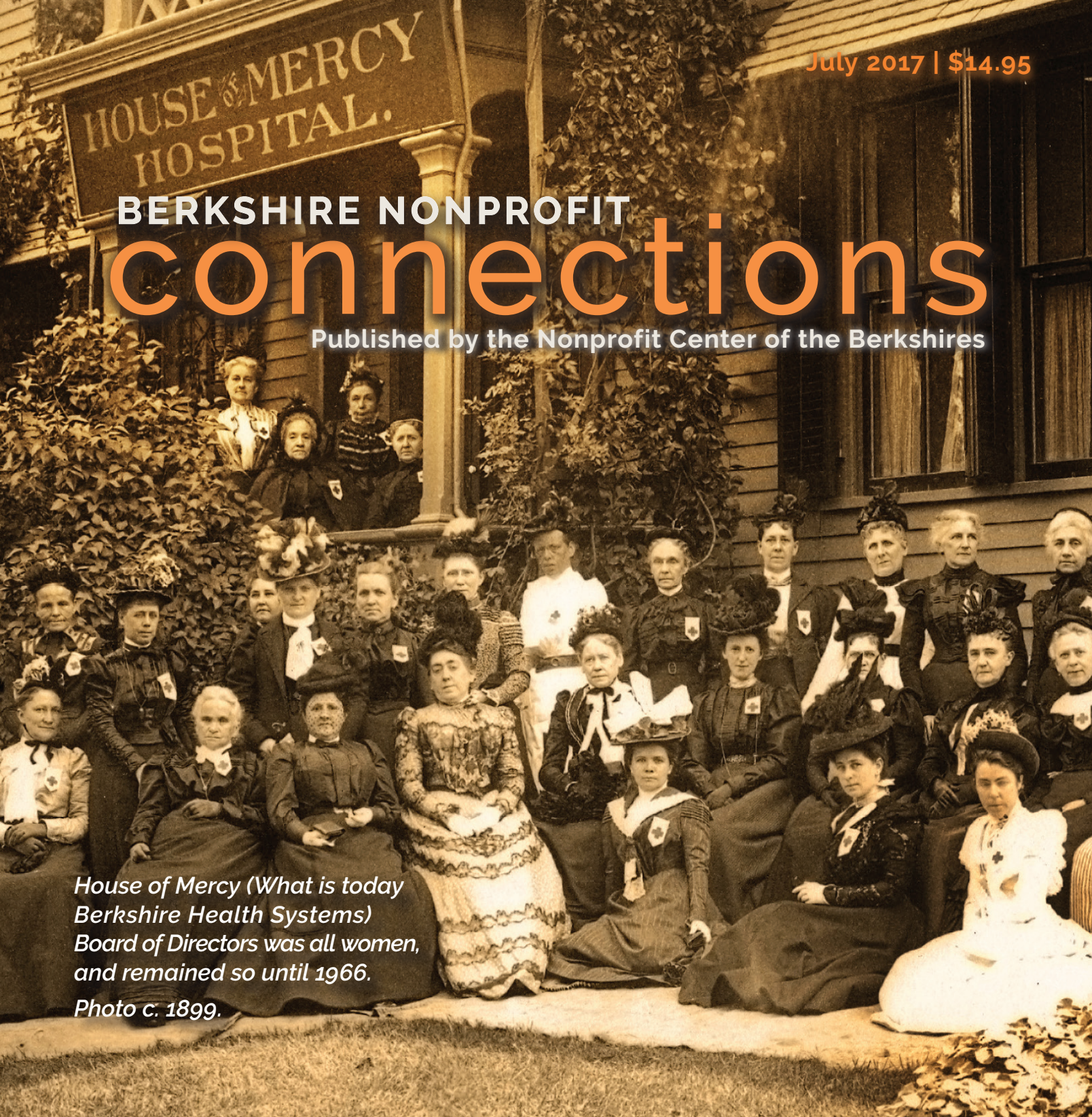


July 2017 | \$14.95

# BERKSHIRE NONPROFIT connections

Published by the Nonprofit Center of the Berkshires



House of Mercy (What is today  
Berkshire Health Systems)  
Board of Directors was all women,  
and remained so until 1966.

Photo c. 1899.

## PROFILE: BERKSHIRE FOOD PROJECT

Hannah Van Sickle

*Valerie Schwarz and a team of volunteers work tirelessly to combat food insecurity in North Adams through their weekday meal program.*

## EIGHT LONG-TERM HEALTH BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING

Claire Shinn

*The impact of volunteerism can be felt in communities of all shapes and sizes. Volunteering does more than boost your mood.*

## THE BERKSHIRES: A RICH CHARITABLE HISTORY

Maxine Carter-Lome

*A look at some of the county's oldest nonprofits, many of which started with nothing more than a vision and a few donors willing to take to risk.*

mobile  
banking

health  
savings

debit  
cards

business  
banking

community

# Together

## Better Banking

connecting people, solutions, and community

- ✓ personal banking & loans
- ✓ business banking & loans
- ✓ mortgages & equity loans
- ✓ community investment



Connecticut  
860.435.9801

Massachusetts  
413.528.1201

New York  
845.877.9850

[salisburybank.com](http://salisburybank.com)



# BERKSHIRE NONPROFIT CONNECTIONS

JULY 2017

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

From The Editor . . . . . 5

Welcome Letter From The Publisher . . . . 7

### VOICES

Jonah Sykes . . . . . 11

Senator Adam Hinds . . . . . 18

State Representative Smitty Pignatelli . . 30

Berkshire County Development Alliance . 36

### PROFILES

Berkshire Food Project . . . . . 8

Berkshire HorseWorks . . . . . 14

Volunteers In Medicine . . . . . 22

The New Kid on the Block –  
Berkshire Baby Box . . . . . 40

Moments House . . . . . 46

### TOPICS

**VOLUNTEERISM:** 8 Long-Term Health  
Benefits Of Volunteering. . . . . 12

**NONPROFIT SECTOR:** The Berkshires:  
A Rich Charitable History . . . . . 26

**MARKETING:** How To Pitch Your  
Nonprofit To The Berkshire Media . . . . 34

**PHILANTHROPY:** Barry Shapiro. . . . . 44

### ARTICLES

NPC Launches Listserve For Nonprofits . 17

The Other Side Of The Coin:  
Business Owners And Philanthropists  
Talk Donation Decisions . . . . . 20

Navigating The Nonprofit Sector:  
How Organizations Can Set Themselves  
Apart To Secure—And Retain—Donors . . 32

Age Friendly Berkshires . . . . . 37

Dance For The Arts –  
A Unique Collaboration . . . . . 42

### DEPARTMENTS

**GOOD ADVICE:** QUALPRINT . . . . . 38

**KUDOS** . . . . . 48

**CLASSY-FIED ADS** . . . . . 50



LIKE the Nonprofit Center of the Berkshires  
on Facebook

#### ON THE COVER:

On Thanksgiving Day 1872, Rev. John Todd called for “A House of Mercy” to offer refuge for the sick and poor; that evening the first donor, Mrs. Mary Sullivan, gave \$100 and helped to launch what today is Berkshire Health Systems. The House of Mercy, the first cottage hospital in the U.S., was opened on January 1, 1873 and served 22 patients in its first year.

Photo: Courtesy of Berkshire Health Systems



# WHERE EXERCISE PRESCRIPTION IS CHANGING LIVES

We provide individuals with an innovative approach to true fitness — the body's ability to distribute oxygen throughout the body while under load — while simultaneously addressing the body's ability to stave off disease through specific movement patterns.

**Founder Joseph A. Alston**

---

Location: 420 STOCKBRIDGE ROAD, GREAT BARRINGTON, MA 01230

Contact: P: 413.645.3344 / [www.exerciseprescribinggyms.com](http://www.exerciseprescribinggyms.com)

# WELCOME LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

I have been connected to the Berkshires since before I was born; my parents, both educators, bought their home in Sandisfield—Windy Hill Van Sickle—in 1971 just before their oldest daughter was born. I spent summers there, picking wild blueberries and catching newts on the sandy dirt road, and returned to build a home next door to my parents the year before my oldest daughter was born. It is a community that, in many ways, has both grounded me and stimulated me to find my own way in the midst of growing up, raising a family, and establishing a career.

I first connected with Liana Toscanini, in the fall of 2004, as neighbors in Sandisfield. Liana had shifted gears from her role in getting the Sandisfield Arts Center up and running, and she was deep in the throes of establishing 501c3 status for a new project afoot in town: Friends of Yanner Park. I somehow found myself in the living room at Liana's eclectic farmhouse planning pancake breakfasts, stuffing envelopes requesting funds, and soliciting auction items. I was a new mom by day, Liana was busy running a retail shop in Great Barrington, and our paths crossed just intermittently over the ensuing years.

Liana and I often vowed to collaborate, but to no avail. She became ensconced in a successful tenure at CATA while I pursued a career teaching English at both public and private high schools, completed my master's degree at Wesleyan University, and raised three daughters. In the fall of 2015, Liana and I met for coffee; each of us was at a proverbial crossroads. She was launching the Nonprofit Center of the Berkshires, and I was navigating a freelance writing career that was in desperate need of cultivation. A scant year and a half later, we reconvened for coffee and the idea of *Connections* was born.

I am excited beyond belief by the intensely important connections that abound: with my own burgeoning interests, with my vast array of "neighbors" throughout Berkshire County, and within the vibrant community where we all convene. This area—these times—reflect the collective vision of everyone who treads here so long as each of us shows up and contributes. Welcome

to this venture, where Liana and I unveil a platform for "Driving Connections" within the nonprofit sector; we invite you along for this exciting ride and look forward to hearing what transpires!

Best wishes,



Hannah Van Sickle, Editor



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Betsy Andrus  
Ronald Bernard (*President*)  
Barbara Campbell  
Maxine Carter-Lome  
Natasha Dresner  
Rachel Louchen (*Secretary*)  
Melissa Lydon (*Treasurer*)  
Denise Roszkowski  
Matt Syrett  
Abbie von Schlegell

## ADVISORY BOARD

Rich Aldrich  
Anthony Blair  
Alice Boyd  
Brittany Brouker  
John Katz  
Joel Millonzi  
J. Scott Rote  
Barry Shapiro  
Richard Stanley



# Reach Your Peak

For business or pleasure, the Berkshire hills are the place to take life to a higher level. And Greylock, an important part of the Berkshires for over 80 years, has everything to take you higher.



Greylock  
Federal  
Credit Union

**Member Owned • Value Driven®**

Locations throughout Berkshire County, MA

**[www.Greylock.org](http://www.Greylock.org)**

Federally Insured by NCUA

# WELCOME LETTER

*Liana Toscanini, Executive Director  
Nonprofit Center of the Berkshires*



**Connections are crucial** to advancing nonprofit missions. Nonprofits run lean with minimal staff so they don't always have the time to get out and make those valuable connections. Personal, business and community connections can happen anywhere – from walking down the street to

the coffee shop, to attending seminars, community events and networking nights, to formally planning meetings with potential collaborators.

At the Nonprofit Center of the Berkshires, I've made it my job to facilitate connections. They might happen as a result of an email or conversation. Or they could occur simply by getting people in the same room, as in the case of our educational workshops. Often, connections are the driver of new programs and products such as "Giving Back," the Nonprofit Center's annual giving guide designed to connect nonprofits with would-be donors and volunteers.

*Connections* fills a gap in our nonprofit sector. There is no printed publication JUST for nonprofits. Given that Berkshire nonprofits support nearly 24,000 full and part-time jobs\*, and generate 1.6 Billion in revenue annually\*\*, there is no question that this vibrant group should have its own vehicle to share information and connect, not only with each other, but also with the community that supports and benefits from them.

My sincere thanks to all our advertising partners who have made this publication possible, gifted editor Hannah Van Sickle, and talented graphic designer Tina Sotis with whom I've worked for 15 years. We all want to feel more connected. I hope this magazine makes that possible in a myriad of ways.

\* *"The State of Non-profit Organizations in Berkshire County" - Stephen C. Sheppard and Kay Oehler, April 2012*

\*\* *Massachusetts Nonprofit Network*

## Berkshire Nonprofit **connections**

### PUBLISHER

Nonprofit Center of the Berkshires

### EDITOR

Hannah Van Sickle

### CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Maxine Carter-Lome

Shannon Crowley

Nichole Dupont

Deborah Elizabeth Finn

Patricia Hubbard

Laura Kitross

Claire Schinn

Jenn Smith

Mike Tucker

Abbie Von Schlegell

### COLUMNISTS

Senator Adam Hinds

Representative Smitty Pignatelli

Lo Sottile

Jonah Sykes

Leah Thompson

### PROOFREADERS

Jo Grossman

Rachel Louchen

### ADVERTISING SALES

Ellen Croibier

Mary Vasquez Slack

### GRAPHIC DESIGN

Tina Sotis

### PRINTER

Quality Printing

**Berkshire Nonprofit CONNECTIONS** is published twice yearly in January and July by the Nonprofit Center of the Berkshires, 40 Railroad Street, Suite 10, Great Barrington, MA 01230. Subscribe online at [npcberkshires.org](http://npcberkshires.org), via email to [info@npcberkshires.org](mailto:info@npcberkshires.org), or by calling (413) 645-3151. Annual subscription fee is \$25. Single copies are available online, at the NPC office, and on select newsstands for \$14.95

# PROFILE: BERKSHIRE FOOD PROJECT

By Hannah Van Sickle

Photos: Berkshire Food Project

The southern gateway to North Adams elucidates how the moniker Steepletown came to be: just past the entrance to Heritage State Park, as Route 8 rises ever so slightly to accommodate a bridge over railroad tracks, five church spires are suddenly visible in the Hoosic River valley. They rise from an enclave of churches, nestled at the base of swollen hills that form the Hoosac Range, and punctuate the once bustling industrial town, whose vacant mills and dilapidated row housing mirror the exhaustion and challenges felt by its steadily declining population. Inside The First Congregational Church of North Adams,

at the corner of Summer and Main Streets, the Berkshire Food Project (BFP) has spent the past 30 years working to fuel optimism in these troubling times.

**Their noon meal, served five days a week, provides both literal and figurative sustenance for the myriad individuals in North**

**County facing food insecurity.**

Inside the kitchen at the BFP, a ten-burner Vulcan gas stove is the focal point. Sheet trays full of tater tots, a towering stack of empty egg cartons, and three-pound canisters of ground coffee are evidence of the traffic in this commercial kitchen where Darlene Ellis is at the helm. Ellis, who has been head cook for five years, explains the proverbial village of volunteers needed to get a meal on the table each day. Duties run the gamut from dicing onions first thing in the morning to serving

soup, to cleaning up. "When people are given ownership of their volunteering, it helps with their wanting to come back. It creates a sense of pride," she says, noting regular groups from Williams College, Miss Hall's School, and Big Y Supermarkets among her regular helpers. The space is pierced by bursts of laughter, coming intermittently from the crew of nine volunteers sporting white chef aprons, as they bustle about beneath the din of overhead fans. Ellis pauses to stir a steaming pot of sausage and bean soup. "[There are] not as many groups as one would imagine," she adds, noting

that she runs a kitchen that invites everyone including those wishing to put in mandated community service hours.

The kitchen scene is juxtaposed by the quiet of the dining room, a sanctuary of sorts, flooded with natural light that spills through the violet, green and golden panes of eight arched

stained glass windows. The BFP was started by Williams College students in 1987 and arose in response to dire needs: the shift in the northern Berkshires from an industrial to a service economy had rendered hundreds of local residents unemployed, underemployed, or tethered to minimum-wage jobs with neither benefits nor security. Its initial funds came from a "meatless meal" program at the College where, for each student who was willing to forgo meat once a month, the College Dining Services donated one dollar to the BFP.




Today, three decades after its inception, this funding remains while the Project is faced with ensuing challenges. According to Valerie Schwarz, Executive Director at BFP, the face of hunger is familiar, albeit largely invisible. Furthermore, it is not necessarily a face that wants to be seen. While the USDA defines food insecurity as the state of being without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food, Schwarz cuts straight to the chase: you don't know where you'll get your next meal, what it will be, and you don't get to choose what it is. This loss of control and dignity often present almost insurmountable challenges.

"There's not much work around anymore," says Tim, a lunch guest who asks that his surname not be used. Tim likes North Adams for its being peaceful and quiet and adds, "[this project] is a godsend—they do a great service." But, as Tim points out, "there are still people falling through the cracks." The town of North Adams was incorporated in 1878; its scant 14,000 residents, according to the 2010 census, make it the least populous city in the state despite being the second largest, after Pittsfield, in Berkshire County. For much of its history, North Adams was a mill town; its position at the confluence of the Hoosic River's two branches provided water-power for small scale industry. North Adams experienced a boon at the turn of the 20th century due to the bustling textile industry; in the post-war years, Sprague Electric Company replaced Arnold Print Works as the city's largest employer. The 1985 closure of Sprague devastated the local economy and left rising unemployment rates and steadily declining population in its wake.

While the arrival of MASS MoCA in 2006 has been beneficial to the city's revitalization, it has not directly impacted those people being served at the BFP. "There are jobs out there, but they pay so little," says Schwarz of the mounting struggles facing the population. She cites lack of transportation and the constraints of minimum wage as secondary to the very real conundrum faced by so many: What if the job doesn't work out and I lose my disability benefits which are tough to get back on? The reality of this situation leaves many, "stuck in poverty...rather than take a risk" on earning a living wage says Schwarz.

A majority of those frequenting the BFP are on some sort of disability, although they shy away from stating that this is a program for the needy. "It is a program for every-



**Your growth  
needs a strategy.  
Let us guide you.**

**Human Resources Consulting  
in the Berkshires & Beyond**

Leadership Development. Employee Relations.  
Communications. Systems. Policy.

.....

Michael Mimnaugh  
203.613.0228 • [mike@highpeakpartners.com](mailto:mike@highpeakpartners.com)  
[www.highpeakpartners.com](http://www.highpeakpartners.com)

HIGH PEAK PARTNERS 



**SAINT JAMES PLACE**  
Great Barrington

body,” says board member and volunteer Jason Morin who goes on to note, “This program is a service that provides for people potentially unable to eat without it. It’s a service that’s there for a need. These people have come to rely upon us,” he adds. Francis E. Fredette Jr. is one of those people. Clad in an Ephs Football sweatshirt, “Frenchie,” age 59, divulges that he has been at Williams College for ten months, working as a chef. When asked about the struggles facing North Adams residents today, he is blunt: “There’s no work, the economy is bad and everything costs a ton,” he says. He goes on to note, “I pedal—six miles to work each way—I choose. I could hitchhike.”

The BFP serves about 80 meals on a normal day. Summer sees an influx of families and children who rely on free and reduced meals at school during the academic year. For the first time, North Adams is “so poverty ridden—every child qualifies for free breakfast, lunch and dinner,” says Schwarz. These meals are available at one location, Brayton Elementary.

**In a staunch effort to protect the privacy of those served, the Berkshire Food Projects takes no state funding.** In return for state funds, the state asks questions, takes data, and this goes against the project’s mission: to alleviate hunger, food insecurity, and social isolation by serving healthy and dignified noontime meals every weekday, by providing education in making good nutritional choices and by helping people access available food resources.

“No one wants to proclaim they are unable to feed themselves,” concludes Morin. And for this reason alone, the Project perseveres despite the challenges that abound. Schwarz is currently searching for office space which, in all reality, will be off site. Furthermore, while the church has generously allowed for the use of their space since the Project’s inception, they are starting to need financial support. Due to this fact alone, “nothing will look different in six months or a year until we get our own space,” admits Schwarz who has been with the BFP for 24 of their 30 years. She goes on to note, “we always need more volunteers—they come and go,” while quickly adding, “I’m all about collaboration—the more we collaborate the better we serve those in need.” And perhaps herein lies the rub: in a town where locals can’t afford the rent and there is no substantial base of economics, something has to give.



*Valerie Schwarz, Executive Director at BFP*

The largely stone and brick facades that line Main Street, including the Hoosac Savings Bank Building, serve as echoes of a distant past. Despite myriad vacant storefronts, the town’s commercial real estate tax rate—second in the County only to Pittsfield—makes it generally prohibitive to new businesses. “Talk about gentrification,” says Morin—citing the historic influx of wealth into deteriorating areas that often displaces poorer residents. Whether this perceived gentrification process is organic or intentional is of no consequence to the disenfranchised. What matters most, thanks, in no small part to full bellies, is the hope of better days to come, made possible by the Berkshire Food Project. 🌱

## ADDITIONAL HELP

If you have a school-aged student in need of breakfast or lunch this summer, simply text “FOOD” to 877877; your zip code will be used to provide information about the closest location for free summer meals. You may also call the USDA National Hunger Hotline at 1.866.3HUNGRY for immediate assistance.

Para más información, llame 1.866.7HAMBRE. Se habla español.

# VOICE: JONAH SYKES

## Mythical Millennial Unicorn

I'm a millennial – someone born between 1980 and 2000 – and I work for a nonprofit. While millennials are overtaking the rest of the U.S. population as the largest generation, research by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission shows some 800 millennials leave the Berkshires every year.

While other global nonprofit leaders are talking about ways to convert millennials from volunteers into activists and then into donors, locally we are struggling not only to find millennials but also to retain them.

Nonprofits are chasing that mythical millennial unicorn to replace their loyal and generous donors who are moving into their fortunate twilight years. Nonprofits want millennials to join their boards, to volunteer with their programs, and to become regular contributors to their organizations.

As the Chair of Berkshire Young Professionals, a program of 1Berkshire, I regularly interact with a few hundred millennials every year. There is a recipe to engaging folks under 40 years old in the nonprofit sector, a recipe backed up by the Millennial Impact Study which essentially states:

- Millennials engage with causes to help others, not organizations;
- Millennials are deeply influenced by the behaviors of their peers;
- Millennials treat their time, money, and assets as having equal value.

I'd add that we also connect through our smart phones; I don't even own a laptop or a computer. We are also extremely college-debt ridden; like, seriously, debt ridden. I'm not kidding. This impacts our ability to be philanthropic until we have a handle on our payment plans. Often we'll engage by volunteering (so long as someone asks us to volunteer).

Millennials volunteer for causes about which they are passionate. Making volunteer opportunities relevant to

these causes is a great way to mobilize participation. Also, we typically hear about these cause-specific opportunities from our peers.

So, create shareable online content. Millennials use their social capital to advocate on behalf of things they care about – namely through sharing (and sometimes, over sharing) this information on social media. It's just one more way they feel they've contributed to the cause.

For nonprofits, this issue will impact our abilities to create social change. Engaging, empowering and retaining millennials in our networks will strengthen the fabric and foundation of our community and help us to turn the curve toward a sustainable future. We just need to get to work. 🌱



**Olde Village  
Monogramming Inc.**  
Custom Embroidery & Silk Screening  
2 Stillwell Street  
Great Barrington, MA  
Phone/Fax (413) 528-3904  
email: [olde.vill@verizon.net](mailto:olde.vill@verizon.net)



**THE TROY BOOK MAKERS**

291 River St. • Suite 180 • Troy, NY 12180 • 518.689.1083  
Visit us online to learn more: [www.thetroybookmakers.com](http://www.thetroybookmakers.com)

The Troy Book Makers is a full-service book printer, helping authors self-publish. Our small staff will work closely with you to design a custom book, professionally and affordably.

If you're ready to let your inner book out, mention NPC and receive \$100 off any new project printing 50 books or more • offer expires 5/1/18 •

# VOLUNTEERISM

## 8 Long-Term Health Benefits of Volunteering

By Claire Shinn

Reprinted with permission from [NonprofitHub.org](http://NonprofitHub.org).

The impact of volunteerism can be felt in communities of all shapes and sizes. No matter the size of the community, though, the impact of volunteerism is always huge.

Wherever it occurs, volunteering exists to help others. But volunteerism's best-kept secret is this: it's good for you, too. We did some digging to find out all the reasons why volunteering rocks.

### 1. BOOSTS SELF ESTEEM

Volunteering helps build a strong safety net for when you're experiencing trying times. With those strong social ties, you're always surrounded by a community that's willing to help you out when times get tough. When you volunteer, you become a part of someone else's safety net, too. By helping others, you'll build a greater sense of trust and self esteem.

### 2. EXPANDS YOUR CONNECTIONS

The relationships you can create while volunteering are endless. You connect to others through volunteering, and if you do it regularly, you can maintain those valuable social networks into the future.

You can make new friends and keep the old by engaging in a common activity like volunteering. With a larger social network, you'll have more resources at your fingertips, which leads to better physical, mental and emotional health.

### 3. MAKES YOU FEEL GOOD

If you've ever volunteered before, you've probably experienced this: volunteering makes you happy!

Researchers at the London School of Economics found that people become happier by volunteering more. When you give your time to others, you attain a personal sense of accomplishment, which accounts for some of the positive effects that volunteering has on your mood.

There's a threshold to reaping the full benefits of volunteering, though. In order to soak up all the positive effects of community service, you need to set aside some time for it. Volunteers who commit at least one or two hours every week reap the fullest benefits from their service.

### 4. CONTRIBUTES TO A LONGER LIFE

Volunteering does more than boost your mood—it also has effects on your physical well-being. Volunteers encounter greater longevity and less frequency of heart disease. Volunteers may be at a lower risk for memory loss, too. The social interaction can significantly reduce the progress of Alzheimer's and other types of dementia. Happier and healthier life? Count me in.

### 5. GIVES PURPOSE

As people get older, they experience a higher risk for isolation. Volunteering combats that statistic by adding a sense of purpose to your life. The same goes for people with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder,

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and other mental illnesses. No matter who you are, there are plenty of ways to give your life new meaning by helping others.

### 6. COMBATS STRESS

Volunteering goes beyond just being something fun to do; it decreases stress, too. Studies on the "Happiness Effect" of volunteering show that you become happier the more you volunteer. When you assist others, your body releases dopamine in the brain, which has a positive effect on how you feel. Volunteers also experience lower levels of depression.

### 7. GIVES A GOOD EXAMPLE

Volunteering as a family is a great way to teach important lessons to your children. Kids are always



learning from the example you set for them, so make sure it's a good one! You can show the impact of volunteering through your actions. By giving back to the community, you can lay the foundation for service in the years to come.

Volunteering doesn't just have to inspire kids, either! You can share your experiences through programs like Reward Volunteers, which lets you connect with other volunteers, find new opportunities and win prizes for your community service. Through sharing your service, you can inspire others. Bringing smiles to other volunteers will bring one to you, too.

## 8. TEACHES NEW SKILLS

Live a little! Volunteering gives you the opportunity to explore new skills and interests that you might not get to enjoy otherwise. You can broaden your horizons while helping others at the same time.

If you're looking to change things up a little, you can also try out a new job or role without having to commit to something long-term. Volunteering gives you the inside scoop on how some organizations operate, and it can hook you up with some helpful references if you're serious about making a job switch. 🍃

### NICHOLAS L. PARSENIOS ATTORNEY AT LAW



17 MAIN STREET, SUITE #5  
(P.O. Box 734)

LEE, MASSACHUSETTS 01238



EMAIL: NLPLAW@YAHOO.COM



PHONE: (413) 243-6901

FAX: (413) 243-6989

## BREAKING THE ICE: A GUIDE FOR FIRST-TIME VOLUNTEERS

Many individuals who want to actively contribute to their communities are unsure where to begin. Understanding what motivates you to engage in meaningful work is an important first step toward making a difference as a volunteer. Begin the process by asking yourself the following questions:

- ***What causes move you to action?***

This will help you to understand WHY you want to volunteer.

- ***Do you have time for a finite project or to serve on a board?***

This will help you to identify the level of COMMITMENT you are able to make.

- ***What skills and strengths do you bring to the table?***

This will allow you to envision the IMPACT your involvement will elicit.

In addition to the list of volunteer opportunities at [www.berkshirenonprofits.com](http://www.berkshirenonprofits.com), two unique opportunities exist in Berkshire County for volunteers of retirement age: the **Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)** provides recruitment, training and placement of persons 55 years of age and over as volunteers in their respective communities. The program enables volunteers to use their time and lifetime experience to meet new people, help others, be productive and creative, grow personally, explore new careers and make a difference through community service assignments. The Berkshire County chapter of RSVP, located at 16 Bartlett Avenue in Pittsfield, can be reached at (413) 499-9345.

**The Senior Citizen Property Tax Work-Off Abatement Program** allows a city or town to offer property owners age 60 and older the opportunity to volunteer services to the city or town in exchange for a reduction in property tax of up to \$1,000. At present the City of Pittsfield, in addition to towns across Berkshire County, offers this program designed to help lessen the burden of local property tax payments. Visit your town website to learn more about this opportunity.

*- Abbie von Schlegell*



## PROFILE: BERKSHIRE HORSEWORKS

### Therapeutic Programs For Those At Risk

*By Hannah Van Sickle*

*Photos by Berkshire HorseWorks*

*Portions of this article have been reprinted with permission from The Berkshire Edge.*

Anyone who knows Haley Sumner can attest to her enthusiasm; for all intents and purposes, she is a mover and a shaker. When I caught up with the founder of Berkshire HorseWorks (BHW) in the aftermath of an early summer thunderstorm that tore through the Berkshires, after several days of mounting humidity, she was quite literally on the move. "This has been my life for

the last two months," she exclaimed. "I bought a house, with seven acres, and I'm moving BHW to Patton Road in Richmond," she announced with just a hint of exhaustion. In the wake of the storms, and for the sake of her horses, she was forced to reschedule. This move, one that requires a police escort for the program's five horses to travel the 2.5 miles down Route 41 to the new facility, is indicative of Sumner's community outreach and penchant for collaboration. Sumner's move to "the ranch," after hours spent pulling stumps in the pasture and raising the tree canopy, comes just in time to celebrate the nonprofit's first big gala and the culmination of much success. **"The Derby"—the nonprofit's first experiential gala—promises to be a night of sophistication with a side of bourbon, hotbrowns,**

**music, horses and of course fabulous hats. In other words, a little slice of Kentucky in the Berkshires. The event, slated for Saturday, July 15th at 5:30 p.m., will be held at the Berkshire Equestrian Center** in a nod to both the nonprofit's genesis and the locale remaining a satellite location.

The move into her own space is what Sumner has coined, "a natural progression." She recalls having been invited, over martinis at the Old Mill in South Egremont, to "come use the underutilized space" at the Berkshire Equestrian Center in Richmond. Carl Dunham, owner of the 27 acre, state of the art, multi-disciplinary equestrian facility has been a huge champion of BHW since the beginning. While he has been leasing space to Sumner for her programs, she made the decision

to consolidate resources in order to move forward and see as many people as possible. Sumner's goal, from the start, has been "To become a real sanctuary for kids and families and veterans who are struggling." Berkshire HorseWorks, founded in the summer of 2013, brings the powerful EAGALA Model of Equine Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP) and Equine Assisted Learning (EAL) to the community. Sumner, an EAGALA Certified Equine Specialist for 9 years, is quick to point out that this is not a riding or horsemanship program: all legs are on the ground, human and horse side by side, ready to learn. These unique programs offer individuals the tools to cope, heal, compete, challenge, communicate, lead, empathize and thrive in today's world.

In the waning days of August 2016, I had a chance to see Sumner—a self-described California cowgirl with a Montana heart—in action on the compound in Richmond where four months earlier she had launched a pilot program with inmates from the Berkshire County House of Corrections (BCHC). On this particular late summer day, while the distant rush of truck traffic could be heard on Route 41, three inmates clad in sunny yellow t-shirts and drawstring waist pants arrived to address their in-house therapeutic goals in an alternative setting. The three men, along with two support staff from the Sheriff's Office, were the second of two groups from the BCHC to take part in an eight-week program with Sumner. "Horses become a metaphor for various people, situations or things in [the participants'] lives," explains Sumner who, along with colleague Dom Sacco, illustrates the importance of the team approach espoused by EAGALA. Dom Sacco, a school adjustment counselor at Monument Valley Middle School in Great Barrington, has worked with Sumner since the inception of the program, which is about to celebrate two years as a non-profit. The facilitators' goal for this population? To build off of each session, "[and to] move on safely, quietly, [while] making good decisions and avoiding bad choices," Sacco says.

Each week inmates are engaged in a series of exercises that aim to address treatment goals. On the afternoon I participate, the men are given a task: to build their first day out of prison, using a series of props, while incorporating the horses (symbols of the supports in their lives). As the men create their scenes, there is a return to the previous week's session, and the group is prompted to share what they learned. "[I got] confirmation that it's going to be OK," says Carleton, sporting a smile that masks the challenges he is facing, including having left behind a trio of sons to navigate his absence. "My voice was heard by [Smitty Pignatelli] being here," says Aaron who goes on to express an idea: "It is all about change. Thoughts lead to actions

which lead to behavior which lead to habits which define character. And this becomes your destiny," he adds, a fitting comment for someone who, in six days, will be free after serving six months of a seven month sentence, his 19th time at BCHC.

"I know where I want to go, it's just a means of getting there," Aaron says, holding up his props: a pair of plastic camouflage binoculars, a sharpie marker, four plastic easter eggs, and a single green die. Aaron explains his first day out to me, pointing to a neat line of props. "Binoculars are for perspective; if you change how you see the world, the world changes," he explains. "Eggs are for seeds; you reap what you sow. I want to get back into my kids' lives on their terms," he goes on to acknowledge. As for the single die, "I'm not going to gamble [with what I have] so much anymore," he says. "A failure to plan is a plan for failure." As for his support system? "Whatever you throw my way, I'm going to take," he says. "I've been trying to grab whatever I can...by means of support, [in order to] start the amends process."

The inmates, dealing with a host of challenges ranging from sobriety, anger management and mitigating the effects of trauma, find support in the arena that complements the therapy each receives at BCHC. Through a series of 90 minute sessions, Sumner and Sacco are able to bring to life, in a controlled environment, everyday scenarios that can be daunting for these men who see their rehabilitation as being hampered by a lack of tools. Sumner's program was designed to enable success, and the root approach





is teaching the “concept of observation and perception,” Sumner says. “To observe clearly [is to] see behaviours, rather than ascribe meaning [to actions],” she explains. “We always use clean language so we are not leading,” Sumner continues, pointing out that making assumptions, particularly about behavior, is what often leads to trouble in any relationship.

The experiential modality being espoused by Berkshire HorseWorks gets to the heart of the matter: one equine facilitated session is equal to four talk therapy sessions. As a result, these two modalities are used in conjunction with one another. When sharing space in the arena with horses, individuals get called out if there is incongruity between one’s speech and actions. While intimidating at first, it is this type of “aha moment...[that] helps facilitate transformation and change,” says Sumner.

At BHW, the emphasis is on non-mounted activities which incorporate horses and require individuals or groups to discover and apply certain skills. Participants learn about themselves and others by connecting with the horses and then observing and discussing the team dynamics,

behaviors, and patterns that arise. What happens in the arena is often a metaphor for one’s life, family or group interaction. For Carleton, the horses represent family; for Hal, they are a symbol of his faith, a constant that keeps him firmly footed in reaching his goals: to get back to his son and to living. And these men are just one of myriad groups growing within the literal and figurative arena at BHW. The Rex Foundation, created by members, family and friends of the Grateful Dead, granted \$5,000.00 to fund an eight-week empowerment program for young girls coming from abusive homes and foster care. Since opening its doors, Berkshire HorseWorks has provided services to 300 clients, most of whom are suffering from mental and behavioral challenges.

“My hope when starting this business was to be able to help organizations and our community concurrently. If we can offer a new way for people to honestly examine themselves and their impact on team dynamics while facilitating change through effective communication, increased problem solving and creative thinking, then that will lead to more productive and healthier relationships all around,” said Sumner.

Sumner’s dream is slowly becoming actualized. “The Ranch” will help facilitate Sumner’s ability to work with people on multiple fronts, and help individuals to continue their relationship with the horses beyond the 8 and 10 week programs at the core of BHW. Most notably, many of the individuals who have been nurtured at Berkshire HorseWorks will be integrated into maintaining the environment, what Sumner sees as a “self-contained environment.” Her new facility will allow for meditation hikes with horses through the fields and in the woods, there will be a contemplative pond, an organic vegetable garden, and yoga with the horses. The Berkshire County Sheriff’s office sent a supervised community service team to dig posts and put up fences for Sumner, and over the course of her transition more than 11 inmates contributed time and labor. This part of Sumner’s vision—one whose foundation is built upon team building and forging strategic partnerships to develop programming that makes sense—all show her propensity for promoting inclusion and cohesion in a world where divisions often rule the day. 



# NPC LAUNCHES LISTSERVE FOR NONPROFITS

## ATTENTION BERKSHIRE NONPROFITS!

*We now have our own "listserve" – an online forum where nonprofits can share news and ideas, post job descriptions and professional development opportunities, and get instant feedback to burning questions.*

*The purpose of the listserve is to facilitate connections and communication across our great geographic divides. Hosted by Mission Based Massachusetts (MBM), MBM Berkshires will be moderated by the Nonprofit Center of the Berkshires.*

*It's easy to join. Send a blank email to [berkshires-subscribe@missionbasedmassachusetts.net](mailto:berkshires-subscribe@missionbasedmassachusetts.net). Read more about the value of a listserve from MBM founder, Deborah Finn.*

**Q. You're the founder of Mission Based Massachusetts, a moderated email "listserve" for the nonprofit sector. Whatever possessed you?**

**DEB:** It all started with a series of conversation with Tim Gassert, who is now the corporate secretary and director of web communications at the Boston Foundation. We worked together on the first online version of the Boston Indicators report, and found ourselves marveling at the **total lack of a convenient online forum that would allow nonprofit professionals in the region to compare notes.** My first thought was that this was a project that should be under the umbrella of a well-regarded organization with a mission that included the well-being of nonprofits in Massachusetts. I shopped it around for a couple of years to those organizations without success, and reluctantly concluded that this would have to be the work of a lone nut. With apologies to the memory of Jerry Garcia, I'd paraphrase him this way: "Someone's got to do something, and it's just incredibly pitiful that it has to be me." Not that I went about it in a state of self-pity! It was really exciting to bring together nonprofit professionals in this way.

**Q. What do people value about this service?**

**DEB:** Several things. One is that it's really easy to belong.

Anyone can join by sending a blank email to [mbm@missionbasedmassachusetts.net](mailto:mbm@missionbasedmassachusetts.net). Moreover, there's no need to go to a separate web site to see the latest news; it all comes to the email in-boxes of those who are interested. Another value is that it provides what I call an **instant focus group**, allowing those who care about mission-based organizations to share feedback, ideas, referrals, news, and resources quickly. Yet another is that it **fosters collaboration and sense of community across organizational lines.**

**Q. Were you surprised by any of the postings or uses?**

**DEB:** Yes, I was surprised at how quickly nonprofit professionals made it a place to post job announcements. I had not anticipated that, and of course I was delighted that members of the group were shaping it to their needs.

**Q. Any words of wisdom for our new Berkshire-based users?**

**DEB:** Here's a tactical suggestion: the best thing that you can do to help your online group flourish is to post the kinds of items that you would most like to see circulated to the group. Whether it's a question for discussion, a news item, a story of success or failure, a job announcement, a resource, or a request for recommendations - don't wait for someone else to get the ball rolling! **Start right now, posting what interests you.** In addition, I have a strategic suggestion: keep thinking about how you can match resources with needs in order to make your community (and the entire world) a better place. Look for ways to make your online group serve that purpose. 🍏





## VOICE: SENATOR ADAM HINDS

### Nonprofits Play a Central Role in Berkshire County

I used to direct **Pittsfield Community Connection**, a program to reach the City's youth most at risk of becoming involved in violence or crime. We worked with city government and neighborhood groups in Westside and Morningside to win a \$5 million grant to move young men towards counseling, education, and jobs.

It was clear to me then, and later at **Northern Berkshire Community Coalition**, that the best and lasting solutions to the toughest problems in our region come about when nonprofits, government, educational institutions, and businesses combine forces. A few months into my job as state Senator, the need for us to work across sectors has never been clearer.

We can take this approach, for example, when it comes to improving the public transportation system in Berkshire County. During the campaign and since I was sworn in, I've heard from many residents who are frustrated that there's not better public transportation to get them to and from work, especially if they work at night, or if they're not near established bus routes.

Compared to our eastern neighbors in Massachusetts, Berkshire County has relatively few people – approximately 128,000 living across 946 square miles. This requires innovative thinking and creative

approaches to solving real problems; thankfully I'm seeing nonprofits, all levels of government, and education coming together to focus on improving public transportation. I've been working with **Berkshire Bridges – A Working Cities Pittsfield Initiative** to improve public transportation options in Pittsfield, with an eye towards helping the City's poorest residents. I've also teamed with MCLA's Design Lab to work on new and innovative public transportation solutions that can be deployed throughout the County. These are exciting partnerships given the times in which we find ourselves. We can now take advantage

of technology that improves how we can gather and interpret data. Furthermore we can exploit the trend toward the greater sharing of information. I've read about design competitions elsewhere in which teams of people have studied public transportation data and have come



*Senator Adam Hinds with Pittsfield Community Connection*

up with concepts like a "frustration index," which measures capacity, delays, and speed of a bus system. I'm hopeful my office can be part of sponsoring such a competition that will lead to cost-effective solutions.

We have challenges ahead, to be sure. The state's tax revenues are down by nearly a half a billion dollars in the current fiscal year, and the state's Revenue Commissioner is warning legislative leadership to consider reducing the revenue predictions for Fiscal

Year 2018, which begins on July 1st. The news out of Washington is even tougher. President Trump's fiscal year 2018 budget is short on detail at this stage, but non-defense discretionary spending is likely to see a sizeable cut. Some predict federal dollars coming to Massachusetts could be reduced by 15 percent.

Community-based nonprofits are largely funded through philanthropy and public dollars. My colleagues and I in the Massachusetts Senate debated our Fiscal Year 2018 budget in late May – these revenue concerns are troubling to me as I think about the programs we fund and the people they serve. I know the importance and the seriousness of the work you do. In my first several months in office, my staff and I have met with the leaders of dozens of nonprofits in our region and I look forward to seeing first-hand more of what you do.

In Berkshire County, for-profit businesses play central roles in improving our quality of life; nonprofits often take on the toughest problems we face, the ones without market solutions. Experts refer to these cases as “market failure.” This failure, however, presents opportunity, and this opportunity is one of the aspects of my new position as state Senator that excites me. I’m optimistic we can find solutions to the hard problems facing Berkshire County, from improving education and public transportation, to creating good jobs, and keeping more of our young adults from moving away. With a deliberate approach and combined effort from nonprofits and for-profits, from all levels of government, and from schools and colleges we will find efficient and sustainable ways to better our lives here. There’s much work to be done, and I encourage you to join in these important efforts. 🍃

*State Senator Adam G. Hinds (D- Pittsfield) represents the 52 western communities of the Berkshire, Hampshire, Franklin & Hampden District in the Massachusetts Senate. He serves as the Senate chair of the Joint Committee on Tourism, Arts & Cultural Development and as Senate vice-chair of the Joint Committee on Economic Development & Emerging Technologies. This is his first term in office.*

**SHOPPERS' GUIDE**  
**Our Word of Mouth Reaches...**

# 57,000+ READERS

**DIRECT MAILED EVERY WEDNESDAY**  
**52 weeks a year**  
**PLUS 3,500\***  
copies available for pick up at key locations

\*CIRCULATION NUMBER VARIES DUE TO SEASONAL PICK-UP LOCATIONS

<b>MASSACHUSETTS:</b>			
Ashley Falls	435	Tyringham	40
Alford, N. Egremont		W. Stockbridge, Alford	825
Great Barrington	3,772	<b>NEW YORK:</b>	
Glendale	100	Copake	855
Housatonic	750	Copake Falls	224
Mill River	250	Hillsdale	1,530
Monterey	420	Millerton	1,365
East Otis	425	<b>CONNECTICUT:</b>	
Otis	475	Canaan	1,000
Sandisfield	310	East Canaan	118
Sheffield	1,375	Falls Village/Canaan	1,753
Southfield	310	Lakeville	1,120
South Egremont	400	Salisbury	820
South Lee	170	Taconic	106
Stockbridge	850		

141 West Avenue, Great Barrington, MA  
 ads@shoppersguideinc.com  
 ShoppersGuideInc.com  
 413.528.0095 (f) 413.528.4805

**Plus available for PICKUP AT OVER 90 KEY LOCATIONS!!**



**Oakdale: Home for special needs adults who strive for independence and thrive in community.**

**REFERRALS WELCOME - LEARN MORE TODAY**

Rachel Kalin, Executive Director  
 oakdalefoundation.org  
 (413) 528-2346 kalin.rachel@gmail.com

# THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN

## Business Owners and Philanthropists Talk Donation Decisions

*By Nichole Dupont*

Nonprofits make great efforts to reach new donors, to keep existing donors, and to walk the line between being pushy and being passionate. All the while their goal is to maintain transparency. But what really inspires donors to come forward? One might like to think it is passion for the cause and the organization, and it is. Yet, this just nicks at the surface of what donors look for, and feel comfortable with, when they decide to cut a check and go all in.

“Corporate giving is all pretty interesting stuff,” says **Barbara Bonner**, a longtime philanthropy advisor to CEOs and nonprofit boards. “It largely comes from marketing budgets, of course interest in the organization, and the mission of the nonprofit that a donor is looking at. Corporations are not anonymous donors, they do want to be thanked and they should be.”

Being able to provide leverage is a key component to attracting donors. Businesses want the community to know that they are actively supporting efforts in their own backyard, so they will be naturally more inclined towards organizations that have a streamlined strategy that places donors in the public eye—newsletters, e-blasts, website mentions, social media status, press releases, hosting an event. But attracting donors—either individuals or businesses and corporations—isn’t just about aligning missions and slick pitches. There is potency, good and bad, in the ‘ask.’

“I do tend to donate to organizations that have business development people who are friendly,” says **Allen Harris, CEO of Chief Investment Officer of Berkshire Money Management, Inc.** in Pittsfield, MA. Harris has, throughout the last

decade, supported a wide variety of local projects and organizations including Animal D.R.E.A.M.S., ArtsWalk, and Shakespeare in the Park to name a few. “People who have the time to sit down and talk with me about their mission, to educate me about what they are doing. People who are genuine. I’ve had folks come to my office, and pitch me, and make it seem like they are doing me a favor. That’s a huge turnoff for me.”

There are many ways to approach a donor, but according to **Jill Cancellieri, Director of Philanthropic Services at the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation**, nothing quite compares with a face-to-face interaction, and developing long term relationships.

“At a certain level, an ask has to be made in person. Stewarding donors is very important,” she says. “They don’t want to hear from you only when you’re asking. It’s really essential to acknowledge the gift as soon as possible and to report back, to share with them how that gift made a difference.”

The most effective method for making a request, at least according to **Barbara Watkins**, longtime owner of Evergreen in Great Barrington, is to ask in person.

“I donate items to every nonprofit that asks me, although occasionally I miss a deadline if the ask is an email or a mailed request,” says Watkins. “Everyone is different and I realize it’s not always possible, but I appreciate when someone contacts me in person or on the phone and I schedule a date for them to pick up my donation item. That assures that I get it done! Since I do a lot of soliciting for different nonprofits, I am aware of how hard it is to approach businesses for donations, so I try to be supportive of everyone.”

In a region where there are more than 1,000 registered nonprofits often drawing from the same pool of individual and corporate donors, there is a certain level of difficulty in steering away from a ‘hard sell.’ Of course, every mission is sacred (at least to those



carrying out the mission). However, just as Berkshire nonprofits are entirely unique entities, so too are the people and businesses who support them. Recognizing that donors have lives is critical.

"Philanthropy doesn't exist in a silo. Many of them are board members, staff members, community members," says **Maeve O'Dea, Program Director at Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation**. "You need to consider that when a donor comes forward, that this is part of their overall wealth management. Funders want to see efficiency and sustainability."

"When any organization approaches a donor, you have to do twice as much listening as talking," says Cancellieri. "Listen to what's important to them. Sometimes donors get stressed over giving."

Giving is supposed to be a joyous occasion. Yet, the bulk of the responsibility for putting donors at ease lies on the shoulders of organizations looking for funding. Donors are smart, they research, they weigh out risk, and they are particularly aware of efficiency and impact.

"Of course, I need to have a certain degree of familiarity with the work that's being done," says Harris. "But beyond knowing that there is a need for funding is knowing where the funding is going. Knowing that money is not being 'wasted' so to speak. There are many organizations out there where dollars go to profit for the people in top admin positions, even though they are still categorized as nonprofits. I tend to lean towards smaller local charities because there tends to be a greater degree of impact with those dollars."

Harris points out that a larger national or even global event or issue (or natural disaster) can "trigger a local response" that encourages donors to look within their community to address these issues on a regional scale, where the impact can be seen almost instantly.

Not all of the time, but often, depending on the issue/organization, donors can attract other donors. Bonner says that one "angel who will speak out" can encourage others to do the same, which is especially beneficial for smaller, quieter nonprofits.

"This is a community with a very well-defined donor network," she says. "On the local level, someone like Jane Iredale stepping forward to a certain cause gives credibility so that other donors feel that they can step forward as well."

Ultimately, where donors decide to place their dollars, boils down to passion.

"There are all kinds of ways that donors can and want to be generous," says Cancellieri. "They really do want to be engaged. They are people who feel passionate about their community. They don't just want to give to a nonprofit, they want to address an issue."

"If someone needs help, let's help them," Harris says. "It's that simple in my mind." ☺


**Berkshire Net Results**



*Dedicated to serving the needs of the nonprofit community providing database support, training, and report writing. Donor Management Systems a specialty.*

**Amy E. Chin**    413.441.9220  
[amy.chin@berkshirenetresults.com](mailto:amy.chin@berkshirenetresults.com)  
[www.berkshirenetresults.com](http://www.berkshirenetresults.com)

Bring this Ad for a 1hr Free Consultation



## Lunch and Dinner Daily

420 Stockbridge Road  
Jenifer House Commons  
Great Barrington, MA 01230

**(413) 528-8282**  
[www.barringtonbrewery.net](http://www.barringtonbrewery.net)

# PROFILE: VOLUNTEERS IN MEDICINE

By Hannah Van Sickle

Two cardboard boxes sit on a corner table in an office at Volunteers in Medicine Berkshires; the first holds an original Rappaport-Sprague stethoscope, the second a Littman Classic II stethoscope. While such instruments are not unusual in a medical clinic, their presence becomes symbolic when considering the role VIM Berkshires has played, since its inception, in listening to the needs of the community. How to care for an underserved and at risk clientele has driven the mission of Berkshire County's only free medical clinic for the past 13 years: to provide access to quality healthcare for income qualified, uninsured residents of the Berkshire region in a respectful and caring manner.

The stethoscope has been an enduring part of practical medicine—for more than 200 years—as an acoustic device for assessing the function of systems incapable of being seen. In many ways, the rampant number of both uninsured and underinsured individuals in Berkshire County has, historically, been largely invisible. In 2004, VIM Berkshires was established in response to the audible and persistent murmurs symptomatic of a dysfunctional healthcare system in Berkshire County. Collaboration among a dedicated group of doctors, business people and community volunteers led to the establishing of Volunteers in Medicine Berkshires, the 30th VIM clinic nationally, the first in New England and the only one in Massachusetts.

The model for care at VIM Berkshires seeks to effect change by serving those most vulnerable in terms of health. The result? The only program in Berkshire County that provides absolutely free care under one roof—inclusive of medical, dental, mental health, optometry, acupuncture, diabetic and nutritional counseling and extensive case management services. Volunteers are quite literally at the heart of VIM. A group of dedicated

volunteer physicians and nurse practitioners, about one third of whom are retired, provide 3,500 annual visits to a growing pool of patients. "What gets people engaged is they can care for individuals the way they want to care for them," said **Ilana Steinhauer**, FNP, and Director of Medical Services at VIM Berkshires.



*Steinhauer with patient Photos: Studio Route 7*

Save for a core paid staff, VIM is run by more than 150 volunteers which, Steinhauer has found, "gives people purpose." It also allows for a welcoming and comforting environment where patients feel safe and well-cared for. Take Sarah, for instance, a VIM Berkshires patient. While her story is her own, it is not unique. She shares, "On the day I walked into VIM Berkshires I was a sick and hopeless version of my former self. After decades of domestic abuse, drug use, mental illness and zero medical or dental care, I

was physically and mentally broken and had a mouthful of diseased teeth that had literally taken away my smile. Due to the caring and dedicated commitment of the people who make up VIM, I am now on my way to a self-sufficient life and a bright future." While such testimonials simply scratch at the surface of the stories unfolding at 777 Main Street in Great Barrington, it is the power of personal connection that fuels continued involvement.

**Arthur Peisner**, Chairman of the Board at VIM Berkshires since June of 2007, chronicles his involvement over the past decade. Peisner—whose career in senior management spanned Ideal Toy Corporation, General Mills and Lionel Trains—first became involved with VIM when asked to facilitate a two-day planning session for a group of people trying to organize a free clinic. Peisner recalls, "it was the people themselves—their energy, enthusiasm, intelligence and commitment—that first attracted me and induced me to become more deeply involved." Peisner's decision to serve as Chairman

is testament not only to the allure of this organization but also its track record at effecting change. Of his involvement Peisner says, “although I knew nothing about health care, I couldn’t resist.” Peisner articulates the tangible effects of work being done at VIM Berkshires through the following scenario: “For me, the most impactful stories occur every day. What to most of us seems ordinary – sick visits, back pain, dental cleanings, nutritional or behavioral health counseling – is life changing for those who otherwise would not be able to see a doctor, dentist or therapist until they showed up in the emergency room with much more serious conditions. That is the central focus of what we do.”

VIM Berkshires serves patients, age 19 to 64, who are uninsured and lack access to public programs. In short, “active members of our community who don’t have access to health insurance,” according to Steinhauer. These individuals are part of our local economy,

working in restaurants, landscaping, beauty salons, housekeeping, the creative and performing arts, farming, personal services, carpentry, construction, and light industrial jobs. Some are part-time workers and some

are small business owners. All are economically distressed and struggling, and typically work multiple jobs and experience erratic living situations.

Lack of affordable healthcare, according to Steinhauer, “inhibits the ability [of an individual] to advance in all other arenas.” The simple requirement of a physical exam prior to starting a new job

becomes prohibitive without health insurance—and the ripple effects are pronounced. Even in Massachusetts, where “universal” coverage was enacted in 2006 under the Commonwealth Care program, there are still huge gaps. For instance, 20% of VIM’s target patient population is uninsured for at least part of the year, while 5% is uninsured all year. Furthermore, the Massachusetts

**In the absence of tools to address chronic pain, taking a pill is often a first resort; through the innovative efforts of VIM Berkshires, pain pills might soon be a last resort.**



**JOIN  
OUR  
TEAM**



**Positive Experiences  
& Advocacy by  
positive leaders**

**[bfair.org/applynow](http://bfair.org/applynow)**

Medical Society's Annual Workforce Study found a "critical" shortage of primary care physicians in Berkshire County, an ongoing problem that shows no sign of significant easing in the near future. In short, even with health insurance it can be very difficult to find a doctor who is taking on new patients. VIM Berkshires is working to fill these gaps.

In 2016, VIM Berkshires joined forces with Berkshire Health Systems to spearhead a project aimed at addressing the opioid epidemic in Berkshire County. The



Integrative Pain Management Program was designed for local patients suffering from chronic pain. Participants were provided what Steinhauer calls, "comprehensive non-opioid pain management using a holistic model of integrated care," which included acupuncture, massage, mental health counseling, nutrition advice and support group participation. The results were staggering. After eight weeks of services at the VIM Berkshires clinic, patients reported a 49% improvement in function and 39% improvement in pain. These numbers are so significant that a Phase II Pilot is currently underway; in addition, Governor Baker's office and the Department of Public Health have approached VIM Berkshires to investigate their model of care. This type of outreach has the potential to help curb an epidemic that, in the first three months of this year alone, claimed 479 lives in Massachusetts. In the absence of tools to address chronic pain, taking a pill is often a first resort; through the innovative efforts of VIM Berkshires, pain pills might soon be a last resort.


In myriad ways, VIM Berkshires is vital to the infrastructure of Berkshire County. "We want people to sign up [for health insurance]" Steinhauer says, "but we don't want them to struggle," she clarifies. "More and more people in this

county, despite what it looks like on the outside, are not able to afford health insurance," Steinhauer says. "In order to create a sustainable Berkshires, we need to make sure the community is cared for and healthy," she adds, which is no small feat. Perhaps most noteworthy is the fact that the earning potential in Berkshire County is not growing, but the cost of living is. Median Household Income has stayed constant since 2009, hovering around \$49,000, while the state has increased by 5.2% to almost \$68,000 according to the US Census, American Community Survey 2010-2014. This stagnancy is further visible in the residents with



*Photos: Studio Route 7*

SNAP benefits which has increased by 67% since 2009. In short, 12.2% of the population in Berkshire County—or 15,746 individuals—is living in poverty. What does this mean for the community at large? It is imperative that individuals accept the invitation to support organizations such as VIM Berkshires in making healthcare accessible to all.

VIM Berkshires has successfully mobilized a group of volunteers to provide an invaluable service in our community. This translates to 2,500 patients seen, in 30,000 office visits for a combined total of 10 million dollars in free care over the past 13 years. They are fully funded by individuals, donors and campaigns—receiving no government or taxpayer dollars—which results in fundraising being an ongoing challenge. "[We have] no idea what the future holds, but the need [for healthcare] will continue to rise," says Steinhauer. "More people are not going to become insured under Trump," she adds. And so, in the spirit of the stethoscope's role in auscultation, VIM Berkshires continues to lead the way by both listening to—and seeking to remedy—the healthcare needs of those most at risk among us, as a means of contributing to the health of all of us. 

*If it matters to you,  
it matters to us.*



**TOOLE**  
INSURANCE

Insuring the Berkshires Since 1939

413-243-0089 info@tooleinsurance.com  
tooleinsurance.com



BISTRO - COFFEE SHOP - SPIRITS  
293 Main Street Great Barrington, MA - 413.528.5505

"I LOVE non-profits,  
small businesses &  
the Berkshires."  
~Dawn Stanyon

professionality  
CONSULTING

Understand your brand. Tell your stories.  
Grow your business.

professionalityconsulting.com



OSHER  
LIFELONG  
LEARNING  
INSTITUTE

Join over 1,000 of the smartest, most engaged  
& active people over 50 in the Berkshires.

Browse our catalog  
online at  
berkshireolli.org

Request one at  
olli@berkshirecc.edu  
or 413-236-2190



BERKSHIRE  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Partners in Education with Williams College  
Bard College at Simon's Rock  
Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts



Courses in Arts • Science • Literature • Current Events  
Trips • Speakers • Socials & much more!

# NONPROFIT SECTOR

## The Berkshires: A Rich Charitable History

By Maxine Carter-Lome

Charitable acts of giving date back as far as 2500 BCE (or 4,500 years ago), which is around the time the Egyptians were building the pyramids. In the U.S. charitable giving dates back to colonial times, but the concept of "nonprofit organizations" as a formal "sector" dates back only to the 1970s. In fact, over 90 percent of nonprofit organizations currently in existence were created since 1950.

Here in the Berkshires, our community is home to over 900 registered nonprofits according to the Massachusetts Nonprofit Network; this figure reflects a concentration higher than the state of Massachusetts, and more than double that of U.S. Nonprofits per resident. The number of nonprofits in Berkshire County is an important part of our region's economic growth and community culture, as is philanthropy.

Here is a look at some of the county's oldest nonprofits, many of which started with nothing more than a vision and a few donors willing to take a risk. Over the years, these organizations and their supporters made major contributions to the quality of life in the Berkshires that continue to define our community today:

**The Berkshire Agricultural Society**, founded in 1811 by **Elkanah Watson**, was the first organization to provide agricultural education to American farmers by sponsoring agricultural fairs which, while offering some amusements, had as their central purpose the education of farmers in the latest scientific agricultural techniques and the use of the most modern equipment. Watson, a businessman who had made and lost several fortunes by the time he was 50, scored a sudden and unexpected success raising Merino sheep on a farm he bought near Pittsfield, Massachusetts. Eager to show the results of his success, he organized

26 of his neighbors and staged the Berkshire Cattle Show in 1810 to display prize sheep. In 1811, he and the others organized the much broader Berkshire Agricultural Society, which absorbed the cattle show and became an annual event.

**The Laurel Hill Association**, founded in 1853, is the oldest continuously operating village improvement society in the United States. **Mary Hopkins Goodrich** founded the organization with the help of generous citizens who shared her mission to "do



*Will and Agnes Gould established Gould Farm in 1913 as a healing community in the Berkshire hills.*

such things as shall serve to improve the quality of life and of the environment in the town of Stockbridge." In that first year, along with a team of volunteers, Mary Hopkins Goodrich raised more than one thousand dollars and planted more than 400 trees. The society transformed Stockbridge from a rough, shabby village (characterized by a muddy main road full of ruts and roaming cows, a bare town common, and a dreary cemetery full of brambles and weeds) into the handsome, orderly town now admired by visitors.

Today, Laurel Hill is responsible for the continuing stewardship of over 460 acres of parkland and miles of trails and pathways along the Housatonic River and throughout the hills surrounding Stockbridge, MA.

On Thanksgiving Day 1872, Rev. John Todd called for "A House of Mercy" to offer refuge for the sick and poor; that evening the first donor, **Mrs. Mary Sullivan**, gave \$100 and helped to launch what today is **Berkshire Health Systems** (BHS). **The House of Mercy**, the first cottage hospital in the U.S., was opened on January 1, 1873 and served 22 patients in its first year. In 1874, churches, sewing societies, and other civic organizations raised \$5,874.22 to erect a new building on the "Gore," the triangle bound by First, North, and Tyler Streets in Pittsfield. From that point on, donations and financial support from individuals and organizations have raised funds for BHS to introduce outpatient clinics, a nursing program, modern facilities and equipment, additional medical practitioners, new departments, the Berkshire Visiting Nurse Association, and ambulance services among other requirements for BHS to keep pace with the needs of our community. Today, BHS is the region's leading provider of comprehensive healthcare services.

**Berkshire Children and Families** has been a source of stability for our communities since 1887, when it was first incorporated as the Union for Home Work. Throughout its history, BCF has been sensitive and responsive to the needs of children and families. Just as importantly, it has been a leader in showing the way forward with innovative services, effective collaborations, and system development ideas that have made BCF a highly regarded organization locally, regionally and statewide. Today, the cornerstones of BCF are early education and care, parenting and family skill-building, as well as foster care and adoption services.

**The Christian Center** is the oldest human services organization in the Berkshires, serving our community for more than 120 years. The Christian Center was

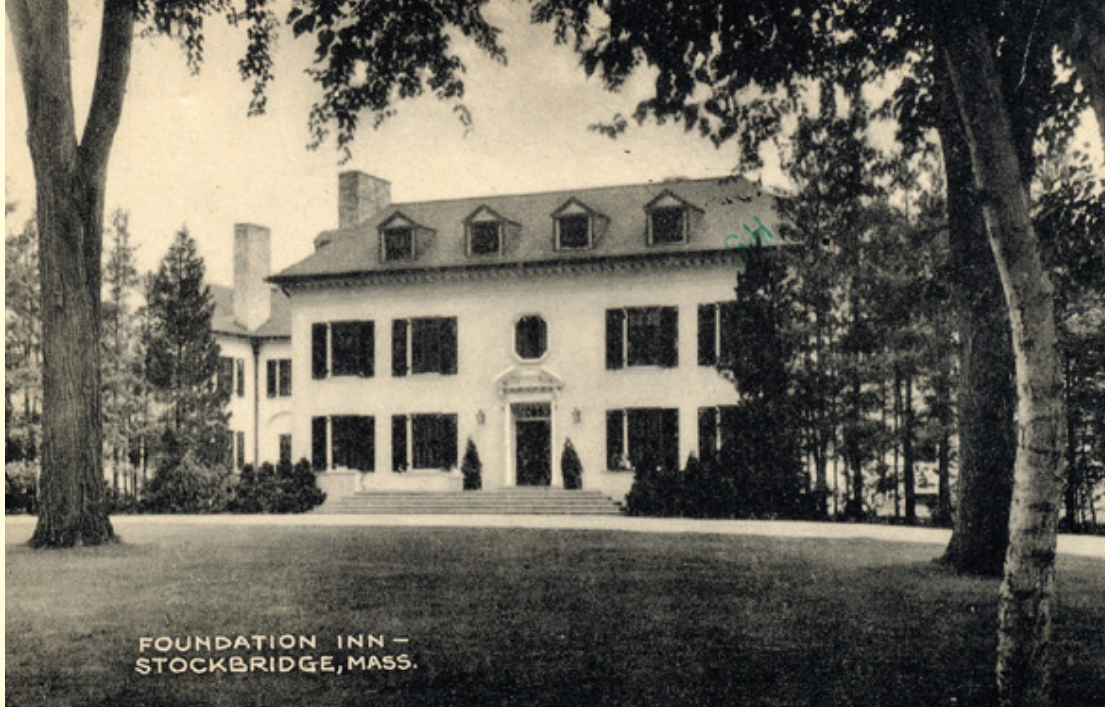


*Berkshire Museum c. 1930*

started by a group of Pittsfield businessmen at a meeting in January 1892. They agreed that some sort of religious work with an emphasis on Sunday School would meet a need in the then Northwest corner of the city. An inter-denominational program grew and prospered to the point where a more formal organization was desirable. A Charter was issued in 1906 for the **"Epworth Mission" of Pittsfield, Massachusetts**, a nonprofit corporation. The Epworth Mission developed numerous programs to meet the social needs of the day. Today, the organization's mission, "Uplifting the community by empowering individuals with dignity, nourishment, and hope," focuses on feeding people in need and teaching them how to improve their lives with better nutrition.

In 1903, **Berkshire Museum founder Zenas Crane**, inspired by such institutions as the American Museum for Natural Science, the Smithsonian, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, decided to blend the best attributes of these establishments in a new museum for the people of Western Massachusetts. Crane, the third-generation owner of Crane & Company, a paper manufacturer that was and continues to be the official supplier of paper to the U.S. Treasury, actively sought out art and artifacts for Berkshire Museum, and encouraged the development of collections that would bring home to the Berkshires a wide cross-section of the world's wonders. With his vision as his mission, Berkshire Museum became a "window on the world." Since 2013, Berkshire Museum has been part of a select group of museums, cultural, educational,

*Continued on page 28*



*Austen Riggs*

*Dr. Austen Fox Riggs founded the "Stockbridge Institute for the Psychoneuroses" (renamed "The Austen Riggs Foundation" in 1919)*

and arts organizations that share the Smithsonian's resources with the nation.

### **Will and Agnes Gould established Gould Farm**

in 1913 as a healing community in the Berkshire Hills of Massachusetts. They welcomed guests who were experiencing emotional and psychiatric vulnerabilities to join them in Monterey, working on the farm and sharing the joys and challenges of daily life in a kind, healthy community. Soon psychiatric hospitals in Boston and New York were referring patients to Gould Farm for treatment. Today, Gould Farm provides targeted services to individuals with a serious mental illness, including schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and depression. Licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health as a Residential Treatment Program, Gould Farm's work program has grown to include social enterprises such as the Harvest Barn Bakery and the Roadside Café.

Since 1907 the **Austen Riggs Center** has been an integral part of Main Street, Stockbridge. While recuperating from tuberculosis at his home in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, New York internist, **Dr. Austen Fox Riggs**, began to expand his interest in psychiatry and psychology. Influenced by the mental hygiene movement of the time, he developed his own system of treatment based on talk therapy combined with a structured routine of daily activities

that emphasized a balance between work, play, rest and exercise. He founded the "Stockbridge Institute for the Psychoneuroses" (renamed "The Austen Riggs Foundation" in 1919). Today, the Austen Riggs Center is a therapeutic community, open psychiatric hospital, and center for education and research, specializing in the long-term residential treatment of psychiatric disorders.

**Berkshire United Way** was founded in 1924 as the local Community Fund organization to improve the quality of life in Berkshire County by mobilizing resources to address community priorities and create sustainable change. Berkshire United Way continues to strive to achieve the community aspiration of making Berkshire County a community of hope and opportunity where every individual and family lives, works and thrives by investing in strategies that work toward positive progress in each of the three priority community issues, considered the building blocks for a good quality of life: early childhood development, positive youth development and financial stability. 🍃

*Maxine Carter-Lome is president of Weathervane Enterprises, Inc., a publishing company that specializes in print-based design and production projects for Berkshire County nonprofits. She is also the publisher of the Journal of Antiques & Collectibles, a national monthly magazine for dealers, collectors, and enthusiasts.*

# SANDISFIELD ARTS CENTER



*"a hidden gem in the Berkshires"*

Presenting Community Theater,  
Music, Educational Forums, Art Exhibits and  
Preserving Massachusetts' Nationally  
Recognized Former Rural Synagogue

5 Hammertown Road, Sandisfield, MA

413 258 4100

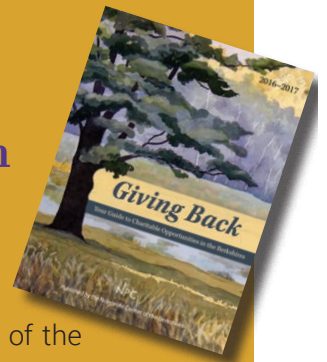
[info@sandisfieldartscenter.org](mailto:info@sandisfieldartscenter.org)

[www.sandisfieldartscenter.org](http://www.sandisfieldartscenter.org)

# GIVING BACK:

Your Guide to  
Philanthropic  
Opportunities in  
the Berkshires

(digital & print)



This fall, the Nonprofit Center of the Berkshires will again publish "Giving Back," NPC's directory of nearly 1000 nonprofits listed by category, designed to connect donors and volunteers with nonprofits. **Listings are free for all Berkshire County nonprofits.** This annual publication also includes full-page profiles of nonprofits, articles, advertisements, inspirational quotes, and more. If you are interested in participating with an ad or profile page, visit [npcberkshires.org](http://npcberkshires.org) or call (413) 645-3151.

## LAURIE M. WERNER

STRATEGY AND FUNDRAISING FOR  
NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

34 WILLIAMS STREET  
PITTSFIELD, MA 01201  
413.281.1576

[lauriemwerner@jwdp.com](mailto:lauriemwerner@jwdp.com)

## WE SUPPORT BERKSHIRE COUNTY NONPROFITS WITH CREATIVE ACTION

GRAPHIC DESIGN &  
PUBLISHING SERVICES

- Event Programs
- Annual Reports
- Special Publishing Projects
- Great Ideas!

WORKING WITH BERKSHIRE COUNTY  
NONPROFITS FOR OVER 15 YEARS!

Maxine Carter-Lome  
Weathervane Enterprises, Inc.  
[maxineconsults@aol.com](mailto:maxineconsults@aol.com)  
(413) 329-6554



**evergreen**  
Fine American Crafts



Jewelry • Pottery • Judaica • Blown Glass • Wearable Art

291 Main Street, Great Barrington, MA  
413 528 0511 [info@evergreencrafts.com](mailto:info@evergreencrafts.com)  
[www.evergreencrafts.com](http://www.evergreencrafts.com)



# VOICE: STATE REPRESENTATIVE SMITTY PIGNATELLI

I remember when I was raising my own children: diapers are expensive, and babies go through lots of them. In the first year of a child's life, he or she will go through over 2,700 diapers, and those diapers are not cheap. One year's supply of

diapers can add up to over \$936/year, and that's an enormous expense for parents who are already struggling to make ends meet.

Unfortunately, while the **Women, Infants and Children Nutrition Program (WIC)** and the **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** provide food for low-income families with children, there is no state assistance to specifically help parents buy diapers. This fact is simply unacceptable. As every parent knows, diapers are a necessity.

When I talk to people about the immense need that families have for diapers, people often respond with, "Well, why don't these parents just use cloth diapers?" The reality is that most of the families who are struggling to pay for diapers do not have washers and dryers in their homes, and most laundromats prohibit the washing of cloth diapers. This leaves the only remaining option, beyond hand-washing dirty diapers, the purchase and use of disposable ones.

This niche is currently being addressed by some incredible nonprofits: **The Berkshire Community Diaper Project** supplies diapers at food pantries across Berkshire County including North Adams, Adams, Pittsfield, Lee, and Great Barrington. (see story page 36) In addition, the relatively new organization, **Berkshire Baby Box**, provides diapers in their supply box that goes out to new mothers in Berkshire County. The people who work every day to collect and supply these diapers are doing incredible work through their organizing to help families meet one of the most basic of needs. Simply put, these local nonprofits have stepped in where Massachusetts has not stepped up.

Inspired by their work, I have filed a bill this session which would require that the Department of Public Health study the feasibility of the state providing some sort of diaper benefit for struggling families. If this legislation, H. 3517, becomes law, the Department of Public Health will study the extent of the need of diapers for low-income families and the most efficient way of providing those diapers. This bill is just a first step; once we know the most cost-effective way of distributing diapers, we can find the money and make sure that every baby from the Berkshires to the Cape has his or her basic needs met. For now, I'm immensely grateful that we have the Berkshire Community Diaper project and Berkshire Baby Box. 🍃

*Smitty Pignatelli is currently serving his eighth term as State Representative to the Fourth Berkshire District. He can be reached at [rep.smitty@mahouse.gov](mailto:rep.smitty@mahouse.gov) or (413) 637-0631.*

*Always something new to see!*



THIS SUMMER

Inventing America: Rockwell and Warhol

James Warhola: Uncle Andy and Other Stories

Learning from the Masters: The Famous Artists School

NORMAN ROCKWELL MUSEUM

NRM.org • Stockbridge, MA • 413.298.4100  
open daily • terrace café • studio



# NAVIGATING THE NONPROFIT SECTOR

## How Organizations Can Set Themselves Apart To Secure—And Retain—Donors

*By Shannon Crowley, CPA, MSA, BlumShapiro*

Despite the Great Recession and the long process of economic recovery of the 2000s, the nonprofit sector has become one of the country's fastest-growing industries. According to the National Center for Charitable Statistics' most recent research, the United States is home to more than 1.5 million registered nonprofit organizations—marking a nearly 20 percent increase over the last 10 years, a timeframe in which many businesses in the for-profit sector have struggled.

This rapid growth is certainly a sign of success, and—as nonprofits employ nearly 11 million American workers and contribute roughly \$887 billion to the national economy—it is difficult for anyone to argue against the economic value of a thriving nonprofit sector.

However, the unprecedented rate at which new organizations are being created is also creating a challenge. The nonprofit sector is more crowded than ever before, making it very difficult for organizations to secure—and retain—their donor bases.

On a local level, there are 33,000 nonprofit organizations registered in Massachusetts—each competing with one another for precious dollars from a limited pool of individual donors, corporate foundations and other fundraising sources. In a recent cover story in *The Boston Globe*, many industry experts argue the field of nonprofit organizations in Massachusetts is simply too large to sustain.

However, the organizations themselves, and the tens of thousands of Massachusetts residents employed by nonprofits, are doing everything they can to prove those experts are wrong.

### AND THAT STARTS WITH DONOR RETENTION.

The Association of Fundraising Professionals reports that, on average, donor retention rates across the nonprofit sector are around 43%, meaning less than half of an organization's 2016 donor base will

contribute. In order to grow in a competitive nonprofit environment, organizations have to find a way to land recurring donors. To do this, nonprofits are employing several strategies. For the purposes of this article, we'll focus on three:

### DIFFERENTIATING THEMSELVES FROM OTHER, POTENTIALLY SIMILAR ORGANIZATIONS

Many potential donors or grant-awarding foundations would love to support every deserving cause that asks for and needs their help. Realistically, though, donors need to choose between hundreds, if not thousands, of similarly operating organizations to which they can lend their financial support. Nonprofits, especially nonprofits working to support similar demographics, are under enormous pressure to set themselves apart to attract new sources of funding. It's never been more important for a nonprofit to have a very clear, very specific mission.


### INVESTING IN "FUNDRAISING INFRASTRUCTURE"

Fundraising success is entirely beholden to the amount of time and resources organizations are willing to invest. In order to succeed in today's hyper-competitive nonprofit sector, organizations must invest in fundraising professionals, such as high-ranking development officers, and fundraising "infrastructure," such as top-notch technology and donor databases.

The clear, specific vision makes an organization attractive to donors. Development professionals and in-depth donor databases help organizations find them.

Increase efficiency by streamlining their accounting functions.

Back-office financial work is crucial to the long-term success of the organization. That said, it's also very time-consuming. As many organizations are investing significantly more time to their fundraising operations,

some nonprofit leaders are finding ways to take complex financial paperwork off their desk so they can focus on the organization's core competencies. This may entail creating new jobs for a full-time accounting team, or hiring a third-party financial organization to take on those responsibilities. 



*Shannon Crowley, CPA, MSA, is an Accounting Manager at BlumShapiro, the largest regional business advisory firm based in New England, with offices in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. The firm, with over 400 professionals and staff, offers a diversity of services which*

*includes auditing, accounting, tax and business advisory services. In addition, BlumShapiro provides a variety of specialized consulting services such as succession and estate planning, business technology services, employee benefit plan audits and litigation support and valuation. The firm serves a wide range of privately held companies, government and nonprofit organizations and provides non-audit services for publicly traded companies.*

## JOIN THE NONPROFIT CENTER OF THE BERKSHIRES!

**Membership is open to all nonprofits and businesses interested in supporting the Berkshire nonprofit sector.**

NPC Membership opens a door to benefits and resources that strengthen your nonprofit organization:

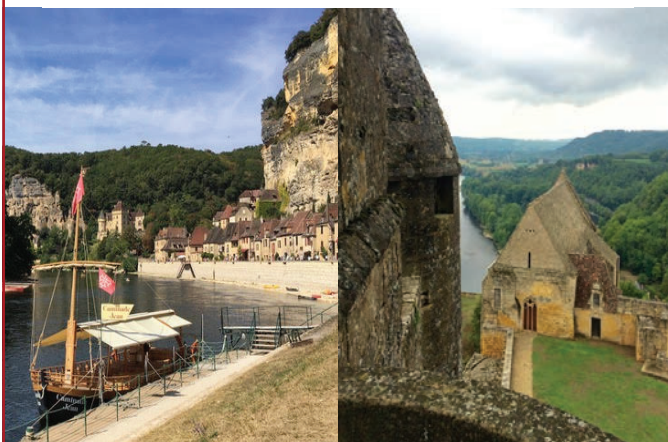
-  1 hour free consultation
-  1 free workshop
-  Social media promotion
-  Discounted profile page in "Giving Back"
-  Discounts on educational workshops
-  Call anytime for assistance or information

*Affordable dues based on your annual revenue*

**More information at [npcberkshires.org](http://npcberkshires.org)**



**NEW VIEW  
TOURS**



**2017/2018  
TOURS  
FORMING  
NOW!**

**TOURS  
DESIGNED  
WITH YOUR  
INTERESTS  
IN MIND:**

Art, Hiking, History,  
Wine Tasting, Yoga,  
Photography,  
Just Friends!

**OUR  
FAVORITES:**  
South America &  
Southwest France

**CHECK  
OUT**  
[NewViewTours.com](http://NewViewTours.com)



**CUSTOM  
DESIGNED  
TRAVEL  
ITINERARIES  
FOR NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATIONS,  
FAMILIES  
AND FRIENDS**



## How to Pitch Your Nonprofit to the Berkshire Media

*By Liana Toscanini, Nonprofit Center of the Berkshires*

Nonprofits in the Berkshires can count our local news outlets among the greatest supporters of our work. They choose to share our stories and announcements as a commitment to our community, helping connect us to the public and to each other. Reporters in our area are not much different, however, than any other reporters. They're busy, they work on deadline, and they have specific "beats."

### GET TO KNOW YOUR MEDIA OUTLETS

The first step in establishing a good relationship with the media is to familiarize yourself with each outlet or publication in which you'd like to be featured. Listen to the radio on the way to work, subscribe to your local paper so you have an awareness of the hot news stories and issues facing our community, and pick up free magazines in popular distribution spots. Check out how other nonprofits are featured, and make note of the writers whose styles inspire you.

### CREATE A PRESS LIST

Organize your press list by publication frequency so you can calendar out the release of information. You wouldn't send notice of an event six weeks from now to a daily newspaper – there's just too much going on between now and then so your news could get lost in the shuffle. Generally you will send information 4-6 weeks in advance for monthly publications like *HomeStyle Magazine* or *Artful Mind*, 3-4 weeks in advance for weekly publications such as *The Country Journal* and *Rural Intelligence*, 2 weeks in advance for daily news outlets such as *The Berkshire Eagle* and *Berkshire Edge*, and 1-2 weeks in advance for radio and television outlets.

Identify the correct editor for your particular sector or story by studying your target publication, searching their web site for the "masthead" or list of staff writers, or calling the main number and asking which editor would be most appropriate for your news story.

As a rule to avoid confusion, try not to pitch a story or submit a press release to more than one editor at a publication. Make sure to update your press list every 6-12 months.

### THINK LIKE THEY DO

As you begin to correspond with editors, make notes about their overall preferences and operations. Do they often request a photograph or send their own photographer? Do they get back to you right away or should you make sure to give them plenty of advance notice? What is the exact format of their calendar listings so you send only the appropriate information?

Reporters are tasked with covering the news and making it interesting to their readers. What can you offer them in this regard? They will almost always get background information from your web site so make sure your history and program descriptions are up-to-date. A good photograph is worth the proverbial thousand words. If you have a great photo of your mission in action, submit a high-resolution image (300 dpi) with a concise caption and photo credit (Name of photographer). Horizontal photographs are preferred.

### KEEP IT SHORT

You can pitch a story idea two ways: via informal personal email (better for exclusive or targeted stories) or more formal press release (for general announcements). Printed publications don't have endless amounts of space so keep your press releases to one page (under 300 words). Use the inverted pyramid style to format your release, putting the most important information in the beginning, just in case they only have room for a small amount of text. Answer the "who what when where why" in the first


paragraph, add a little background and a quotation in the second paragraph, provide more detail in the third paragraph, and finish up by providing action information such as web site address or phone number to call. Don't use subjective adjectives; leave the editorializing to the editors! Google "how to write a press release" for additional dos and don'ts and proper format.

## COMMUNICATION VEHICLES

Most reporters prefer to receive pitches by email. Save phone calls for high-stakes situations such as late-breaking developments or exclusive stories. Set a daily "Google Alert" for your organization so that stories in which you are featured pop up in your email in-box. Don't forget to send reporters a quick thank you email from time to time. If you've invited the media to attend an event and they express interest in coming, meet them somewhere specific and introduce them to the folks they should be interviewing. Give them your cell phone number so they can contact you at the last minute if their availability changes.

## EDITORIAL ETHICS

In an ideal world, editorial and advertising should have nothing to do with each other. Editors, whose responsibility is to their readers, would never permit advertiser influence to compromise editorial integrity. By the same token, advertisers place ads so they can control their messaging. They know they can't count on free publicity to get the word out. PR and advertising are both part of a smart marketing plan.

While your news does and must exist on its own merit, I often suggest to nonprofits that they support our local media by advertising when they can afford to. If we want our local publications to remain strong and independent, we must find ways to create mutually beneficial relationships. Feeding them good news stories, thanking them publicly for well-written articles, and taking advantage of their discounted nonprofit advertising rates are all ways to partner with the local media to give your organization the exposure it needs to thrive. 

# Pitching Tips from *The Berkshire Eagle*

*By Jenn Smith, Community Engagement Editor*

1) Timeliness is key. Aside from season announcements for cultural and sporting events, if you send in a press release regarding an event six months down the road, it's much too early, and both your audience and the publication will likely forget about it. It's also of no help to anyone to send info about an event a day early, or after the fact. Aim for the standard two-week notice.

2) Even before you start to make your event pitch and piling on quotes and enthusiastic language, put the facts, the basic details first: what's happening, when and where is it happening (date and time), what's the cost of the event or deadline to respond, and who can people call or email if they have questions or want more details. Feel free to supplement the rest, or better yet, hyperlink to an online press kit where folks can find added details, comments, reviews, photos, etc.

3) Either in your headline or clincher, tell me directly why my audience should care about what you're pitching, be it a product, service, event, or program. My biggest pet peeve is getting a press release about something happening in Boston or L.A., when my newsroom, and majority of our audience, is located in and thinking about the Berkshires. Show me the local and human connecting point(s)!

Other tips:

- Keep it brief.
- Spare me the quotes — I'm a reporter and can get my own — but please do share the contact info for sources.
- Figure out who covers what at whatever publication you're pitching to, then send the release to the most appropriate staff member. Do your homework and read/watch who's covering what beat. Make it relevant!
- Source your statistics! A 50 percent increase or change doesn't mean much unless you divulge the original figures (i.e. population sizes, number of people surveyed) and year(s) reported.
- Spell correctly the name of the reporter/editor you're pitching to.
- Never use CAPS, unless it's an acronym on a second reference.
- Avoid jargon.
- Please, please, please proofread and make sure names, numbers, dates and addresses are correct. You'll spare yourself from having to send out a correction, which happens more and more these days with busy schedules. Be in a rush to be right!

# VOICE: BERKSHIRE COUNTY DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE

**Lo Sottile** and **Leah Thompson** co-chair the Berkshire County Development Alliance (BCDA), an informal group of nonprofit professionals who represent area organizations in a fundraising capacity. Members meet to share information and engage in meaningful dialogue about advancement issues affecting the industry.

Over 85 nonprofit entities are currently represented in our group of 150+ development professionals in and around Berkshire County. Throughout the year, we gather at an array of venues—from home gardens, to local theaters and even wine cellars! Most recently, our events have included a database forum, a structured conversation about development tips and tricks, and a presentation on planned giving strategies.

Here's a peek at our notes from our rich Development Tips & Tricks discussion where we took a closer look at how each of us handles the daily details of running a busy development office:

## **Tips to efficiently and effectively work with your Board of Directors:**

- Ensure your board members have made donations themselves before asking them to solicit from others.
- Give your board clear expectations of how they should participate by providing specific requirements in checklist format such as attending a special event and donating to your year-end appeal.
- Help your board members identify their passions and connect to your mission, and they will learn how simple it is to make a donation request on your behalf by letting their story do the talking.


## **Tricks to maintain an ever-overflowing inbox:**

- Re-read sent emails at the end of each day to refresh your memory of any promises made.
- Open e-mails each day and flag for follow-up, deleting, categorizing, adding to your to-do list, or responding immediately if the answer can be quick.

- Flag or mark as unread any e-mails read at home so you remember to follow-up the next day.

## **Strategies to manage your volunteers:**

- Know who each volunteer reports to, and make sure they know too. Similarly, you should determine ahead of time which staff member will be following up with the volunteers, their projects, and their deadlines.
- Outline volunteer expectations; make sure they not only understand but are also prepared to meet their deadlines.
- Ensure your volunteers feel valued by providing benefits such as tickets to events, invitations to staff meetings, and personal thank you notes.

We'd love to meet you! Fundraising professionals in the Berkshires looking to connect with colleagues can use BCDA to learn and to vent, and we encourage you to reach out. You can find us on Facebook by searching Berkshire County Development Alliance. 

*Lo is the Development Manager at the Berkshire Museum and Leah is the Director of Development for BART Charter Public School. For more information or to become a member of BCDA contact them at [lsottile@berkshiremuseum.org](mailto:lsottile@berkshiremuseum.org) and [leah.thompson@bartcharter.org](mailto:leah.thompson@bartcharter.org).*



# AGE FRIENDLY BERKSHIRES

## Berkshire County Age Friendly Vision 2020


**Age Friendly Berkshires** seeks to make Berkshire County both a great place to grow up and a great place to grow old. The initiative began to take shape in late 2014, and a multi-sector Task Force convened in early 2015. From inception, a key premise has been to develop a county-wide framework for a sustainable community that works for all ages. By cultivating a place where residents of all ages can participate, thrive, and contribute, the Berkshires can positively and proactively acknowledge the shifting local demographics and how they can enable a better, stronger, more inclusive community for everyone.

With a median age of nearly 46, Berkshire County is one of the oldest counties in Massachusetts. In 2011, the number of local residents over 65 surpassed the number under 18 – a shift not expected to happen across the country until 2030. Of the thirty-two cities and towns in the Berkshires, the majority will have 60% or more of their populations over the age of 50 by 2030. Given the magnitude of this demographic shift, the imperative to create a culture and resources that support people across the age spectrum is clear. A county-wide survey was conducted in the spring of 2015 to identify needs and priorities from the perspective of residents age 50 and up.

Age Friendly Berkshires was subsequently accepted into the AARP/World Health Organization Global Age-Friendly Cities and Communities network, which provides access to information and best practices for local initiatives to craft community-specific plans. Berkshire County joined 140 Age-Friendly communities across the USA, as well as those in 65 countries around the world. In June 2015, grant support was received from the Tufts Health Plan Foundation to support the initial two year planning phase, focused on identifying local concerns across AARP's eight domains of livability.

The eight domains of livability encompass outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, housing, social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment, communication and information, and community support and health services. The work of the **Age Friendly Berkshires Task Force**

has been further augmented by the formation of an **Active Agers Advisory Council** and the addition of domain leaders within each of the domains named above. Cumulatively, this input has coalesced into an Action Plan aimed at guiding the next three years as the initiative transitions from the planning into the implementation phase.

Age Friendly Berkshires continues to seek new partners and collaborators at the municipal, organizational and individual levels to continue creating an environment in which people can stay active, healthy, and engaged in their community on a lifelong basis thanks to well designed, livable communities that meet the needs of all residents. 

Contact Laura Kittross, Public Health Program Manager, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission at [lkittross@berkshireplanning.org](mailto:lkittross@berkshireplanning.org) to learn more about Age Friendly Berkshires Vision 2020.

## SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICES EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)

**Elder Services of Berkshire County (ESBC)** is a sponsor of the federally funded, state administered, Massachusetts Senior Community Services Employment Program (MA-SCSEP). SCSEP's mission is to provide job training and placement for individuals age 55 or older with limited financial resources and to provide employers with trained, motivated workers.

During the initial intake an applicant is assessed for eligibility, current job skills, interests and individual experience. Applicants then have the possibility of interviewing with a Host Agency. If a match occurs, the candidate is enrolled as a SCSEP participant and placed in part-time job training opportunity at a local nonprofit organization or government agency. The participant's salary is paid by the SCSEP program.

The SCSEP program allows participants to be enrolled for a maximum of 48 months with job rotations on an annual basis to maximize job training with different nonprofit organizations.

Individuals interested in learning more about program eligibility requirements and enrollment opportunities for SCSEP should contact Elder Services' SCSEP Job Developer at (413) 499-0524.

[http://esbci.org/employment/senior\\_employment.html](http://esbci.org/employment/senior_employment.html)


# GOOD ADVICE: QUALPRINT

## Tips For Cost-Effective Printing

From Mike Tucker,

Director of Sales at **Qualprint**

1. **Plan jobs ahead of time, prior to designing.** Consult your print provider on optimal sizes, page counts and quantities. Review mail panels to make sure they are automation compatible.
2. **Get nonprofit status with USPS.** This saves quite a lot on postage vs Presorted Standard (bulk mail) rate.
3. **Proofread layout and content BEFORE sending final file to printer.** This is the single easiest way to save money, but is often the most overlooked. Author alterations can add up, especially if there are several rounds of edits. This goes hand in hand with item 1, job planning. This is essentially free money. I would say that 80% of the jobs we produce have some type of author alterations.
4. **Design shelf life into pieces of collateral when possible.** While dated materials are often important in a marketing mix, pieces like pocket folders and other marketing materials will cost less per unit if you order more of them. Finding ways to design a longer life into the content allows you to purchase more and use the items for a longer period of time. This is especially true with items like pocket folders, die cut pieces or any piece with a lot of finishing steps and machine setup costs.
5. **Look for house paper grades.** Printers often buy a certain brand in bulk at a reduced cost. Our house papers are of very good quality and are consistently available.
6. **Digital vs Offset** - Digital is less costly per unit at lower quantities. Offset is less costly at higher quantities. If we suspect a requested quantity will be at the crossover point between the 2, we'll

quote it both ways. You give up a bit of quality in digital in exchange for costs savings, but you have the advantage of seeing a 1-off proof on the actual job stock, something you can't get with offset. Digital lead times are usually quicker for smaller jobs. We'd advise a client of the options upon review of the particular specs. 



**WINDY HILL FARM**  
NURSERY • ORCHARD • GARDEN SHOP

[www.windyhillfarminc.com](http://www.windyhillfarminc.com)  
686 Stockbridge Road  
Great Barrington, Massachusetts 01230  
(413) 298-3217 • [office@windyhillfarminc.com](mailto:office@windyhillfarminc.com)

**A v S**  
**a. von schlegell & co**

Abbie, based in the Berkshires, has 40+ years providing counsel in the nonprofit sector.

**FUNDRAISING • GOVERNANCE  
INTERIM LEADERSHIP • WEALTH SCREENING  
WOMEN'S PHILANTHROPY**

Abbie J. von Schlegell, CFRE  
410.908.9068 [abbie@abbievonschlegell.com](mailto:abbie@abbievonschlegell.com)

**On a Roll cafe**  
& CATERING COMPANY

75 North St. / Pittsfield MA | 55 Pittsfield/Lenox Rd. / Lenox MA  
PHONE (413) 236-5671 | (413) 637-9544 PHONE

**OPEN 7-DAYS**

7:00AM to 11:00AM **Mon – Sat**  
7:00AM to 1:00 PM **Sun (BREAKFAST ONLY)**  
7:00AM to 2:00 PM **Sun (SEASONALLY LENOX)**

Full menu and specials at [www.onarollcafeandcatering.com](http://www.onarollcafeandcatering.com)  
Find us on Facebook too! 



- Office of -  
**Community Engagement,  
Education &  
Workforce Development**

Professional Training for  
Local Businesses & Nonprofits



[www.berkshirecc.edu/workshops](http://www.berkshirecc.edu/workshops)



**Lift Your Spirits,  
Open Your Heart,  
Inspire Your  
Creativity.**

Art, prints, books,  
cards, installations  
by artist and author  
Deb Koffman.



Mindful drawing classes  
Saturdays 10:30-12:30  
In Words Out Words  
Open Mic 7-9PM  
First Tuesdays

Deb Koffman's Artspace  
137 Front St Housatonic  
413-274-1212 [debkoffman.com](http://debkoffman.com)

## We're here for the same reasons you are. The Berkshires.

More than a place. It's a set of values,  
experiences and qualities that shape your life.

Your financial advisors should embody these  
same attributes.

It's why we're here. We're here with you.

And for you.

Call Gary Schiff, Managing Director, and  
discover the ways he and his team can  
help you achieve your financial goals.



103 West Park Street  
Lee, MA 01238  
413-243-4331



[octobermountainfa.com](http://octobermountainfa.com)

Member SEC, FINRA, SiPC

# PROFILE: THE NEW KID ON THE BLOCK — BERKSHIRE BABY BOX

*By Hannah Van Sickle*

It was a fervent need to take action—fueled by post-election outrage and motivation to contribute in a meaningful way—that got Hinda Bodinger thinking outside the proverbial box. The subsequent realization that it takes a veritable village to rally around expectant mothers and connect them to community support found the South Egremont resident looking inside the box—the baby box, that is—and just like that Berkshire Baby Box (BBB) was born. The now thriving nonprofit, begun just 18 months ago, distributed nearly 700 baby boxes in its first year—to families throughout the Berkshires—in a county-wide initiative aimed at facilitating the health and success of all new families.


A quick tour of the BBB headquarters—housed in Bodinger’s newly renovated two-car garage and full basement—reveals myriad cardboard boxes overflowing with all things baby related. A cursory glance exposes hundreds of fitted sheets and cotton washcloths, a towering stack of Huggies wipes, dozens of packages of newborn Swaddlers, ten cases of Halo SleepSacks, and cartons upon cartons of children’s books. “The whole community is welcoming your child,” says Bodinger of the overwhelming support she has experienced since launching BBB.

“It was never just about the box,” Bodinger explains, whose goal is to reach mothers, often in the throes of isolation regardless of circumstances, and provide an incentive to connect with a community of support. The actual box, widely used in Finland for the past 75 years, serves as a safe sleeping space for babies up to eight months. Each of its contents, however, provides an opportunity for discussion. Bodinger calls it, “a springboard for discussion,” and the topics range from family planning (thanks to the inclusion of condoms) to safe sleep initiatives (compliments of the Halo SleepSacks, wearable blankets that help protect babies from SIDS.)

“One should not have to be at risk or have a child in crisis to get support,” says Bodinger whose work aims to normalize the challenges of motherhood. Her hope is that this will lead to empowerment. BBB offers boxes to all expectant mothers, regardless of income, as an incentive to connect them with prenatal care. At present, the boxes are available at workshops—offered throughout the county—that often serve as the first step in connecting mothers with a network

of support. Through education and outreach, Bodinger is making a mark that is both invaluable and costly.

While the distribution of each Berkshire Baby Box is done at a fraction of the \$350 retail cost—thanks to discounted nonprofit pricing and generous donations—a more sustainable model is necessary. Hinda Bodinger and her husband, Bill—who she credits with sourcing, inventory and tech support—are limited by funding. At present, the venture has been floated by small grants and roughly 200 individual donations. And if given the opportunity to expand? Bodinger would like to build and grow a board, in order to call on the experience of others in the community to write grants, seek funding and generate support for her mission.

In the meantime, Bodinger remains optimistic: “The universe has conspired to make this happen,” she says noting that “a totally random thing happens, and then you find it is not random at all.” And so, at the end of a winding dirt drive deep in South County, the staging area for Berkshire Baby Box is twofold: literally, there is space to pack boxes with valuable tools for building healthy families; figuratively, a platform has been created for destigmatizing the need for support and guidance around having a new baby, both tangible gifts for the community at large. 

**Congratulations to Berkshire Baby Box, winner of the 2017 Nonprofit Excellence Award in the Small Nonprofit category.** Each year, the Massachusetts Nonprofit Network honors the passion and impact of leaders in the state’s nonprofit sector. Hinda Bodinger traveled to the Massachusetts State House in Boston on June 5th—Nonprofit Awareness Day—where she was one of six honorees cited for improving communities across the Commonwealth from the Cape to the Berkshires. Liana Toscanini, of the Nonprofit Center of the Berkshires, was among the crowd of nonprofit, business and community leaders present when Bodinger delivered her acceptance speech and was presented with citations from the offices of State Representative William “Smitty” Pignatelli and State Senator Adam G. Hinds.

## PULSE is for UNITY

A dynamic non-profit dance, world music,  
and movement arts education center.  
Spacious studios in a beautifully re-imagined  
mill building overlooking the Housatonic River.  
Classes year-round - All ages and levels welcome



Housatonic, MA  
[www.berkshirerpulse.org](http://www.berkshirerpulse.org)  
413-274-6624

Call today to join our family  
new customers welcome



**KIMBALL  
FUEL**  
FUEL OIL • PROPANE • DIESEL • BIO FUEL  
SERVICE & INSTALLATION  
168 Main St., Great Barrington 413-528-1410



*Renaissance Arts Center, Inc.*

Working in Collaboration with  
NORMAN ROCKWELL MUSEUM

At Renaissance, we offer a thematic,  
inter-disciplinary approach to learning. Please join us!

Visual Arts • Dance • Vacation Programs  
S.T.E.A.M. • After-School Programs  
• Ages 2 to 102 •

420 Stockbridge Road  
Great Barrington, MA 01230

[www.RenaissanceGB.org](http://www.RenaissanceGB.org)



A 501(c)(3)  
Nonprofit Organization

your  
online  
portal to the  
berkshires

Berkshire

news & ideas  
worth sharing

the edge

events CALENDAR

updated daily life in the berkshires

real estate

obits NEWS  
business

ENTERTAINMENT

TRADE & COMMERCE environment POLITICS arts

the online newspaper for the tri-state area [theberkshireedge.com](http://theberkshireedge.com)

# DANCE FOR THE ARTS – A Unique Collaboration

By Patricia Hubbard

It comes as no surprise to those familiar with fundraising in the Berkshires that summer calendars fill with galas beginning in mid-May; while organizations have long vowed to work together in not only respecting one another's dates but also supporting each other's events, a new spirit of collaboration was arrived at among a trio of local nonprofits—albeit organically—that not only solved their own problem, but also set the proverbial stage for future collaborations of this sort.

This past winter, as Main Street Stockbridge lay in repose beneath a blanket of fresh snow reminiscent of Norman Rockwell's well-known 1967 painting, "Home for Christmas," a rather Dickensian "best of times, worst of times" scenario was unfolding for a pair of local arts organizations: The Norman Rockwell Museum was poised to unveil their summer exhibit, *Inventing America: Rockwell and Warhol*, as a means of linking the iconic American hometown illustrator with the leading figure of the country's pop art movement. To capitalize on the exhibit and its potential appeal to a contemporary audience, the museum planned their summer gala to include a Studio 54 Dance Party in a nod to the legendary New York nightclub where Warhol was a regular. At the same time, IS183 announced plans for their 2017 Gala, *The Factory*, an imaginative party whose invitation promised "a mash-up[featuring] the foiled flair of Warhol's pop art, Lucille Ball on the assembly line, Factory Records, punk rock mohawks, spikes, and leather along with the everlasting Charlie's Chocolate Factory to create a truly one-of-a-kind evening." The events were just a few weeks apart, and the organizers were suddenly stumped. What to do?

Neither organization could change its theme or date so a true dilemma was on the table: How to make those proverbial lemons into lemonade? A meeting was held early in January between the two groups, joined by IS183's event planner—Oskar Hallig of Only in My



Dreams Events—who was serendipitously planning a Dance Party & Cabaret to celebrate LGBTQ Pride as a benefit for Berkshire Theatre Group.

Another dance event. Amidst mounting concerns in the post-election period, related to increased cuts to state and federal funding to the arts, it became suddenly clear that the answer lay in joining forces—not only to encourage support of the arts but also to actively engage Berkshire County residents in doing so.

This first meeting came on the heels of the Women's March in Washington, DC. There was a strong belief that grass roots efforts were effective, and that the sum of the parts could create a greater whole; that the "mini" could come together to become the "mighty." The group believed there was an answer to this conundrum, and that kernel of belief slowly began to take shape and grow.


The group tackled marketing first and found easy ways to collaborate. What that meant, initially, was the execution of joint press releases, joint participation in press events, sharing mailing lists, and sharing expenses. For example, one group created the marketing postcards, another group had them printed; another group purchased the entry wristbands. The visual that was created for marketing materials showed the different organizations' events fitting together as a jigsaw puzzle to create one image. That strong sense of community began to grow and provide inspiration.

Social media for all the events was displayed on each of the institutional websites. As the first event grew closer the team went to radio and press events as a group, just as they had said they would.

The stakes were raised to a higher level when the group decided to expand the goal to include “a greater good.” The group ultimately used incentive—a motivational tool, of sorts—to encourage attendance at all three dance benefits with a positive payoff at the end: a complimentary “Karaoke Wrap Party,” to be held on August 31, for anyone who attended all three of the preceding dance parties. Proceeds from the event, garnered through advanced ticket sales for those who had not attended the first three parties, would be donated to charity. And the trio’s choice? MASSCreative, the state’s advocacy group for the arts, cultural and creative communities. According to Matt Wilson, Executive Director of MASSCreative, “The Berkshires are the epicenter for arts and culture in the Commonwealth. It’s an honor to partner with these top notch cultural institutions to and to help build a powerful advocacy voice for the arts from Boston to Pittsfield.”

Suky and Tom Werman, owners of the beautiful Stonover Farm in Lenox, were so impressed by this collaborative effort that they generously donated their venue for the 2017 Summer Wrap Party—a Berkshire Club Kid Revolution karaoke lounge evening— on August 31st at 7:30pm. Karaoke jockey KJ Spizz, and local karaoke impresarios Pops Peterson, Ken DeLoreto and Michael Allen Lowe will also donate their time. So you missed a dance party? Not to worry; the public is welcome and invited to join the fun. If you are not a Berkshire Club Kid member, tickets to this event are \$35 per patron, with all proceeds to be donated to Mass Creative.

This outcome—a far cry from the collaboration one might expect among an art museum, an art school

and a theatre group—is refreshing in its veering from the predictable progression for problem solving. This unusual collaboration, pegged as both unconventional and progressive, sets a tone for future collaboration among myriad nonprofits in the area, a theme being echoed by Executive Directors, philanthropists, and supporters of the arts at large. Kudos are in order for this fine example of creativity, made possible by the converging of these three organizations. What better way to celebrate the diversity of nonprofits in the Berkshires than to come together, create community, raise awareness and *Dance for the Arts?* 



**Richard B. Migot**  
PHOTOGRAPHY

■


Events, Portraits  
& Landscapes

413.441.4775

[rmigot@aol.com](mailto:rmigot@aol.com)  
15% off with this ad

**FROM CLASSICS TO  
ONE OF A KIND...**

*We have it all!*



**Zabian's Fine Jewelers**

Est. 1985

15 Main Street, Lee  
413-243-0508  
[www.zabians.com](http://www.zabians.com)

Want to get the word out  
in the Berkshires about your  
event or business? Contact  
[mary@BerkshireFLYER.com](mailto:mary@BerkshireFLYER.com)

**business cards ★ brochures ★ flyers ★ guides  
magazines ★ postcards ★ posters ★ rack cards**



Barry Shapiro's goal—upon his retirement from more than 40 years as a lawyer—was to stay busy and to contribute. Living full time in the Berkshires was a major driver in his proverbial Chapter Two where he has been charged with the responsibility of giving money away—roughly \$500,000 annually—in his position as President and Chairman of the

Dr. Robert C. and Tina Sohn Foundation. Shapiro's insight, into what makes a nonprofit appealing to funders, is invaluable: an organization's ability to touch the greatest number of lives in the most effective way with the least amount of dollars.

Shapiro is very straight forward in his advice to organizations seeking funds: give him something that is compelling. He goes on to clarify, "What I want to know is, what is your mission? What are you trying to do, how do you do it, and how successful are you?" The answer to each of these questions, according to Shapiro, should be laid out in the first page of any grant proposal. "It is really hard to do" Shapiro admits, "but it is critical." He goes on to explain that, contrary to popular belief, "it's got to be written in plain English, not with buzzwords." And yes, he has a pet peeve: reading a grant request, with great care, and still having no idea what the organization does. Shapiro often finds himself in a tricky position: "I kind of have an idea of what they want to do, but I have no idea how [they intend to do it]." For nonprofits dependent on funding from donors, this is precarious ground on which to perch.

Shapiro shies away from identifying a single factor that contributes to his wanting to fund an organization; he does, however, have a short list of advice. Can an organization show that 85 cents of every dollar is going towards programs and not overhead? This is important. Shapiro gets specific when he explains, "A 10K grant that serves ten kids and makes them environmental ambassadors is less worthy than a 10K grant that touches a thousand kids." Furthermore, there are pure logistics. Shapiro admits that "donation requests received in January are more likely to be acted on favorably than those received in October." Shapiro's years of practicing law have left him adept at judging people; if he senses that someone is smart, hard working, committed, and effective at what the individual does, "it's hard not to fund him" Shapiro admits. "You can't fund everyone" he quickly adds. And that is where the demonstration of impact become imperative.

Can the organization's success be demonstrated with tangible outcomes? While this can be addressed statistically or anecdotally, the key is to illustrate that the project is really making a difference. In the Berkshires, Shapiro points to CATA, Construct, Shakespeare and Company, and the Mahaiwe as organizations that are "really making a difference in the community." He goes on to divulge, "I like funding those [organizations] because I can touch them. I can see what is happening on the inside, and I can monitor our investments."

Shapiro goes on to point out that establishing a rapport is the key to fostering any relationship. After ten years at the Sohn Foundation, Shapiro can speak to the fact that, "the best of our donees end up becoming our partners. They don't just take the check and disappear." And he's not talking about a perfunctory thank you note; Shapiro cites the importance of including donors in email blasts, providing advance notice of special events, and inviting them to see their dollars in action.

Shapiro uses an appropriately agrarian metaphor to talk about a stable of donees that, year after year, come back to the Sohn Foundation for funding. He goes on to say, “we replace about 25% of [donees] in any given year.” Reasons for this run the gamut, from “we like someone else better, the organization never came back to us, or the organization came back to us and we were unimpressed with what they had done—or we were more impressed with someone else.” The bottom line? Applying for and securing funds is just the first step in what can become a lifelong partnership, between donors and donees, if properly cultivated.

Of the Berkshires, Shapiro notes—albeit unscientifically—“There are more effective not for profits here, per capita, than elsewhere.” He goes on to acknowledge that as a whole, they are doing good work and making appropriate use of their resources. “Committed people, who seem to be doing effective work—that is what we look for” he emphasizes. He then goes on to share his message for Berkshire County nonprofits: “There are too many of us here, and we are all chasing the same dollars.” He goes

on to suggest that when it makes sense, economically and in terms of mission, that organizations have an obligation to explore mergers. In this way, “the walls, the fiefdoms, need to dissolve, and the organizations need to come together in a cohesive manner so that the financial pressures the organizations face can be ameliorated and they can do what they are here to do: serve the Berkshire community.”

Shapiro’s advice is bold and requires courage on the part of organizations; his rationale, however, is warranted: “When you go to a donor, you have a responsibility to make sure that their money is used most effectively for carrying out your mission.” He considers it an obligation for nonprofits to at least explore combining with another organization for the sole purpose of increasing the percentage of dollars used for program work. After all, he says, it boils down to making investments and building rapport. In this way, understanding what makes the other tick—when considering both donor and donees—is an exercise in reciprocity, one certainly worthy of elucidating. 🌱

—Hannah Van Sickle



### *Supporting Nonprofits in the Berkshires Since 1871*

Vibrant communities make it possible for local businesses to thrive. Local businesses in turn should help their communities thrive. That’s why Wheeler & Taylor believes in a Purpose Beyond Profit. Through our affiliation with the GoodWorks Financial Group, we provide substantial financial support to nonprofits throughout Berkshire County.

With the Wheeler & Taylor and the GoodWorks Grants program, nonprofits have the ability to create a stable, renewable funding source for the causes they support. Under the program, a full 20% of commissions earned from insurance policies written into the program will be placed in a Special Fund for the benefit of the nonprofit and its charitable endeavors. When these policies renew each year, those dollars will be granted again and again!

#### **Can your insurance agency do this?**

AUTO, HOME, BUSINESS AND LIFE INSURANCE, GROUP HEALTH INSURANCE AND RETIREMENT PLANS

**Dalton 413-684-2384 Great Barrington 413-528-1000 Pittsfield 413-448-8224 Sheffield 413-229-8064 Stockbridge 413-298-5584**

**[www.wheelertaylor.com](http://www.wheelertaylor.com)**





# PROFILE: MOMENTS HOUSE

*By Hannah Van Sickle*

Alice Trumbull has a tattoo on her left forearm that says “choose joy” in loopy, black script; another winds along the ridge of her right foot

and reads “she believed she could so she did.” The former reflects a philosophy that guided her to Moments House, the organization for both cancer survivors and their caregivers, that she founded with her daughter, Danielle, in 2011; the latter tattoo commemorates her first year as Executive Director of the now thriving nonprofit she launched to honor the life and legacy of her best friend, Linda Palivoda, who died in 2010 after an 11 year battle with breast cancer. In short, Trumbull’s ink is symbolic of the level of visibility she hopes to bring to those impacted by a cancer diagnosis in the Berkshires; to date, the mark she is making in Berkshire County is indelible.

Trumbull’s perspective is clear and compelling; the organization’s moniker reflects the two friends’ belief that, “Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.” Moments House, which is set up to make visitors feel like they’ve arrived at a friend’s home, is instantly welcoming. And, for those arriving in the throes of a cancer diagnosis, “We’re gonna love you through it,” Trumbull adds in a nod to the song by country singer Martina McBride. Her promise is evident from top to bottom, inclusive of the mission, programming and resources available.

Trumbull is very clear in what drives her programming, most of which evolved from a basic question: What do you need? After witnessing her best friend receive treatment for 11 years, “I had an opportunity to see what the community really needed,” says Trumbull for whom the development of Moments House was part of a process fueled by inclusion. She placed emphasis on preserving relationships among family members caring for sick kids and providing end of life comfort for those who needed support, noting both the stress and disconnect that often ensues in these times. Trumbull points out, “While doctors and nurses treat the illness,

we take care of all the other needs not being addressed: spiritual, emotional, physical.” Moments House provides the full spectrum of complementary care, based on individual circumstances, and the breadth of offerings is astounding.

Trumbull has established a rapport with a cohort of licensed practitioners who offer reiki, massage, healing touch, acupuncture, and foot reflexology in the Moments House private spa. There are organized groups who gather for restorative yoga, aromatherapy and meditation. Trumbull and team of volunteers offer art therapy, kid’s activities, legal services, financial services, a lending library and a free wig bank—the only one in Berkshire County—along with end-of-life doula support. Trumbull’s pride is evident when she speaks of the “many kids who organize fundraisers for [Moments House], ask for donations in lieu of birthday gifts, make fleece blankets for members, paint rocks or do other crafts to brighten their days.” She spreads her enthusiasm—which is infectious—by going into classrooms at local schools, hosting after school programs and working with scout troops and service groups to “show them that no one is too young to make a difference.”

A fitting example of this activism can be seen in the guise of then 4-year-old twins, Eva and Emma Akroman of Cheshire, who decided they had the power to fight cancer, one cup [of lemonade] at a time. The twins, daughters of Paul and Kelly Akroman, arrived on Trumbull’s doorstep in the summer of 2013 literally bearing gifts: a Mason jar full of cash, \$300 to be exact. The girls—inspired to help a classmate’s father who had been diagnosed with cancer—had set up shop on a Friday afternoon; by Sunday, after lunch, the preschoolers had sold out to great success. To date, Eva and Emma’s Lemonade Stand has raised nearly \$12,000 for Moments House, a connection easily fostered through their mother’s newish role as Director of Programs and Services. “If people need help, [we are always] ready to pull out the lemonade stand,” says Akroman of the structure—built by her cousin Corey McGrath—that travels thanks to a trailer. The girls have made appearances at neighborhood tag sales, the Pittsfield Farmers’ Market and the North

Adams Fall Foliage Parade. Their model of stepping up for the greater good has most certainly set a precedent: the organization is fully funded by individual donations to keep their doors open. Their largest annual fundraiser, now its 7th year, is called Slice of Life Pizza Competition which alone raises just shy of \$10,000 each year, and provides a true opportunity for the community to come together both in celebration and support of Moments House.

The organization's new home, at 2 South Street in Pittsfield, expounds upon the theme of visibility. Its largely unassuming facade boasts expansive windows that look out onto Park Square; the bustling traffic moving about the awkward circle is juxtaposed by the peaceful interior space. In her first career, as a fundraising consultant for nonprofits, Trumbull visited Gilda's Club of Chicago and got to see what a cancer support center looked like. In cobbling together the eclectic offerings at Moments House, Trumbull continually looked for opportunities that invite the important question, "What's your story?" Art as therapy, evidenced by the paintings, quilts and projects adorning the walls of both the living room and play room, tell the story of individuals who use this space just to be together. The popularity of action-oriented events is undeniable. Painting parties, jewelry making workshops and journal demonstrations all provide opportunities for catharsis and connection. A series of mismatched decoupage chairs punctuate the common areas at Moments House and lend further visibility to the individual stories that have unfolded there. Trumbull explains that each chair, "honors, remembers or celebrates someone's cancer journey." The fact that current members literally sit in these chairs is particularly poignant: they tell the stories, albeit inaudibly, of the lives of so many touched by a cancer diagnosis.

There are no restrictions at Moments House where there is an open door policy for anyone in Berkshire County impacted by a cancer diagnosis. More often than not, those who use the services at Moments House want to give back and volunteer their time. For Amy, who identifies herself as a "cancer thriver" (a term coined to address the fact that most individuals don't like to think of themselves as simply surviving a cancer diagnosis), volunteering gives her something to do with her grief. After the shock of her own diagnosis, she recalls feeling relief in "knowing there was somewhere I could go." Amy goes on to describe who she met at Moments House, what she calls "a beautiful blend of people—from those who are newly diagnosed to those in treatment to those who are suddenly cancer free." She speaks candidly



about the panic and fear that often comes with being cancer free—a sort of anxiety—that can trigger post-traumatic stress. With a community like Moments House in place, cancer thrivers have a space to explore the questions that inevitably arise at these times: Who am I? How do I redefine my life? How did this experience change me? This mindfulness, necessary to redefining oneself after diagnosis, treatment, and cure, is also addressed at Moments House.

While Moments House just moved into their current space on February 1st, Trumbull is always looking ahead. Despite their current three year lease, and an ample 2,400 square feet, at the top of her wish list is a freestanding facility, with outdoor space and plenty of free parking. Remaining centrally located is also key. And then there are the ongoing struggles that are not so tangible: the dilemma of how to balance the celebration of life with grief and loss. In Chinese philosophy, this is referred to as yin and yang—quite literally dark and bright—a fitting way to describe the seemingly contrary paths often tread by those impacted by a cancer diagnosis. A simple shift in perspective reveals that these two halves are actually complementary, interconnected and interdependent in the natural world, not unlike the disparate albeit similar group of individuals whose paths undoubtedly intersect at Moments House, thanks to Alice Trumbull and her visionary persistence. ♡

# Kudos



The Massachusetts Mathematics and Science Partnership program has awarded a \$46,000 competitive grant to three lead institutions — Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, Southern Berkshire Regional School

District, and the **Flying Cloud Institute** — to use for training and curriculum development work as approved by the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. This award will launch an intensive week of professional development for Berkshire County K-8 science educators, a county-wide Professional Learning Network, and a year of Science Talk training sessions to advance STEM education in our public schools.

On May 1st, Great Barrington residents voted to adopt the town's Trust Policy, a citizen-initiated campaign led by **Multicultural BRIDGE** in partnership with Berkshire Interfaith Organizing, Community Health Partners and Berkshire Showing Up for Racial Justice. The policy provides a broad framework to advance equity, safety and trust among community members, town leaders and local police. Learn more about the policy: <http://www.multiculturalbridge.org/programs/task-force/great-barrington-trust-policy>.



In April **WAM Theatre** – Where Arts and Activism – Meet donated \$2,500 to Flying Cloud Institute, providing ten scholarships to their Young Women in Science summer intensive. WAM's 2017 *Stars in the Orchards Gala* is coming up on July 12. [www.wamtheatre.com](http://www.wamtheatre.com) (Photo: David Dashiell)

**Hinda Bodinger of Berkshire Baby Box** and Liana Toscanini of the Nonprofit Center of the Berkshires at the Massachusetts State House in Boston for Nonprofit Awareness Day. Berkshire Baby Box won the Excellence Award for Small



Nonprofit from the Massachusetts Nonprofit Network! Representatives from Rep. Smitty Pignatelli's office and Sen. Adam G. Hinds' office presented Hinda with citations recognizing this achievement. (see story p. 36)



**Cherri Sanes of ExtraSpecialTeas**

in Great Barrington has been selected by the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women as one of the Commonwealth's Unsung Heroines of 2017. Shown here with son, Jache.

Tony Award-winning **Williamstown Theatre Festival** has received a \$100,000 unrestricted grant from The Shubert Foundation, which has been supporting the work of WTF for three decades.



**July 19 10am-12Noon**

BCC South County Center, Gt. Barrington

***Video for Nonprofits & Small Businesses***

Diane Pearlman, Berkshire Film & Media Collaborative

**August 1 9am-11:00am**

BCC South County Campus, Gt. Barrington

***Cyber Security***

Rob Horner, IT Consultant

**October 18 9:30am-11am**

BCC South County Center, Gt. Barrington

***IT Tips, Tricks & Troubleshooting***

Jean Atwater Williams, BizTech Associates



**NONPROFIT CENTER MEMBERS  
AS OF JUNE, 2017**

AIER	Fenn Street CDC
Aston Magna Foundation	Flying Cloud
Austen Riggs	Great Barrington Historical Society
Berkshares	Gould Farm
Berkshire Baby Box	Greenagers
Berkshire Bach Society	Irie's Pet Food Pantry
Berkshire Children & Families	Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival
Berkshire Community Land Trust	Lenox Historical Society
Berkshire Food Project	Lenox Library
Berkshire Grown	Literacy Network of SB
Berkshire Horseworks	Moments House
Berkshire Humane Society	Multicultural Bridge
Berkshire Opera Festival	Music in Common
Berkshire Pulse	Oakdale Foundation
Blue Rider Stables	OLLI
Brien Center	Otis Library & Museum
Brigham Center	Railroad Street Youth Project
CATA	Renaissance Arts Center
CDC of South Berkshire	Saint James Place
Charley's Fund	Sandisfield Arts Center
Community Recreation Assoc. (Dalton)	Sheffield Kiwanis
Construct	Sheffield Land Trust
Crescendo	Tamarack Hollow
Dewey Hall	The Barrington Institute
Extra SpecialTeas	The Nutrition Center
Fairview Hospital	Volunteers in Medicine
	WAM Theatre

# Berkshire Nonprofit connections

**Subscribe today!**

The **ONLY** magazine for the Berkshire nonprofit sector.

Guaranteed to make **YOU** feel more connected! Enjoy hearing from many voices around the county, delving into fascinating profiles of nonprofit organizations, soaking up the news, views and practical tips, and much more.

1 year of CONNECTIONS (2 issues) is \$25  
(a 16% savings off the cover price!)

Four ways to subscribe  
or order a single issue (\$14.95):

- online at [npcberkshires.org](http://npcberkshires.org)
- call (413) 645-3151
- email [info@npcberkshires.org](mailto:info@npcberkshires.org)
- mail the completed form below and send it with your check to:

**NPC**

**40 Railroad Street, Suite 10  
Great Barrington, MA 01230**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send me:

- ☐ Single Copy \$14.95;
- ☐ 1 Year Subscription \$25.00
- ☐ I have enclosed my check in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## WAM THEATRE

**Stars in the Orchards Gala**  
**Wed, July 12 at 5:30 pm**

Hilltop Orchards, Richmond, MA / Tickets \$50-\$350  
A magical midsummer night's cocktail party to benefit WAM Theatre featuring the Expandable Brass Band, silent and raise-the-paddle auctions, a sneak peek at WAM's fall MainStage production, delicious food, and wine made on site at Furnace Brook Winery.

## BERKSHIRE BACH SOCIETY

Baroque and classical music concerts in great venues focusing on J.S. Bach and his contemporaries.

Season Highlight: "Bach at New Year's" with renowned Music Director Eugene Drucker and special guests.

Fall, winter and spring performances.

[www.berkshirebach.org](http://www.berkshirebach.org) | 413.528.9555

Come visit the historic

## SANDISFIELD ARTS CENTER

5 Hammertown Rd, Sandisfield, MA

and take in a concert, play, art exhibit or workshop.

Learn more about our unique building ("a hidden gem in the Berkshires") - and upcoming events at

[sandisfieldartscenter.org](http://sandisfieldartscenter.org).

## OLLI: THE OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE

at Berkshire Community College

Providing stimulating courses, talks, outings and more designed especially by and for people 50 years old & up. Over 1,000 members throughout the greater Berkshires!

[BerkshireOLLI.org](http://BerkshireOLLI.org) | 413.236.2190

[OLLI@BerkshireCC.edu](mailto:OLLI@BerkshireCC.edu)

## I AM A PART OF ART: CATA'S ANNUAL ART EXHIBIT

**Lichtenstein Center for the Arts, Pittsfield**  
July 7-31st

Opening Reception, Thursday, July 13 5-7pm  
**Clark Art Institute's Lunder Center at Stone Hill,**  
Williamstown July 1-August 22

**Meet the Artists Thursday** July 20 from 1pm-2pm  
[cataarts.org](http://cataarts.org).

## WALK To PREVENT HOMELESSNESS

### Construct's 29th Annual WALK

To Prevent Homelessness and  
Provide Emergency Services

**Sunday, October 15, 2017,**  
Registration opens 12:30, WALK begins at 1:00  
Ski Butternut,  
380 State Road, Great Barrington, MA  
Registration fee is \$20

## 8TH ANNUAL BERKSHIRE DRUM & DANCE FEST

to Support Tamarack Hollow Nature & Cultural Center

**Fri, Oct. 13th 7pm \$10-20+ suggested donation**

Berkshire Community College

Boland Theater, Pittsfield

75 drum & dance artists/diverse genres  
from around the world!

[www.tamarackhollownatureandculturalcenter.org](http://www.tamarackhollownatureandculturalcenter.org)

## BERKSHIRE HUMANE SOCIETY

is excited to announce this year's car raffle –

### 2018 Subaru Outback!

Tickets now on sale: 1 for \$40 or 3 for \$100.

Purchase at the shelter or call 413 447-7878  
for other locations.

Winner will be drawn Oct. 28th.

## BERKSHIRE OPERA FESTIVAL

Summer 2017 Festival Season

**Ariadne auf Naxos** by Richard Strauss

**Gods & Monsters**

Featuring Berkshire Opera Festival Chorus  
**Reluctant Revolutionary**, a Recital of Songs  
by Richard Strauss Tickets and information at

[www.berkshireoperafestival.org](http://www.berkshireoperafestival.org)  
413.213.6622

## CLASSY-FIED ADS

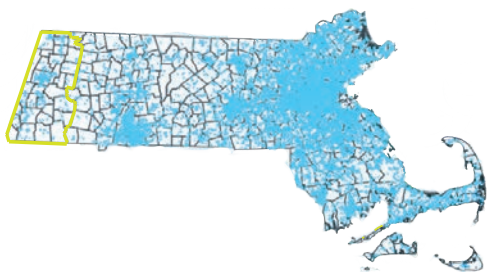
**Feature 40 words for \$35.**

**To place a classified in the  
January 2018 issue, email  
[info@npcberkshires.org](mailto:info@npcberkshires.org).**

# THE BERKSHIRES' NONPROFIT SECTOR

## 984

nonprofits in the Berkshires

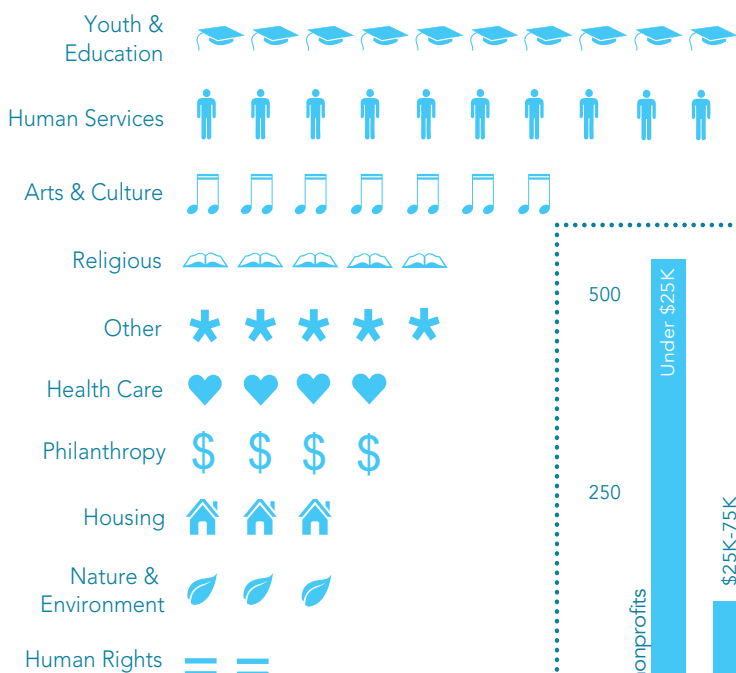


The Berkshires has the highest proportion of **ARTS & CULTURE** nonprofits in the state. They make up 12.8% of the region's nonprofits.



Health Care is a significant sector in the Berkshires with 79 organizations representing **\$738 MILLION** in annual revenue.

## NONPROFITS BY SUBSECTOR [1 symbol ≈ 18 organizations]



## ECONOMIC IMPACT

[ ANNUALLY ]

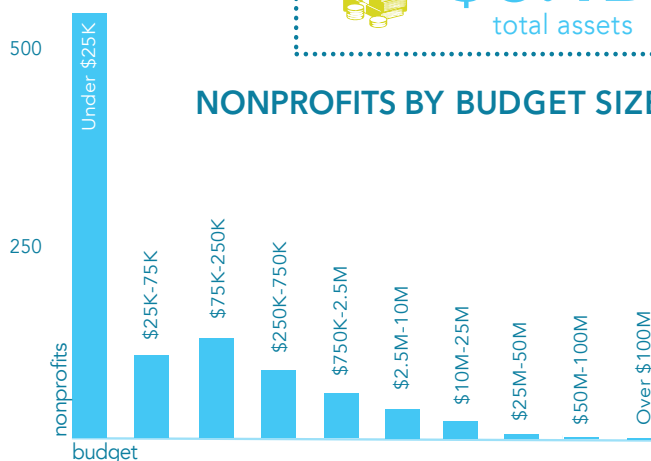


**\$1.6B**  
total revenue



**\$6.1B**  
total assets

## NONPROFITS BY BUDGET SIZE



Source: "SOI Tax Stats - Charities & Other Tax-Exempt Organizations Statistics" Internal Revenue Service, January 2016.



The Massachusetts Nonprofit Network is the voice of the entire nonprofit sector in Massachusetts. Launched in 2007, MNN is the only statewide organization dedicated to building strong communities by supporting nonprofit organizations through advocacy, public awareness, and capacity building. MNN has more than 750 member organizations, representing nonprofits in every part of Massachusetts, from the Berkshires to the Cape and Islands.

The Massachusetts Nonprofit Network • 89 South Street, Suite 603, Boston, MA 02111 • 617.330.1188 • [www.massnonprofitnet.org](http://www.massnonprofitnet.org)

# FIREFLY

gastropub & catering co.



Catering for & Supporting the Non-profit  
Community for Over 25 Years

.....

Berkshire Museum • Barrington Stage Company  
Berkshire Theatre Group • Berkshire Visitors Bureau  
Community Access to the Arts (CATA) • Shakespeare & Company



## Your Ideas | Our Magic Inspired Menus | Local Ingredients

*You are looking to create a statement event—the one everyone will remember. We get it! I began catering over 25 years ago at the urging of my mentor, Master Chef James Beard, and with my Firefly team, have passionately created great food and memories for my clients ever since. From an informal cocktail party to an elegant sit-down dinner, you will have a festive occasion no one will forget.*

*Our menu selections are widely varied to appeal to a broad array of tastes and budgets; we'll work with you to create exactly what you desire—and our professional staff will see to all your needs, leaving you nothing to do but enjoy.*

*Chef Laura Shack*

*Firefly chef/owner Laura Shack has pleased hundreds of our visitors with generous offerings of tasty, fresh, colorful, and artfully presented food. Her friendly, capable staff sees to it that everyone... even the host enjoys the party. We suggest you see for yourself what a memorable event they can create.*

.....

William Blaauw, Special Event Manager  
Berkshire Museum

