

NEWSLETTER

Coalition News

Vol IV, #8

Coalition Coordinator : Al Bashevkin 664-4511 x519; 802 442-5200.
The Northern Berkshire Health and Human Services Coalition is supported by
the Berkshire Area Health Education Center with funding from UMASS
Medical School. The Coalition is hosted by North Adams State College.

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April 1990

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April Coalition Meeting : **Note New Location**

First Baptist Church of North Adams 131 Main St No Adams
Please Enter via Eagle St Entrance

Friday April 13th 10 AM to Noon

Meeting Agenda

I. Welcome

II. Introduction of Participants : **Who's Who of Who-Man Services**

III. What's Happening : **Announcements by Coalition Membership of
interest to all**

IV. Special Coalition Topics : **1. Status of Universal Health Care
Coverage in Massachusetts :**
Representative Sherwood Guernsey

2. In Celebration of our Volunteers :
*Volunteers and Agencies from
Northern Berkshire*

V. Other Business

VI. Adjournment and Conclusion

Bring a Friend to the Meeting : **Βρίγγα Φριενδ το της Μειττυν**

Coalition News is the newsletter of the Northern Berkshire Health and Human Services Coalition. Its function is to keep the mailing list informed of what's happening around the Northern Berkshire area. It's a service to the entire COALITION mailing list (about 300). Announcements submitted to the newsletter will reach our entire mailing list. So, take advantage of this unique, free mechanism for informing our friends of news important to all. Please submit these announcements to Al Bashevkin, Coalition Coordinator, P.O. Box 1417, Bennington, VT 05201. For insertion into the May newsletter, news should reach Al Bashevkin by Apr 26.

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What's Happening!

- March's Events

March Coalition Meeting

A contingent of Coalitioners met on the 2nd Friday of March (March 9th) to discuss the topic of Barriers to Economic Opportunity. The meeting was both interesting and helpful and opened many of our eyes to the complexities of the problem. The expense of child and elder care for working parents, confusion about Universal Health Care, illiteracy, and the lack of a consistent test site for the GED in North County, were all cited as barriers to economic opportunity for the disadvantaged in North County.

Our thanks to Colleen Cutler of Child Care of the Berkshires who told Coalitioners about impending cuts to basic and voucher day care and the effects it will have on working parents in the Northern Berkshire area. We are hopeful the revamped version of the federal ABC Day Care Bill will follow up on President Bush's commitment to affordable child care. Good news is that both the House and Senate have passed versions of this bill which is headed for conference.

Special guest Phil Rabinowitz of the Literacy Project in Greenfield joined Northern Berkshireites Margaret Campbell of North Adams State College and Lisa Jarisch of the North County Literacy Program to talk about the need for comprehensive literacy efforts in North County. According to Phil Rabinowitz, there are 1.25 million adults in Mass. without a high school diploma. Half of these people cannot read about the eighth grade level, and half of that population read below the fourth grade level. The figure in North County of adults without a high school diploma is higher than the statewide average, so one can imagine that there are large numbers in need of literacy services. We are not serving all who need literacy services. Literacy programs are a great vehicle to help people understand the powers they have. Non-readers usually try to hide their lack of skills, so people who are

interacting with the non-reading population need to look for clues to find the non-readers who may benefit from literacy programs.

The North Adams Public Library, in sponsoring the Literacy Program, is always seeking volunteers to help. Volunteering involves a three week workshop, with the next training scheduled for June. Contact the NA Public Library for more info about literacy volunteering.

North Adams State College's Adult Learning Center is an active facility to help area residents acquire necessary educational skills for employment. Later in the newsletter more info is available about programs from the Learning Center.

Nadine Kuhner, of the Department of Public Welfare, talked about the status of CommonHealth. A handout written by the Mass Law Reform Institute and the Health Care for All Group was made available to further explain the present status of Universal Health Care in Massachusetts. That handout is available from Al Bashevkin. Representative Sherwood Guernsey, a prime mover behind Universal Health Care, was unable to attend the March Coalition meeting, but will be present during the April meeting to discuss Universal Health Care with Coalitioners.

Information Outreach Task Force

The I/O Task Force continues to move ahead with their exciting plans for the Coalition. The **Speaker's Bureau** is assembled, and seventeen Coalitioners have crossed the line to volunteer to speak at public meetings about their viewpoints of health and human services. For a copy of the list of speakers, contact Al Bashevkin. The *Human Side* has seen articles written by Al Bashevkin and Thorman Hulse blessing the pages of the Transcript. Plans for a Health and Human Services Month are being drawn up and will be re-presented to Coalitioners during the April meeting. The **Power Lunches** at Heritage State Park's Shippers Lounge are a regular feature for the Coalition. We have had some interesting discussions about teen services, stress management, and caring for our elders. Lunches are scheduled through the end of May. See later in the newsletter for a schedule. Lastly, save the date of June 15th for what should be the most interesting Coalition Annual Meeting yet, planned by Info-Outreachers.

Parenting Issues Task Force

Negotiations have ensued as the result of the Feb 22nd Task Force Meeting. Discussions about using Louison House as a site for Parenting Center Services have brought forth other ideas about using this site. Berkshire Center for Families and Children is moving ahead with its plans to replicate the McInerney model for North County. The next Task Force meeting is scheduled for Thurs, Apr 5, at 11 AM at Louison House.

Coalition Budget Advocacy

Even more sadly, not much headway has been made with the State budget dilemma since our last editions of Coalition News. The stalemate goes on and the nickle and diming of State programs continues. Much has been written in past editions of Coalition News, and little that we hear today is good news regarding the budget. A coalition of Coalitions, the Western Mass Alliance, has been formed and its first activity was a counter-demonstration during the House Ways and Means Public Hearing in Springfield. The Mass Coalition of Human Services "Half-Baked Sale" is a fitting metaphor to the attempts at balancing the State budget without new revenues. We must keep the public aware of the social and humane costs of balancing the budget without new revenues. To get involved on specific budget advocacy issues, contact Al Bashevkin.

Steering Committee

The steering committee has worked long and hard on a set of "Operating Principals", and is pleased to report these principals are complete. Copies will be available at the next few Coalition meeting, and can be received by mail by simply returning the tear-off located at the bottom of the page. The steering committee has an opening for an individual who would like to serve. Present members of the steering committee are:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>Phone</u>
Fred Nicholaev	NB Public Welfare Office	664-9951
Maggie Bittman	Pregnant Adol Support System (PASS)	664-6104
Terry Louison	NB Community Action	663-9807
Neil Novik	Berkshire AHEC	447-2417
Al Bashevkin	Coalition Coordinator	802 442-5200
Meg LeRay	Northern Berkshire Mental Health	664-4541
George Mercier	North Adams Regional Hospital	663-3701
Peg Ouellette	Berkshire Cty Regional Housing Authority	443-7138
Al Nelson	Northern Berkshire United Way	663-9062
Thorman Hulse	Helpline, Inc	663-6555

Yes, send me a copy of the Coalition's Operating Principals!

Name _____

Address _____

Mail this Tear-off to Al Bashevkin, Coalition Coordinator,
North Adams State College Box 8982
North Adams, MA 01247

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

To help promote self-sufficiency and establish decent housing in the Northern Berkshire area, a local Habitat for Humanity Chapter is being formed. Habitat uses locally raised monies and local volunteers to build housing with those who need. Recipients of homes from Habitat work alongside community workers to build a home they can call their own.

There's lots of enthusiasm locally for the Habitat idea to take off. Meetings have enlisted over fifty people each time to talk about the Habitat concept. Habitat of Northern Berkshire is looking for your help. If interested or if you would like more information, please fill out the following questionnaire and mail it to Habitat for Humanity in the Northern Berkshire Area, P.O. Box 391, North Adams, MA 01247.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

When are you usually free for volunteer participation ?

Weekdays _____ Evenings _____ Week-ends _____

Basic Committees (check off which interest you)

Steering Committee

Fund Raising

Public Relations

Family Selection and Nurture

Site Selection

Building Committee

Please send me more information about Habitat for Humanity

Please put me on your mailing list

Mail to : Habitat for Humanity of Northern Berkshire

P.O. Box 391

North Adams, MA 01247

Can health and human service coalitions help agencies with
fiscal survival in the coming years?

by: Tom Wolff, Director of Community Development, AHEC Coalitions

Our local health and human service coalitions have proved to be powerful vehicles for community-based human service planning, coordination, collaboration, and information exchange. However, the challenge of the State's fiscal crisis now threatens the existence of the basic founding members of the Coalitions--health and human service non-profit organizations. The reduction in funding, the general economic recession, the State's trend toward mega-agencies (as exemplified in Secretary Matava's PTE program), and the ongoing accusations that smaller agencies are economically inefficient and need to be eliminated, are all threats to the continuation of the smaller agencies (from \$1 million to \$70,000) in the local communities. Our local community based services have shown that smaller agencies are the critical components of innovation and responsiveness to both client and community.

Peter Nessen, former Assistant Secretary of Administration and Finance, has suggested as part of his agenda the creation of Shared Services Corporations. These entities would be independent, non-profit corporations, set up to provide the "back room" services to small human service vendors. These services would include: accounts receivable, accounts payable, payroll, bookkeeping, etc. The foundation of Peter's ideas are that by combining these efforts we can exhibit increased cost effectiveness and efficiency, and also send a strong message to Boston that small agencies are both a programmatic and fiscally viable component of the human service system.

In one community, we have had a number of gatherings of human service agencies to explore this possibility and indeed their "menu" of potential collaborative services goes well beyond Nessen's "back room" and includes bulk purchasing of equipment, insurance, legal services, printing, maintenance, auditing, computerized payroll, transportation, etc. The opportunity to combine the purchase and bidding power of a number of agencies and get lower costs is quite exciting. These ideas expand the Shared Service Corporation concept to include greater collaboration and sharing between agencies.

Exploration of models for such ventures will continue. The point of this column is to plant the seed of this idea to see whether the creation of joint human service consortiums, with a goal of increased inefficiency and greater collaboration, might be attractive in many of our coalition communities.

The fiscal crisis and political stagnation that we presently face has stymied new ideas, creativity, risk taking, and good will. But the present crisis also offers us some opportunities for innovation. Expanding the AHEC Coalitions beyond programmatic collaboration, to include fiscal and economic collaboration, may be one such opportunity.

NEWS AND VIEWS

*** *And Now, here's Ken!* **Northern Berkshire Tonight**, the talk show of the Coalition (in its third season) will be airing its April show, **Monday, April 2 at 7:30** and repeating **Friday, April 6 at 8 PM**. The April show will be showcasing the North Adams Commission for Teens. Special guests include Ellen Kaiser, Youth Services Coordinator for the Commission for Teens and Michel Ethier, founding Board Member. Join thousands of others who watch the Coalition on TV and enjoy the opportunity to watch Northern Berkshire Tonight on channel 7, Northern Berkshire's local access channel.

*** *Wanna help Parent's Anonymous?* . . . Parent's Anonymous is looking for volunteers to provide child care for parents who attend the Parent's Anonymous meetings. If you are willing to volunteer some time to watch children, the meetings are held Tuesdays from 9:30 - 11:30 AM and Mon's from 7 - 9 PM. Interested? Call Crystal Scholtz at 664-8300.

*** *NASC Learning Center News* . . . The Learning Center at NASC offers adult basic education services to community residents. These services include : evaluation of basic academic skills, GED pre-testing, classes and tutoring in all basic academic skills, preparation for the GED and post-secondary education, and advising. Services are offered in the following locations :

North Adams State College, Murdock Hall, North Adams

Free classes in math, writing, and reading development are offered on Mon, Tues, and Wed evenings from 6 to 8:30 PM during the academic year. Students may enroll in these classes to review basic skills, prepare for the GED and prepare for post-secondary education. Pre and post testing and advising are available as needed.

Adams Community Center, East St, Adams

Free classes in reading/language arts, and math are available in Adams on Tues and Wed evenings from 6 to 8:30 PM. Pre-testing, advising, and GED preparation are available.

Adams Free Library, Park St, Adams

Free tutoring is available to assist students reviewing basic academic skills and preparing for the GED. Tutoring is available on Mon's from 10 AM to 5 PM, except when the library is closed for a holiday.

For more info, contact : **Learning Center, Murdock Hall, First Floor, Church St, NASC, North Adams, MA 01247.**

*** *Looking for employment?* . . . Women's Services Center has a number of opportunities. They are looking for a (1) counselor advocate, 28

hours/week, (2) full time child advocate for one year, (3) relief on-call counselor, about 8 hours/ week, (4) a part time temporary evening position available at their shelter. Contact Women's Services at 499-2425.

***** Council for Children accepts new members.** . . the Berkshire County Council for Children, the volunteer component of the local Office for Children is accepting new members. The Council has identified the issue of adequate funding for critically needed community-based services via progressive tax reform as a top priority for their workplan for 1990. Child poverty, education, and day care are also areas in which they will focus their work. A Child Abuse Prevention Committee has recently formed to work on primary prevention of child abuse and neglect. The council serves as a grass-roots, consumer protection group for kids. It's a wonderful opportunity for people concerned with the impact of public policy on the lives of children to have their voices heard. Residents and workers of Berkshire County interested in Children's Services are eligible for Council membership. People of color and **Residents of North County** are particularly encouraged to join. If interested, contact the Office for Children, **499-4492**.

***** In the Spirit of Coalitioning . . .** The Family Life Support Center is seeking to work with social service agencies and other members of the Northern Berkshire community to provide life skills education programming for homeless and at-risk families and individuals at Louison House. Their goal is to create a community center where can develop independent living skills and find support. They hope to engage the expertise that other service providers have already developed in areas such as: tenant rights and responsibilities, budgeting and money management, employment search and career development, health care and nutrition, family dynamics and parenting, problem-solving and conflict resolution.

The Family Life Support Center is able to provide a large space and home-like environment, transportation for families and individuals to Louison House, volunteer staff assistance, and access to their client population through their mailing list and eventual newsletter. **If you are interested in exploring new approaches to inter-agency cooperation and life skills education, please contact Bob Ronnow at 743-7957.**

*****Northern Berkshire United Way Wrap-Up 1** The 1989 Annual meeting for the Northern Berkshire United Way will be held on Monday, April 30th at Brannings in North Adams. Cost is \$6 for a light buffet. Social hour is at 6 PM followed by the Annual Business Meeting and volunteer recognition for the NB United Way. To reserve call 663-9062 by 4/26.

***** Training Against Child Abuse.** . . The Citizens Against Child Abuse is sponsoring a two day training, May 10 - 11 at the Berkshire Hilton in Pittsfield. The training is entitled **CHILDREN OF THE 90'S : Innovative Interventions in Child Abuse**. The training will focus on important chronic and emerging issues which face professionals who serve victims, families, and offenders. There are lots of renown experts in the field of child abuse who will be presenting at the conference, which has been put together by Berkshire AHEC. Cost is \$45 for two days, \$25 for one day. For more information contact Berkshire AHEC, 447-2417.

***** News from Helpline I.** Helpline, Inc. is pleased to announce that their new program PhoneFriend is underway as of February 5th, when he made his debut on "Northern Berkshire Tonight", the talk show of the Coalition. The new telephone number for **PhoneFriend is 664-7878**. PhoneFriend will be traveling to local schools to promote this new service. In some areas, "Imagine That I", a children's theater group from NASC, will be accompanying PhoneFriend.

Plans for **Helpline's 20th Anniversary Celebration** are being finalized. The date will be May 12, 1990. So reserve that date now, as tickets will be gobbled up. A raffle will be held during the event with prizes including \$200 for first prize, second prize will be a handmade tablecloth, and third and fourth prize will be handmade crafts.

Helpline's major fundraiser this spring will be the theatrical presentation of "Robin Hood" by the Hampstead Players Theatrical Touring Company. The event is scheduled to take place at the Mohawk Theatre, Saturday, June 9. Stay tuned for further information!!!!

- *** Support Group News.** . . Info has come in from a number of groups :
- 1. Northern Berkshire Alliance for the Mentally Ill (N.A.M.I.)**
Contact Person : Judith Alden (458-5887). Meetings are held the 4th Monday of each month at the Canal St Center at 7:30 PM. Meetings are open to family and friends of those suffering from psychiatric disabilities. Cost : None
 - 2. Rape Crisis Center Group for Incest Survivors.** Contact : Roberta Russell (442-6708 W, 637-0161 H). Group is closed at present but will be opening in the Fall. Cost : None
 - 3. Berkshire Council on Alcohol and Addictions Support Groups :** For info call 664-1067. Location is at BCAA, 69 Main St, North Adams. Cost is by sliding fee scale or insurances.
 - A. Co-dependency Group.** Tuesdays from 5:30 - 6:45 PM. Contact : Mary Sugden.
 - B. Women's Support Group.** Tuesdays from 10 - 11:15 AM. Contact : Nancy Iacussa
 - C. Men's Support Group.** Friday's 9:30 - 10:45 AM.

Contact : Mike McGovern

We are continuing to look for information about area support groups, especially those that are medically related. Please send this info to Al Bashevkin for publication into the Coalition News and other resources.

*** **NASC News** . . . NASC is interested in knowing about job opportunities available in the area that will have career path opportunities. These may be included in future grant applications. If you have one, contact Mary Fucqua, 664-4511. NASC is also considering including the psychology degree program into the continuing education program. Thus, these course would be available at night and other alternative times. Any ideas / advice about how this might work ? Contact Mary Fucqua.

*** **POWER Lunch Schedule** . . . The Power Lunch Program at the Shipper's Room at Heritage State Park is moving along. Bring your own Brown Bag. Be Important Be Seen at the Power Lunches. The following is the itinerary for the Power Lunches through the end of May :

April 12th	Let's Talk About Teens
April 19th	Intro to CPR
April 26th	AIDS in the Workplace
May 3rd	HelpLine, in celebration of 20 years
May 10th	Northern Berkshire Mental Health
May 17th	Open discussion
May 24th	Citizen Advocacy of Northern Berkshire, CommonGround

*** **Need a Speaker ?** The Northern Berkshire Health and Human Services Speakers Bureau has assembled an interesting list of Coalitioners who are willing to speak at your public event. To obtain a list of the who's who of whoman services (volunteers for the Speakers Bureau), contact Al Bashevkin (802 442-5200). If you want to be on the list, but were late in getting the info in, the Speaker's Bureau list will be revised in the Fall.

*** **Stuffings** . . . DSS is having an Open House at the Sarah Haskins School for its new Area Director, Ray Burke. The Open House will be Thursday, Apr 5 from 2 - 4 PM. . . A new Task Force has been developed countywide, to assist residents of at-risk housing find solutions to their problems. Mohawk Forest of North Adams is at risk. Call Jim Hamilton, 499-2877 for more info.

*** **From the it slipped my mind department** . . . Someone asked Al Bashevkin for a copy of the Coalition mailing list, and he can't remember who. Mailing lists are available for Coalitioners. All is required is a donation to the Northern Berkshire Crisis Fund. If you want one, call Al Bashevkin.

1989 - 90 NORTHERN BERKSHIRE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COALITION SUPPORTERS :

ORGANIZATIONS

NB Committee on Mental Retardation
 Pregnant Adolescent Support System (PASS)
 American Red Cross
 Berkshire Council on Alcohol and Addictions
 Williamstown Housing Authority
 Northern Berkshire Support Services
 United Cerebral Palsy
 Mass Society for Prevention Cruelty to Children
 Northern Berkshire United Way
 Berkshire Sane/Freeze
 AdLib, Inc.
 Northern Berkshire Community Action
 Visiting Nurse Association of Northern Berkshire
 Northern Berkshire Mental Health Association
 Williamstown Council on Aging
 AdLib North
 Child Care of the Berkshires
 Mass Department of Employment and Training
 HelpLine, Inc.
 North Adams Regional Hospital
 Women's Services Center
 Hospice of Northern Berkshire, inc.
 Adams Housing Authority
 Town of Adams Community Development Dep't
 Berkshire Food Project
 Williams College
 Berkshire Center for Families and Children

INDIVIDUALS

John Howland, MD
 Al Nelson
 Pamela Knisley
 Al Bashevkin
 Steve Green
 Suzanne Walker
 Len Radin
 Diane Balduzy
 Michele Ethier
 Karen Forni Austin
 Kayte Miller
 Anthony J. Siracusa
 Bob Ronnow
 Trish Kelly
 Judith Alden
 Art and June Rock
 Bill Garrison
 Lisa Jarisch

YES, SIGN ME UP AS A COALITION SUPPORTER for 1989-90 !

Name _____
 Organization _____
 Address _____
 Phone _____

- Ind (\$10)
 Sm Org (\$25)
 (< \$100,000 budget)
 Lg Org (\$50)
 (> \$100,000 budget)

Checks payable to AHEC/NBHHS. Mail to Berkshire AHEC 725 North St
 Pittsfield MA 01201

Areas of Interest :

Are you willing to be listed as Coalition Supporter Yes No

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Apr 2** - **Northern Berkshire Tonight** : North Adams
Commission for Teens Channel 7 7:30 PM
- Apr 4** - **FACT Meeting:** Haskins Community Center Noon
- Apr 5** - **Parenting Issues Task Force** : Louison House,
Adams 11 AM
- Apr 5** - **Family Life Support Center Advisory Board** :
Louison House 2:30 PM
- Apr 5** - **Open House to meet Ray Burke, DSS Area
Director**, Haskins Community Center, 2-4 PM
- April 6** - **Northern Berkshire Tonight** : North Adams
Commission for Teens Channel 7 8 PM
- Apr 13** - **All Coalition Meeting** : Universal Health Care; Salute
to our Volunteers 1st Baptist Church of North Adams
Corner Eagle and Main St (enter on Eagle) 10 AM to Noon.
- Apr 19** - **Steering Committee** NA City Hall 1:30 PM
- May 10 -11** - **CHILDREN OF THE 90'S : Innovative
Interventions in Child Abuse.** Training by the
Citizens Against Child Abuse. Contact Berkshire
AHEC (447-2417) for more info.
- Month of May** - Mental Health Month
- May 12** - HelpLine's 20th Anniversary Celebration
- June 15** - 4th Coalition Annual Meeting

**BE IMPORTANT, BE SEEN AT THE COALITION POWER LUNCH !
Thursdays from 12:05 - 12:35 at Shippers Room,
Heritage State Park**