

November 2024

Washington County Department of Human Services



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HELPING HANDS

HOLIDAY GIFT DRIVE

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



APPROVED BY CHIEF OF POSTING

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.



amazon.com/hz/wishlist/l/27LSHZ7Q9CXXD/

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

WASHINGTON COUNTY BHDS EMPLOYMENT FAIR

Presenters:

- Achieva
- Arc Washington County
- Self-Advocates United as One
- Voices for Independence

Employment opportunities for adults with Intellectual Disabilities / Autism & their families / children.

- RESOURCE TABLES
- MOCK INTERVIEWS
- RESUME WRITING
- REFRESHMENTS



NOVEMBER 13, 2024
10AM - 2PM

Chartiers Township Community Center
2013 Community Center Drive
Houston, PA 15342

Registration: <https://forms.office.com/g/39xYKwdrwA>

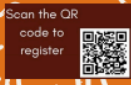
Table sign up: <https://forms.office.com/g/KMVHwVcBuX>

HARVEST FOR HOPE COAT AND COLD WEATHER GEAR DRIVE

THE JOHNSON-BRAW FOUNDATION IN PARTNERSHIP WITH WASHINGTON COUNTY DEPT. OF HUMAN SERVICES

As the colder months are upon us, many families in our community are in need of warm coats and clothing to stay safe and warm. We are collecting donations of (preferably) new coats and cold weather gear to be distributed at the Harvest for Hope dinner event. Please consider helping those in our community that need cold weather gear. Together we can bring warmth and HOPE to our

community. Call 724-228-6995 by 11/8/24 to register. Scan the QR code to register.



20 Harvest for Hope **NOVEMBER**
340 RACETRACK RD. WASHINGTON, PA

UPCOMING EVENTS NOV. 2024

- 13** November HARMONY LIFE CENTER
75 E MAIDEN ST
WASHINGTON PA 15301
- 18** November HERITAGE PUBLIC LIBRARY PRESENTATION
52 4TH ST
MCDONALD PA 15057
- 20** November HARVEST FOR HOPE DINNER
340 RACETRACK RD
WASHINGTON PA 15301



What's the Buzz at the Department of Human Services



Celebrate National Adoption Month by joining Washington County Children and Youth Services at two holiday events. On November 29th from 4pm until 7pm at the LeMoyne House, located at 49 East Maiden Street, Washington PA, 15301, children and families will be able to receive free ornaments and pictures with Santa's favorite helper. Then on November 30th from 3pm to 6pm children and families can get into the holiday spirit with free crafts, snacks, and activities while learning about children waiting for a family to call their own. Children will also be able to decorate their own cookie and make an ornament. This event will take place at 16 North Main Street, Washington, PA 15301.



Abigail Gerlach, Human Services Community Outreach Liaison, had the opportunity to attend the EmployHER Pittsburgh Washington County Fall Opportunity Fair on October 29th. The event was held at Dee's Event Center in Charleroi and brought in 49 attendees. Participants were able to connect with local community-based organizations and hiring partners. Attendees were also about to receive wardrobe support from Dress for Success Pittsburgh and hair/makeup support from Ulta Beauty. Many women, after attending the event, said they didn't know such resources existed and that they felt happy to be more connected to people and resources that could help better their lives.



On Tuesday, October 29th, the Department of Human Services hosted The Road to Recovery Symposium at the Bella Serra Event Villa in Canonsburg, PA. This symposium was dedicated to building awareness and fostering community engagement by bringing together local community members, stakeholders, businesses, and the recovery community to provide meaningful discussions and shared insight to the current state of Washington County's addiction recovery.

Employee Spotlights

Rachel Rogers, BHDS ID/A Program Specialist II/KWI Manager

Rachel received her bachelor's degree in speech/hearing disorders from Edinboro University and a master's degree in community/agency counseling from California University. Rachel stated that the most rewarding part of her job is seeing individuals happy and prospering with the services they oversee. It is always nice to see them out in the local community as well and they greet you with a big smile or hug and a conversation. Rachel looks up to Joan Susko and Lori Martin. Joan took a lot of time out of her day for several months when Rachel was working on her master's degree and was thinking about becoming an OVR counselor. She spent time training Rachel on the paperwork and various case files. Lori Martin taught Rachel quite a lot in this field that will remain with her always. Rachel enjoys watching hockey and football, even when the Penguins and Steelers aren't playing. Her favorite tv show is Friends and her favorite movie is Sixteen Candles.

Amanda Golkosky, Children & Youth Services Prevention & Intake Supervisor

Amanda attended California University of Pennsylvania where she obtained her bachelor's degree in business administration with a concentration in management, minor in human resource management, and an associate degree in marketing. Amanda expressed that she is very passionate about preventive services to help families get connected with community resources and to show a positive impact to the community. She strives to help change the communities view on Children and Youth Services (CYS). Amanda stated that she looks up to Ashley Blake and Hilary Burchett because they are always willing to help and ensure a good work environment. Amanda's favorite hobbies are sparring, jujitsu, running, hiking, and reading. Her favorite movie is the Notebook.

Heather Redd, Human Services Administrative Assistant

Heather expressed that the most rewarding part of her job is seeing firsthand how all of the agencies come together to help the residents of Washington County have a better quality of life by working as a team to put a plan in place that truly addresses the individual's needs and concerns. She stated that it is hard to pinpoint just one person that she would consider her mentor because she has acquired skills from many individuals that she has had the pleasure of working with over the years. Although if she had to pick one it would be her dear friend Mr. G. Mr. G is an attorney that Heather has had the privilege to work for the past 3 years as his secretary. He too lives his life by the golden rule and has taught her a great deal about the law and always takes the time to explain the process to better understand what needs to be executed in order to provide clients with a successful outcome. Heather enjoys long car rides in the country with family and spending time with her children. Her favorite movies are A Walk in the Clouds and The Lakehouse. Her favorite tv series is Suits.

Not Pictured



National Hunger and Homeless Awareness Week

Guest Columnist: Nicole Masur, Housing and Homeless Coordinator

During this particular time of the year, a significant number of individuals find solace in the comfort of their own homes, relishing in generous holiday feasts, and cherishing meaningful moments with their loved ones. Regrettably, this reality is not universal, as there are many within our community who continue to grapple with the daunting task of meeting their most basic needs, including securing adequate housing and nourishment. The observance of National Hunger and Homeless Awareness Week, scheduled for November 17 to 24, stands as a reminder that these pressing issues persist even as the holiday season unfolds.

Food insecurity is the result of various factors, including limited resources, lack of awareness, and poverty. The increased cost of food directly contributes to a growing number of individuals experiencing food shortages. Statistics indicate that 1 in 11 people, and 1 in 8 children, face hunger in Pennsylvania. In Washington County, approximately 18,820 individuals struggle with undernutrition. Unfortunately, the demand for assistance surpasses the available resources, and existing charitable programs are unable to fully address the needs of those affected by hunger.

The prevalence of homelessness, both sheltered and unsheltered, has risen in recent years. In January 2024, an estimated 164 individuals in Washington County were without housing, including 20 children. This social issue is influenced by multiple factors, including health conditions and poverty. Furthermore, there is a scarcity of housing resources to adequately support all individuals in need throughout Washington County.

Poverty emerges as a common factor contributing to both hunger and homelessness, with approximately 19.41% of Washington County residents living at or below the poverty line. Many individuals are faced with the difficult choice of purchasing groceries and paying rent. It is important to recognize that homelessness is not a prerequisite for experiencing hunger, as hunger can often precede homelessness. Every individual has the right to an adequate standard of living, encompassing the ability to meet basic human needs, which is hindered by poverty. Hunger and homelessness have persistently afflicted our country, and particularly our community, for decades.



Raising awareness of these intricate issues within our community is imperative for addressing the related concerns. The Washington County Department of Human Services has formed a partnership with the Local Housing Options Team, Neighbor to Neighbor of SWPA, Community Circle Food Pantry, and the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel - Pittsburgh Meadowlands to achieve this objective. We are organizing the Harvest for Hope community event on November 20, 2024, to enhance awareness of these issues and foster unity within our community.

What are your plans to assist your community this season? Please consider contributing to local organizations addressing these needs or engaging in volunteer work. For one option, the Harvest of Hope community event above is seeking volunteers, but I encourage you to also reach out to local homeless shelters and food pantries to explore other opportunities, as well. Let us collectively spend time this holiday season to contemplate the privileges in our lives. Let us also consider those who are uncertain about their next meal. Furthermore, let us dedicate time to contemplate how we can aid those experiencing poverty and contribute to breaking the cycle of poverty in our community.

The Open Door, Inc.

Guest Columnist: Thomas Whitfield, Expansion/Outreach Coordinator

The Open Door, Inc. was founded in 2006 in Pittsburgh by a group of social workers who saw that many of their patient's health was deteriorating due to not going to their appointments due to housing instability. We served individuals who are living with HIV.

The Open Door, Inc. provides transitional housing, non-medical case management, representative payee services, and service coordination. We are able to help individuals who are homeless and living with HIV with our transitional housing program. We own and manage a 14-unit (one bedroom) apartment building. Our representative payee program helps individuals develop a budget each month.

We are currently hosting a research study to show the effectiveness of our model and are looking for participants who are HIV positive, have experience with the legal system, and are unstably housed. Participants will receive gift cards and bus passes, as well as the possibility of being rapidly re-housed.

If you would like more information on our services, please reach out to Thomas a twhitfield@opendoorhousing.org or info@opendoorhousing.org.

IN HONOR OF HUNGER AND HOMELESS AWARENESS WEEK WASHINGTON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, IS PROUD TO PARTNER WITH NEIGHBOR 2 NEIGHBOR OF SWPA, COMMUNITY CIRCLE FOOD PANTRY, LOCAL HOUSING OPTIONS TEAM, AND DOUBLE TREE BY HILTON HOTEL PITTSBURGH - MEADOWLANDS TO PRESENT

Harvest for Hope

THANKSGIVING THEMED DINNER

NOVEMBER 20, 2024

DOUBLE TREE BY HILTON HOTEL
340 Racetrack Rd. Washington, PA 15301

Scan the QR code to register



Neighbor 2 Neighbor
Working Together to Help Those in Need

12 PM - 6 PM



WASHINGTON COUNTY
COMMUNITY CIRCLE FOOD PANTRY

DOUBLE TREE by Hilton
PITTSBURGH - MEADOWLANDS



Veterans Day

Guest Columnist: Bobbi Cumpston, Director of Washington County Veterans Affairs



Veterans day is one of our most treasured days honoring the service of our military. Veterans Day originally began as Armistice Day on November 11, 1918 (the 11th hour of the 11th month of the 11th day) when the fighting of World War I ceased. Ideally, World War I was to be the war that ended all wars. However, World War II soon followed, and 16 and a half million Americans were called to action. In 1954, Congress passed a bill changing Armistice Day to Veterans Day and it was signed into law by President Eisenhower. November 11 became known as Veterans Day and veterans are celebrated nationwide.

We celebrate Veterans Day with proclamations, parades, and ceremonies that pay tribute to our veterans who answered the call of service. Veterans share a common bond that exists outside time or location. We share stories and experiences, good and bad, that link us together for life. This year's theme for Veterans Day observances is "A Legacy of Loyalty and Services". Veterans share loyalty to each other, the military and to the United States, which translates into services, even beyond the uniform. Veterans find a way to give their time serving other veterans and organizations.

Veterans Day also extends to ensuring veterans know their eligibility for benefits. Some veterans have never filed for a service-connected disability. Some do not know they are eligible for healthcare. Surviving spouses could also be eligible for benefits, depending on the veteran's military service. The most important document for a veteran is their DD214, showing proof of military services. A DD214 can be obtained through the National Archives. It should also be recorded with your County Recorded of Deeds office for free and ensures its safekeeping.

On this Veterans Day, we extend thanks and honor to our Veterans who are part of Washington County government. We encourage you to participant in a Veterans Day event in your area. Some of the events include:

- November 6: Veterans Breakfast Club Annual Breakfast at the Rivers Casino
- November 8: Veterans Day Program, Central Assembly of God Church, Houston
- November 8: Veterans Day Appreciation Luncheon, Chartiers Community Center
- November 9: Veterans Day Parade, Charleroi
- November 10: Veterans Day Program, The Church at Southpointe
- November 11: National Cemetery of the Alleghenies

It is an honor to continue to serve the veterans of Washington County.

