

The Broadway Bulletin

A monthly publication of Opportunities for Otsego

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

July 2022

Volume 14, Issue 7

From the CEO

I've been talking for a long time about a **social justice strategic plan** for Opportunities for Otsego. At long last we had our first meeting with Coordinated Care Services (CCSI) who will be facilitating the strategic plan process.

Over the course of the summer and then in September, will be starting out with an Equity Assessment. Every OFO employee will have the opportunity to participate and give feedback as to the questions provided in this assessment.

The Equity Assessment will give OFO an analysis and status of what work needs to be done to see where we are at and then CCSI will provide a series of training sessions for all the agency as well as the board of directors. This process will take some work but the prospect of making OFO a stronger organization is very exciting.

Have a wonderful summer.



Navigating Your Local Farmers' Market

What better way to start your Saturday morning than a morning adventure to your local Farmers Market? With the weather warmer and fruits and vegetables ripe, you may be excited to start exploring the outside community. **When taking a trip to your local Farmers' Market, you may feel intimidated going the first time. Here, you will find some helpful tips and tricks to introduce your family to navigating your local Farmers' Market.**

Make a Plan: If you have never been to your local Farmer's Market, you are in for a treat! However, much like many adventures, it is better to go in with a plan. First, do some prior research to find out where your local market is. Scroll down to see a list of just a few of the markets operating in Otsego County.



Be Mindful of the Season: While it is always important that you are eating your fruits and vegetables year-round, think about treating yourself to delicious, in-season fruits and vegetables. Starting in July, keep an eye out for juicy fruits such as berries, cherries, and peaches. With a colorful assortment of berries, they provide an excellent source of vitamin C, fiber, iron, and B-vitamins.

Do you have a picky vegetable eater in your household? The Farmers' Market is an excellent opportunity to get the whole family involved in picking out new vegetables to try. In July, look for vegetables such as beans, broccoli, cauliflower, cucumbers, tomatoes, and let's not forget the sweet corn for summer. Veggies are important for an overall healthy diet and can provide sources of potassium, folate, vitamin A, and more!

Get the Family Involved: Just like a trip to the grocery store, it is helpful to bring a list of foods with you to the Farmer's Market. Before heading to the Market, get a game plan together with the family and discuss what meals you may enjoy making together with the fresh fruits and vegetables that you will be picking up. Stuck on new meal ideas? Check out Child Nutrition Recipe Box and SafeRecipeGuide.org for fresh ideas for your fresh produce.

Eating Produce Safely: Now that you are ready to enjoy those fresh fruits and vegetables from the Market at home, it is important to practice safe food handling with fresh produce. When at the Market, make sure you and your family members check over the produce for any cuts or bruises. The produce you pick up may not be as "pretty" as the selection you find in the store, but that can add to the fun. Once you select your fruits and vegetables from the stand, take them home and make sure you give them a good rinse before enjoying them. For fruits and vegetables with a firm-skin, try rubbing lightly with your hand or taking a clean brush and gently scrub under running water. Remember, never use soap or bleach when you are rinsing and washing your produce. Once rinsed, dry with a clean paper towel and you are ready to enjoy.

Make Friends at the Market: Sometimes we go in with a plan and it all goes out the window once we arrive at the Market; and that is okay! If you are looking over the fresh fruits and vegetables and have questions, ask the experts. Visiting your local Farmers' Market gives you the chance to meet your local farmers. By talking to the sellers, you can get an idea of who is growing your food, the health benefits behind the fresh produce, and you may pick up one or two family recipes right from the source. Remember when shopping around the Market to search for the signs that say: "We Gladly Accept New York State Farmers Market Checks."

With these tips and tricks, you will be prepared for your next visit to the Farmers' Market. By getting the family involved, it is a vital way to teach and learn the importance of fresh fruits and vegetables and how the nutrients that they provide can help us lead healthy lives.

Remember: Plan ahead, challenge yourself to try new foods, and make it an adventure!

Submitted by **Madison Messina, WIC Nutritionist**

Find Your Local Farmers' Market

Community	Location	Hours of Operation
Cooperstown	101 Main Street	Year-round Saturday, 9AM - 2PM
		June- September Tuesday, Noon - 5PM
Morris	117 Main Street	May 26 - October 27 Thurs. 2:30PM - 5:30PM
Oneonta	55 Market Street	Year-round Saturday, 9AM - Noon
Richfield Springs	Spring Park, Main Street (Route 20)	June 18 - October 29 Saturday, 8AM - 1PM Thursday, 2PM - 6PM

FARMERS' MARKET PROGRAMS IN NEW YORK STATE

Now Enrolling

Our community is fortunate to have resources available that offer support to young children and families as they begin their parenting journey. At OFO, home visitors in both **Building Healthy Families** and **Early Head Start** partner with families and children to celebrate their strengths, identify challenges, and set goals that reflect their individual needs, culture, and values. Both programs provide free screenings, information, encouragement, and resources to support healthy attachments, child development, positive parenting, family stability and well-being, and much more. Although similar, there are differences between the program. Below is a helpful chart to guide staff and the community in making referrals to these critical programs.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BHF & EHS		
	Building Healthy Families	Early Head Start
Enrollment Period	Prenatal to 3 MONTHS old	Prenatal to 3 YEARS old
Service Period	Prenatal until Head Start or Kindergarten	Prenatal until Head Start
Eligibility	Income: No Limit Other Criteria: Concerns about parent confidence & readiness to welcome a new baby (e.g. limited finances, infant knowledge, or social supports, relationship difficulties, domestic violence, depression, anxiety, substance use or recovery.)	Income up to 130% of Federal Poverty Level OR Homeless OR Applicant child is in Foster Care; OR Household receives SNAP, TANF or SSI.
Services	Screening & assessment of family needs and goals. Home visits & groups that develop family strengths, address challenges, support healthy child development, & link to resources.	Weekly home visiting and twice a month socializations. Center-based services for toddlers (18 months-3 years old) located in Oneonta.
Program Goals, Purpose	Build parent confidence and competence; reduce stress that comes with parenting; support social-emotional well-being; & promote healthy child & family development. Primary focus is family and child health & development.	Promote healthy pregnancies & child development; conduct developmental screenings & coordinate medical care; promote school readiness; linkages to community supports. Primary focus is education.
Contact	Trenea Halstead 607.433.0444, ext 112 thalstead@ofoinc.org	Melissa Fetterman 607.433.8055 mfetterman@ofoinc.org

A common transition for BHF and EHS children is enrollment into **Head Start**. Head Start offers center-based and family support services for children ages 3-5 years old. To enroll for fall, children must turn three years old by December 1st. Children turning three after December 1st may enroll after their birthday.

Head Start is now accepting applications for the 2022-2023 program year. Centers are located in Cherry Valley, Cooperstown, Morris, Oneonta, Richfield Springs, Scheneyus, and Unadilla. Classes begin September 14, 2022.

To start an application for Head Start, families may apply online at www.ofoinc.org/hsapply or contact Heather Fay at 607.433.8055 or hfay@ofoinc.org.

Submitted by Megan Martin, Planning and Research Director

The Team that Trains Together Gains Together

Henry Ford, the great mind that developed mass production once proclaimed, **“The only thing worse than training your employees and having them leave is not training them and having them stay.”**

Building Healthy Families consistently commits to prioritizing training. Well trained staff not only increase competence and confidence, but research shows workers who are offered continual opportunities to develop usable skills are happier in the workplace. This translates into retention of valuable staff, which is critical for home visiting programs like Building Healthy Families, that strive to retain partnerships with parents over time.

Not just any training will do for the **Building Healthy Families** Team. Each year, staff collaborate with the program’s Advisory Committee using demographic data collected for the Annual Service Review to determine what topics need focus for the coming year. Presently, two members of the Team are absorbed in Certified Lactation Counselor training. Once certified, it is anticipated that Family Support Specialists **April Carrington** and **Sarah Lanese** will increase participant breastfeeding success and the resulting benefits to babies. Substantial participation by fathers during visits drives the program’s Fatherhood Advocate, **Linda Cunningham**, to remain current in her field by taking advantage of topics to support them. The Team annually gains new knowledge for supporting parents of diverse cultures, those who have experienced trauma and poverty, and for partnering with participants challenged by emotional or substance use disorders. Staff are especially excited that Healthy Families New York has arranged for the opportunity to receive RISE (Recovery, Impact, Support, Empower) Training from Growing Great Kids, Inc, the acclaimed organization that provided Growing Great Kids Preschool Curriculum Training to the Team over the past year. Beyond RISE, all staff are registered for Growing Great Kids Next Generation Curriculum Training for supporting parenting from pregnancy to Kindergarten.

Training and implementation of training are only the beginning of increasing worker competence and job satisfaction. Positive participant response to the delivery of new information is often the most important part of fostering staff retention. The following comments represent some of the feedback staff and families share after implementing the most recently completed curriculum training:

“I’ve noticed the difference in rich conversations that open up using the curriculum. It was a springboard for a really great conversation about discipline verses punishment.” -Family Support Specialist April

“The information you brought was exactly what we wanted to talk about.” -BHF Participant

“I really like that the curriculum is connected to the science of cognitive development, that the activities tell parents what learning they are supporting for their child, and that the tools all fit together to support a parent to positively influence their child’s overall development.”
-Team Leader Heather

Submitted by Trenea Halstead, BHF Program Manager

Save the Date

07.04.2022 - Agency Closed for Independence Day Holiday

07.11.2022 - Happy 56th Birthday to OFO

Staff Spotlights



NEW
Hannah Mathieson
Emergency Housing
Residential Associate



NEW
Madison Messina
WIC Nutrition Educator



NEW
Richard Rumble
Bus Driver
SUCO Head Start



NEW
Cynthia Shepard
Family Partner
Unadilla/Morris Head Start



NEW
Shannon Waugh
WIC Qualified Nutritionist



NEW
Kerry Young
Center Associate
River Street Head Start

WE'VE MADE IT EASIER FOR APPLICANTS TO APPLY FOR JOB OPENINGS.

Applicants can now upload a resume and submit an application online right through our website. This new Paycor feature not only makes the initial application process easier, this new system should streamline processes and expedite hiring. For a list of current openings visit OFOINC.ORG/JOBS

Mental Health First Aid

Congratulations to members of the Crisis and Support Services Team, who recently completed a Mental Health First Aid Course, facilitated by the Rural Health Network. The course teaches attendees how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illness and substance use disorders and helps develop the skills needed to reach out and provide initial support to someone who may be experiencing a mental health or substance use problem and how to connect them to the appropriate care.

Congratulations **Cindy O'Hara, Taylor (Trombley) Schulte, Kelsey VanAlstyne, Jessica Eklund, Karen Johnson, Kimberly Sperbeck, and Melissa Witzgall.**

Submitted by Will Rivera, Crisis Intervention Services Director

Safety First

Kelly Blue Book recently cited a study that found nearly 14,433 reports of stolen catalytic converters in 2020. That number jumped to almost 26,000 in the first five months of 2021.

These thefts are a crime of opportunity; taking an experienced thief only a few minutes to separate it from a vehicle. It is also a lucrative crime as catalytic converters contain precious metals, whose values have risen sharply over the past decade.

These crimes are also costly for victims. Staff may not be aware that **OFO** was recently targeted by these thieves. In total, **13 catalytic converters were stolen off of six agency vehicles at Roundhouse Road and two Head Start buses.** The cost to replace these parts and repair the damage has cost the agency thousands of dollars.

Despite steps to make our facilities safe, such as external cameras and enhanced lighting, **OFO** properties are not immune to crime. All staff are encouraged to:

- Park vehicles in well-lit areas overnight
- Lock vehicles after parking, even if for a short while
- Keep valuables out of sight from car windows (e.g. purses, shopping bags, electronics, excessive change/coins, etc)

As a reminder, any damage to **OFO** or personal property occurring during the course of conducting agency business must be reported to your immediate supervisor - using an Incident/Injury Report - prior to the end of the workday.

Submitted by Megan Martin, Planning and Research Director

Happy Birthday

Nicole Sutliff	July 1
Dimetra Colbourne-Johnson	July 2
Jane Richards	July 9
Zach Siems	July 10
Deanna Cramphin	July 16
Jessica Sawyer	July 20
Melissa Witzgall	July 20
Jacqueline Hinckley	July 24
Melissa Bissell	July 26



Submitted by Dan Maskin, CEO

Ideas Wanted

Do you have a great idea to make **OFO** a better place for staff and clients or a way to improve the agency? If so, we want to hear from you. Suggestions can be submitted to suggestions@ofoinc.org, via inter-office mail to Human Resources or dropped in the physical suggestion box the mailroom at 3WB. Staff are encouraged to include their name so they can be given credit!