The Broadway Bulletin

A monthly publication of Opportunities for Otsego

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

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Sights, Frights, and Lights

Building Healthy Families took full advantage of the region's beautiful surroundings, autumn offerings, and family fun events recently. Participant families picked apples at the Middlefield Orchard in September. In October, they were treated to a tractor ride among Fall foliage and spooky scarecrows at Willy's Farm in Schenevus. There, little ones selected pumpkins while parents chatted over cider and donuts. Finally, staff members **Aislinn Smith**, Family Resources & Support Specialist, and **Sarah Lanese**, Team Leader, took part in Huntington Library's Pumpkin Glow Event in Oneonta. Treat bags with glow sticks and agency information were shared with the public as well as program information with organizations who could serve as community partners and referral sources.





Save The Date

11.06.2026 - 11.20.2026 - Open Enrollment: OFO's 2027 online Open Enrollment will be live 11.06.2026-11.20.2026. All eligible employees are required to select or waive each benefit offering. Additional details will be shared soon - so keep an eye out in your email!

11.11.2026 - Veterans Day: Agency offices will be closed in recognition of the holiday. *

11.26.2026 & 11.27.2026 - Thanksgiving Holiday: Agency offices will be closed in recognition of the holiday. *

11.30.2026 - Annual Compliance Training Deadline: All staff should have received an email from Lydia Bell, HR Director, announcing OFO's Compliance Training Program. Instructions on how to access the trainings and other important details were contained in the 10.23.2026 email.

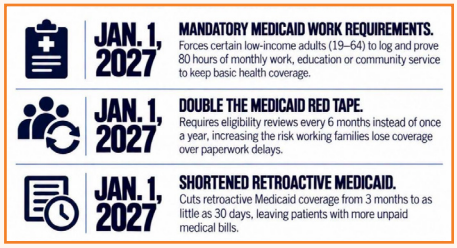
** The Emergency Housing and Violence Intervention Program 24-hour hotlines and shelters will still be accessible to those in need.**

Changes Ahead for SNAP & Medicaid

Significant changes to federal benefit programs are beginning to take effect, and many of the families we serve may be impacted. Changes stemming from the federal H.R. 1 legislation will affect eligibility requirements, reporting responsibilities, and access to programs such as SNAP, Medicaid, and other supports for low-income households.

What does this mean for the people we serve? Some families may face new work requirements, additional paperwork, more frequent renewals, or even the loss of benefits if they are unaware of the changes or unable to meet new requirements. A few important changes to be aware of:

- SNAP: Expanded work requirements took effect in New York in March 2026. More adults, including some individuals ages 55–64, veterans, and people experiencing homelessness, may now be subject to work requirements and a three-month benefit time limit unless they qualify for an exemption.
- Medicaid: Beginning January 1, 2027, certain adults ages 19–64 will need to document at least 80 hours per month of work, volunteer service, education, or approved job training to maintain coverage, unless they qualify for an exemption. Additional changes to renewal and eligibility procedures are also coming.
- Medicaid renewals: Certain adults ages 19–64 will move from annual to every-six-month renewals beginning in 2027. Keeping contact information current, opening mail, and responding to requests for documentation will be especially important.



What can we do as staff?

Staff should be prepared for questions and increased needs among the families we work with. Please keep the following in mind:

- Encourage families to open and respond to all notices from SNAP, Medicaid, and other benefit programs.
- Remind families to keep their mailing addresses, phone numbers, and contact information up to date.
- Encourage families not to assume they are no longer eligible. Exemptions and special circumstances may apply.
- Be prepared to connect families with DSS, health insurance navigators (Fidelis is at 3WB once a month), food pantries, and our Community Advocates.
- Listen for changes in family circumstances,(e.g. food insecurity, health care, or loss of benefits) and help connect families with appropriate support.

The bottom line: We may see more families needing help accessing food, health care, and other basic necessities. Staying informed, recognizing when a family may be struggling, and knowing where to connect them for assistance will be more important than ever.

Coffee for a Cause

In recognition of **Domestic Violence Awareness Month,** VIP partnered with the Latte Lounge in Oneonta for "Coffee for a Cause". The event brought community members together over coffee while shining a light on the importance of domestic violence awareness, prevention, and support for survivors.

Jenn Dilello, Counseling-Advocate, connected with the community, offered information, and shared the importance of standing together to support those impacted by domestic violence.



It was a great reminder that small moments of connection can spark meaningful conversations and make a life-changing difference!

Home Energy Assistance

The New York State **Energy Affordability Program (EAP)** provides financial relief to New York households with annual income levels below Area Median Income or State Median Income, depending on utility service territory. The program is meant to make utility bills more affordable through monthly bill discounts applied directly on your bills. Visit the *Energy Affordability Program | Department of Public Service website* for more information on eligibility and how to apply.



Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) can help eligible households heat their homes. Program components:

- ***Heating Equipment Repair and Replacement benefit*** opened October 1, 2026. This benefit can help you repair or replace your furnace, boiler, and other direct heating equipment necessary to keep your home's primary heating source working.
- ***Clean and Tune benefit*** opened October 1, 2026. Eligible households can receive energy efficiency services, which includes the cleaning of primary heating equipment, but may also include chimney cleaning, minor repairs, installation of carbon monoxide detectors or programmable thermostats, if needed, to allow for the safe, proper and efficient operation of the heating equipment.
- ***Regular HEAP Benefit*** opened November 2, 2026. The regular HEAP benefit may help you if you heat your home with: Electricity; Natural Gas; Oil; Coal; Propane; Wood/Wood Pellets; Kerosene; or Corn.

A Spooktacular Time

OFO once again joined the **Oneonta Boys & Girls Club** for its annual **Trunk-or-Treat** event, which (literally!) draws hundreds of kiddos and community members for an evening of Halloween fun.

This year, **Jasmine Chianta**, Community Advocate, took the lead in bringing our Coraline-themed trunk to life, putting in countless hours and plenty of creativity to make it standout! She was determined to bring home first place, so while we may not have won Best Trunk (much to her dismay), our spooky, whimsical display and blue candy certainly caught everyone's eye and brought plenty of smiles. It was a little bit creepy, a little bit curious, and a whole lot of fun!

Staff enjoyed connecting with families, sharing treats, and spreading the word about our agency and Head Start program. After all, in the world of Coraline, there's always more than meets the eye - and we're always excited to share more about the programs and services OFO has to offer!

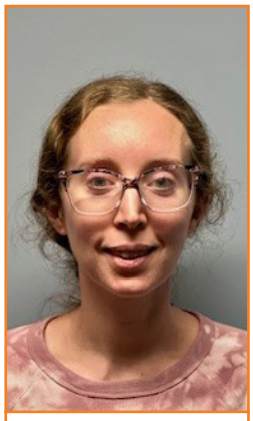
A big thank-you **Jasmine** (Circus Mouse), **Ari Zadra-Tiahrt** (Mr. Bobinsky), **Ally Porack** (The Cat), **Megan Martin** (Other Mother), **Stacie Mark, Shannon Rocconi,** and **Amanda Woodbeck** who helped bring our Coraline-themed trunk to life and made this another memorable community event.





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**

Staff Spotlights



NEW
Alicia Casta
Classroom Aide
SUCO Head Start



NEW
Tina McClung
Emergency Housing
Shelter Associate



NEW
Payton Schrader
Classroom Aide
SUCO Head Start



NEW
Katrina Worden
Head Start Recruiting &
Outreach Coordinator



PROMOTION
Fatima Harkley
Head Start Administrative &
Data Specialist



MILESTONE
Mackenzie VanHorn
Head Start Assistant Teacher
5 Years

Your Donation Makes a Difference

Emergency Utilities. Food & Hygiene. Victim Services. Basic Needs for the Unsheltered.

Whatever your passion, your donation provides hope & dignity to people in need throughout our community.

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Kudos & Congratulations



Congratulations **Nicole Sacharsky, Head Start Health Specialist,** on earning two important certifications.

Nicole is now certified to teach Basic Life Support (BLS), which includes BLS skills, First Aid, Heartsaver First Aid/CPR, and Hands-Only CPR. These trainings will help build lifesaving skills among our staff and community members through hands-on learning and practice.

Additionally, Nicole has earned her Medication Administration Training (MAT) Instructor Certification. This OCFS-approved curriculum prepares childcare staff to safely administer medications to children enrolled in our Head Start programs.

These certifications are quite an accomplishment and expand our capacity to support the health and safety of our children, staff, and community. Thank you Nicole for your dedication to Head Start and for bringing these valuable skills and training opportunities to our team.

Head Start Enrollment & Eligibility

Head Start has immediate openings for income-eligible children in their home-based and center-based program. Centers located in Cooperstown; Morris; Schenevus; Oneonta; and Unadilla.

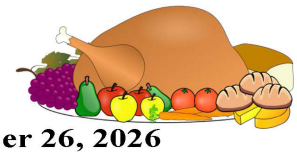
To qualify for Head Start, families must be pregnant or have a child under five years of age and meet one of the following eligibility criteria:

- Household annual gross income up to 130% of Federal Poverty Level after any adjustments
- Family is receiving or eligible for TANF, SSI or SNAP benefits
- Child is experiencing homelessness (e.g. in shelter, "couch-surfing"; non-permanent nightime residence)
- Child is in foster care

Make a Referral: 607.433.8055 - Ask for Heather Fay or email headstart@ofoinc.org or encourage families to use the ***Self-screening tool***

Housing costs are now considered in determining income eligibility for Head Start. Families paying more than 30% of their annual gross income on housing-related expenses may be deemed income eligible after an "excessive housing adjustment". The excessive housing adjustment considers monthly payments; taxes; utilities; insurance; and interest. This change opens opportunities for families who were otherwise excluded based on household income.

Thanksgiving Community Dinner



Thursday, November 26, 2026

Dine-in

Thanksgiving Day at the **Elks Lodge**
84 Chestnut Street, Oneonta
12:30 until 2:00 pm
Free Raffle

Delivery for homebound or take out meals
contact Deb Bruce at 607 433-0356 or email
oneontathanksgiving@gmail.com by **Monday, 11/23**.

To volunteer: drivers, cooks, food prep, serving, clean up
Nov. 23 - 27 contact Cindy Korb
thanksgivingvolunteer2026@gmail.com
phone: 607-267-0539
by **Friday, 11/20**

Cash donations send to:
St. Mary's Church, 39 Walnut St, Oneonta NY 13820.
Write *Thanksgiving Dinner* on the memo line.

Sponsored by St. Mary's Church and the Oneonta Community