

NOVEMBER 2023

WARREN HEALTH EQUITY ZONE

Newsletter

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

BY KRISTIN READ

In this edition of our newsletter, we highlight how connection plays a key role in individual, family, and community well-being. Read more about relationships as a health indicator in the study, *Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community*. Learn more: www.SurgeonGeneral.gov/Connection

The Warren HEZ Collaborative is a growing a resident and stakeholder group, and **together we can build social connection**. Consider how we can all play a role in these recommendations from the study:

- Create opportunities and spaces for inclusive social connection. Establish programs that foster positive and safe relationships among people of all backgrounds.
- Actively seek and build partnerships with other community institutions... This can create a culture of connection in the broader community and support those who may be experiencing loneliness and social isolation.

IN THIS ISSUE:

GET CONNECTED • AMERICORPS HELPS WITH HOUSING • SNAP INTERIM REPORTS & MEDICAID RECERTIFICATION • WARM UP WITH HEATING ASSISTANCE & ENERGY EFFICIENT APPLIANCES

Be a part of monthly HEZ collaborative meetings:

FOOD & HEALTH. Residents and partners in Warren & Bristol are taking action to decrease food insecurity, increase nutrition, with a food system lens. [On Zoom]

SAFETY, EMERGENCY AND CLIMATE. This group focuses on education and action centered on the changing environment. [In person & on Zoom]

Sign up for a work group, contact Warrenhez@ebcap.org



WARREN
HEZ
HEALTH EQUITY ZONE



east bay community action program
THE BRIDGE TO SELF-RELIANCE

Health Equity Zones are an initiative of the Rhode Island Department of Health. This newsletter is produced by East Bay Community Action Program, the backbone agency for the Warren, Bristol, and East Providence Health Equity Zone's, and does not necessarily represent the views of RIDOH.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT!

Megan Conway
Accessing Homes
AmeriCorps Member



Megan Conway is the first Accessing Homes AmeriCorps member to serve at the Warren HEZ through a partnership with NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley. This is Megan's second AmeriCorps term, her first being at the Providence Children's Museum bringing play-based STEM activities to the Boys and Girls Club! As a Bristol resident with a Warren connection, she is looking forward to making a difference so close to home.

Megan will spend time in the community at Mary V. Quirk Community Ctr., George Hail Library, St. Mary of the Bay Food Pantry, Housing Authority, Senior Center and East Bay Community Action Program (EBCAP); connecting residents to services that help reduce the cost of living. She can help with housing recertification forms and applying for Internet, Food & Heating Assistance such as GetACP.org, SNAP and LIHEAP!

WHAT IS A HEZ?

Many people ask Warren HEZ this question. Here is what RIDOH's website says, "The mission of the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) Health Equity Zone Initiative is to build a healthy and resilient RI by investing in communities and their capacity to affect change; by honoring the expertise of those who live and work in those communities; and by challenging the systems and structures that perpetuate health inequities." Learn more at www.health.ri.gov/hez

To learn more, please scan the QR code below or visit our Link Tree at the link below.



<https://linktr.ee/warrenhez>



SNAP INTERIM REPORTS

SNAP households must complete a report once a year, six months after their most recent application or recertification (excluding elderly/disabled households). The Department of Human Services, (DHS) will notify people by mail/email if they must complete a report. During the pandemic, SNAP Interim Reports were waived.



MEDICAID RENEWALS

During COVID-19, Rhode Islanders were automatically renewed for Medicaid each year. Due to federal changes, as of April 2023, people enrolled in Medicaid must recertify to make sure they still qualify. DHS will contact you to let you know what is needed. **Always open mail that you receive with a return address from "State of Rhode Island" or "HealthSource RI."**

HEZ SUCCESS AND GRANT UPDATES!



Preschool Development Grant (PDG)

Warren and Bristol HEZs serve the Bristol Warren Regional School District. We are celebrating the success of our PDF grants, which ran from July 1, 2022 -December 30, 2023. The grant provided dedicated staff to assist families with benefits navigation and supported trainings and skills-building workshops for caregivers, children, and local professionals.

Family Navigator, Natalie Chasse led these two efforts in the towns of Warren & Bristol. The Warren HEZ & Bristol HEZ and Family Navigator have:

- Assisted 65 families with accessing bill assistance, food, local childcare, early intervention, COVID-19 masks and test kits, clothing, and more.
- Coordinated 22 workshops providing social outlets and content on Potty Training, Sensory-Friendly Storytime, Transitioning to Kindergarten, Pre-school Playgroups, Anxiety in Children, and more.
- Hosted workshops in partnership with local groups; East Bay Community Action Program's Head Start, The Autism Project, George Hail and Rogers Free Library, the Bristol Warren Regional School District, Thrive Outside, Warren Parks & Recreation.
- Developed a crowd-sourced community event calendar to share info on playgroups, story times, and parent support groups. The calendar can be found on the Bristol Warren Thrive By Five and Beyond website: www.bristolwarrenthriveby5.org

This project was made possible by Grant Number 90TP0027 from the Office of Child Care, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.



Digital Equity and the Affordable Connectivity Program

Warren HEZ, the Town of Warren and ConnectRI are partnering to promote digital equity and the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), which provides a monthly \$30 benefit for income eligible households towards their WiFi bill. This fall, the HEZ shared ACP info at 10 outreach events and met with stakeholders. We reached 4500 households.

Get connected with cheaper, high-speed home internet today! Visit GetACP.ORG and see if you are eligible or contact the Warren HEZ for assistance.



GATHERINGS AND GOINGS-ON IN TOWN

HOLIDAY FESTIVAL

Our community lights up with holiday cheer on Friday, Nov. 24th, from 5-8PM and continues on Saturday 1-4PM with kid-friendly activities happening all over town! Sip some free cocoa, take a stroll! www.warrenholidayfestival.org.

WARREN'S SENIOR CENTER

Make friends, participate in programs, have a hot meal! The Libby Lane site is alive with activity Tuesday through Friday. Sign up for weekly lunch, learn about shuttle services and more ways to connect. Scan the QR code, visit www.townofwarren-ri.gov or click here for the monthly [calendar](#)



FIND HEZ AND FREINDSHIP AT ST. MARY OF THE BAY FOOD PANTRY!

Every Tuesday, 3:00pm to 6:00pm and most Wednesdays, 9:00am to 11:00am

During Pantry hours a Community Health Worker can assist with food and reach out to residents who need services such as SNAP, Medicaid, LIHEAP, and more. We provide information and schedule appointments to help residents apply for resources and benefits.

*St. Mary of the Bay Food Pantry always needs Volunteers...build new friendships here!

BE WARMER AND MORE ENERGY EFFICIENT DISCOVER HEATING AND WEATHERIZATION PROGRAMS

The Low-Income Heating Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a seasonal program, running from *October 1, 2023 to May 1, 2024*, and income-eligible households may qualify to receive a one-time per-season credit for fuel. For more info or to apply online, please visit: www.ebcap.org/programs/heating-and-energy/

LIHEAP program participants may also work with the *Weatherization Assistance Program* to improve energy efficiencies. Participants may be eligible to receive replacement appliances. *The Weatherization Assistance Program is a year-round program.*

You may be eligible for LIHEAP & Weatherization, two important cost-saving strategies! An income-eligible household's gross income must be equal to or less than 60% of the State Median Income (SMI).

Here are two examples which meet the SMI criteria:

- Household size of one- \$35,674 in 12 months/ \$2,972.83 per month
- Household size of four- \$68,605 in 12 months/ \$5,717.08 per month

For more details please visit: www.ebcap.org/programs/heating-and-energy

OUTREACH PHOTOS FROM EVENTS



Hugh Cole Elementary School Open House



Bristol Warren Education Fund 5 K Fundraiser- Scary Spiders!



Affordable Connectivity Program Outreach at Mt Hope High



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THANK YOU FOR READING!

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