

Community Action of Orleans & Genesee September 1, 2026, Employee Newsletter

► Weathering the Storm Together

► Team,

► As we move into another busy month, I want to take a moment to talk candidly about where we are as an agency and where we are headed.

► Being honest, I was putting off writing this article because recent events impacting our funding had me feeling sad and frustrated. Like many people, I was also saddened by the recent passing of Dolly Parton, whose life and work reminded us what it means to use hardship, talent, and generosity in service to others. Her Imagination Library has provided more than 300,000,000 books to children across five countries, and her songs often reflected the struggles of growing up in poverty and facing life's biggest challenges. Her example reminds me that people and organizations can endure hardship, support one another, and continue helping others even during difficult times. As she once said, "The way I see it, if you want the rainbow, you gotta put up with the rain."

► That helped me to put things back into perspective and start working on this article. Over the past several weeks, we have shared difficult news regarding a significant reduction in our Head Start funding. The reduction is nearly \$1 million, representing roughly one-third of our Head Start funding. Because Head Start accounts for more than half of our agency's overall budget, the impact extends far beyond a single program. Reductions of this magnitude create ripple effects throughout the entire organization. We are one agency, and when one part of our organization experiences a challenge, all of us feel the impact.

► I know this uncertainty is unsettling. Many of you are concerned about what these changes may mean for our future, your colleagues, and the families we serve. Those concerns are understandable. While we do not yet have all of the answers, please know that our leadership team is working tirelessly to evaluate every available option, advocate for our programs, and protect the long-term sustainability of Community Action. We are carefully reviewing our operations and finances while continuing to fight for the resources our communities need.

► Recently, we made the painful decision to reduce staffing levels. These decisions were among the most difficult we have faced, and they were not made lightly. They affected dedicated colleagues who have contributed greatly to our mission. However, these actions were necessary to position the agency to survive, adapt, and remain strong enough to continue serving our communities in the years ahead. Sometimes leadership requires making difficult decisions today to ensure there is an organization here tomorrow.

Weathering the Storm Together - continued

► At the same time, there are important developments happening at the national level that could significantly shape the future of Head Start. The federal government recently released a proposed rule that would substantially revise Head Start regulations. The proposal includes changes to administrative cost limits, staff qualifications, service requirements, parent engagement structures, disability services regulations, program duration requirements, and many other areas. It is important to remember that these are proposed changes only. No decisions have been finalized, and programs are not required to make any operational or budget changes based on these proposals at this time.

► The National Head Start Association is carefully reviewing the proposal and encouraging Head Start programs, families, staff, and stakeholders to provide feedback during the public comment period. I submitted something the day this came out and got right to contacting elected officials. The strength of Head Start has always come from the voices of those who see its impact every day. As more information becomes available, we will continue to monitor developments and advocate for policies that support children, families, and communities.

► Through all of this, I remain confident in our future.

► Community Action has faced significant challenges before. Economic downturns, changing regulations, funding uncertainties, and unexpected obstacles have tested this organization throughout its history. What has always carried us forward is the resilience, creativity, compassion, and determination of our staff. Those same qualities are alive and well today.

► I want every employee to know this: we are doing everything possible to weather this storm. We are advocating aggressively, planning strategically, evaluating every option, and making decisions with the long-term health of the agency in mind. While the road ahead may not be easy, we are committed to navigating it thoughtfully, transparently, and together.

► Most importantly, thank you.

► Thank you for your professionalism during uncertain times. Thank you for your flexibility when asked to adapt. Thank you for continuing to show up every day for the children, families, seniors, and individuals who depend on us. I also recognize that understanding a difficult decision does not make it easy, and I do not take your commitment for granted.

► The work you do matters. It changes lives every single day. That mission remains unchanged, and together we will continue moving forward.

► Thank you for being Part of the Solution!

► Renee

Great feedback from Weatherization customers

- ▶ Upon receiving a Customer Satisfaction Survey, this comment was inserted. How wonderful
- ▶ It is to receive such great feedback and appreciation for the Weatherization Team and Crew.

Thank you so much for all employees' help!

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Especially the workers because they did an awesome job!
And I can't forget to thank Amy and Joe for getting all of this started for me. Everyone was very kind & caring and professional. It was a great experience.

More great feedback.
Two very nice cards
were sent to the agency
and Weatherization

I would like to thank community weatherization
for the services they provided for me concerning
my home. The windows are beautiful - even got new
curtains and rods for them in my living room.
Love being able to vent my kitchen when I cook with
the new air vent. Love the smoke alarms even though
my husband as set them off a several times
cooking hamburgers. The insulation in the ceiling
has helped no leaking when it rains. The heat pumps
with air conditioning has really helped during hot
humid days. Can't wait to have heat in our bedroom
this winter after 21 years of not having many. Words of
Thank you are small for how blessed I feel for what you
have done for me and my home. Thank you so much

It may not have seemed
like a big deal to you,
but it was to me.

THANK YOU



► A wonderful piece of feedback recently came in for our Weatherization Team! A happy customer sent custom keychains to express their gratitude for our hard work. This meaningful gesture highlights the deep commitment and pride that every member of the Community Action of Orleans & Genesee team brings to their role each day. It is an excellent reminder of how the work we do together changes lives and builds stronger communities.

Dino had said to me
Why do we care so much?
Well, that touched me.
I found something for you,
Jeff and the guys that
worked on my house.
Let them know you are all
appreciated.

September 2026

Highlights for September

9/9 – Special BINGO with Alzheimer’s Association

****Pending date for Blood Pressure Check****

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Sandwich Vegetable / Soup Fruit	Casserole w/ Rice or potato Fruit / Desert	Sandwich Vegetable / Soup Fruit	Salad Fruit / Desert		
7 Labor Day	8	9	10	11 Patriots Day	12	13
CENTER CLOSED	Sandwich Vegetable / Soup Fruit	Casserole w/ Rice or potato Fruit / Desert	Sandwich Vegetable / Soup Fruit	Salad Fruit / Desert		
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Pasta w/ Meat Sauce Vegetable Fruit / Desert	Sandwich Vegetable / Soup Fruit	Casserole w/ Rice or potato Fruit / Desert	Sandwich Vegetable / Soup Fruit	Salad Fruit / Desert		
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Pasta w/ Meat Sauce Vegetable Fruit / Desert	Sandwich Vegetable / Soup Fruit	Casserole w/ Rice or potato Fruit / Desert	Sandwich Vegetable / Soup Fruit	Salad Fruit / Desert		
28	29	30				
Pasta w/ Meat Sauce Vegetable Fruit / Desert	Sandwich Vegetable / Soup Fruit	Casserole w/ Rice or potato Fruit / Desert				

MEALS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE DEPENDING ON AVALIBILITY

Lunch served at 11:30 am

A \$2.00 donation is appreciated but not required.

BINGO Mon, Wed & Fri

Milk, coffee or water provided with meals

****See Menu for list of items that maybe served****

September 2026



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30	31	1 Cook a healthy and delicious meal	2 Enjoy some quiet time and "unplug"	3 Make a list of things you are grateful for	4 Declutter and organize one space at home or work	5 Spend time outdoors today
6 Try something new	7 Clean up social media feeds	8 Define what gives you stress	9 Get rid of three things you don't use	10 Set boundaries with yourself and others	11 Allow yourself time to rest and reset	12 Pick up the phone and call a friend to connect
13 Write down your goals for the week	14 Create a new evening routine	15 Dress in your favorite outfit today	16 Treat yourself to something special	17 Listen to your favorite song	18 Speak kindly to yourself - like you do others	19 Catch up on sleep if your body needs it
20 Have a no plans day	21 Do an act of kindness for someone	22 Sit still for 5 minutes and just breathe	23 Spend a few minutes journaling	24 Think about one of your strengths and use it today	25 Spend a few minutes doing something artistic	26 Scan your body and mind - notice how you feel
27 Make time for laughter-watch a funny movie or show	28 Take 10 deep breaths and notice how you feel	29 Give yourself permission to say "No"	30 Be gentle with yourself when you make a mistake	1	2	3
4	5	Notes				

SORT

Your Way to a Safer Work Environment

**S
O
R
T**

STOP and take the time to evaluate your work environment and work task.

OBSERVE your work environment- Have all hazards been addressed?

RECOGNIZE any unaddressed hazards in your work environment.

TAKE OWNERSHIP of unaddressed hazards in your work environment and follow through to see that they are corrected.



VA S.A.V.E. TRAINING

VA S.A.V.E. Training is a free training that will help you act with care and compassion if you come across a Veteran - or any person - who is in crisis or having thoughts of suicide.

The acronym **S.A.V.E.** helps you remember the important steps involved in suicide prevention:

- **S**pot the signs a Veteran might be thinking about suicide
- **A**sk the critical question – “Are you thinking of killing yourself?”
- **V**alidate the Veteran’s experience
- **E**ncourage and support next steps

At the end of this training session, you'll also hear more about the **VA WNY Homeless Veteran Program.**

Thursday, September 10, 2026 12:00-1:30PM
Virtually via Microsoft Teams

[Click here to register](#), scan the QR code:
or e-mail Sara.Hults@va.gov



This training is brought to you by the WNY Veteran Homelessness and Suicide Prevention Coalition – we invite you to attend and follow-up with us to see how you can help. We currently have an active group of individuals from agencies that serve Homeless Veterans in WNY and are seeking increased Veteran representation and input. We meet virtually every other month.

Brought to you by:



★ SECOND ANNUAL ★ PARKING LOT PARTY

Hosted by: Independent Living
of the Genesee Region



Sunday, Sept 20, 2026



11:00AM - 3:00PM



**319 West Main St.
Batavia, NY 14020
(Crickler Building)**

Bring a bag of pet
food as a
donation
and get tickets
to play the Human
Slot Machine Game!

The 3 E's: Education • Equality • Empowerment

**Free Children's Games and Activities.
Games for Adults!**

Touch the van CONTEST- prizes for the

child/youth who can touch the longest

Talk to firefighters and visit the fire truck

**Meet the ILGR Team
Basket Raffles**

50/50

Local VENDORS!

MORE!

**Chicken BBQ- served at 12:00PM
presale tickets available for \$16.00**

**SPONSORSHIP
OPPORTUNITIES**

Gold- \$1000

Silver- \$750

Bronze- \$500

VENDORS WANTED

Contact: Rae Frank

for more information

585-815-8501 ext 406

rfrank@wnyil.org



**INDEPENDENT
LIVING** OF THE
GENESEE REGION

Accepting donations!

September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

September 2026



Join a community event to participate in this observance.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Speaking Volumes: Words Matter Exhibit will be on display all month ➤ Richmond Lib.	Which County? Genesee Orleans Wyoming Virtual	1 6-8pm Picnic in the Parking Lot SP Month Kickoff ➤ City Church	2	3	4	5
6	7	8 11am Firearm Safety for Suicide Prevention ➤ Generation Ctr	9 530-630pm Speaking Volumes: Words Matter Art Reception ➤ Richmond Lib.	10 12pm VA S.A.V.E. Training 	11	12
13 The Lives They Left Behind: ➡ Suitcases from a State Hospital Attic	14 Showcase on display 9/14-9/20 ➤ City Church Generation Ctr	15 445pm Wyoming County Annual SP Month Walk ➤ Perry Vet Club	16	17	18	19
20 9am-2pm Fuller 155 Basket Raffle ➤ Shelby Fire Hall	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	Events continue in October 	October 10 10am Out of the Darkness Walk ➤ Bullard Park	October 25 1-4pm Men's Day Out ➤ Medina YMCA

For more information on any events please see GOW Pathway to Hope Facebook page or e-mail Sara.Hults@va.gov

Enter to win a Hope Firepit:



Follow GOW Pathway to Hope:



GOW Pathway to Hope website:



Request a Lock & Talk Lethal Means Safety Kit:



Genesee & Orleans Credible Mind:



Wyoming Credible Mind:

