



The Common Thread

North Quabbin Community Coalition

Working to improve the quality of life in the North Quabbin.

February 2010
Volume 26 Issue 7

427 Main Street

Athol, MA 01331

Ph: (978) 249-3703

www.nqcc.org

Info@nqcc.org

Rebecca@nqcc.org

Coalition Meeting

February 19, 2010
9 - 11 a.m.

This Month:

The Athol Area YMCA:

A Community Partner for over 150 Years

Athol-Orange Elks Club

92 New Athol Rd.

(Rt. 2A)

Orange, MA 01364

Driving directions can be found at www.nqcc.org

Rebecca's Ramblings

The January North Quabbin Community Coalition forum hosted a conversation with the Department of Children and Families (formerly DSS). The Department is in the midst of shifting case practice to better engage families from the beginning of the case. The new integrated case practice model allows for a differential response when families are struggling with meeting the caretaking needs of their children rather than cases in which perpetration of abuse and neglect have occurred. The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is the state agency responsible for protecting children and ensuring that they are safe.

In Massachusetts, when anyone suspects that a child is abused or neglected, they can report the situation to DCF. Some people, like doctors, teachers, and child care workers, are required by law to report their concerns to the Department. DCF does an "investigation" when the report is about serious abuse or neglect. DCF does an "initial assessment" when there has been a less serious allegation. An "investigation" or an "initial assessment" is done to determine whether a child is safe and what services might be needed to help support a family to provide for his/her needs. The social worker will speak to all parties involved with the child including teachers, medical providers and others. These interviews must be completed within 5 – 15 work days. DCF will also send you a letter stating one of two things: The "investigation" is "unsupported", or the "initial assessment" showed "Minimal or No Concern." A case will not be opened.

If the "investigation" is "supported", or that "initial assessment" shows "substantiated concern," DCF may open a case to be sure that your child's needs are met and that the family gets services you need to keep your children safe. When a DCF case is opened, a social worker will determine a family's strengths and needs and develop a service plan for the family.

Although a shift of this magnitude within any State system means many bumps along the way, it is a shift in the right direction for families and for communities. When families in need of services can access what they need, everyone benefits. For more information about the Department of Social Services, you can contact the North Quabbin Patch Office at (978)249-5070 or the Greenfield Area Office at (413)775-5000.

Rebecca

Recent Donors

Athol Area United Way

Susan Paju & Heidi Strickland

Charles Winters

Patricia Larson

First Call for Help is available to help North Quabbin residents in need of financial assistance with heating costs this winter. Residents in need of heating assistance should contact **Avery Oldach, Resource Specialist** at **(978) 544-8091 x579**. We request that residents in need call First Call for Help so that they may be pre-screened for eligibility over the phone. Arrangements will then be made to meet with staff a person so that necessary verifications can be collected.

First Call for Help/NQ is a information and referral program of Community Action, serving the nine towns of the North Quabbin region. Requests for financial assistance are taken on a first-come, first-served basis and not all applicants will receive assistance. Only complete applications will be screened for program eligibility.



Upcoming Work Groups:

Parental Attitudes Group: 2/23

10:30 am at 423 Main St. Athol

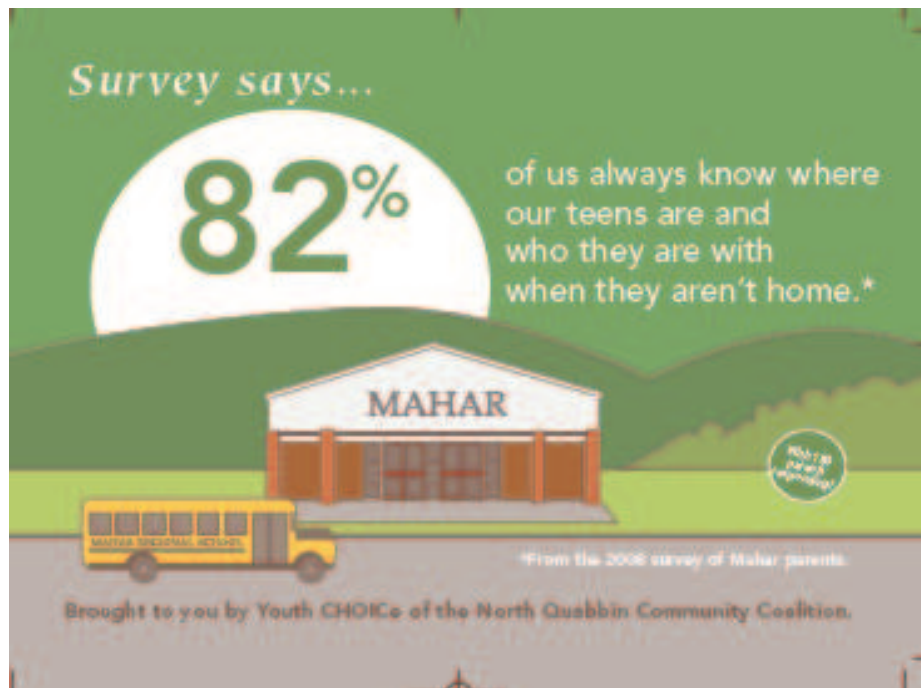
Laws & Norms Group: 2/23

3 pm at Dial Self,

15 E. Main Orange

Youth Rewards Group: 2/4

10 am at Mahar Reg. High School



Spotlight on Youth

The Youth CHOICE Project has begun a new Youth Recognition Effort to highlight the positive power of youth in our Community. Anyone interested in nominating a young person for the monthly Spotlight Award, can e-mail jennifer!@nqcc.org or call the Coalition office at (978)249-3703 Ext. 302 to tell us why. Any young person or group of youth from the nine-town region is eligible, just let us know how to reach them (and their parent/guardian) and how they have contributed to improving the quality of life for the North Quabbin Community.

The North Quabbin Home, Living and Energy Expo

Join the North Quabbin Chamber of Commerce for the annual event on **March 20 from 10—5 at Athol High School**. Many local vendors and demonstrations will be scheduled throughout the day. Door prize drawings all day! Food concessions available. For more information or to secure a booth space, call the Chamber at (978)249-3849 or send an email to nqcc1@verizon.net

Athol Bird and Nature Club Events

Tuesday, February 9, 8-10 a.m.

Accessible Birding with Joe

Join Joe Superchi on the second Tuesday of the month visiting local sites. Open to birders of all abilities. Meet at the Center. Call ahead for wheelchair van access, 978-248-9491.

Wednesday, February 10, 7 p.m. The Cuckoo and the Gypsy Moth

The regular monthly meeting at the Center features Nick Barber, a postdoctoral research fellow in the Department of Plant, Soil, and Insect Sciences at U-Mass Amherst. A birder since the age of eight, Barber received his Ph.D. in biology from the University of Missouri-St. Louis in 2009, where his dissertation work focused on the interactions between birds, insects, and oak trees in forests. His current work explores how pests of cucumber crops affect beneficial species like pollinators in western Massachusetts.

Saturday, February 13, 7:30 a.m. Eagle Festival and Plum Island

Caravan to coastal birding sites, including the Merrimac River Eagle Festival. Sightings sometimes number in the teens in one spot. Other likely winter specialties are snowy and short-eared owls, rough-legged hawks, white-winged crossbills, snow buntings, etc. Meet at the Center or call ahead to meet the group at 9 a.m. at Burger King on Rte. 110, Salisbury. Bring lunch and a hand-held radio if you have one, and wear extreme cold weather clothing. Info: Larry Duprey, 978-249-4964.

Friday, February 19, 8 p.m. Owl Prowl (This is a new date)

Join one of our premier local owl experts Billy Fregeau in search of wintering owls. Meet at the Center for car-pooling. Limited participation; pre-registration is required. Inclement weather date: February 26. Registration and Info: Billy Fregeau, 978-249-8627.

1st Annual North Quabbin Food Forum Cultivates Food and Hope:

Saturday February 20, 10am to 3PM (snow date Feb 21) Orange Innovation Center, 131 West Main Street, Orange MA Seeds of Solidarity, Deb Habib, deb@seedsofsolidarity.org, Admission: Free, priority to those who live or work in the North Quabbin region. No pre-registration. Capacity limited to 60. Attendees asked to stay the whole day. Content geared towards adults and teens/young adults. Accessibility: Please call 978-544-9023 Content geared towards adults and teens/young adults.

Seeds of Solidarity and their SOL (Seeds of Leadership) Garden youth leaders announce an informative and inspiring new event, Saturday February 20th, 10am-3PM at the Orange Innovation Center, 131 W. Main St, Orange. This day of activity, workshops, and conversation unites North Quabbin residents to gain real skills and share innovative ideas for local, healthy food and a stronger community. The event is free, with priority to those who live or work in the North Quabbin Region, and is geared towards adults, interested teens and young adults. There is no pre-registration but capacity is limited to 60 and a full house is expected, so those interested are asked to arrive early (by 9.45) and to plan to stay the whole day, 10am-3PM. Coffee, tea, baked goods will be available for purchase in the morning from the new Railside Café and Maple Grove Farmhouse Bakery in the Orange Innovation Center.

At the Food Forum, participants will experience great workshops taught by local farmers and community members that build skills and self-reliance. Choose from topics like Raising Goats, Chickens and Pigs; No-till Gardening and Tool sharpening; Fruit trees and Berries in your yard; How to Compost; and Real Food for all: Cost Saving recipes. Lunch will feature "Stone Soup." If you know the story, the meal will demonstrate that if everyone gives a little, a feast can be made. If they are able, participants are asked to bring a cup or two of pre-washed and chopped vegetables for the soup, or a loaf of bread or some cheese to complement. Following lunch, there will be a video release celebration of Seeds of Solidarity's new short film and a panel with SOL Garden youth leaders. If you can't make the event, do watch this new video posted on www.seedsofsolidarity.org. In the afternoon, participants will choose from facilitated roundtable conversations and share ideas to strengthen community and thrive in tough times. Topics include Food Coops; Food and Energy Preparedness for the Future; Cool Ideas to Fight Hunger, Simplicity; and how Youth can Cultivate Food & Hope. A culminating craft project will end the day, and Food Forum participants may even leave with some seeds or a raffle prize. The Food Forum is an event of Seeds of Solidarity, a non-profit organization in Orange MA, with support from the Orange Innovation Center via their generous contribution of a beautiful space to hold the Food Forum, the North Quabbin Garlic and Arts Festival, the MA Cultural Council Youth Reach Program, and over a dozen presenters giving of their time to provide workshops. Questions about the event can be directed to Deb Habib at 978-544-9023 or deb@seedsofsolidarity.org.

THE LITERACY PROJECT ADULT LEARNING PROGRAMS:

Position Opening: INSTRUCTOR, North Quabbin Site – Orange, MA

We are seeking an Instructor at our North Quabbin site in Orange MA - a short commute from Amherst, Greenfield and more. This exempt position is full-time (35 hours per week) earns a salary based on an hourly rate of \$18.54 and offers full benefits. The start date is February. The Instructor is responsible for teaching up to 20 hours of classes per week to adults and out-of-school youth integrating student goals, computer literacy, and community engagement activities into reading, writing, and math topics as appropriate, including instruction in basic reading and math skills. The instructor is also responsible for lesson planning and curriculum development, initial and on-going assessments of students, providing student counseling as appropriate, and working with and supervising classroom volunteers. Additional responsibilities include recordkeeping, answering the telephone, responding to inquiries and taking messages, conducting new student intakes, and participating in the general upkeep of the site. The Instructor participates in The Literacy Project staff meetings and staff development opportunities.

Desired qualifications include experience and/or education in adult basic education utilizing a student-centered approach, knowledge of strategies for working with beginning readers and/or English-language learners, experience with lesson planning and curriculum development, experience working with diverse groups of people including immigrants, people with learning disabilities and out of school youth, computer literacy, and knowledge of community resources.

The Literacy Project's mission is to provide adult basic education programs and opportunities that support participants to engage meaningfully and equitably in the economic, social, cultural and civic life of their communities. We are a non-profit, community-based organization offering free adult basic education and GED preparation services at our learning centers in Amherst, Greenfield, Northampton, Orange and Ware. We incorporate community development, civic participation, health, computer technology and arts/culture in our teaching. Our philosophy is based in an empowerment model that is learner-centered and participatory.

Please direct your cover letter and resume to the *Search Committee* and submit them via email to jobs@literacyproject.org. We are able to open your email attachments if they are sent in one of the following formats: .doc .pdf .rtf. Please note for your email server requirements: We will send an auto-response from jobs@literacyproject.org to verify our receipt of your application. Resume screening will begin on January 13th and will continue until the position is filled. A background screening, including a CORI, is required for this position. **The Literacy Project is an EOE/ADA employer. We strongly encourage diverse candidates to apply.** For more information please visit www.literacyproject.org

Join the RISE Program to support local middle school students!

Volunteer Opportunities:

Athol Royalston Middle School: Contact: Marcus Collins at riseathol@diasef.org

Volunteer Opportunities for Mahar: Math/science professionals to speak to high school classes, Chaperones for after school clubs, Contact: Danielle Shnaper at dshnaper@rcmahar.org

The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts is pleased to announce the following grant

application cycles for 2010. Activation Fund: Letters of Intent due: April 30, 2010; Applications invited: June 17, 2010; Applications due: August 16, 2010; Grant awards: September 16, 2010; **Health Care and Health Promotion Synergy Initiative:** Letters of Intent due: August 2, 2010; Applications invited: September 16, 2010; Applications due: November 1, 2010; Grant Awards: December 9, 2010.

Please visit the Foundation's website (www.hfcm.org) to review the guidelines for each of these grant categories. Contact Elaine Cinelli at ecinelli@hfcm.org or 508-438-0009 x26 to discuss your proposed project.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The deadline for submissions to the newsletter is always the third Friday of the month prior to the upcoming newsletter. This is a community newsletter so your input, advertisements and announcements etc... are **always** welcomed and encouraged.

Federal Government

(for the North Quabbin Region)

U.S. Senator John Kerry (413) 785-4610

Fed. Bldg, 1550 Main St., Springfield, MA 01101

Website: www.kerry.senate.gov

U.S. Senator Scott Brown(617)565-3170

2400 JFK Federal Building, Boston MA 02203

State Government

(for the North Quabbin Region)

Governor Deval Patrick (617) 725-4005

Office of the Governor

State House, Room 360, Boston, MA 02133

Email: GOffice@state.ma.us

Senator Stephen Brewer (617) 722-1540

Orange, Petersham, Phillipston, Royalston, Warwick, Athol

State House, Room 109B, Boston, MA 02133

Email: stephen.brewer@massmail.state.ma.us

Senator Stanley Rosenberg (617) 722-1532

Wendell, Erving, New Salem

State House, Room 320, Boston, MA 02133

Email: StanRosenberg@state.ma.us

Rep. Chris Donelan (978)-544-2180

Erving, Orange, Athol, Warwick

186 Walnut Hill Rd., Orange, MA 01364

Email: rep.christopherdonelan@hou.state.ma.us

Rep. Anne Gobi (800) 650-4624

Petersham, Phillipston

State House, Rm. 473F, Boston, MA 02133

Email: Rep.AnneGobi@hou.state.ma.us

COALITION MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Coalition is open to all agencies, religious communities, business and industry, government officials, civic groups and other interested individuals and organizations. The Coalition holds monthly meetings (the third Friday of every month except July & August) on relevant topics, facilitates monthly task forces on critical local issues, publishes a monthly newsletter, provides resource materials, networking services and advocacy efforts on behalf of Coalition issues. The North Quabbin Community Coalition is an affiliate of Valuing Our Children. The Coalition is funded in part by the generous contributions of members; the Department of Children & Families' Community Connections; the Central Mass. AHEC; UMass Medical School MASS AHEC Network, Community Coalition for Teens DFC Mentoring Grant; the Boynton Fund and the Athol-Royalston Regional School District.

NQCC Advisory Board

Charlie Winters (President) - Athol Area United Way
Shirley Hebert - (Vice-President) Comm./Business Rep.
Jeanette Robichaud—(Treasurer) Athol Area Y.M.C.A.
Fran Gromelski- Community Transit Services
Donna Liebl - Franklin County Home Care Corp.
Kathleen Hardie - Valuing Our Children
Sharon Tracy - Quabbin Mediation
Frances Graziano - A-R Comm. Partnerships for Children
Pat Roix - Community Representative
Chief Tim Anderson - Athol Police Department
Pat Moore - Community Rep.
Steve Raymond - North Quabbin Chamber of Commerce
Steve Penka - Athol Memorial Hospital
Chief Brian Spear - Orange Police Department
Michael Truckey—Franklin Hampshire Career Center

Task Force Mtg. Schedule

DENTAL TASK FORCE

To Be Announced

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Wed. Feb 24 @ 5 p.m. at the NQCC Office,

427 Main Street, Athol

YOUTH POLICY BOARD (YPB)

Thurs. March 18@ 10 a.m. at Mahar Regional High School

NQ System of Care (Children ' s Behavioral Health Initiative)

Mon. Feb.22 @ 10 a.m. at the NQCC Office 427 Main St. Athol



**NORTH QUABBIN
COMMUNITY COALITION**
427 Main Street
Athol, MA 01331

Mission Statement

**The North Quabbin Community Coalition
is a community-wide alliance committed to
improving the quality of life for all those living
and working in the North Quabbin region.**