

The Broadway Bulletin

A monthly publication of Opportunities for Otsego

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

From the CEO

OFO made the news in early February when **the Department of Housing and Urban Development came to 3 West Broadway to announce that OFO received funding in the amount of approximately \$715,000.** The purpose of the funding is to provide rent assistance to homeless individuals to help them attain permanent housing.

The Housing First model is key to helping the homeless get back on their feet. Having a place to go home to every day is tantamount in formerly homeless families functioning in their communities. But now, back to the grant.

What is amazing to me, is that **OFO was one of 46 projects in the whole country to get funded. I'll say it again . . . the whole country.** When I was introduced to the HUD representative, she told me that we submitted a brilliant proposal, which is why we got the funds.

Back in 2008, OFO made the decision to create a Planning and Research position to focus on grantswriting. That position turned into a community data expert while also managing OFO's marketing and social media.

So, if you see Megan Martin in the hallway, say congratulations!



WIC Updates

Since March 2020, WIC programs across the nation were permitted to conduct remote appointments with participants under the COVID-19 related Public Health Emergency Physical Presence Waiver. In late January, the White House announced its intent to end the COVID-19 national and public health emergencies as of May 11, 2023. As such, **Opportunities for Otsego's WIC program will begin transitioning to in-person appointments in May, gradually moving to all in-person appointments by August 2023.** Hours at the Oneonta clinic remain the same with extended evening hours on Wednesdays resuming this month.

Additionally, outreach clinics in Cooperstown, Cherry Valley, and Richfield Springs will reopen by the end of this summer. Appointments at outreach clinics may be scheduled as follows:

- Cherry Valley: 3rd Friday every month from 9:45AM - 1:30PM
- Cooperstown: 2nd Tuesday every month from 9:30AM - 1:30PM
- Richfield Springs: 1st Friday and 3rd Monday every month from 9:45AM - 1:30PM

Recognizing how remote WIC services addressed structural barriers and expanded access to resources and supports during the pandemic, the National WIC Association is advocating for changes at the national level to modernize WIC, including remote services under certain circumstances.

Another exciting development in the WIC World is online nutrition education.

New York State WIC is teaming up with wichealth.org to allow families, who may have trouble traveling to a WIC clinic, an alternative means of accessing nutrition advice, tips, and tricks. From the comfort of their home or on their smartphone, WIC participants may complete a nutrition lesson. Afterwards, participants speak briefly with a local WIC Nutritionist, make a follow up appointment, and then are issued benefits on their eWIC card. **Participants are still welcome and encouraged to meet in-person with Madison Messina or Shannon Waugh, our WIC Nutritionists!**

To complete online WIC nutrition education, participants will need to create a wichealth.org account and complete lessons by a certain date. All participants still must still come to a clinic for certification and update appointments. *Participants should contact the WIC office prior to setting up a wichealth account.*

WIC is excited to start seeing families in-person again!

Submitted by **Heather Brown, WIC Manager**



Enrolling in WIC is easy and you do not need to be a "mom" to benefit - dads, grandparents, guardians, and others can apply for WIC for children under age 5 in their care.

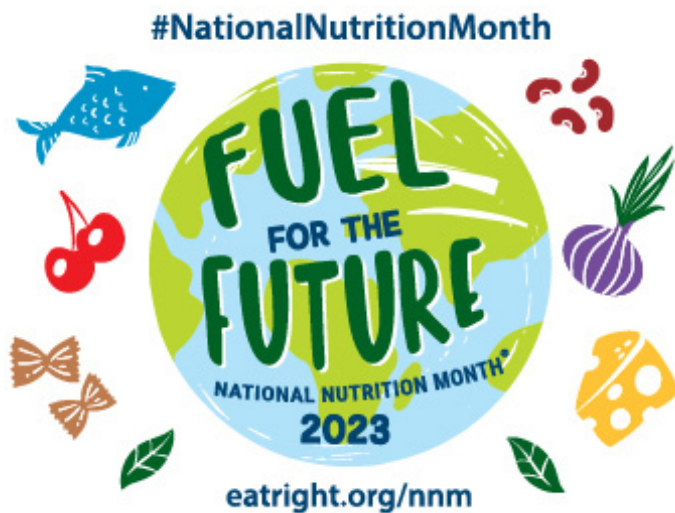
Contact WIC at 607.433.8071 or wic@ofoinc.org to sign up.

50th Anniversary National Nutrition Month

Fifty years ago, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics created an annual campaign to help bring nutrition education and information to individuals about the importance of their food choices and how developing sound eating habits can change their lives. Each year, during the month of March, we invite individuals from our community to learn about a specific theme in nutrition. The 2023 theme is **“Fuel for the Future”**.

This year’s theme highlights the importance of making food choices that are beneficial for the environment and for fueling our bodies. Being mindful of our food selection allows us to create healthier versions of ourselves and help improve the environment through sustainable food choices. You may be thinking, where would I even start? By working with a Registered Dietitian or Nutritionist, they can teach you how to meet health goals through personalized nutrition information and education.

Below, you will find some easy tips and tricks so that you can start fueling for the future.



Eat for the Environment: As we make better food choices to fuel our bodies for the future, there is also the opportunity to make choices that are better for the environment. Some easy ways to eat for the environment:

- Eat more plant-based meals
- Buy foods that are in season
- Purchase foods that have minimal packaging

By eating more plant-based meals, this can naturally lower amounts of sodium, saturated fats and added sugars in your diet, while increasing beneficial nutrients such as vitamin D, dietary fiber, and calcium. Wondering how to get started? Focus on adding more fruits and vegetables in your daily meals by substituting meat in recipes for a plant-based source, adding more vegetable servings on the side, or try designating one meal a week for a “meatless meal.”

Save Money and Stay Healthy: The key to saving money and staying healthy is to be a person with a plan. Before going to the store, take a look at what you have at home. Once you have taken stock of what you have on your own shelves, take some time to review some recipes that you would like to try for the week. By deciding on meals and snacks before going to the store, this is a great way to save time, money, and unnecessary purchases that may go to waste in the future. If you want to take your savings to the next level, check out advertisements online or at the store for weekly sales and coupons. By going in with a plan, you can make sure you are getting the most bang for your buck.

Cook Meals at Home: As most families know, eating out at restaurants can really add up. Cooking meals at home comes with many benefits including being less expensive, creates an excellent opportunity to try new types of foods, flavors, and increase variety within your families’ eating routine. Having more meals at home also offers an opportunity to teach (and learn) new meal preparation skills and creates fun for the whole family.

Smart Snacking: When considering fuel for our bodies and for the future, snacks can be extremely beneficial in helping meet daily nutrient needs. By providing healthy snacks at home, you create an opportunity to provide a variety of foods. As you plan meals for the day, consider incorporating two to three snacks through the day, one to two hours before the meals. Some easy and healthy snack options include:

- Whole-wheat English muffin mini pizzas
- Yogurt parfait with a selection of dried cereal and fruit
- Celery sticks with nut butter.

No matter what your snack of choice is, get the family involved and get creative!

These are just some of the ways to get involved with National Nutrition Month during March. If you are interested in learning more ways to “Fuel for the Future”, check out eatright.org and read all about their 50 ways to celebrate the 50th anniversary of National Nutrition Month.

Submitted by **Madison Messina, WIC Nutrition Educator**

For more nutrition tips and recipes, check out the March **“Healthy Living With Head Start”** newsletter in the website Press Room

Notice from HR/Finance

Effective immediately, all staff will be locked out of their Paycor Timecard feature at noon on the Monday preceding pay day. All entries, changes, and supervisor approval must be made before noon to ensure HR/Finance staff have adequate time to review, process, and run payroll by their Wednesday deadline. Any questions should be directed to supervisors.

Crackling Canary



April 1st brings a fresh new look in the Finance Department. Changing the paper color we use for purchase orders and check requests helps identify which fiscal year an expense is applicable to. **The new Fiscal Year paper color is YELLOW. Please begin using it now for expenses incurred from April 1st and onward.** If you do not have yellow paper remaining from past years, reach out to your program admin/support staff who can order for your site. (Item# XER3R11053 through S&B Computer) Yellow paper will also be available in the fiscal office that programs can sign out.

Women's History Month

National Women's History Week was first designated March 2-8, 1980 by President Jimmy Carter to recognize the achievements, leadership and courage of the women who have impacted America. In 1987, March became recognized as National Women's History Month. International Women's Day is celebrated on March 8th. **To celebrate Women in History, here is a quick quiz on women who have impacted history. The first person to answer the most questions correctly will win a prize.**

1. Who was the first African American woman to serve in the U.S. Cabinet as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development under President Carter in 1977?
2. Who founded the Children's Defense Fund in 1973, a group focused on helping millions of children living in poverty?
3. She came to the U.S. when she was a teenager to study science and stayed to become "the world's foremost female experimental physicist." Her most famous experiment disproved what had been thought to be a fundamental scientific law. Who is this outstanding Asian-American scientist?
4. Who was the first female and youngest artist to receive a

commission from the government for a statue? She is known for sculpting the full-scale marble statue of Lincoln in the Capitol Rotunda.

5. Born in Pakistan, who was the youngest person to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her fight for the right for every child to receive an equal education.
6. The first Latina Supreme Court Justice in U.S. History, this powerful woman in history is known for saying "There are uses to adversity and they don't reveal themselves until tested, whether it's serious illness, financial hardship, or the simple constraint of parents who speak limited English, difficulty can tap unexpected strengths." One of her notable rulings ended the 1994 MLB strike after 232 days.

The first person to submit the correct answers will win a prize. Answers can be emailed to Lindsay France at lfrance@ofoinc.org. We will announce answers and the winner in the next Broadway Bulletin.

Submitted by **Lindsay France, Executive Assistant**

Lots of Moving Parts as COVID Emergency Ends

Excerpt from National Conference of State Legislatures, by Lauren Kallins and Austin Reid (02.15.2023)

The Biden administration announced that **the COVID-19 national emergency declaration and the public health emergency declaration will expire on May 11. That means the end of numerous pandemic-era flexibilities in Medicaid, Medicare and CHIP programs, as well as private health insurance. It also suggests an additional extension of the pause on student loan payments is unlikely.**

The timing of the announcement provides states with at least 60 days' notice of the end of the emergency as promised by the Department of Health and Human Services. But lots of complex moving parts lie ahead for states in the spring and beyond. The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 ends the Medicaid continuous coverage requirement enacted during the pandemic on March 31. So states will be in the midst of processing their Medicaid redeterminations for the first time in over three years, just as other as significant flexibilities, including those related to vaccines, boosters, tests and treatments, will be ending in May.

Here are some of the most significant changes as the emergency declarations expire:

COVID-19 Tests and Treatments:

Access to free COVID-19 at-home tests and some treatments will no longer be federally required for Medicare beneficiaries or people with private insurance once the declarations expire in May, though

Medicare and private insurance will continue to cover the cost of tests and vaccines ordered by a doctor. Medicaid and CHIP recipients will continue to receive all federally recommended vaccines at no cost, but federally mandated coverage for at-home tests and COVID-19 testing and treatment will end 15 months after the end of the emergency. Federal funding of testing, treatments and vaccines for people without insurance ran out in April 2022.

Nursing Homes: While the blanket waiver of training and certification requirements for nurse aides has been lifted, states facing a backlog in their training and testing capacity can still apply for a waiver of the certification requirement. However, that flexibility will end when the emergency declaration ends in May, and nursing homes with numerous nursing aides who are not certified may face increased staffing shortages. In August, it was reported that as many as 300,000 temporary nursing aides nationwide remained uncertified.

SNAP Benefits: Food stamp allocations, which were temporarily increased during the pandemic, will return to their normal levels in March. A number of states have already stopped providing the emergency allotments. SNAP beneficiaries, who also receive Social Security benefits, may see a decrease in their SNAP benefits because of COLA increases to Social Security that went into effect in January. Other pandemic SNAP waivers will remain in effect until the end of the emergency.

Telehealth: Medicare beneficiaries may continue to access telehealth through

Dec. 31, 2024, per the Consolidated Appropriations Act. These flexibilities otherwise would have expired 151 days after the end of the emergency. The availability of telehealth for Medicaid and CHIP beneficiaries is state-specific with regard to whether the service was tied to federal or state public health emergency declarations. Many states have made Medicaid telehealth a permanent option via their state plans.

Student Loan Repayment: The U.S. Department of Education has used the public health emergency declaration to extend the student loan repayment pause in effect since March 2020. The department, under both the current and previous administration, extended the pause under a 2003 law that allows the education secretary to modify or waive provisions in the loan program during national emergencies. In November, the department announced a final extension of the loan pause; payments will resume 60 days after litigation over the Biden administration's debt forgiveness plan is resolved. While other final extensions had been announced, the end of the public health emergency suggests another extension is unlikely under previously used authority.

To read of other programs and policies which will be impacted visit <https://www.ncsl.org/state-legislatures-news/details/states-handling-lots-of-moving-parts-as-covid-emergency-ends>.

Submitted by **Megan Martin, Planning & Research Director**

Staff Spotlights



NEW
Mychaelah Christian
Head Start Center Associate
SUNY Oneonta



NEW
Lindsey Millea
Head Start Senior Cook
River Street, Oneonta



MILESTONE
Julie Barton
Head Start Assistant Teacher
10 Years

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Mary Kuhn	March 1
Melissa Brigham	March 8
Alexis Cullipher	March 8
Ralph Eggleston	March 9
Tristin Croce	March 11
Ronald Decker	March 14
Lindsay France	March 18
Maria Arnot	March 16
Allyson Porack	March 21
April Carrington	March 23
Jazmine Clemons	March 27
Mandy Erwood	March 23
Amy Leech	March 29
Chloe Shamblin	March 30

Submitted by **Dan Maskin, CEO**

Kudos & Congratulations

Congratulations to **Autumn Pedersen, Community Advocate**, for earning her ROMA Certification. This certification from the National Community Action Association gives Autumn the knowledge and skills to assist the agency with implementing the ROMA performance-based management system, which includes analyzing agency outcome data from Captain and developing logic models in coordination with Lindsay France and Tanya Shalor, our other agency ROMA Certified Implementers.

The certification process requires completion of 6 self-guided online training modules; a one day "Introduction to ROMA" course; portfolio development and review; and a final online exam.

ROMA, also known as or Results Oriented Management and Accountability, is a performance-based approach to evaluate the effectiveness of community action agencies receiving Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funds.

Head Start would like to extend congratulations to **Andrea Barrows, Oneonta Center Director** and **Crystal Hamm, Education-Disabilities Specialist** on obtaining their Infant and Toddler CLASS Observer certifications. CLASS helps child care providers nurture children's early learning while responding to their needs and fostering a secure, supportive base for learning and exploration. CLASS Observers collect CLASS teaching assessment data, allowing the program to identify strengths and areas to improve in regards to the quality of teacher-student interactions in the classroom. HS/EHS extends a big "thank you" to Andrea and Crystal for their dedication and commitment to providing the best possible services to enrolled children!

Save the Date

04.29.2023 - Community Baby Shower: Join Building Healthy Families for their 9th Annual Community Baby Shower, scheduled from 10AM-2PM at Southside Mall. Everything you want to know about pregnancy, birth, breastfeeding, fatherhood, babies, and beyond. FREE gifts, prizes, games and presentations. **Reach out to Treena Halstead, BHF Manager if you would like to reserve a table for your program.**

05.20.2023 - Head Start Spring Carnival: Head Start will be hosting a community get-together at the Sixth Ward Booster Club Field in Oneonta. Activities, games, and snacks from 10AM-Noon. **Reach out to Melissa Fetterman, Home-Based Specialist if your program would like to staff an activity table for this event.**

To include details on upcoming events in the Broadway Bulletin, email Megan Martin, Planning & Research Director at mmartin@ofoinc.org by the 20th of the proceeding month.

Thank You!

Every day, grant professionals work diligently behind the scenes to seek and secure grant opportunities for the benefit of disadvantaged, underserved and often overlooked people. These talented professionals offer a unique skill set and perspective that helps programs develop impactful program models, thoughtful project implementation, and wise financial stewardship. Often, grant professionals support overall agency functions including capacity building, long-term solutions to challenges, sustainable programming and so much more.



In recognition of **International Grant Professionals Day**, celebrated annually on the second Friday in March, Opportunities for Otsego would like to express our appreciation to our in-house grant professionals, **Megan Martin, Planning & Research Director** and **Sue West, Head Start Planning Specialist**. Through their support, OFO has been able to maintain, enhance, and expand access to quality early childhood, housing, nutrition, and victim services for individuals and families across Otsego County.