

December 2024



Washington County Department of Human Services

Save The Date

Department of Human Services - Town Hall

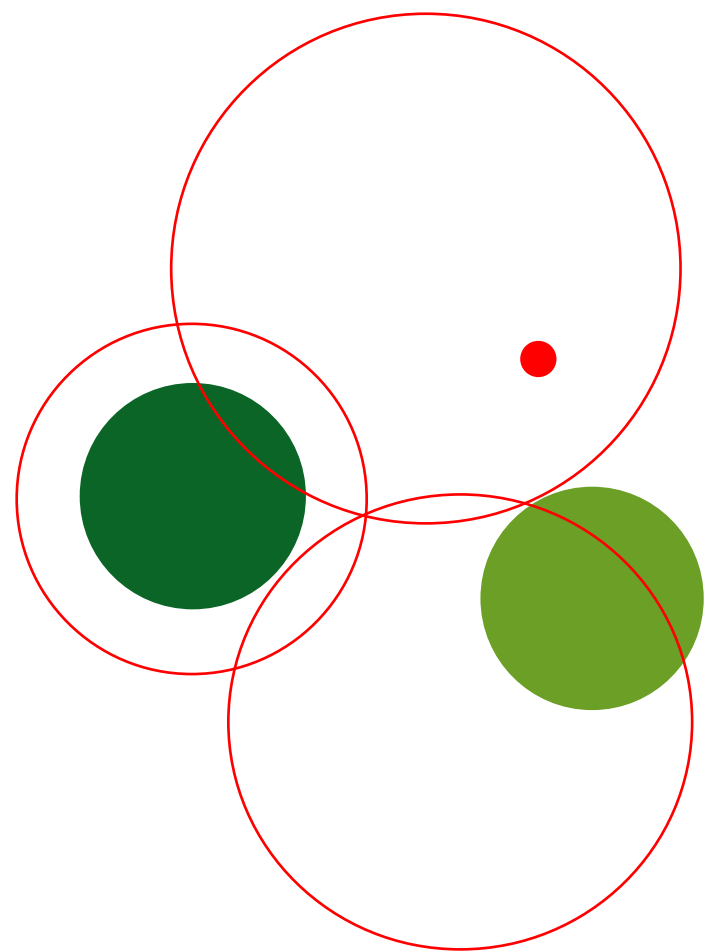
January 8 at 3:00pm

Join us by Microsoft Teams



IN THIS ISSUE

- PG. 2**
Dates to Remember and Announcements
- PG. 3**
What's the Buzz at the Department of Human Services
- PG. 4**
Employee Spotlights-DHS
- PG.5**
A Year in Review - 2024



WASHINGTON COUNTY
Behavioral Health & Developmental Services

TRAINING Workshop

Two sessions to learn about the dangers of social media & human trafficking with a FBI Agent.

December 3, 2024
11 AM - 2 PM

G-16 Meeting Room
95 West Beau Street
Washington, PA 15301

OBJECTIVES:

- How are online predators targeting children through the use of social media.
- What is human trafficking.
- What trafficking looks like in our area.
- How the public can partner with law enforcement to fight against it.

This training is for Washington County MH Providers.
Only 70 spots available. Please register by November 20th:

<https://forms.office.com/g/ANijbhn2L4?origin=IprLink> [Sign Up](#)

APPROVED BY CHIEF CLERK FOR POSTING

HELPING HANDS

HOLIDAY GIFT DRIVE

Benefiting Children & Families Served by Washington County Children & Youth Services

Gifts needed for children and teens, ages birth to 18 years
New rolls of wrapping paper and large gift bags are also needed.

Shop online:
Scan or enter the link to connect to an Amazon Holiday Wish List to purchase items for a child and ship items directly to the Agency.

Helping Hands

amazon.com/hz/wishlist/l/271SHZ7Q9CXXD/

Shop in store - and drop off new, unwrapped gifts at:
Crossroads Building
95 W. Beau St.
November 1st - December 9th
Collection boxes on the 1st floor
or at
Washington County Fairgrounds
December 9th 8:30am - 6:30pm

There are many ways to help!
Provide a new gift, host a drive at your office, or coordinate other donations from your family, group, or organization.

Call for more information:
Kate Grant: 724-250-4154 or Barb Mullen: 724-250-4128

WINTER HOLIDAY Outreach Fair

December 17, 2024
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM

303 Chamber Plaza
Charleroi, PA 15022

*Visits with Santa Claus
Treats For All*

Community Resource Tables

Kids' Corner provided by Washington County LICC

SPONSORED BY
WASHINGTON COUNTY BHDS
IT & PROVIDER SYSTEM

APPROVED BY CHIEF CLERK FOR POSTING

Upcoming Events

WASHINGTON CHRISTIAN OUTREACH PRESENTATION
December 2nd 11am-12pm
Washington Christian Outreach

BENTLEYVILLE LIBRARY PRESENTATION
December 4th 3:30pm
Bentleyville Public Library

CITIZENS LIBRARY PRESENTATION
December 11th 6pm
Citizens Library

BHDS OUTREACH FAIR
December 17th 1pm-5pm
303 Chamber Plaza Charleroi PA 15022

HARMONY LIFE CENTER
December 18th 11am-1pm
Harmony Life Center

CIARRA'S COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS
December 21st 10am
Washington County Fairgrounds

What's the Buzz at the Department of Human Services



On Wednesday, November 20th, the Department of Human Services hosted the 1st annual Harvest for Hope Hunger and Homeless Awareness event. With the support of numerous community partners, meals were served to approximately 150 individuals in need. The event aimed to unite our community and raise awareness of the daily challenges faced by our neighbors – particularly hunger and homelessness. The Department of Human Services would like to extend a thank you to everyone who participated, volunteered and/or donated to make this event a success. Save the date for the 2nd annual Harvest for Hope Hunger and Homeless Awareness event which will be held on November 19th, 2025.



On November 13th, Washington County Behavioral and Developmental Services, Intellectual Disabilities and Autism Program hosted the first Annual Employment fair for all individuals. There were many providers of employment that were set up and available to discuss their services and how they would be able to assist individuals who attended. The event also included various speakers from the WVU WIPA program, SAU1, ARC Human Services, and OVR, who gave presentations on topics of employment. Included with the ARC presentation was a panel of 4 individuals who presented and participated in discussion around employment. It was a very beneficial event and plans to be held again next year.



On Saturday, November 23rd, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and Pathfinders hosted International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day. The event focused on self-care and attendees were able to receive self-care kits to take home with them. Attendees were able to hear from a podcast style keynote speaker, complete a remembrance activity and receive a catered lunch from Angelo's. In addition, the unveiling of the Peace Crane curtain occurred which has become a symbol of peace, hope and healing. The curtain consists of 1000 origami cranes and will be a focal point for the 2025 Out of the Darkness Walk scheduled for September 27, 2025, at Washington Park Rotary Club Pavilion.

Employee Spotlights

Michelle Gindlesperger, BHDS ID/A Program Specialist/ Intake

Michelle attended Washington and Jefferson college and California University of Pennsylvania where she obtained her degree in special education. Michelle expressed that the most rewarding part of her job is being able to support individual, in the ID/A program, and helping them get connected to services and supports so they can live their best life. She stated that someone she admires is Elon Musk as he is n amazing genius and a great visionary that persevered through challenges to achieve greatness in technology and innovation. Michelle enjoys spending time with her family and friends, cooking and going to Pilates. Her favorite movie is Braveheart and her favorite TV show series is The Chosen.



Bernadette Saylor, Children & Youth Services Program Director

Bernie attended Slippery Rock University where she obtained bachelor's degree in social work. She then went on to obtain her master's degree in social work from California University of Pennsylvania. Bernie expressed that the most rewarding part of her job is helping find permanency for children by reunifying them with their parents or adoption. She stated that she looks up to all of her coworkers, as they are like a family and help each other cope with difficult situations. Bernie enjoys cooking, baking, and working out. She loves to watch anything on the Food Network.

Not Pictured

Kristin Fraizer, Aging Services Burgettstown Senior Center Coordinator

Kristin attended Westminster College where she obtained her degree in public relations. Kristin expressed that the most rewarding part of her job is delivering meals on wheels. She really enjoys providing such an essential service to those in need. Kristin stated that Brenda Wacker, coordinator at the Canonsburg Senior Center, is a wonderful mentor and is very supportive of all the Aging Services centers and coordinators. Brenda is a wonderful asset to Aging Services, and Kristin still relies on her expertise and guidance. Kristin enjoys playing the piano and doing diamond art. Her favorite movie is Simon Birch.

Not Pictured

A Year in Review - 2024

**Guest Columnist: John Tamiggi, Human Services Director,
and Tiffany Milovac, Human Services Deputy Director**



As we reflect on this past calendar year, we discovered it was the endless support of our dedicated staff, board, and community stakeholders, that enabled our Human Services Department to continue to create a true impact for residents throughout Washington County. We are proud to state that over the course of 2024 our department has made significant strides in our shared communities by creating human-centered initiatives that help further strengthen our residents and families.

Carrying out the passion set forth by our County Commissioners, our efforts continue to provide an ongoing commitment to outreach and accessibility. It is through this commitment that we have channeled a continuation of engagements that coincide with introducing new and innovative ways in which we connect. Through engagements such as our Out of the Darkness Suicide Prevention Walk, Senior Expo, and Helping Hands Holiday Gift Drive, we have deepened our understanding of the importance of connectivity and this has driven our desire to introduce new events which included the Intellectual Disability/Autism Awareness Day and Harvest for Hope Hunger and Homeless Awareness event. These engagements have been designed to continue to channel awareness of need and collectively develop inroads of support. Additionally, it is through the collective, we have witnessed the power of partnership that has enabled inroads of innovative support and opportunity. Such partnerships have strengthened our needs assessments, educational initiatives, and further channeled resource support and services to the people.

As we begin to embark upon the new year, we close by reflecting on this past year as a way to further instill the passion that drives us. We possess great enthusiasm that is rooted in our commitment to service. Together, we will continue efforts to further connect, unify, and transform the hearts and minds of Washington County.