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Summer 2019, Volume XXXIII, Number 10

nbCC Celebrated 33 Years of Community in June! Gene and Justyna Carlson Honored as Our Northern Berkshire Heroes



▲ L: North Adams Mayor Tom Bernard, Northern Berkshire Heroes Justyna Carlson, Gene Carlson holding his granddaughter Ksena, nbCC Board member Steve Green and nbCC Executive Director Amber Besaw; R: Over 200 people attended nbCC's 33rd Annual Meeting in June.

On Friday, June 14th, the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition (nbCC) held its 33rd Annual Meeting as over 200 friends of the Coalition gathered to celebrate another year of community building and to honor the 2019 Northern Berkshire Heroes Gene and Justyna Carlson.

Sara LaLumia, nbCC Board President, started the program with welcoming remarks and thanking attendees for partnering with nbCC to build a better community everyday.

A short slideshow was presented of the late Al Nelson documenting his work with nbCC for almost 30 years. Mark Rondeau reflected on the impact that Al made in his life and the friendship they forged while co-founding the Northern Berkshire Interfaith Action Initiative and The Al Nelson Friendship Center Food Pantry.

Amber Besaw, Executive Director of nbCC gave an update on the exciting March opening of the Beacon Recovery Community Center. nbCC was honored and proud to work with the grassroots group who wished to explore what could be done to support

those in our community who are in recovery. With their tireless efforts, and with many partnerships and supporters, their work came to fruition in just 15 months.

Long time nbCC Board Member Steve Green presented the Northern Berkshire Heroes Award to Gene and Justyna Carlson. This award is given annually to individuals or groups who have had a positive impact on the quality of life in our region. Both have long histories of selflessly supporting our local community through their work with the North Adams Historical Society and Commission. They both give generously their time, energy, spirit, and dollars, which all contribute to the health of North Berkshire.

In recognition of our local residents doing great work to build community, Amber asked four community members to share their stories and in particular, "What's Their Why"?

Beth Allison Schmehl, founder of 5 Cents at a Time spoke of her commitment to helping those in need by redeeming bottles and

cans. UNiTY Youth Development Program and ROOTS member Malina Ziaska spoke of herself as an "unlikely leader" who has found great satisfaction in representing and growing the youth voice in our community. Kim McMann from the Berkshire Food Project spoke of the importance of sharing food together in a setting that provides dignity and respect, and builds trust amongst the community. And lastly, Paul Gordon, pastor at the Terra Nova Church and Director of The Green spoke of how his journey through faith inspired him to build a space where people can meet, share common ground and build relationships.

Other highlights of the meeting included a game of "Berkshire Bingo" and an original spoken-word poem performed by Jake Snow, facilitator of nbCC's Teen Writing Program.

nbCC would like to thank our sponsors, The Greylock Federal Credit Union, MountainOne and Adams Community Bank for their support and all they do to build up our community.

-Bert Lamb



Northern Berkshire Community Coalition

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 and contains announcements from Northern Berkshire agencies and organizations. Submissions must be received by 9:00 a.m. 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 your fundraising events. For more information, please call 663-7588, or to submit an announcement, please email phzine@nbcoalition.org.

UNO Summer Playground Program is Back!

The UNO Summer Playground Program is back for its 5th consecutive year! On Mondays through Fridays from July 8th to August 16th, come down to the playground at the bottom of Houghton Street, right across from the UNO Park. Between 9am and 12pm, you’ll find staff members Cristina Cassidy and Bri Jones with everything from footballs, kickballs, soccer balls and badminton, to board games and arts and crafts for youth ages 8 and up. This is a drop-in program, meaning that everyone is free to come and go as they please. We also teamed up with the Summer Eats Program to give out free lunches. If you’re under 18 simply stop by and check in before 10am to get a meal at noon. If you have any questions, comments or concerns, feel free to contact UNO Com-

munity Center Manager Matt Shiebler at (413) 664-4612, or mshiebler@nbcoalition.org. See you on the playground!

-Matt Shiebler



▲ Cristina Cassidy and Bri Jones

ArtDoors: An Exploration of Self, Outdoors, & Art

Summer time for UNiTY means ArtDoors time. ArtDoors began as a way for UNiTY participants to explore nature and art over the long Berkshire summers. What transpired was as much an exploration of identity and self as it was of the outdoors and the creative world. Since its inception, ArtDoors has taken many forms, featured a variety of participants, and traveled to a wide range of beautiful Berkshire locales. This summer’s ArtDoors is no exception!

stewardship projects in Northern Berkshire County.

Because we are be tasking participants with some serious labor, and asking them to contribute their time and energy to maintaining and repairing trail systems, all participants will receive a stipend at the end of the program. ArtDoors facilitators are excited about the ability to compensate participants for their hard work, as we feel strongly that valuing youth participation is equal to validating their contributions.

UNiTY is partnering with the ROOTS Teen Center to offer ArtDoors. This year’s program has grown with the help of funding from the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, and with support from the National Parks Service. For the first time, participants are learning about, and contributing to, several trail maintenance and

ArtDoors currently has 10 participants signed up. Thus far, staff and participants traveled to Peck’s Falls in the Greylock Glen and to the Cascades in North Adams, many of them for the first time. Following this excursion, everyone was treated to a dream-catcher making workshop at the Common Folk Artist Collective, using materials collected at the Cascades. ArtDoors will continue until the middle of August.

I would be remiss if I didn’t mention our 2019 intern, Josh Doubiago. Josh is a former participant in UNiTY’s Teen Writing Workshop, and a recent graduate of BART Charter. Josh has brought an invaluable blend of maturity and insight, a willingness to put himself out there and go all-in on our projects and activities, and an ability to relate to our 10 participants. Josh has rounded out our team, and really strengthened our ability to deliver quality programming.

-Tim Shiebler



▲ ArtDoors participants make dream-catchers using materials collected at the Cascades.

BRCC - It's All About Connections

The Beacon Recovery Community Center (BRCC), a community of people in recovery, their families, and friends, opened the doors on March 6 in The Green at 85 Main Street. This peer-based recovery center supports people in all stages and on all paths of recovery by sharing life experiences, skills, and social connections. Research, meetings, collaboration, outreach, and brainstorming led up to the opening with modest expectations. Four and a half months later, participation has greatly exceeded those expectations!

BRCC operates in The Green at 85 Main Street on Wednesdays from 10-2. In June, an additional two hours were added on Tuesday evenings for an All Recovery Meeting (5-7pm).

Outside of open hours, "Hikers in Recovery", led by Adam Galambos, took two forays into nature and a group visited The Clark Art Institute for a picnic lunch on the grounds and a visit to the galleries. Members have been enjoying a variety of activities, including a poetry writing workshop, guided meditation, "Name That Tune", and ice-breaker games of Thumb Ball. A Recovery Coach Training in May graduated 29 attendees and an Ethics of Recovery Coaching training will take place September 23-25 at The Holiday Inn in North Adams.

The Tuesday All Recovery Meeting averages 7-10 members and Wednesday Open Hours has brought as many as 17 people to the center. We believe that the success of BRCC comes from the warmth of the community membership and connections that are made within. In the words of Johann Hari, "The opposite of addiction is not sobriety.



The opposite of addiction is connection." The foundational success of a peer recovery center is based on the connections that are made with others who have faced similar struggles or wish to support those who seek recovery.

As our community continues to stamp out stigma, extend a warm welcome to all, and offer many options to support pathways to recovery, we continue to make connections with each other. On Saturday, September 21, BRCC will host the fifth Walk, Rally, and Vigil during Recovery Month. The theme for this year's event is "Join The Voices for Recovery: Together We Are Stronger". Please save the date and help our voices carry strength to support each other with connections to recovery pathways. Details about the walk, rally, and vigil will be posted on the nbCC website and Facebook page.

In the words we heard at Recovery Coach training, we "continue" and invite you to join us. For more information about BRCC please visit the nbCC website or call Susan at (413) 663-7588 ext 29. *-Susan Cross*

Summer Neighborhood Basketball Wrapping Up

Provides Non-Competitive Fun and Exercise for Local Neighborhood Kids

nbCC's Neighborhood Summer Basketball Program is back this summer with an expanded schedule! This summer there is a 9 - 13 year old division and a 14 - 17 year old division with teams representing four North Adams neighborhoods (Brayton Hill,



Mohawk Forest, UNO and Greylock Valley). Volunteers from the neighborhoods coach over 100 kids while teaching the importance of teamwork and sportsmanship. The program is free and open to all. Transportation is provided. This non-competitive summer basketball league runs through August 1st.

The Summer Neighborhood Basketball League is supported by funding from nbCC, Greylock Federal Credit Union; North Adams Housing Authority, The Caleb Group, The John Fox Memorial Fund, and the City of North Adams.

Northern Berkshire Community Coalition Board of Directors 2019-2020

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UNITY Forges a Connection with NHTI

One of the best parts of summer is the partnership we have with the New Hampshire Teen Institute (NHTI)! NHTI is a week long overnight camp where teens spend time digging down deep into their roots as leaders, as well as exploring who they truly are. The NHTI is a partnership we've had for the last few years and it has created so many wonderful opportunities for the UNITY youth. The camp not only offers this amazing program, they also offer scholarships and financial support so that no young person is turned away based on their financial situation or abilities.

One of the most amazing things this partnership has created is the tie it builds with the young people they work with. One of our UNITY participants, Malina, attended camp last year to test the waters of this new and different leadership opportunity, and left the camp changed! They expressed that the experiences they had during camp really showed them what it meant to be a young leader, and helped them think more critically about who they are as a person. The week-long camp experience even shone a new light on what they might want to do after high school! This bond wasn't just a one-time thing, Malina returned to the NHTI during the winter, and again in the summer as a counselor at the camp! They felt excited and inspired to take what mentoring they received and pass it on to other campers like them!

We always look forward to hearing from the young folks about their experiences at camp and all of the many great connections and memories they make. Since forming our connection with the New Hampshire Teen Institute, we have sent several teens to camp for an amazing and world changing experience!



◀ **Malina Ziaja, UNITY and NHTI participant shown here with Tim Shiebler, UNITY Program Coordinator.**

Massachusetts Youth Trail Summit

Once again, UNITY is helping to support the Massachusetts Youth Trail Summit. The summit is "a hands-on opportunity for students, educators and service leaders to learn about public lands, outdoor recreation and the importance of effective conservation practices". This will be the third year that UNITY, in addition to other youth serving organizations in the region, will help to support the planning and implementation of the summit. ArtDoors participants will again be invited to attend.

The summit will take place this year at April Hill in Great Barrington. It's a fantastic opportunity to not only learn about conservation and trail stewardship, but also about leadership, about yourself, and about the many opportunities that exist for involvement in these areas. On top of that, it is a great chance to meet other youth from the region.

The summit is open to any youth, and registration is now available! Contact Tim Shiebler for more information at tshiebler@nbccoalition.org, or call at 413-663-7588, ext. 15.

Summer Time at UNO



UNO is having one busy summer! We had over 200 people attend our first Starry Night Movies at UNO Park event in collaboration with MASS MoCA. We are doing it again on August 16th, showing the movie *Hidden Figures*; the story of three African-American women at NASA who were the brains behind the launch of astronaut John Glenn into orbit. We will again provide popcorn during the movie, thanks to our friends at Empire Cafe, and will be offering some space themed games and activities like solar observing and stargazing. Check out www.bit.ly/starrynightmovies for more information. The event is free and open to the public.



4-H Wacky STEAMsters at UNO

The 4-H Wacky STEAMsters are a fun filled STEAM group (ages 5-18). We tackle it all! From physics, to beadmaking, to breaking down scientific principles with fun, user-friendly, hands-on experiments. The group meets every other Tuesday from 4-5:30pm. The

focus this summer is on river maintenance and hiking! Parents are welcome and encouraged to attend! There is no drop off available for younger youth. You do not have to be a member of 4-H to participate. But all participants have the option to register as an official member of 4-H and participate in other local groups and events throughout the county. We look forward to meeting everyone!

Bocce League at UNO!

Also at UNO this summer, the Northern Berkshire Bocce League is having tournaments every other Sunday, the Gardening Program meets on Saturday mornings in the UNO gardens at 10am, the After School Program continues to run on Tuesday evenings from 6:30 to 7:30pm and Thursday afternoons from 4 to 5pm, and so much more! Be sure to like us on Facebook to get all the latest updates and events happening at your UNO Community Center.



New Staff and Workshops at The Family Place!

Summer time has finally arrived at the Family Place. Staff will be out serving the community at many events this summer. If you see our table, please come by and chat with us. We are always happy to meet new faces. Speaking of new faces...The Family Place welcomes our newest staff member: Bri Rousseau. She will be taking on the role of School Liaison/Family Support Worker. Bri is a transplant who moved to North Adams with her therapy dog, Seymour 3 years ago. She studied sociology and psychology at Fitchburg State University and her professional passions focus on positive youth development and family support. Bri is a strong believer that all families can be successful in living healthy, productive lives when equipped with necessary tools, education and opportunities. We are excited for her and Seymour joining our team with nbCC. See page 6 for more on Bri (and Seymour!).

New Workshops

Staff has brain stormed many wonderful classes/programs for the up-coming year. We are adding two parent education workshops a month as well as a life skills workshop. If would you would like to receive our monthly calendar of programming via email; please email Stephanie Puc at spuc@nbccoalition.org. Also please contact Stephanie if you would like to volunteer your time with us! We are always looking for parent leaders who would love to lead a workshop or education class. We believe that parents can learn from other parents and their experiences.

Back-Packed for Success

The Family Place will be hosting our annual Backed-Packed for Success program. This is our 7th year distributing backpacks to children who live in Northern Berkshire in grades k-12. Families will need to register for this event as we have a limited number of backpacks and school supplies. Registration starts July 29th and will go through August 9th. Please call 413-663-7588. Pick up days: August 13th from 6-7:30 for families who reside in Florida and Savoy at the Gabriel Abbott Memorial School. Families who reside in North Adams, Adams, Cheshire, Clarksburg and Williamstown will be able to gather their backpacks on August 15th from 1-3pm at The Green at 85 Main Street in North Adams. We hope to see many of you at this event.

► A sampling of the "Under the Sea" Arts and Crafts for families event held in July!



A Visit to Jack the Bike Man

Bret and Amanda had the opportunity to visit and learn from Jack Hairston, founder of Jack the Bike Man in West Palm Beach, Florida. Jack began fixing children's bicycles from his front porch. As word got out that Jack was the "Bike Man", more children began showing up at his house for bicycle fixes and people began giving him bikes for those children that didn't have one. In just a short time he outgrew his front porch, and needed a bigger space. It was then that "Jack the Bike Man", a non-profit, was created. Today Jack the Bike Man, has over 1,000 donated bikes, a crew of bicycle mechanic staff and volunteers, a low cost bike shop, "earn a bike" program, after school bicycle programs for youth, a Christmas bike give-away in which 2,000 bikes were given away last year, and the opportunity for the community to stop by the shop to learn about bicycles and get a tune up or fix on their bicycle. Jack has established the largest bicycle collective in the East. His belief is all children and adults can benefit from owning a bicycle and knowing how to maintain and ride safely. Jack's first question always is, "Do you remember your first bicycle? What was it?" He believes that majority of people can recall their first bicycle and it is a great way to connect with folks and build community. Jack the Bike Man offers an opportunity to pay for or earn "a quality bicycle at a fair price".

Bret and Amanda absorbed information from Jack, his staff, volunteers and the community that stopped by to donate bicycles or bring them in for a quick fix. The hope is to share Jack's values, and borrow systems and procedures practiced at Jack the Bike Man for the future here in North Berkshire. For more info on Jack, visit <https://jackthebikeman.org/>.



Bret and Jack



Jack's space is filled with over 1,000 donated bikes.

The Family Place Welcomes Bri Rousseau and Seymour



◀ Stop by and say hello to Bri, nbCC's Family Support Worker and School Liaison. Seymour is always close-by and loves the attention!

I moved to North Adams with my dog, Seymour three years ago and I knew we found home when we began finding our place in this compassionate community. I've

aspired to work with the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition since I attended my first NBYC meeting shortly after moving 107 miles to live in North Adams. I immediately fell in love with nbCC and their remarkable work and I knew I wanted to be a part of this incredibly dedicated team. Most of my young career has been devoted to promoting positive youth development, finding new ways to encourage and empower young people, and supporting and strengthening families within my communities. I am thrilled that my three-year dream has finally been realized and I have the privilege to join the nbCC and Family Place team as School Liaison and Family Support Worker. I am eager to utilize this opportunity to continue empowering young people and families in the Northern Berkshire community to lead healthy and successful lives.

-Bri Rousseau

NEIGHBORLY SPOTLIGHT



For the month of July, we would like to spotlight the efforts of David Nicholas and Tonia Beauchamp of the Bounti-Fare Restaurant & Catering. In the Northern Berkshires, Bounti-Fare is well known for several reasons. To some, it's a place to meet friends and family for a delicious meal. Others might first think of the frequent musical performances that take place there. But for us here at nbCC, as well as many other residents of North County, our minds first go to the tireless fundraising and community building efforts of David Nicholas and Tonia Beauchamp. The Bounti-Fare Restaurant & Catering has been host to numerous efforts supporting individuals and groups in the past, and they show no signs of changing that any time soon. Developing a reputation for these efforts is no easy task, and requires a lot of dedication and no small amount of sacrifice. For that, we thank you.

The North Adams Tree Initiative Update - 133 Trees Planted!

The NA Tree Initiative planted 133 trees this spring thanks to your help. Not bad for our first season! The wet and cool spring really helped these young trees establish themselves. The Tree Initiative has some cool things happening this summer that I wanted to let you all know about.

First we have a Mt. Greylock student, Jack Glittermen, who will be assisting with summer watering and he will be doing the watering by bike and trailer. We are currently coordinating with property owners of the large volunteer public plantings. Along with watering, we will be putting up lawn signs with our plantings to promote resident's interest in the tree initiative either by volunteering to plant or signing up to have a tree planted in their front yard. So, if you see someone hauling a trailer behind a bike, watering trees or putting up a lawn sign, wave or say hello.

We will also be doing a tree tour by bike and a tree walking tour of downtown North Adams this summer. These events will identify unique old trees of North Adams as well as taking a look at some of our newly planted trees. Dates and times to be announced.

We continue to sight trees at private resident's homes and line up some volunteer public plantings for the fall planting season. We will start planting again in September.

-Bret Beattie



Tuesdays in August
5-7pm

Wednesdays in August
10am to 2pm

**The Green, 85 Main St. NA
BRCC Open Hours**

The Beacon Recovery Community Center (BRCC) provides peer support to those seeking recovery from addiction. It is a peer led effort that provides support groups, connections to networks that can assist anyone seeking recovery, and opportunities to socialize with others. The community center is free and open to all. For more info, please contact Susan at scross@nbccoalition.org.

Wed., Aug. 14, 5:30p.m.
Eagle St., North Adams

**BikeFest @
Downtown
Celebration**

Join nbCC for Bike Fest 2019 at the North Adams Downtown Celebration. Bring your bike and helmet and pedal around Holden Street. Bike giveaways, bike rodeo, bike education and free basic bicycle maintenance. Call Amanda Chilson at (413) 663-7588 for more info.

**Trekking Pole
Demo and Guided
Walks in Adams**

Learn how to use trekking poles and experience taking guided walks using the trekking poles. Matter of Balance components will be incorporated. There will be 4 sessions in various locations in Adams on Mondays, August 12, August 26, September 9 and September 16. This a free program and trekking poles will be provided. There is limited space, please call the Adams Council on Aging to register at 413-743-8333 or Bret at (413) 663-7588.

Thursdays in August
6:00p.m.

**St. Anthony's Parking Lot
Downtown
BikeAround**

Join us for weekly community rides. Bring your bike and helmet and ride around downtown! See Bike North Berkshire Facebook page, or email Amanda at achilson@nbccoalition.org to be put on email list for updated starting locations. For more info, call (413) 663-7588.

Tuesday, August 6
4:00 - 8:00pm

Noel Field, North Adams
5:00-7:00pm

**Williamstown Police Station
National Night Out**

National Night Out is a crime prevention event involving citizens, law enforcement agencies, civic groups, businesses and neighborhood organizations. Food and fun! For more information, call Glenda at (413) 663-7588. Watch for flyers in your neighborhood and check local media for updates.

Friday, August 16 6:00p.m.
UNO Park

Starry Night Movies

This month features the movie Hidden Figures. Festivities begin at 6 and movie begins at dusk. Bring pillows, blankets, and low back chairs. Free popcorn! For more info, call (413) 663-7588.

Wed. August 21, 4-5pm
nbCC Conference Room

**Beat Back to
School Stress**

This parent education workshop will help you learn ways to identify specific stressors caused by transitioning back to school, understand simple coping skills for both you and your child, and establish and manage routines, especially for sleep and meals. For more info or to register, contact Stephanie at (413) 663-7588..



Florida & Savoy

Tues., Aug. 13, 6:00p.m.
Gabriel Abbott Elem. School

N. Adams, Williamstown
Clarksburg, Adams, Cheshire
Thurs., Aug. 15, 1:00p.m.

The Green
**Back-Packed for
Success**

The Family Place is hosting its annual back-to-school event for kids entering K through 12. Students will receive a free backpack filled with school supplies. This event requires preregistration from now until August 9. Call The Family Place at (413) 663-7588 for more information or to register.

Thurs., August 22, 10-11am
nbCC Conference Room

**Yelling Threatening
and Putting Down:**

The workshop will help you know what to do when your child is angry, when children whine, when siblings fight and what to do with a child who is very active. For more info or to register, contact Stephanie at (413) 663-7588..

Thurs., Aug. 29, 5:45p.m.
St. Anthony's Municipal Lot

**Bike to the Murals
Community Ride**

Check out the many murals of North Adams by bike! Meet in the St. Anthony's Municipal Parking lot at 5:45, ride will leave at 6:00pm. This ride will range from 5-7miles, click here for more information on Downstreet Art. There will be plenty of time to enjoy Downstreet Art before and after the ride. For more info, call Bret Beattie or Amanda Chilson at 413-663-7588.

Visit <http://www.nbccoalition.org/calendar.html> for our complete nbCC and UNO Community Center calendar listings.

NB Food Access Collaborative

Mass in Motion Coordinators and the 3 food access collaboratives of Berkshire County worked together to collect data, set priorities and gather information and stories to write a community food assessment (CFA) for Berkshire County.

This is an active document that will be a guide for the food access collaboratives to continue to build upon the assets, and fill the gaps of the food system with cross sector collaboration.

Visit <http://bit.ly/berkshirecfa> to see the complete assessment.



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nbCC is supported by:



A Note from the Director. . .

Hello and Happy Summer... I know that many of us are attempting to savor the warmth of summer and do not want to think about the upcoming fall season. But here at nbCC, we are already starting to prepare for fall. September 13th at 10:00am will be our needs assessment forum and first forum of the “new year”. This is a great opportunity to come out and tell us what issues, concerns, or happenings the community needs to talk about.

We are also continuing to prepare for our October forum, part 3 of our “Inclusive Redevelopment” and “Gentrification” conversations. We recognize that our June conversation did not go as planned and the topic veered off from the intended goal. Despite the challenges we have experienced, the need for and the request to continue the conversation motivates us to move forward. The planning group is meeting and preparing for a goal-oriented conversation on what the community’s concepts of and expectations for the redevelopment of our region.

So much more to come... please enjoy the summer and write the forums in your calendar for the fall, see you there!

-Amber Besaw



Find this newsletter online at www.nbccoalition.org

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