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Coalition news

An update from



March 2026, Volume XL, Number 9

Sustaining Volunteerism

by Annie Rodgers



While there is no method that can guarantee complete success in sustaining volunteerism, there are several ways in which organizations and volunteers can mitigate potential issues in this area.

Whether you are a site or a volunteer, transparency is key. For the volunteer, you must share your availability and if there are jobs or tasks you are not willing to do. For the site, you must share your needs, in regard to both time and roles. A failure to do so will result in expectations not being met on both sides, and the potential for burnout on the volunteers' end. Do not take someone on as a volunteer if they do not match your needs. Likewise, do not cause yourself to burn out because you failed to communicate your time constraints.

Oftentimes, volunteers can become disillusioned with volunteering because their role or the jobs assigned aren't what they want to do or envision themselves doing. Ask yourself though: am I helping this organization achieve their mission? Is achieving the organization's mission the reason I am volunteering? If the answer is yes, then you've done exactly what was needed of you as a volunteer. However, that doesn't mean that sites should ignore unfulfilled or unhappy volunteers. Are there opportunities to utilize their skills beyond the ways you have been? If so, then use them that way! It is okay to think outside the box when utilizing volunteers. While sites cannot always carry the burden of their volunteers' emotions, they should be aware and responsive to continual disappointment on that end. And, sometimes, a site and a volunteer do not match. The site's needs are not in alignment with the volunteer's offerings, and that's okay. However, that should be an exception and not the rule.

Lastly, saying thank you is paramount. Sites, say thank you to your volunteers often. This can be done individually by pulling someone aside, taking note of their work for the day, and letting them know they are seen and appreciated. You could also consider an annual

volunteer luncheon or a volunteer-of-the-month award. Be creative and make it fun! Volunteers, say thank you, too. Yes, sites are benefitting from your time and efforts, but are you not benefiting as well? Let them know you appreciate being able to serve with their organization or how you're thankful their organization exists. Everyone lights up a little brighter when they are recognized by another.

Sustaining volunteers can be tricky, however, we are fortunate to live in a community where folks readily give of their time and talents, and many of our organizations have endured thanks to longtime volunteers.

~ Annie Rodgers



▲ Pat Hernandez and other volunteers prepare lunch at the Berkshire Food Project



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 pzhine@nbccoalition.org.

THE NEIGHBORLIES

It's Never Too Early to Submit Your Neighborlies!

While we wait for the weather to warm and dream of putting away our snow shovels, let's take a moment to reflect on the people who shared their warmth with others this winter.

There are countless stories of neighbors clearing sidewalks and driveways, offering rides during snowstorms, donating warm clothing, and much more!

These acts of kindness are what the Coalition's annual Neighborlies celebration is all about. We collect submissions year-round to make sure that those who go above and beyond for their neighbors are recognized each November.

If you experienced the warmth of a helping hand this winter, consider saying thank you with a Neighborly! You can give someone a Neighborly by calling us at 413-663-7588, or scanning the QR code below!

SUBMIT TODAY!



WEDNESDAY 3/18
EMERGENCY
Preparedness w/nbcc



WHERE: 367 Mohawk Trail
Drury MA

WHEN: 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM on
Wednesday, March 18th, 2026

Hosted with the Florida COA

Start your emergency kit, and discuss how you can be prepared! Initial supplies will be provided by nbCC, and food will also be provided.

To RSVP: gglasier@nbccoalition.org
or call (413) 663-7588.



Teen Writing Workshop Winter Showcase

The newest cohort of Teen Writing Workshop(TWW) teens presented their first showcase of the year in February. This year's winter showcase featured a new venue, the Milne Public Library in Williamstown. The space was cozy on the cold winter evening and worked out perfectly for the gathering of friends and family.

Teen Writing Workshop facilitators Carrisa Sacherski and Harry Seven welcomed the crowd before introducing the performers. Ten of the TWW participants presented their works that evening. A few even presented a second piece after the intermission period. There were many returning participants, some of whom this is their final year with TWW before graduating. The showcase also introduced us to the writings and visual arts of several new faces, including the program's first teen presenting in the medium of animation.

The event was concluded with celebratory treats for everyone. The group will present their final showcase on May 20th, at 3 West Events in the Norad Mill. Join us then!



Northern Berkshire Community Coalition Board of Directors Fiscal Year 2026

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In celebration of our 40th year, here's what the Coalition was up to 20 years ago!



UNITY

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

United • Neighboring
Interdependent • Trusted • Youth

Youth Leadership Program Kicks Off Hygiene Product Drive

As stated in last month's newsletter, our Youth Leadership Program participants have elected to split into two work groups that are each tackling their own service project. While the groups are working separately, they come together each week to check in about their lives and their project work as well as to participate in activities designed to enhance the skills needed for their projects.

Half of the group is focused on increasing knowledge and access to reproductive health information amongst their high school-aged peers. After some discussion and research, they have decided to do the following: 1) engage Tapestry Health to explore ways to expand Tapestry's outreach to northern Berkshire youth; 2) become trained on basics of sex ed and reproductive health so that they can be resources for their peers; and 3) offer a workshop on reproductive health myths and facts at the 411 in the 413 Youth Conference in April. As first steps, group members are meeting with Katrina Mattson, Health Services Manager at Tapestry, and drafting a workshop proposal to submit to the 411 in the 413 planning committee for consideration.

The other group, who have dubbed themselves "Team Drive", are focusing on collecting hygiene products, clothing, and food for local emergency services. In January, they hosted guest Carol DeMayo, who has been working for the Williamstown Food Pantry for almost 30 years. Carol told the group about her experience in that role and informed their thinking around items that are most needed by pantries and shelters. In addition to this conversation

with Carol, the group has been busy kicking off their first drive, collecting hygiene products for Pope John Paul the Great Charity Center in Adams, The Friendship Center Food Pantry in North Adams, the Louison House, and the Williamstown Food Pantry. Donations are being collected until March 13th at the North Adams' Walmart, Drury High School, Mt. Greylock Regional High School, the First Baptist Church in Williamstown, The First Congregational Churches of Williamstown and North Adams, and All Saints' Episcopal Church in North Adams. There will be a one-time collection in front of the North Adams' Stop and Shop on March 10th from 11a.m.-3p.m. The products in the most need include feminine products, men's shaving products, clean washcloths, towels, soap, shampoo, toothpaste and toothbrushes. For more info please contact Annie Rodgers at (413) 663-7588 x20.

TWW Focused on Editing and Performance Coaching

Teen Writing Workshop is approaching the final chapter of this year's program. TWW Facilitator Robin Lehleitner and Intern Hannah Gais have begun one-on-one editing sessions with participants to get their work ready for publication in our student journal, *Some-where Between*. While they're doing this editing, TWW Facilitator Jake Snow and Intern Rachael Silvano are coaching participants on performance skills. The program is scheduled to wrap up in mid-April (weeks later than originally planned, thanks to the receipt of a Local Cultural Council grant!). We will celebrate the end of the year in our traditional TWW style: a book release and public reading. The date for the reading will be announced soon.

Did You Groove?



▲ Groove hosted a concert on Saturday, February 11th at Gallery 51 in North Adams featuring local bands On The Shoulders of Giants and ShitZoo Ballistics, whose members attend the various local high schools.

February Forum Centers on Volunteerism: Attracting Volunteers, Utilizing Volunteers Effectively, and Sustaining Volunteers

Volunteerism was the focus of last month's community forum. Attendance was light, but the conversation was filled with useful insights. The topic was co-presented by Annie Rodgers and Matt Alcombright. Annie, has been involved with nbCC for many years and currently co-facilitates the annual Community Outreach Volunteer Program. Matt is the executive director of Berkshire Food Project.

The conversation began, asking what motivates people to volunteer and how can that help organizations attract volunteers they need? There were many answers. Often people are drawn into volunteer opportunities through their friends; personal connection matters. Many volunteers give their time because the tasks they are doing bring them joy and feel meaningful. Some volunteers want to offer a specific skill that an organization is lacking, or use the opportunity to learn new skills. Volunteers want to respond to a need they see and they can help fill. People want to feel like what they are doing matters and makes a difference.

If those are reasons that motivate people to volunteer, what are the best ways for organizations to attract potential volunteers to their specific needs? A compelling story can "sell" an organization's mission by clearly communicating their needs and why the work is impactful. Marketing should be intentional and thoughtful, providing clear "buy-in" and creating a positive, welcoming environment for volunteers, both new and established.

From here the discussion moved onto utilizing volunteers effectively, a goal that both the organization and the volunteers have responsibilities to ensuring success. Volunteering is a generous act. Still, most of us are expecting to feel some sort of satisfaction from the experience. Be mindful that as a volunteer you are showing up to support the mission of the organization you are working with. If you are feeling under utilized or unfulfilled, you might not have found the right fit.

Organizations can help volunteers figure out if they are a good fit early on, by being honest about their needs. Communicating clear and realistic expectations

and organizational capacity is important. It builds trust and ensures that every volunteer's time is being utilized effectively. Is this going to be a one-time task or ongoing role with the organization? What are the skills and time commitment required? Organizations should keep in mind that not every volunteer is going to be a good fit.

On the other hand sometimes a great volunteer comes along and their skills might not be an obvious match. By being open to listening to ideas from volunteers organizations sometimes gain fresh perspectives that can reveal helpful, less obvious solutions.

Once an organization has found great volunteers how do they keep them coming back? To sustain a thriving volunteer program, prioritize consistent appreciation. Personalized "thank yous" through verbal recognition, public acknowledgments on social media, and formal celebrations help ensure volunteers feel their work is meaningful.

Beyond gratitude, long-term retention requires flexibility and a focus on the individual fit. Organizations should regularly assess whether a volunteer's role aligns with their skills and, if not, be willing to refer them elsewhere to ensure they remain engaged in work that suits them. Finally, preventing burnout is essential; leaders must avoid over-relying on a single individual by spreading responsibilities across a broader team, thereby protecting the well-being of their most dedicated supporters.

3/14 Ages 0-5
10-11AM

Learn Thru Play
COLOR exploration

CCB
Family Resource Centers
UNO Center, 157 River St., North Adams
MORE INFO: 413.663.7588 or nkennedy@nbccoalition.org



Ask a Community Health Worker 10:00 am to 12:00 pm

Northern Berkshire Community Coalition is excited to partner with the North Adams Public Library & the North Adams Housing Authority.

Our Community Health Worker is here to help you! They will be available to provide you with information about community programs, services, and resources, and assist in bridging access to them.

MORE INFO: 413-663-7588 or info@nbccoalition.org



North Adams
Housing Authority

THURSDAY, MARCH 12 & 26
North Adams Housing Authority
150 Ashland Street



1ST & 3RD TUESDAYS
North Adams Public Library
74 Church Street

COMMUNITY INFORMATION PANEL: EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT 3/26

SPACE IS LIMITED. PLEASE REGISTER!

6-8 PM



Free & open to the public.

Please join us for this panel discussion with local representatives from Mass Hire, NAPS Adult Basic Ed., Massability & Goodwill about education and employment resources.

The panel discussion will conclude with a Q&A session. Light refreshments will be available. Space is limited.

Please register.

UNO CENTER, 157 RIVER ST., NORTH ADAMS
REGISTRATION: 413-663-7588 info@nbccoalition.org

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.

NEW JOB LISTING: Development Director: Salary: \$80,000 - 90,000

The Development Director leads nbCC's fundraising and resource development efforts to ensure sustainable, diversified revenue in support of the organization's mission. As a member of the leadership team, this role advances nbCC's visibility, cultivates strong relationships with donors and partners, and integrates health equity, anti-racism, and community-driven values into all development activities.

Family Resource Center Clinician: Salary: \$65,000, PLUS a \$5,000 sign-on bonus after 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.

Family Support Worker: Salary: \$45,000-47,000

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

First Fridays North Adams: Cabin Fever

Friday, March 6, 5:00-9:00 PM, Downtown, North Adams
Join in the First Friday Fun! Kick-off the new year with a fresh start. Visit downtown businesses for specials, sales and check out the first gallery exhibitions of 2026.

Monthly Forum: Youth-led Forum

Thursday, March 12, 4:00 - 6:00 PM, at the common room at Hotel Downstreet, 40 Main Street, North Adams
FREE & open to the public. All are welcome! The Youth Health Collaborative want adults to understand social media and see it how the younger generations do - to stay educated and help young people in their life stay safe! Topics we'll cover during the presentation:

- Slang, hidden messages -> substance use
- Real Vs. Fake (Catfishing & Scams)
- Cyberbullying

The forum will begin with a round of introductions and an opportunity for announcements before the topic discussion begins. Light refreshments served. FREE & open to the public. Forum will be held in the community space at Hotel DownStreet.

More Info: 413-663-7588 or info@nbcccoalition.org

Learn Through Play: Color Exploration

Saturday, March 14, 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@nbcccoalition.org

Emergency Preparedness

Wednesday, March 18, 11:30AM-12:30PM, 367 Mo-hawk Trail, Drury MA

All are welcome! Start your emergency kit, and discuss how you can be prepared! Initial supplies will be provided by nbCC, and food will also be provided. Hosted with the Florida COA
To RSVP: gglasier@nbcccoalition.org or call (413) 663-7588.

nbCC Community Panel Discussions: Education & Employment

Thursday, March 26, 6:00PM - 8:00PM, at UNO Community Center, 157 River Street

All are welcome! Join us for this community panel discussion. This month the topic will be Education and employment. This panel discussion features local representatives from Mass Hire, NAPS Adult Basic Ed., Massability & Goodwill about education and employment resources.

The presentation will be preceded with a round of introductions, and opportunity for everyone to share announcements. Space is limited. Please register. For questions or to register for the event, give us a call at 413-663-7588 / info@nbcccoalition.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

FRC Parenting Together Group

2nd & 4th Wednesdays, 10AM - 12PM, UNO Community Center, 157 River Street, North Adams

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

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

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@nbcccoalition.org

*NEW LOCATIONS: Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Coffee Time

1st Friday, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM. Adams COA, 3 Hoosac St., Adams

3rd Friday, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM. North Adams COA/ Spitzer Center, 116 Ashland St., 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. For more information: 413-663-7588 or info@nbcccoalition.org

Questions: 413-663-7588 or email info@nbcccoalition.org

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren coffee time

This is a drop-in group for grandparents who are actively parenting their grandchildren, giving them a safe and confidential space to share similar experiences with other grandparents.

10am-12pm

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

Adams COA, 3 Hoosac St.
Adams

Spitzer Center, 116 Ashland St.
North Adams



FRC Parenting Together Support Group

2nd & 4th Wednesdays

10:00AM - 12:00PM

This is a confidential space for parents to connect. Snacks are provided. Children are welcome.

 **Family Resource Centers**

UNO Community Center, 157 River St., North Adams
MORE INFO: 413-663-7588 or info@nbcccoalition.org

SAVE THE DATE

LET'S CELEBRATE OUR

nbCC 40th

JUNE 18, 2026

6 PM | DINNER

8 PM | DESSERT & DANCING

GREYLOCK WORKS

Coalition Staff

Executive Director

Amber Besaw: abesaw@nbcccoalition.org

Business & Administrative Staff

Liz Boland: lboland@nbcccoalition.org

Sara Keagle: skeagle@nbcccoalition.org

Communications Coordinator

Suzy Helme: shelme@nbcccoalition.org

Youth Development

Carrisa Sacherski: csacherski@nbcccoalition.org

Merudjina Normil: mnormil@nbcccoalition.org

Health & Wellness

Jo-Ann Ault: jault@nbcccoalition.org

Jeni Legg: jlegg@nbcccoalition.org

Tiffany Kuzia: tkuzia@nbcccoalition.org

Youth Prevention

Meredith Starr: mstarr@nbcccoalition.org

Family Resource Center

Nancy Kennedy: nkennedy@nbcccoalition.org

Gabby Glasier: gglassier@nbcccoalition.org

Andrew Rosenberg: arosenburg@nbcccoalition.org

Sully Boland: sboland@nbcccoalition.org

Tammy Martin-Bartlett: tmartinbartlett@nbcccoalition.org

nbCC is
supported by:



Northern Berkshire
UNITED WAY

Social Media Literacy

Annual Youth-Led Forum

THURSDAY, MARCH 12TH 4-6 PM

HOTEL DOWNSTREET CONFERENCE ROOM, 40 MAIN STREET, NORTH ADAMS

We want adults to understand social media and see it how the younger generations do - to stay educated and help young people in their life stay safe! Topics we'll cover during the presentation:

- Slang, hidden messages -> substance use
- Real Vs. Fake (Catfishing & Scams)
- Cyberbullying

MORE INFO: 413-663-7588 or INFO@NBCCCOALITION.ORG

Do you want to STOP receiving these newsletters,
or would you prefer to receive the digital version?
Let us know. Give us a call at 413-663-7588 or fill
out the form at the QR code.



Find this newsletter
online at www.nbcccoalition.org

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



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