

The Broadway Bulletin

A monthly publication of Opportunities for Otsego

December 2020
Volume 12, Issue 8

The leader in developing innovative solutions that promote healthy lives, thriving families, & caring communities

From the CEO

I can't remember a time when employees were more challenged than in 2020. Not only enduring unimaginable and unpredictable hardships, but still delivering services in impossible situations is nothing short of amazing. Saying "Thank You" sometimes doesn't seem like enough. But **I want to express my full appreciation for the work you do each and every day. It takes special people to do this hard work. If it wasn't hard, everyone would do it.**

Have a safe holiday and hang in there. Better days are coming!

AGENCY HIGHLIGHTS

Megan Martin, Planning and Research Director, developed a **supplemental needs assessment on the impacts of COVID-19 in Otsego County.**

Thirty-six employees took advantage of the **Employee Assistance Program** for a total of 93 different activities. Opportunities for Otsego provides this confidential service free to its employees.

Opportunities for Otsego will soon have a platform to fill out **CSBG applications online.**

The Board of Directors has established a **committee on Racism and Equity.**



New Funding Results in COVID-Relief Workforce Training Initiative

In June 2020, Opportunities for Otsego received funding through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to help area families and individuals impacted by the public health emergency and economic fallout. As part of the agency's strategy to positively impact those unemployed or underemployed, a partnership was developed with the **CDO Workforce Investment Board** and the **New York State Weatherization Directors Association (NYSWDA)** to provide weatherization skills training to eligible young adults and those who have been unable to go back to their previous occupations.

The initial training session was held in November at OFO's Round House Road location. To ensure appropriate social-distancing, the class size was limited to six trainees. Six referrals for the program came from the CDO Workforce Job Center in Oneonta and five people reported for training on day one. The week-long program incorporated the fundamentals of building science, making energy efficiency improvements to building structures, and included an OSHA-10 hour construction safety course and certification for all who successfully completed. **Dannielle Joslin, Energy Services Director**, also arranged to have area employers come in and speak with the class about job opportunities and career pathways in the fields of weatherization, energy, and construction. All five trainees completed the program and received a tool kit, work jacket, and a pair of work boots.

The success of this initial training session was aided by a large donation from **Lowes Home Improvement** in the form of tool kits for all the trainees. An additional partnership with **Mobility Management of the Southern Tier** and the **GetThere** program helped ensure that those who lacked transportation were able to get to and from class every day.

Another week-long training session is being planned for February 2021.

Submitted by Audrey Benkenstein, Housing & Community Development Director



Inaugural Class: Five trainees successfully completed the week-long energy efficiency and building science training hosted by Opportunities for Otsego in partnership with CDO Workforce and NYSWDA. Training was a combination of hands-on and classroom learning taught by industry experts.

Male Survivors of DV and IPV

Domestic violence (DV) and intimate partner violence (IPV) is a widespread issue that affects all people regardless of age, race, culture, sexual identity, immigration status, class or gender. According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 1 in 4 women and 1 in 9 men experience severe physical violence, sexual violence, or stalking by an intimate partner. Because women are statistically affected by DV and IPV at a higher rate than men, domestic violence is often treated as a women's issue, thus, instilling the perception of males involved within a heterosexual relationship are the aggressor. Additionally, this concept perpetuates gender stereotypes and places domestic violence within the "violence against women" category, resulting in frequent suspicion, disbelief, and lack of services when male victims seek support or attempt protection.

There are many explanations as to why women statistically experience DV and IPV at disproportionately higher rates compared to men as well as why men are not societally seen as the victim but rather the perpetrator. Sexual discrimination, which includes gender-based violence directed against women, as well as traditional gender roles and stereotypes – such as women being nurturing, caregivers, and emotional whereas men are seen as strong, aggressive, and financial providers – contribute to a common social perception that men are rarely victims of domestic violence. However, in the United States more than 1 in 3 women and more than 1 in 4 men have experienced physical abuse, rape, or stalking by an intimate partner in their

lifetime (National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey CDC, 2011). And according to the New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, 41% of male victims who were involved in recurring incidents of IPV, were identified as suspects, compared to 26.3% of women.

Although there are shifts away from traditional stereotypes and gender roles, these beliefs are still fundamentally rooted in our culture. The idea that domestic violence is still considered a "violence against women" crime may be a contributing factor as to why male victims of DV and IPV have greater difficulty seeking support and community resources. A lack of reporting by IPV victims, conceivably due to lack of resources, lack of trust in the criminal justice system, fear of stigmatization, fear of not being believed, fear of death, or still loving their abuser, further hinders victims from seeking the resources they need to live free from abuse. Moving forward it is critical both men and women survivors are provided with access to all available community resources, support, safety, and opportunities to thrive as survivors.

If you or someone you know has been impacted by interpersonal violence, contact VIP, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 607.432.4855. If you are in immediate danger, call 911.

Submitted by Mikala Gallo, Victim Resource Coordinator

COVID-19 Updates

Each week, the office of Governor Cuomo sends email updates on the COVID-19 situation in New York State. Notable updates are included below.

Contract Tracing: If you get a call from NYS Contact Tracing, pick up. Contact tracers are working around the clock to trace clusters and inform people who have been in contact with someone who tested positive for COVID. How can you help? Simply by picking up the phone. If your caller ID says "NYS Contact Tracing," pick up and help New York stop the spread. (Tracers will never ask for your Social Security Number or financial information; if someone does, they are not an official tracer and you should hang up.)

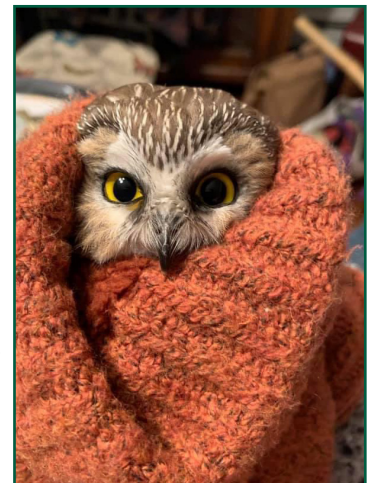
Community COVID Response: Governor Cuomo recently met with President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris and fellow governors to discuss the ongoing COVID response. New York State is looking forward to a strong federal-state partnership and working hand-in-hand in the months ahead. Topics of discussion included how to achieve a fast and equitable vaccine distribution, how to help our communities recover economically and more.

If you would like to receive updates to your inbox, subscribe at <https://now.ny.gov/page/s/coronavirus-updates>.

Rocky Road

While the iconic Rockefeller Center Christmas tree was being installed in New York City, workers discovered that **an unexpected traveler had hitched a ride during the tree's two-day trip from West Oneonta**. Staff who worked for the transportation company found a Saw-whet owl, the smallest owl in the northeast, in the tree. The tiny owl, dubbed Rockefeller, was moved to the Ravensbeard Wildlife Center, where he was cared for until his release into the wild this past week.

Be sure to catch the tree lighting this Wednesday evening starting at 8:00PM on NBC.



Caring Communities: Thank you to Sidney Federal Credit Union for selecting OFO's Violence Intervention Program for their recent Fund-It-Friday donation event.

Staff Spotlight



PROMOTION
Elizabeth Wilson
Classroom Teacher
SUNY Oneonta Head Start



MILESTONE
Heather VanCleeef
BHF Team Leader
15 Years

Happy Birthday

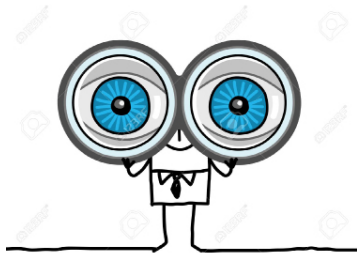
Lisa Ford	Dec. 1	Crystal Hamm	Dec. 22
Debbie Davis	Dec. 5	Debra Carmody	Dec. 23
Marie Ellis	Dec. 5	Darlene Pink	Dec. 24
Chava Granett	Dec. 6	Maura Fink	Dec. 26
Cynthia Shepard	Dec. 9	Nancy Adikes	Dec. 27
Destiny Hoagland	Dec. 12	Debra Allen	Dec. 27
Rachael Romero	Dec. 12	Dannielle Joslin	Dec. 28
Christian Strignano	Dec. 13	Thomas Reardon	Dec. 30
Rosemary Copperwheat	Dec. 16		
Megan Kantor	Dec. 17		
Stacie Mark	Dec. 17		

Submitted by **Dan Maskin, CEO**

Keep an Eye Out

Opportunities for Otsego's **Online Open Enrollment for 2021 Employee Benefits** will be live soon. Continue to watch your email for the upcoming announcement once the system is live. All benefits-eligible employees will need to make selections for the plan year January 2021-December 2021 using the Paycor Benefits Advisor tool.

Other than rate changes for medical plans, there are no changes in benefit offerings for 2021.



Because Opportunities for Otsego is no longer having in-person benefit meetings, Paul Metcalf with Relph Benefit Advisors, our benefit insurance broker, has recorded 2 overview videos containing details normally provided at open enrollment meetings. Links to these videos and a PDF with a summary of benefit offerings are available in the 11.24.2020 email sent by Lydia Bell. Employees with additional questions may get further assistance by contacting Paul Metcalf by phone at 800.836.0026 ext. 286.

Submitted by *Lydia Bell, Human Resource Director*

Head Start Program Plan

Head Start is resuming in-person center-based services; however, CDC guidelines and day care regulations limit the number of children per classroom. Home visiting and virtual services are being offered as an option for families where classrooms are full or while centers are closed. Early Head Start is currently providing home visits and virtual services to families. Center-based Early Head Start at 256 River Street is operating at limited capacity.



Cherry Valley, Cooperstown, and Laurens: Opening soon. Families should reserve their spot today!

Morris: Open for a half-day program. Parent transport.

Oneonta/256 River Street*: Open for a half-day program. Limited bus transportation.

Oneonta/SUNY Oneonta: Virtual until further notice.

Richfield Springs: Open for a half-day program. Parent transport.

Schenevus: Open for a half-day program. Limited bus transportation.

Unadilla: Open for a half-day program. Limited bus transportation.

Families interested in Head Start can call 607.433.8063 or email hfay@ofoinc.org. **Head Start eligibility is based on income; however, with many families having lost wages due to COVID-19, those who would not have been eligible before may now qualify.** Children must be turning 3 years old to enroll in Head Start center-based services.

* Oneonta/256 River Street will be closed until January 19, 2021 in response to the Oneonta City School District COVID-related closing.