or neighborhoods and communities to provide for greater tolerance, understanding, and caring.

This year the MLK Jr. Day of Service Committee is proud to announce that Reverend Mary Frances Curns has been selected from the numerous worthy people and groups nominated by the community, and will be honored with the 2024 Peacemaker Award at this month's annual Northern Berkshire MLK Jr. Day of Service. As the priest in charge at All Saints Episcopal Church in North Adams, Mary Frances has a deep passion for service to her community. She and All Saints run a weekly "Tent Ministry" meeting people in the community from whatever walks of life, providing them with comfort,

understanding, and attempting to aid them in any way that she and the community can. All Saints is constantly collaborating with other Christians in Northern Berkshire to help address the needs of the North Adams and greater northern Berkshire community. All Saints is an extraordinarily open, welcoming, and warm church community where truly all are welcome, and that is thanks in a large part to a pastor with a very big heart.

The celebration begins at 8:30 a.m. at MCLA's Church Street Center in the lower level with check-in and registration, coffee and pastries. At 9:00 a.m. there will be a brief welcome and opening remarks before volunteers depart the center to service sites or can stay on site to work on activities at the Church Street Center. Participants will choose from more than ten sites to provide service to the community, including: Louison House, Goodwill Industries of the Berkshires, weatherization for homes, food collection sites, and meal deliveries. There will be projects suitable for all ages and abilities.



Participants will return to the Church Street Center at 12:30pm to share a free luncheon and community celebration, enjoy local entertainment and hear uplifting words in the spirit of Martin Luther King, Jr. The annual Peacemaker Award will be presented during the lunchtime celebration.

Those wishing to participate in the day of service can register the morning of the event or pre-register in one of three ways:

Call: 413-663-7588

Email: [Lboland@nbccoalition.org](mailto:Lboland@nbccoalition.org)

Online: [https://bit.ly/MLK\\_day\\_2024](https://bit.ly/MLK_day_2024)

**1/15** NORTHERN BERKSHIRE  
**MLK DAY OF SERVICE**  
8:30AM - 2:00PM | MCLA CHURCH ST. CENTER A Day On, Not a Day Off

JOIN US!





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).

## December Forum Discusses Reframing

The specific language a person uses to describe a situation, also known as the framing, can have a tremendous impact on how they and others perceive it. Depending on how it is used, framing has the ability to obscure or complicate the true meaning behind someone's communication, whether it is intentional or not. Kayla Allen, director of the Dispute Resolution Center at Berkshire County Regional Housing Authority, once again led this month's forum to discuss reframing and how it can be a catalyst for positive dialogue.

Often, Kayla explained, people use negative terminology when describing conflict or other similar situations, which can make it much harder to achieve a proper resolution. For someone trying to resolve a dispute, reframing can help to change the way a thought is presented without changing the intended meaning. The idea behind this kind of reframing is to say something in a different, more constructive way, one that is hopefully more conducive to discussion. This is different from reflecting, or mirroring what the person says to convey empathy and ensure you understand, which Kayla spoke about when she led a session on active listening in October.

The group went over several reframing strategies during the forum, with numerous questions and thoughts from the audience throughout. Using reframing techniques to present a situation with more positive or solution-oriented language, Kayla said, can make resolving a conflict much easier. For instance, if someone says “This office is pure chaos,” one

might reframe what they said more positively to say “You need order at work” or “A more structured, organized environment is something you would benefit from.” It is also helpful, according to Kayla, to reframe blaming language into what the desired outcome would be. So if someone says “You never contribute or take initiative,” a way to reframe that may be to say to them “You value teamwork and collaboration.”

In addition to simply turning negative framing positive, Kayla suggested looking for the speaker's position, or their view on what the outcome should be, to determine their interests and needs within the context of the situation and reframe it. To show this technique in action, Kayla showed the group a video where two people want to have the same orange. Initially, the two decide to split the orange in half as a compromise. However, after asking what each person wants to do with the orange, they come to the realization that one only needs the orange peel, while the other only needs the juice. Using reframing to determine the other's needs allowed them each to have more of the orange than with the original compromise.

Another strategy the group talked about was taking advantage of past, present and future tense. An example from the forum: if someone says “I had to clean the whole office by myself last week,” one could reframe it and say “Next time you'd like to divide up the work in a way that seems fair.”

To help practice, participants were asked to form small groups and analyze several situations involving conflict

and disputes, formatted in the style of responses to a newspaper advice column. The goal was to reframe the situation using less negative language and determine the underlying need of the speaker. Each group presented their thoughts on one scenario and how they would have reframed it. After sharing, several people noted their group’s interpretation of a scenario was different from others. This, Kayla said, is normal and there are several different ways to reach a positive outcome in a dispute. Being

wrong as a mediator, she said, is often part of the process and getting to that positive outcome is the important part.

Instead of a forum next month, the coalition encourages the community to attend the annual MLK Day of Service on January 15th. The day starts with check-in at the MCLA Church Street Center at 8:30 a.m. Following some opening remarks, participants will go to their individual service sites. We hope to see you there volunteering your time!

*~Brian Rhodes, Program Admin. Specialist*

My Experience as a Community Outreach Volunteer

Over the last several years, I had wanted to become more involved in my community but didn’t know where to begin. A friend shared information about the nbCC Community Outreach Volunteer (COV) training that she thought was perfectly suited to what I was looking for. Because the training took place one day a week from January through June, I felt like I could commit to it even with my busy schedule of balancing work, school, and family.

During the 6 months, I met and learned beside many wonderful like-minded people, from all over Berkshire County, who also wanted to make an impact in our community. During our training, which the very knowledgeable Annie facilitated, we engaged in a variety of workshops that focused on different styles of leadership, effective communication skills, and conflict management, among several others. These hands-on workshops encouraged critical thinking, how to approach a problem, and ways to help resolve issues, while

being open-minded and respectful of others’ thoughts, feelings, and beliefs. The workshops also allowed me to learn about myself and others by providing me the opportunity to share my own real-life experiences while listening to theirs.

I was also given the opportunity to learn from many of our local community organizations and health and human service providers who graciously shared with us invaluable insight into who they serve, what services they provide, and how we can actively support their efforts in our community. We had a diverse group of presenters who covered topics including youth-focused programs, housing and food assistance, adult continuing education, and mental and behavioral health. Listening to and being able to ask questions of the presenters not only provided me with a greater knowledge of what is available in our community but also gave me a different perspective on understanding the importance of meeting people where they are at.

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Fiscal Year 2024

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# NEW YEAR, NEW FACES AT THE COALITION

We have some new faces here at the Coalition and we're excited for you to meet them! We asked each of them the following questions: What do you want the community to know about you, personally? What made you want to join the nbCC team? What are you most looking forward to about your work here? What's your favorite thing about living in this area?



## **Stephanie Quetti - Family Resource Center Clinician**

1&2. I worked at the Coalition before (in 2016-17) as a Coordinator of the Community Health Workers and am excited to return to such an awesome place after earning my MSW last May as a Clinician in collaboration with the Brien Center.

3. I am looking forward to doing good, meaningful work with families in this community. I like being part of a solution during difficult times people may be experiencing.

4. I love the variations in nature from the seasons in the Berkshires. There are beautiful scenes everywhere and there's always a place to hike or walk nearby, no matter where you find yourself.



## **Brian Rhodes - Program Administrative Specialist**

1. I have lived, gone to school and worked in northern Berkshire County for over six years now. During that time, it has truly become my home and somewhere I know that I want to be. I have learned life lessons and made connections here that will continue with me through the rest of my life.

2. I've found what motivates me most in both work and in general is to be able to make a positive contribution to the people and places around me, regardless of what it is I'm doing. Working at nbCC allows me to pursue this every single day!

3. I most look forward to helping others and contributing all my efforts into making the community a better place for everyone to live.

4. The natural beauty present throughout all of Berkshire County is without a doubt my favorite thing about living here. No matter what town you visit or place you go, the mountains and nature that make the Berkshires so unique are seemingly ever present. A quiet place to retreat away from the noise and busyness of civilization is always close by.



## **Sully Boland - Family Support Worker**

1. Hello, my name is Sully Boland and I am a family support worker at nbCC. I have lived in North Adams my entire life and value my upbringing in the area fondly.

2. North Adams and the greater Northern Berkshire community have shaped and influenced who I am today and being able to give back is important to me. I consider my hometown of North Adams to be very fortunate to have a place like nbCC. I have naturally had a keen interest in the development of our community and the strategies we can implement to continue such efforts.

3. I look forward to being able to work with individuals and families from the Northern Berkshires in all capacities. Whether it be connecting people to resources or providing parenting education, I aim to make positive connections in our community, especially younger generations. I think it is crucial that we promote an accessible and welcoming community dynamic among youth to ensure a better, more united future in the Northern Berkshires and beyond.

4. My favorite thing about our area in the Northern Berkshires would have to be our creative communities. Whether you are interested in visual, audible, or physical forms of art, there are groups and spaces to engage, collaborate, and develop.



# Berkshire County Filled with Holiday Cheer!



The holiday spirit has been alive and well this season in the Berkshires! Whether it be making Thanksgiving dinner for neighbors, crafting ornaments to put on the tree, or getting together with friends for a holiday celebration, everyone is starting to get into a festive mood.

We hope you enjoy some holiday photos taken at events from throughout the season.





(Continued from Page 3)

Since graduating from the training this past June, I have been able to connect with nbCC again through an internship opportunity; part of the Master of Public Health program I am currently enrolled in. Over several months I was able to continue learning first-hand about available services, resources, and events, and how our amazing local organizations and providers come together to acknowledge and troubleshoot the needs of our community. I look forward to putting to good use all that I have learned this year and am thankful that opportunities like this exist in Berkshire County. If you want to become more involved and support our community, I highly recommend COV training through nbCC as the place to start.

~Megan Bates, 2023 COV Graduate

## Become a Community Outreach Volunteer! Classes Start 1/22/24

Participants will walk away from this training with hands-on experience and a plan to broaden their scope of community involvement and leadership.

(Mondays, 5:30-8PM, Jan - June)

**FREE! APPLY TODAY!**

<https://bit.ly/2024cov>

**413-663-7588**

[gglasier@nbccoalition.org](mailto:gglasier@nbccoalition.org)

## Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Update from Donna

For the last couple of months, Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Group has added a Coffee Time on the third Friday of the month from 10-12. After talking with the members that have been coming to the Tuesday evening meetings and the attendees from the Friday meeting, we have decided to do away with the Tuesday meetings. Instead, the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren will be doing two Coffee Hours from 10-12 the First and Third Friday of the month.

All meetings will be at the UNO Community Center at 157 River Street in North Adams. Stop on by, grab a coffee and make some new friends who are also walking down the same journey of parenting the second time around.



**Grandparents Raising Grandchildren**

**coffee time**

**1st & 3rd Friday of the month**

**10am-12pm**

**UNO Center, 157 River Street**

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

### Youth Prevention Coordinator: Salary: \$50,000

The Youth Prevention Coordinator works with the community to address the legal, institutional, social and health issues related to underage drinking and substance use.

### Youth Development Coordinator: Salary: \$42,000 - 45,000

The Youth Development Coordinator will be responsible for the work to bring together a diverse group of youth and adults in northern Berkshire communities for the purpose of promoting and implementing positive youth development practices in our region.

### Family Support Worker: Salary: \$38,000 - 40,000

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.

# Coalition Events

## HAPPY NEW YEAR! CHEERS TO 2024!

**WE ARE CLOSED ON MONDAY, JANUARY 1ST, 2024**

### Northern Berkshire MLK Day of Service

Monday, Jan. 15, 8:30am-2:00pm, at MCLA Church Street Social Center in lower level of Church Street Center, North Adams

The Martin Luther King Day Committee welcomes everyone to join them on Monday, January 15th, as the Northern Berkshire community celebrates the life, principles, and ideals of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. by participating in a "Day of Service".

A celebratory luncheon will follow. Pre-register: [https://bit.ly/MLK\\_day\\_2024](https://bit.ly/MLK_day_2024)

#### SCHEDULE FOR THE DAY

8:30AM: Registration & light refreshments

9:00AM -9:15AM: Welcome and opening remarks

9:15AM- Noon: Volunteer service at assigned sites (Some projects are on-site at the social center. Other locations include Berkshire Food Project, Louison House, Goodwill Industries, Habitat for Humanity and more.)

12:30PM: Free lunch with entertainment and the presentation of the Annual Peacemaker Award

For more information, contact us:

413-663-7588 or [lboland@nbcccoalition.org](mailto:lboland@nbcccoalition.org)

We hope you can join us for this "day on, not off!" For more information please call us at 413-663-7588 or email [lboland@nbcccoalition.org](mailto:lboland@nbcccoalition.org)

### Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Coffee Time

1st & 3rd Fridays (1/5 & 1/19), 10:00am - 12:00pm. 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. Please let us know if you are coming. 663-7588 or email [dseneal@nbcccoalition.org](mailto:dseneal@nbcccoalition.org).

### Game Night at Clarksburg Elementary School

Wednesday, Jan. 10, 5:00 pm -7:00 pm, Clarksburg Elementary School

For families attending Clarksburg Elementary School. Join the nbCC as we bring an evening of fun and games to your school!

### FREE Day at MASS MoCA

Saturday Jan. 27, 10:00 AM -12:00 PM, MASS MoCA, North Adams

Join the nbCC at MASS MoCA for their annual free day! We'll be there with fun crafts along with other local agencies. Take a minute to stop by and say "Hi!" in between checking out exhibitions.

### Nurturing Fathers Program

\*STARTING 1/29, Mondays, 5:30-7:30 PM, 61 Main Street, Rm. 213, North Adams.

Nurturing Fathers' Programs bring together men from all family circumstances (custodial, non-custodial, step-fathers, new fathers) to explore what it takes to be their child's nurturer and teacher.

Fathers learn how important it is to provide loving praise and a nurturing and secure environment so that their children gain self-esteem and confidence.

The program also emphasizes the importance of maintaining a positive and supportive co-parenting relationship with the child(ren)'s mother, whether the parents are together or separated.

FOR MORE INFO & TO REGISTER: 413-663-7588 or [nkennedy@nbcccoalition.org](mailto:nkennedy@nbcccoalition.org)

### nbCC Youth Empowerment Program

Mondays, 5:00-6:30 PM, 61 Main Street, Rm. 213, North Adams.

**No Group 1/15** 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, 5:00pm - 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

### nbCC Bike Collective Open Hours

Wednesdays, 4:00-6:00pm, The Armory, 206 Ashland St., North Adams

### WINTER HOURS: 1 & 2ND WED. OF MONTH.

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.

### 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: 413-663-7588

### FRC Parenting Together Group

\*NEW TIME & LOCATION, 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.

### 24/7 Dads Parenting Group

Thursdays, 10:00am - 12:00pm, UNO Center, 157 River Street, North Adams.

A support group for dads. Children need their fathers. Fathers need their children. Discuss difficult issues and develop more effective coping techniques. No registration required. For more information: 413-663-7588 or [nkennedy@nbcccoalition.org](mailto:nkennedy@nbcccoalition.org)

### 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 [gglasier@nbcccoalition.org](mailto:gglasier@nbcccoalition.org)

### 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.




**WEDNESDAYS | 5:30-7:30PM**

**FRC PARENTING TOGETHER SUPPORT GROUP**

This is a confidential space for parents to connect. Snacks are provided. Children are welcome. NBCC 61 MAIN STREET, STE 218, NORTH ADAMS

MORE INFO: 413-663-7588 or [nkennedy@nbcccoalition.org](mailto:nkennedy@nbcccoalition.org)

**1ST & 3RD FRIDAYS | 10AM-12PM**

**GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN SUPPORT GROUP**

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.

**Please register beforehand.**  
Call 413-663-7588 or email [dseneal@nbcccoalition.org](mailto:dseneal@nbcccoalition.org)  
UNO CENTER, 157 RIVER STREET, NORTH ADAMS



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Stephanie Quetti: squetti@nbcccoalition.org

nbCC is  
supported by:





# 1/15

## NORTHERN BERKSHIRE MLK DAY OF SERVICE

**A Day On, Not a Day Off**  
**MCLA Church Street Center**  
**8:30AM - 2:00PM**

**Everyone is welcome!**



8:30AM - Registration/Check-in/Snacks  
9AM-12PM - Service Site Volunteering  
12:30-2PM - Celebratory lunch

**Please join us to honor Dr. King's  
legacy through volunteer community  
service projects.**



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

*Find this newsletter  
online at [www.nbcccoalition.org](http://www.nbcccoalition.org)*

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