

# The Broadway Bulletin

A monthly publication of Opportunities for Otsego

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

February 2026  
Volume 18, Issue 2

## Everyone Counts

On the evening of January 22nd, local housing advocates were out in the dark and the cold for the annual Point-in-Time (PIT) Count - checking in with neighbors experiencing homelessness and making sure they are seen, counted, and not forgotten.

Thank you **Eliza Hamm** (Crisis Shelter Associate), **Mandy Erwood-Dumond** (Emergency Housing Program Manager, Mason Hovick (RSS), and **Melissa Witzgall** (Emergency Housing Shelter Associate) for staying out late, and doing this difficult, compassionate work.

The **Point-in-Time (PIT) Count** is an annual, nationwide effort to count people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January. It includes individuals staying in shelters - like Opportunity House and the VIP Domestic Violence shelter - Warming Centers, emergency housing, and transitional programs, as well as people living unsheltered in the community.



The PIT Count is required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as part of our community's participation in the Continuum of Care. Beyond the requirement, it plays an important role in making sure people experiencing homelessness are seen and represented. The information collected helps guide funding and resources, informs local planning, and strengthens programs that support housing, safety, and stability. Each count helps tell a more complete story and deepens our collective impact. Data from the PIT Count is also included in our Community Needs Assessment, which guides strategic planning and implementation of services and activities to address identified needs.

As the bitter cold and snow has settled in, this work feels even more urgent. For people without stable housing, freezing temperatures aren't just uncomfortable - they're dangerous. To help address the community-wide need, our Emergency Housing Assistance Program donated extra supplies (masks, hotel size shampoo/soap) to Catholic Charities Warming Station and two bags of blankets to the temporary Warming Station at 66 Chestnut Street that opened in response to the frigid temperatures impacting our area.

*If you would like to help, please reach out to Mandy Erwood-Dumond, Emergency Housing Program Manager, for a list of items needed at our shelter and for unsheltered folks who stop by Opportunity House after hours looking to meet their basic needs. People can also shop our Amazon Wish list, available at <https://www.ofoinc.org/lend-hand/wish-list>.*

Submitted by **Mandy Erwood-Dumond**, Emergency Housing Program Manager and  
**Megan Martin**, Planning & Research Director

## Save The Date

**February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month**

**02.10.2026 - Wear Orange Day:** Join VIP in supporting our youth and raising awareness for teen dating violence by wearing orange. Group photos should be emailed to Megan Martin.

**02.16.2026 - Agency Closed:** OFO will be closed for Presidents' Day. The Emergency Housing Assistance Program and Violence Intervention Program 24-hour shelters and hotlines will still be available for those with a need.

**03.07.2026 - Banking on Bright Futures:** Head Start - in partnership with the Oneonta Boys & Girls Club and Sidney Federal Credit Union - is hosting a free skating event for children age 16 and under. If your program would like to have an activity table for the younger children, reach out to **Brooks Mixon-Allen, Head Start Recruiting & Outreach Coordinator**.

A poster for the "Banking on Bright Futures" event. It features a cartoon character of a girl in a green hoodie and roller skates. The text includes: "BANKING ON BRIGHT FUTURES", "FREE EVENT FOR CHILDREN AGES 16 AND UNDER", "ROLLER SKATING • LASER TAG • INDOOR PLAYGROUNDS • ACTIVITY STATIONS", "FREE ADMISSION - ONE SLICE OF PIZZA - ONE FOUNTAIN DRINK", "A Parent/Guardian Must Accompany Their Child at All Times. NO DROP OFF.", "March 7 • 10AM-Noon • Interskate 88". Logos for Opportunity House, Catholic Charities, and Sidney Federal Credit Union are also present.

## Quality Home Contractor Designation

Congratulations to our Energy Service Team on achieving the **2026 NYSERDA Quality Home Contractor designation!** This designation is awarded to contractors who complete at least 12 projects within the past calendar year, have an average field Quality Assurance score of 4.0 or greater within the past calendar year, and not have been on any disciplinary action, either probation or suspension, within the past calendar year.



**NYSERDA**  
Quality Home Contractor  
EmPower+ 2026

In an effort to help New York homeowners identify quality home contractors, NYSERDA will highlight Opportunities for Otsego's designation on their website.

Thank you to **Ed Cope, Doug Ives, Jayden Marsh, Keith Audette, Kyel Jones, and Mike Livingston** for your hard work and efforts put forth to achieve this status.

Submitted by **Ed Cope**, Energy Services Director

# Social Care Network Service - Get Connected

New York State's **Social Care Networks (SCNs)** help Medicaid members get support for everyday needs that affect their health - like food, housing, and transportation. These services don't replace medical care; they work alongside healthcare to help people stay healthy and stable.

## How SCNs Help Medicaid Members

SCNs connect members to community organizations - like Opportunities for Otsego - that can:

- Help access nutrition education and healthy food
  - Medically tailored meals; home delivered meals; home pantry stocking; cooking supplies; kitchenware
- Assist with home modification and repair needs
  - Home accessibility and modifications; mold and pest remediation; air conditioners; furnace clean and tune; sump pump replacement
- Assist with housing-related needs
  - Eviction prevention, utility assistance, transition supports such as inspections, relocation costs, pantry stocking, household goods and furniture
- Arrange transportation for non-medical, essential services
  - Grocery store; food pantry; DSS; court; housing search appointments; victim services; and necessary errands like the laundromat
- Offer care coordination, so members don't have to navigate services on their own

These supports reduce stress, improve health outcomes, and help members stay engaged in their care - at no cost to the member.

## Our Role at OFO

For almost a year, OFO has been partnering with the Care Compass Collaborative to provide Social Care Network services to Medicaid members in Otsego County. **As an agency, we serve more than 1,500 Medicaid members each year - adults and children - and SCN services are another way we support the whole person, not just their medical needs.**

## How Staff Can Help Members Get Connected

- If you work with or get a referral to your program for someone who is a Medicaid Member - **adult or child** - explain that additional food, housing, and transportation resources may be available to them.
- If agreeable, gather the correct spelling of the first and last name and date of birth of **all household members** who have Medicaid. Trained staff can do an initial screening for SCN eligibility in the SCN system called UniteUs.
- If seemingly eligible, trained staff will coordinate a Screening and Eligibility Assessment. This can be done in-person, over the phone, or even Zoom.
- Referrals will be made within UniteUs to community organizations for services that the Medicaid Member is eligible for. **OFO is a provider of housing and transportation services.**
- Organizations accepting referrals will coordinate services under SCN throughout the eligibility period for each particular service.

**Questions should be directed to one of these Trained Staff:** Allyson Porack (ADM); Jasmine Chianta (Community Advocate); Catherine McCoy (EHAP); Karen Johnson (EHAP); Sam Augur (EHAP); Jaydyn Marsh (Energy Services); Heather Fay (Head Start); Corinne Wheeler (VIP); Heather Brown (WIC); and Jennifer McCoy (WIC).

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

## Medicaid Members can receive assistance connecting to social needs services

If you are enrolled in Medicaid and you or your family are looking for support with food, transportation, or housing, there may be help available to you.



Medicaid Members can reach out to a Social Care Network to discuss their social needs.

For those who may benefit from additional supports, you may work with someone to get connected to the services that are right for you, depending on health status and need.

To learn more about services available in Otsego County, reach out to **Opportunities for Otsego** at 607.433.8005 or [jchianta@ofoinc.org](mailto:jchianta@ofoinc.org)

### Navigation includes:



CARE COMPASS  
COLLABORATIVE

Opportunities  
for otsego

NEW YORK  
STATE  
Department  
of Health  
Medicaid

# Spread the Love



facebook.ofoinc

instagram.opportunitiesforotsego

Almost daily, updates are posted on our social media pages about our work, our people, and the opportunities here - and a little engagement goes a long way.

When you like, share, or comment on our posts, it helps boost visibility, supports recruitment, and gets our message in front of more people. Simply put, interaction helps our posts reach beyond our own page.

So if one of our post pop up in your feed, please spread the love. It only takes a moment and really helps showcase the great work happening across the organization. Thanks for your support!

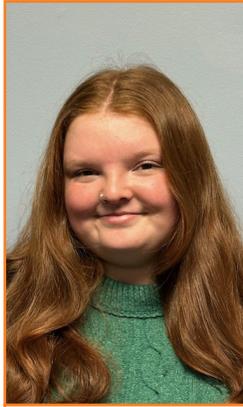
## Staff Spotlights



**NEW**  
Brandy Anderson  
Food Service Associate  
River Street Head Start



**NEW**  
Brittany Gunther  
Classroom Aide  
SUCO Head Start



**NEW**  
Eliza Hamm  
Crisis Shelter Associate  
Violence Intervention Program



**PROMOTION**  
Mary Iannarelli  
Classroom Teacher  
SUCO Head Start

## Now Hiring

Are you looking for a change or know someone who be a perfect fit for OFO? **We have openings in programs across the agency with varying schedules, levels of experience and responsibility.**

For details and application instructions, visit [ofoinc.org/jobs](http://ofoinc.org/jobs)

## From Intern to Advocate

The **Violence Intervention Program** is proud to recognize **Paige Wandelt** and her story of dedication, perseverance, and outstanding growth within our Violence Intervention Program. Paige's journey is a true success story.

Paige began her path with VIP as an intern, where she quickly demonstrated a strong work ethic, eagerness to learn, and a genuine passion for advocacy. Her dedication did not go unnoticed, and freshly after graduation, she was hired as a Shelter Associate at the domestic violence shelter. Throughout her time at the VIP shelter, Paige's professional development was strongly supported by her supervisor Patti Olmstead. Patti consistently encouraged Paige's growth, provided mentorship, and helped shape her into the skilled, sassy, and compassionate worker she is today. With Patti's leadership, Paige continued to excel, supporting the team with professionalism, empathy, and determination.

Through each step of the ladder, Paige consistently went above and beyond, building her skills while remaining deeply committed to the mission of VIP. Her growth and leadership have now led her to her newest role as a full-time Advocate with VIP, where she will serve as the Campus Advocate/Coordinator.

We are incredibly proud of Paige's accomplishments and the journey she has taken to get here. Her enthusiasm, dedication, and advocacy skills will undoubtedly be a tremendous asset to the campus communities she will serve. **Please join us in congratulating Paige on this exciting milestone and celebrating the impact she continues to make.**

Opportunities for Otsego is proud to foster an environment where employees are encouraged to grow, develop, and pursue their professional goals. We believe in recognizing potential, supporting advancement, and celebrating success from within. Paige's journey is a wonderful example of how investment in our staff leads to meaningful growth for both our employees and the communities we serve.

Submitted by **Jess Eklund, Senior Counseling Advocate**



**PROMOTION**  
Paige Wandelt  
Campus Advocate-Coordinator  
Violence Intervention Program

## Subsistence and Snacks

Friendly Reminder: If staff are working with families or know community members who could use supplemental food, please send them to our in-house **Food Pantry**, located at 3WB. We have been working with the Community Cupboard of Edmeston to maintain our inventory and are expecting a new delivery in the coming weeks. With donations from the community, we also have dog food (thanks to Brandow's Feed and Seed) and hygiene items.

The goal of our pantry is to make sure our friends and neighbors in need do not go hungry. At this time, we do not have restrictions on when households may access food. We will welcome people as needed.

Any questions may be directed to **Jasmine Chianta, Community Advocate**, or Megan Martin, Planning and Research Director.

**3WB Staff Kitchenette:** The (broken) soda machine that one graced the staff kitchenette at 3WB has been removed. In its place we'll be sprucing up the employee snack area by adding additional counter space. This update will allow us to offer a wider variety of nutritious and healthy snack options, perfect for that late-afternoon pick me up! We appreciate everyone's patience while we make the arrangements to bring this improvement together. Questions and snack suggestions should be directed to **Ally Porack, Executive Assistant**.

