

The Broadway Bulletin

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

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Pandemic Underlines Poverty's Enduring and Harmful Myths

The gulf between reality and the demeaning, divisive stereotypes about American poverty has never been more apparent than during the coronavirus pandemic, an event that has made clear that the vast majority of Americans need help during times of crisis. In a timely new book, **Poorly Understood: What America Gets Wrong About Poverty**, the authors examine the common myths about poverty and inequality and identify policies that might render them a relic of the past. Rank, one of the authors, spoke with *Spotlight on Poverty and Opportunity* recently about the book:

The book seems incredibly timely, given what we're going through. Tell us how the project got started: You're right – it's extremely timely. The genesis was that I was talking with my co-author one day and he said, "You know, there's never been a book that takes on the different myths of poverty and inequality." Both of us thought this would be a great topic for a book, so we each sat down and wrote out a list of myths, put them together, and came up with the outline for the book. It's designed so that each chapter debunks a specific myth related to poverty, welfare, or inequality. I'm familiar with the literature, and I can't think of another book that takes this approach.

What's an example of a particularly pernicious myth? There's plenty of them, but the one we start out with is the myth that poverty only happens to somebody else – that it's not going to happen to me, and therefore why worry or be concerned about it? We begin by saying right off the bat, if you look across peoples' lives, the chances of experiencing poverty is high. Sixty percent of Americans will experience at least one year below the official poverty line between the ages of 20 and 75, and three-quarters will experience either poverty or near-poverty. So this idea that poverty happens to somebody else doesn't hold water. A broader myth says that poverty is really an issue of "them" and not an issue of "us." We also debunk this in several places throughout the book.

[Click here to read the full interview.](#)

Vaccine Experiences

There has been a lot of coverage in the news about who is currently eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. In addition to medical providers, public safety workers, persons over age 65, and those with medical vulnerabilities, **certain OFO employees are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine based on their regular job duties.** Under NYS distribution Phase 1a and 1b, several staff in the Violence Intervention Program, the Emergency Housing homeless shelter, and Head Start have been vaccinated. Here are a few of their stories:

Cindy O'Hara, VIP Transitional Housing Coordinator: I received my first vaccine on Feb. 8, 2021. My appointment was for 1:50PM and I arrived in the parking lot around 1:25PM. I could see that there was no one in line, so I decided to see if they would take me in even though I was about 20 minutes early. It was not a problem at all. Everything was contactless. I showed them the letter I received from our Human Resources Department and my driver license as an ID. I went directly over to the nurse after that to get the vaccine. She told me that I'd receive an e-mail with instructions about my second dose. They had me wait 15 minutes to make sure I had no adverse reactions, and then I left. The site of the shot was a little sore for about 3 days, but nothing that needed anything for discomfort. I may have been a little tired the second day and did take a short nap but I felt fine.

Brooke Noble, VIP Senior Counselor-Advocate: Prior to receiving the vaccine, I did ample research to be sure it was something that I felt comfortable doing. Once I felt more informed and made my ultimate decision to get vaccinated, I waited for availability to do so. I recently received my first shot and found the process to be simple and people administering the shot to be knowledgeable. I experienced minor side effects from the first shot, which I've learned most people do, but they subsided within a day.

Toya Lane-Bowden Emergency Housing Supervisor: On Monday, February 22nd, I received my first shot of the Moderna vaccine. I must say that I was hesitant at first due to rumors and conspiracy theories. However, I took the time out to read about the vaccine and how it was created. I must also admit I waited to see if a few of my friends who received the vaccine had any side effects - one being a biologist. I thought she would be my own personal guinea pig.

The process was quick and easy. I arrived at the Department of Health in the morning and I was the only person there. The nurses asked me the typical COVID screening questions that we have all grown accustomed to and few additional ones, including if you ever had any allergic reaction to any other vaccines. After answering the questions, the vaccine was administered using a very thin long needle and I barely felt it. They'll ask you to wait 15 minutes before leaving just in case you have an adverse reaction. As I walked to the waiting area I felt a little woozy but I think that was more about me not eating breakfast that morning. Fifteen minutes later, I was on my way home.

In my own personal experience I would suggest that you eat something before you go, bring a bottle of water, take Tylenol when you get home and choose your non-dominant arm for the shot. As for me, so far, so good. Please continue to wear your mask, wash your hands and social distance.

Please reach out to your supervisor if you if you have any questions or need proof of employment to receive your vaccine.

For a complete list of vaccine eligibility criteria, testing options, and general COVID information, visit OFO's website at ofoinc.org/covid19.

March is National Nutrition Month

Nutrition means something different to everyone. Some people think of it as a fully committed lifestyle, while others see it as a day-to-day effort. No matter how you work towards it, here are few simple ways to make nutrition work for you:

Keep it simple: Avoid a complete over-haul of your life. Small goals like serving a vegetable with every meal or choosing water instead of sugary drinks are easy ways to work a little extra nutrition into your daily choices.

Don't be too trendy: Between social media and advertisements, it is easy to get caught up in all the latest trends. Take the time to research claims and facts about lifestyle changes before committing to them. Reach out to your healthcare provider or nutritionist to get fast and credible nutrition information.

Make choices not changes: Instead of trying to stick to harsh changes in your life, work on making individual choices towards a healthier lifestyle throughout the day. Each time you eat or drink, challenge yourself to make the best choice possible to support your new goals.

Celebrate your successes: Take time to acknowledge your nutritional triumphs daily. Reflecting on your choices and being proud of your progress will help motivate you to continue working towards larger goals.



From "Healthy Living With Head Start", March 2021 Newsletter.
Submitted by Amy Losee, Head Start Dental/Nutrition Specialist

Finance & HR Updates

New Year, New Color: Each April kicks-off 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 item is applicable to. It is critical that expenses are recorded in the proper fiscal year. **The new Fiscal Year paper color is PINK.** Please begin using it now, as applicable. If you do not have a supply of Fireworx powder pink paper (#MP-2201-PK) at your site, reach out to your program admin/support staff who can order it from WB Mason and supply you with paper. There are also reams in the fiscal office that each program can sign out.

As we finish FY21 (ending 03/31/2021) and begin FY22 (starting 04/01/2021), be careful to notice which fiscal year purchase orders, check requests, and invoices apply to. The fiscal year which the expense is for determines the paper color to use to prepare your check requests and purchase orders. Here are some examples of transactions:

- On 4/8/21 you receive an invoice for supplies/services received in 3/2021. This would be a FY21 expense and the check request should be on purple paper (even though the payment of the invoice will not occur until FY22). The key is to determine which fiscal year the expense is for, not the date you are preparing the check request or the actual payment date.
- You prepare a purchase order on 3/25/21 for food (or supplies, services, etc.) to be purchased during the month of 4/2021. This would be a FY22 expense and the purchase order should be on pink paper. Again, the key is which fiscal year the expense is for, not the date you are preparing the purchase order.
- On 3/21/21 you submit a per diem check request for a conference that is scheduled to occur on 04/24/2021 and the check is due by 04/10/2021. This is a FY22 invoice to be paid and processed in April 2021. Since the conference is held 4/24/21, it is a FY22 expense and the check request should be on pink paper. The key is which FY the expense is

for, not the date you are preparing the check request.

Blanket Purchase Orders: Now is a great time to start reviewing all of your open purchase orders/encumbrances to help the fiscal year end close process go smoothly. Blanket purchase orders that are intended to cover expenses through FY21 but are not fully spent by 3/31/21 will need to be closed (encumbrances liquidated) and new purchase orders should be done for FY22 (on pink). Blanket purchase orders that are for a contract period and cross the end of FY21 (ex. 7/1/20-6/30/21) DO need to be closed as of 3/31 and you DO need new ones created for the new fiscal year.

Purchase Order Form: As a reminder, the threshold for when three quotes are necessary for purchases over \$3,500. The purchase order form is available in the Forms Folder on the server. Best practice is to utilize forms saved on the server and not your desktop; however, if you have a reoccurring purchase order form saved locally, be sure to change it to the updated form before submitting for approval.

We Want to Hear from You: A few years ago OFO implemented a process for staff to offer suggestions on how to improve the agency. Some updates that came through the Suggestion Box were additional lighting in the 3WB parking lot, a bottle-filling water fountain, gender neutral bathroom signage, space for the WIC breastfeeding peer counselors, and an EAP program. While not all suggestions are feasible, we would love to hear from you. **The easiest way to submit a suggestion & get feedback is by emailing suggestions@ofoinc.org.** Persons preferring to submit an anonymous suggestion can drop it in the Suggestion Box in the 3WB mail room. All suggestions are brought to the monthly Management Team meeting for consideration.



Remote Work-Life Balance

With so many people working from home, keeping a healthy work-life balance is becoming increasingly important. Especially for those who aren't used to working in their own home or taking a lunch break in their own kitchen. If you are still struggling to find or keep that balance, consider these tips:

Keep morning routines: To prevent burnout and stay motivated to work, urge employees not to open their computer the minute they roll out of bed. Instead, have them follow the same morning routine they had while working in the office. Sticking to a daily rituals allows them to separate "home time" from "work time" - especially when the new commute is just down the hall. Showering, putting on makeup, shaving, and getting out of your sweatpants or PJs not only helps to keep a routine but can do your mental health and wellbeing wonders.

Eliminate distractions: It helps to associate a workspace only with work. Distractions like non-work-related notifications, social media pings and texts from friends can take up a lot of time. If employees don't need their phone for work, have them place it in another room (out of sight, out of mind). Use a weekly planner to help stay focused during work hours.

Set - and enforce - boundaries: Working from home requires good boundaries. The line between home and office can get blurred easily when no one is actually leaving the building at the end of the day. Encourage good communication among your team. Have them set daily schedules and stick to them. And ask about workloads so no one is overwhelmed. This applies to family and household members too.

Remind your team to unplug: It can be tempting to keep on working an extra half hour every evening "just because," but that type of habit can quickly lead to burnout. Remind them of the importance of boundaries and keeping a schedule (that includes a lunch break away from their work area).

Create a shutting down ritual: Similar to keeping up a morning routine, a shutting down routine signals to the brain that it's time to transition from work mode to home mode. Have employees set a 15-minute warning bell. When it goes off, they know to wrap up any unfinished business, shut down the laptop and put it out of sight. Other end of day rituals include squeezing a stress reliever ball a few times before closing the computer, turning off the light and leaving the work area, and beginning non-work activities like yoga or reading.

Keep a healthy remote work-life balance: With ideas like keeping daily routines the same, eliminating distractions and setting good boundaries, you will be on your way to a healthy remote work-life balance. **If you still need help finding balance, reach out to someone you trust, your supervisor, or consider contacting the agency Employee Assistance Program (EAP) service.** Total Care EAP is available to ALL OFO employees and their families regardless of the number of regularly scheduled weekly hours.

To access EAP, call 1.800.252.4555 or 1.800.225.2527 to confidentially talk with a counselor or coach to help you address your concerns. You can also visit EAP online at www.theEAP.com for thousands of problem-solving resources and self-help tools.



What's New at OFO

Apply Online: Following the success of the Building Healthy Families online screening tool, **Head Start now has an online application** for Otsego County families interested in Early Head Start or Head Start services. Head Start is still accepting applications for the 2020-2021 year and will soon be recruiting for 2021-2022. The online application is available at ofoinc.org/hsapply.

Weatherization Training Program: Through a partnership between OFO's Weatherization Program, CDO Workforce and the New York State Weatherization Directors Association (NYSWDA), Otsego, Chenango and Delaware County residents may receive **free training on basics of building science and energy conservation**. Upon completion, attendees will earn certification, tools, and an opportunity to meet with local employers. The next training is scheduled for March 22nd. For more information, interested persons should contact Penny at CDO Workforce at 607.432.4800 extension 0 or email seegerp@otsegocounty.com.

In similar news, **OFO's Weatherization Program is expanding into Chenango County and is now hiring new crew members.** Job details are available at ofoinc.org/jobs.

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 (limited finances, infant knowledge, or social supports, relationship difficulties, depression, anxiety, substance use or recovery.)	Income: Up to 130% of Federal Poverty Level Other Criteria: Homeless; Applicant child is in Foster Care; Recipient of 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; Twice a month socializations; Center-based services for toddlers (18m-3yr) 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 health & development.	Promote healthy pregnancies, child development; conduct developmental screenings & in coordinating medical care; promote school readiness; linkages to community supports. Primary focus is education.

Staff Spotlights



NEW
Devon Flanders
Violence Intervention Program
Residential Associate



NEW
Fritzline Gue
Emergency Housing Program
Residential Associate



NEW
Gennelle Johnson
Emergency Housing Program
Residential Associate



NEW
Zakkary Jones
Energy Services
Crew Laborer (Tech I)



NEW
Lindsay Walker
Violence Intervention Program
Residential Associate



NEW
Nicole Cashman
Head Start Director

I'm glad to be a part of the Head Start family! Everyone has been welcoming and I look forward to meeting the children and families we serve throughout Otsego County as we continue to transition to our post pandemic normal. I have over twenty years' experience in the non-profit sector with a background in program operations, strategic planning, and financial management. I'm excited to collaborate with community partners and continue to provide high quality services to the families of Otsego County. Thank you for entrusting me with the most treasured members of our community.

-Nicole Cashman

Happy Birthday

Mary Kuhn	1-Mar
Keri-Jean Dorritie	2-Mar
Deborah Glidden	3-Mar
Monique Baldenegro	4-Mar
Burkley Cole	4-Mar
Melissa Brigham	8-Mar
Ralph Eggleston	9-Mar
Ronald Decker	14-Mar
Lindsay France	18-Mar
Kathleen Winans	19-Mar
April Carrington	23-Mar
Mandy Erwood	23-Mar
Virginia Nelson	23-Mar
Amy Leech	29-Mar
Jessica Heller	30-Mar
Chloe Shamblin	30-Mar

Submitted by **Dan Maskin, CEO**

Expanded Child Tax Credit Would Lift Millions of Children Out of Poverty

Policy analysts at the Center for American Progress explored the short and long-term benefits of expanding the child tax credit (CTC) as part of President Biden's American Rescue Plan. **The new proposal would make the credit fully refundable, increase the amount per child for both single parents and couples, include 17-year-olds, direct the IRS to make monthly advanced payments of the CTC, and extend the CTC to U.S. territories.** According to Columbia University's Center on Poverty and Social Policy, these expansions would reduce child poverty in the United States by 45 percent, lifting nearly 5 million children out of poverty. Expanding access would especially benefit Black

and Latino households, who typically have substantially less in cash reserves than white families. On a national level, analysts suggest that expanding the CTC would support the U.S. in recovering from the recession as monthly payments would put more money into the hands of low-income people, enabling them to increase their spending and generate economic activity.

Read the full article at the **Center for American Progress**.

ICYMI: Lawyer Cat

Virtual meetings have become part of our daily lives. However, sometimes these calls do not go as planned, such as the case of a Texas lawyer now dubbed "Lawyer Cat". The absurdity of the image and the seriousness of a legal proceeding are a great recipe for humor. Watch the exchange on **YouTube**.

