The Common Thread

A North Quabbin Community Coalition Publication

June 2022 ~ Volume 37, Issue 10

Heather's Highlights

Hello Readers,

Welcome Summer (well almost!) Mother Nature has not yet caught up, as we seem to go from winter to summer with just a tease of spring here in North Quabbin.

It is June and we are gearing up for our biggest and most eventful event of the year— the NQCC Annual Meeting and Luncheon! We hope that if you have not yet signed up, you consider joining us for a yummy buffet, an award ceremony celebrating those going above and beyond, as well as a recap of all NQCC has done over the past year! Also a heck of a theme too… but I'm still not supposed to leak that information YET.

Our May forum provided an awesome overview of all things happening at Valuing Our Children (VOC). We were introduced to new staff, heard about new and continuing programming and services provided at both The Family Center site and The North Quabbin Family Resource Center and Patch Office, and were encouraged to connect with VOC virtually in a plethora of ways. If you have not yet connected with VOC, please do! You will be glad you did!

Our monthly forums will resume on September 23 with a presentation by Dr. Ruth Potee and Maile Shoul about BHN! Mark your calendars as September will be the only meeting not on the 3rd Friday of the month.

Thank you all for all that you do for our region that is "virtually" amazing (may be a hint to our theme.) See you on June 17th!



Heather Bialecki-Canning
Executive Director

Next Coalition Forum:

Annual Luncheon Celebration—
June 17, 2022

11:340 am—2:00 pm
Athol American Legion
325 Pequoig Avenue
Athol, MA

Early Bird Registration Deadline: June 10

July/August Newsletter DEADLINE: July 11, 2022
Publish Date: July 15
Email details to
admin@nqcc.org

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NQCC
251 Exchange Street
Athol, MA 01331
978-249-3703
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You're Invited

to the

38th Annual NQCC Luncheon Celebration



June 17, 2022

11:30am - 2:00pm

Athol American Legion
325 Pequoig Avenue, Athol

> Seating is Limited <
Early Bird Discount Before June 10!

Visit www.nqcc.org, call 978-249-3703, or email admin@nqcc.org

2022 Summer Camp Scholarship Program from the Foundation for Community Justice

Through fund raising and a generous grant from the Opioid Task Force, the Foundation for Community Justice has a fund of $5000 to provide families in Franklin County and the North Quabbin Region with summer camp scholarships. Funding needs to be dispersed by June 30, 2022. Grants will be made on a first-come, first-served basis until the funds are spent. The application deadline is June 10, 2022.

Local agencies can refer families who are working with them on healing and/or recovery. No documentation about the family's needs will be required, but on the application form the staff of the agency will be required to attest that the family qualifies. Families are to be residents of Franklin County or the North Quabbin Region.

Agency staff and the family will fill out the one-page application and submit it to the Foundation, either by mailing it to The Foundation for Community Justice, PO Box 1266, Greenfield, MA 01302, or by emailing a scan of the application to Lbrown1st@aol.com. Access the application at nqcc.org/pdfs/2022_summer_camp__scholarship_form.pdf. Once the Foundation receives an application, a board member will contact the family about their specific circumstances.

Families will make arrangements directly with the camp of their choice. The Foundation will give the family a check or money order to cover the expense of one week of camp per child, and the family will make the payment directly to the camp(s). For families with more than one child, the Foundation will cover the costs of one week of summer camp per child, up to $500 per family.

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)

Learn how to help people save $30/month on their internet bill!

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) is available to help people pay for their internet service. Signing up to receive a monthly discount on their internet bill can be complicated and will vary depending on which company provides internet service. Many people will need help with applying for this discount.

The ACP is providing free workshops for anyone in the Pioneer Valley who wants to be an "ACP Helper" to assist people with completing the application. The training will help you understand the benefits of the ACP, and if you are interested, to enable you to provide enrollment assistance. ACP Helpers who go through the workshops will get support and access to ACP expertise.

The online workshop will be offered on Friday June 3, from 10:00 to 11:30 am. (For those who cannot attend, a recording will be made available - please visit the registration page and provide your email address.) Register at https://register.gotowebinar.com/rt/1620146199341522957.

For more information, email AllianceForDigitalEquity@gmail.com or visit https://register.gotowebinar.com/rt/1620146199341522957.

BEE Kind Movement/Scavenger Hunt 2022



The North Quabbin Community Coalition has over 100 agencies and businesses in the North Quabbin who have signed onto the Bee Kind Movement. BEEing part of this movement will bring us together as a community to highlight the shared common value of Kindness.

Please join us for a family friendly scavenger hunt that will take place through the nine towns of the North Quabbin beginning on June 1 and will run the whole month of June. Visit our website at nqcc.org/beekind or use the QR code below to access the Scavenger Hunt locations list (not all 100 agencies will be part of the Scavenger Hunt) and a fill-in-the-blanks form.

At the scavenger hunt locations, you will find the Bee Kind Gnome (pictured below) as a symbol of Kindness, as well as a word with a corresponding number that you will use to fill in the sheet to complete the Scavenger Hunt phrase. Example: The word with the #1 Gnome will go in the number 1 spot on the fill-in-the-blank form.

Once you visit all the locations and collect all the words, you will be able to complete the fill-in-the-blank phrase and return it to the North Quabbin Community Coalition at 251 Exchange Street Athol, MA or you can take a picture of it, upload it, and email it to amanda@nqcc.org to be entered into a raffle and receive a participation prize.

Happy Hunting! For any questions, please feel free to email amanda@nqcc.org or call 978-249-3703 and speak to Amanda.



North Quabbin Community Coalition



From the Office of Governor Baker: Infant Formula Shortage

Families across the country, including in Massachusetts are facing challenges accessing infant formulas. These challenges are related to the February recall (https://www.fda.gov/safety/recalls-market-withdrawals-safety-alerts/abbott-voluntarily-recalls-powder-formulas-manufactured-one-plant) of certain Abbott infant formulas, the resulting increased demand for other brands of formula, and supply chain issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Commonwealth is proactively addressing these short-term issues to help families access safe, healthy feeding options for their infants.

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health's (DPH) Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program is a nutrition program that provides healthy foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and referrals to healthcare and other services, free of charge, to Massachusetts families who qualify. Infant formula and specialty medical formulas are available as part of the WIC food package for participants who are not fully breastfeeding and/or need special formula for medical need. WIC participants access their benefits by using their WIC Card (electronic benefits) at more than 800 retail grocery stores and pharmacies across the Commonwealth. Health insurers, including MassHealth, pay for specialty medical formulas in certain cases, such as when a child has allergies or trouble absorbing nutrients.

What Massachusetts is doing to help families during this national shortage of infant formula:
The Executive Office of Health and Human Services, with DPH and MassHealth, has been taking immediate steps with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and other federal agencies and suppliers to help families to access formula during this shortage:

- WIC is working closely with formula manufacturers and retailers to monitor availability of formula and regularly providing that information guidance to local WIC providers.
- On February 20, 2022, DPH requested and received three federal regulatory waivers from USDA that provide additional flexibility in response to the shortages such as: (1) covering other formula brands (other than Abbott) without medical documentation, (2) covering varying, nonstandard container sizes and (3) retailers' ability to exchange recalled formulas purchased with WIC benefits for non-identical but similar formula products.
- As a result, Massachusetts WIC has added 8 more formula brands (including Mead Johnson and Gerber products, as well as a full range of private label/store brand options) and a total of 68 new formula products/can sizes that are now covered by WIC benefits.
- MassHealth has made it easier for members and providers to access medically needed formula by waiving prior authorization at pharmacies for members with a prescription.
- The Division of Insurance (DOI) and MassHealth are directing health plans to waive any prior authorization for formula needed for medical reasons for 90 days to prevent any undue delays in member access to specialty formula.

What can families do?

- If families are experiencing challenges locating formula, they should contact their local WIC office, the 800- number on the back of their WIC Card, or by email to wicinfo.dph@massmail.state.ma.us.
- Participants are encouraged to use the WICShopper smartphone app to identify options available with their specific formula benefit. Contact information, including email addresses, for local WIC offices can be found here: https://www.mass.gov/orgs/women-infants-children-nutrition-program/locations?_page=1.
- Many local WIC programs also communicate with families by text message. Families can turn to local WIC providers, reputable online retailers, distributors, and manufacturers as sources for finding formula. Contact United Way's 2-1-1 at https://nc211.org/ or dial 2-1-1 to be connected to a community resource specialist affiliated with United Way who may be able to help identify food pantries and other charitable sources of local infant formula and baby food. Certain milk banks accredited by the Human

Milk Banking Association of North America (https://www.hmbana.org/) are distributing donated breast milk to mothers in need; please note that some may require a prescription from a medical professional. Find an HMBANA-accredited milk bank near you at https://www.hmbana.org/find-a-milk-bank/.

- Families can contact manufacturers for help in finding formula:
  - o MyGerber Baby Expert: https://www.gerber.com/mygerber-baby-expert
  - o Abbott's Consumer Hotline: call 1-800-986-8540 and urgent product request line
  - o Reckitt's (Mead Johnson) Customer Service line: call 1-800 BABY-123 (222-9123)
- Families using a combination feeding of breast milk and iron-fortified infant formula may wish to consider increasing the frequency of breastfeeding or pumping so that they do not need as much formula. Families can reach out to a local lactation specialist to try and help increase their supply of breastmilk: https://www.zipmilk.org/
- If a family is not able to find formula for their child, they should contact their child's health care provider to determine the best feeding plan. For cow's milk-based formula, a comparable other brand, including generic or store brand, smaller manufacturer, or organic options are generally fine.
- Families who need formula for medical reasons should talk to their health care provider about a prescription to get specialty formula through a pharmacy. Health care providers can write on the prescription an appropriate substitute if a specific formula is not available.

What should families avoid?

- Do NOT make homemade infant formula. Homemade formula recipes can be very dangerous for babies since they have not been evaluated by the FDA and may lack nutrients vital to an infant's growth.
- Do NOT water down formula to stretch it out; it can be extremely dangerous to your baby to do so. Always follow formula label instructions or those given to you by your health care provider. • Toddler formula and plant-based milk alternatives are not recommended before a child's first birthday.
- Do NOT buy formula from overseas, online auctions, or unknown individuals. Storage and shipping conditions may impact formula safety. The American Academy of Pediatrics (https://www.healthychildren.org/English/tips-tools/ask-the-pediatrician/Pages/Is-it-OK-to-buy-imported-formulas-online.aspx) discourages families from purchasing formula online that comes from outside the United States. These products are not regulated by the FDA, and there may be confusion over labeling. The FDA is exploring safe options for importing formula from other counties.

What other resources are available?

- HHS: Helping Families Find Formula: https://www.hhs.gov/formula/index.html
- President Biden's Fact Sheet: https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/05/12/fact-sheet-president-biden-announces-additional-steps-to-address-infant-formula-shortage/
- AAP/Healthychildren.org Resource for Parents: https://healthychildren.org/English/tips-tools/ask-the-pediatrician/Pages/Are-there-shortages-of-infant-formula-due-to-COVID-19.aspx
- FDA Consumer Page on Powdered Infant Formula Recall: https://www.fda.gov/consumers/powdered-infant-formula-recall-what-know
- USDA Infant Formula Safety: https://www.fns.usda.gov/ofs/infant-formula-safety
- FDA Infant Formula: Safety Do's and Don'ts: https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/infant-formula-safety-dos-and-donts
- MA WIC Program: https://www.mass.gov/orgs/women-infants-children-nutrition-program/locations?_page=1
- USDA WIC Breastfeeding: https://wicbreastfeeding.fns.usda.gov/stages
- CDC's Relactation Resources: https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/breastfeeding-special-circumstances/supporting-families-with-relactation.html

Farm to Home Food Program

Join LifePath's New Farm to Home Food Program to receive free and fresh produce, meat, and dairy products on a monthly basis!



This program will be available to:

- individuals who are 60 or older, or adults with a disability;
- individuals who are able to prepare their own meals or have someone who can assist them with meal preparation; and
- applicants who meet an income threshold of not more than $34,400/year for an individual, or $48,958/year for households of 2 or more.



The program runs through March 2023, with monthly food deliveries of approximately $50 worth of food made directly to individual homes.

Call 877-590-2540 for more information.

LifePath
options for independence

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS



Your community needs you in 2022!

As part of the Greening Lord Pond Plaza plan, the North Quabbin Community Coalition, along with the Town of Athol, needs your help. We are looking for photos of anything you would like us to know about the area from Athol Town Hall to Alan E. Rich Environmental Park along Main Street.

Simply take a photo and write a small description about what is shown and how it impacts our downtown corridor. Is it easy to walk through there? Do you enjoy the scenery? Is it accessible? Try to avoid people in the photos, just capture spaces.



To send your photo and description to us, visit nqcc.org/photovoice. The submission deadline is June 15, 2022. Your photos will be used to help better inform planning and improve the area for all.

Visit lordpondplaza.wordpress.com/photovoice for more info on the Greening Lord Pond Plaza project.

Volunteers Needed in Greenfield and Orange!

In Orange:

Every Thursday from Noon to 3 PM

Direct the car line in Orange Armory parking lot to the Orange Food Pantry.

Requires standing on feet and working outdoors.

In Greenfield:

Every Tuesday from 3:45 - 5:45

Help with pantry pop-up and meal distributions.

Need to be able to lift up to 50 pounds and you will be working outdoors.

Contact Melanie, our Volunteer Coordinator, at mhighlander@fccmp.org or 413-325-6631 to find out more

ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

Train for a career in Manufacturing and CNC Machining

Apply early to see if you qualify for funding that pays for 100% of the training .. no cost to you!

Attend an upcoming Info & Application Session to learn more about Advanced Manufacturing Training offered at Greenfield Community College and other W. Mass. schools:

Free Monthly Online One-Hour Info Sessions



Info Sessions Take Place First Mondays every month

3:00 - 4:00 pm on:

Sign up TODAY and reserve a seat!

(GCC Manufacturing Trainings start in January, June and September)

Sign up at: gcc.mass.edu/manufacturing or call 413-774-4361

Veterans, women, unemployed, and other under-represented groups are especially encouraged to apply.

This project is funded in part by an Advanced Manufacturing Training grant awarded to MassHire Franklin Hampshire Workforce Board (MFHWB) by Mass. Executive Office of Housing & Economic Development (EOHED), and by U.S. Dept. of Labor (DOL) Employment & Training Administration WIOA funds.

The Manufacturing Skills Initiative (MSI) is an Equal Opportunity Program. Auxiliary aids and services are available on request for individuals with disabilities. Greenfield Community College (GCC) and MFHWB are affirmative action/equal opportunity institutions. For disability accommodation, please contact the GCC Coordinator of Disability Services (413) 775-1812.

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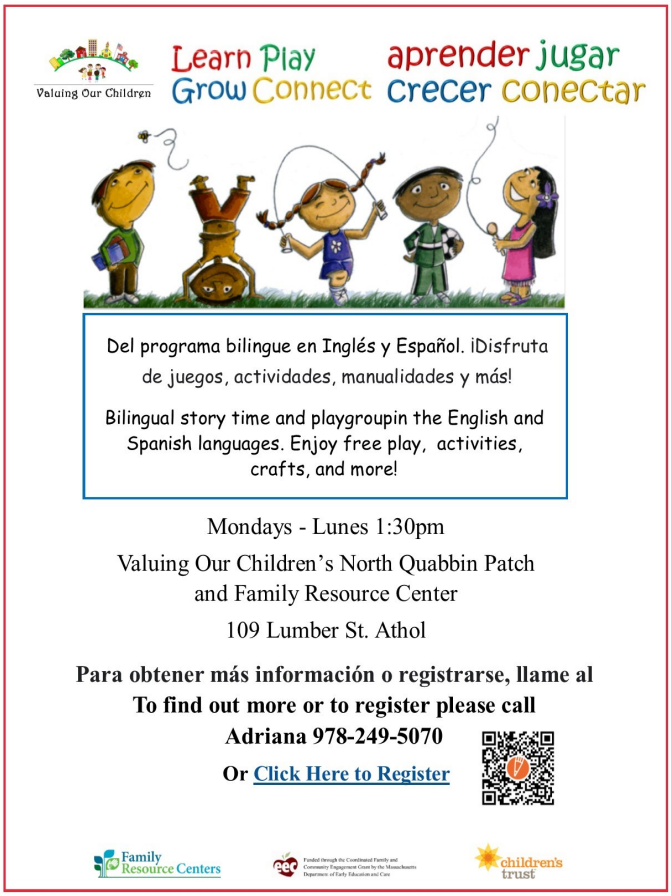
5/6/19

Do you work with individuals or families who could benefit from free training for a good job in advanced manufacturing or a new career as a skilled precision machinist? Please share info for the Manufacturing Skills Initiative (MSI) training programs at Greenfield Community College. The next 4-week Foundational Manufacturing (FM) Training begins on June 27. Participants who successfully complete the 4-week FM training can apply to enroll in the 8-week hands-on CNC Operator training at the Franklin County Tech School machine shop to prepare for a precision machining career.

The entry point to free training is to attend one of our monthly online 1-hour Information & Application sessions. The next info session is Monday, June 6, at 3:00 pm – this is the final opportunity to apply for the 4-week FM training starting on June 27.

Those interested can register for a link to the June 6 Info Session by going to the GCC manufacturing page and filling out an online form at: https://gcc.mass.edu/manufacturing or by calling the MassHire Franklin Hampshire Career Center at 413-774-4361.





Senator Comerford's Library Tour

Senator Jo Comerford has announced that she will be visiting 15 libraries throughout the Hampshire, Franklin, and Worcester district from June to September. The tour will include visits to libraries in Amherst, Ashburnham, Athol, Deerfield, Greenfield, Hadley, Hatfield, New Salem, Northampton, Pelham, Petersham, South Hadley, Sunderland, Whately, and Winchendon.

She'll be celebrating the vibrancy of our region's libraries and the critical role they play in our communities. At each visit, she will share a brief update about her legislative work and then open it up to your questions and concerns about pressing issues affecting your communities.

The full details of each visit are available on her website at senatorjocomerford.org/librarytour.



LifePath's Healthy Living Summer Workshops Are Here!

LifePath
options for independence

In the Healthy Living Department at LifePath, our workshops teach about exercise and provide support from others in a similar situation to overcome our barriers to getting started. These evidence-based workshops provide information and practical skills for people living with long-term health conditions to better manage our health and improve the quality of our lives. Here are the workshops we are offering this summer.

Living Well with Long-Term Health Conditions (Live Video Conference): Topics include healthy eating, relaxation techniques, communicating, goal-setting, problem solving, and more. Fridays, June 10-July 29 (skipping July 1), 9:30 am-12:00 pm.

A Matter of Balance–Managing Concerns About Falls (In-Person at Elm Terrace, 1 Elm Terrace, Greenfield, MA): Teaches practical strategies to reduce the fear of falling and explores medical, behavioral and environmental risk factors for falls, stressing the importance of developing an exercise plan. Mondays, June 6-August 1 (skipping July 4), 1:00 pm-3:00 pm.

Living Well with Persistent Pain (Live Video Conference): Helps participants assume an active role in managing problems specific to chronic pain, including fatigue, frustration, and poor sleep. Topics include appropriate exercise for improving strength, flexibility, and endurance; pain management techniques; goal-setting; and problem solving. Wednesdays, June 8-July 20, 1:00 pm-3:30 pm.

Living Well with Diabetes (Live Video Conference and Telephone Toolkit): Teaches the basics of balancing medication, diet, and exercise; techniques to deal with hyper/hypoglycemia; meal planning; stress reduction; goal setting; problem solving; and more for people living with diabetes or their caregivers. Live Video Conference Workshop: Tuesdays, July 5-Aug 16, 5:30 pm-8:00 pm. Telephone Toolkit Workshop: Thursdays, June 9-July 23, 1:00 pm-2:30 pm.

For more information or to register, contact Andi Waisman, Healthy Living Program Manager, at 413-773-5555, x2297/978-544-2259, x2297 or awaisman@LifePathMA.org.

Employment Opportunities

NELCWIT

NELCWIT has several job openings! If you or someone you know is looking for meaningful work or looking to create social change, NELCWIT could be the place for you! Visit https://nelcwit.org/work-with-us/ for full information on these positions.

- **Crisis Line and Medical Advocate Evening/Overnight, Weekend & Holiday—Work Remotely**
- **Bilingual Domestic and Sexual Violence Counselor Advocate**
- **Crisis Line And Direct Services Advocate—Franklin County**
- **SafePlan Advocate—Orange**
- **Supervised Visitation Monitor—Franklin County Children's Visitation Program**

North Quabbin Community Coalition
251 Exchange Street, Athol MA 01331
www.nqcc.org

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 since 1984.

NQCC June Forum:

Annual Luncheon Celebration

June 17, 2022, from 11:30 am to 2:00 pm

Athol American Legion, 325 Pequoig Avenue, Athol MA—Register at nqcc.org/luncheon

Covid-19 Corner

COVID-19 Isolation and Quarantine Guidance for Children in Child Care, K-12, Out-of-School Time (OST) and Recreational Camp/Program Settings: https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-isolation-and-quarantine-guidance-for-children-in-child-care-k-12-out-of-school-time-ost-and-recreational-campprogram-settings

COVID-19 Isolation and Quarantine Guidance for the General Public: https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-isolation-and-quarantine-guidance-for-the-general-public

