



## Welcome to our community newsletter!

We are very excited to showcase some of the incredible work and resources within and beyond our Continuum of Care.

Please note that by featuring an organization or individual in our newsletter, the Homeless Alliance does not endorse any religious or political beliefs/stances of these individuals or organizations.

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## HOMELESS ALLIANCE OF WNY IMPORTANT UPDATES



The Homeless Alliance's **new** office is located at 625 Delaware Ave., Suite #410, Buffalo, NY 14202



Our Annual HAWNY Luncheon will be held on Friday, December 13th at Classic V Banquet Center  
• **Click here** to buy tickets



The PIT Count (Point in Time) is on January 29th and 30th

- ★ **Kashmir Bowser:** Youth Program Coordinator
- ★ **Sara Carlson:** Erie County Coordinator
- ★ **Haley Diagostino:** Aging Coordinator
- ★ **Treya Gough:** Data Quality Specialist
- ★ **Michaela Thorley:** Intern
- ★ **Matthew Roehmholdt:** Intern

## ORGANIZATIONAL SPOTLIGHT: COMPASS HOUSE



Compass House has been a cornerstone for youth experiencing homelessness in our community. The organization describes their mission “to be a beacon of hope for youth facing adversity, providing them with the support and tools to build a brighter future.”

**Compass House Emergency Shelter** is located at 370 Linwood Avenue in Buffalo. The Shelter provides a safe place for 12-17 year old youth experiencing homelessness or running away from home. The shelter is inclusive of all genders. The shelter offers numerous supports including, Case management, independent living skills, clothing, food, counseling, medical care and far beyond.

**The Compass House Resource Center** is located on 1451 Main street in Buffalo. The resource center is equipped with a lounge area, laundry, full kitchen, and various goods and materials available for local youth. Compass House Director of Rapid Rehousing, Mark Mancuso credits a local Target and Tops for donating personal care and food to the resource center. He also notes, the organization works with FeedMore of WNY to bring in low cost produce.

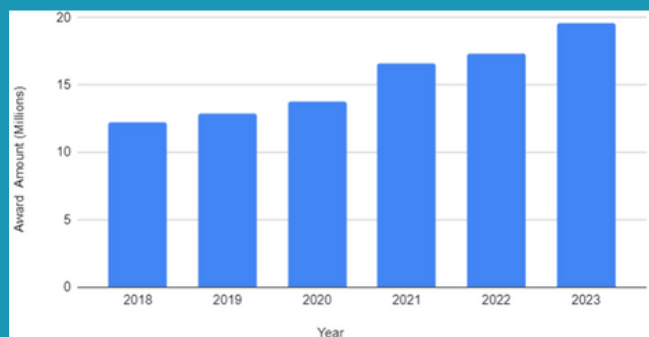
Mark says they are always listening to local youth and trying to improve their offerings. He says recently, “we added a bulletin Board with current events and resources.”

Mark says that the youth “feel comfortable to come here when they have a problem.” Mark notes the importance of empowering youth to make their own choices. For example: He encourages the youth to use their kitchen to make their own meals.

Visit their website if you are interested in donating to their organization or to learn more about Compass House resources and programs. The organization offers many different opportunities to volunteer your time including, sorting donations, becoming a safe place volunteer, annual fundraising assistance, etc.

## NY-508 COC FUNDING INCREASES TO OVER \$19 MILLION

### NY- 508 FUNDING FY2018-FY2023



The chart above illustrates the steady increase in CoC award funding for NY-508, growing from \$12 million in 2018 to \$19.6 million in 2023. This growth reflects not just system performance, but the dedication and hard work of everyone involved.

As the CoC lead, the Homeless Alliance of WNY has been at the forefront of these efforts, advocating for new projects and leveraging community partnerships to maximize resources year after year.

Kexin Ma explains, “Our success is truly a community effort. Every organization that serves individuals experiencing homelessness plays a vital role in securing this funding. While rising Fair Market Rent (FMR) has contributed to the increase, this is a more passive change. What truly drives our growth is the Homeless Alliance’s efforts to bring new projects on board and secure additional resources. By staying proactive and strategic, we’re ensuring our community gets the support it needs.”

Kexin adds, “HUD looks at more than just numbers. They assess how well we engage diverse sectors, prioritize housing first principles, and incorporate the voices of those with lived experience. At the Homeless Alliance, we take pride in leading these efforts, ensuring the community is heard and our policies are shaped with compassion.”

Looking forward, Kexin emphasizes the importance of continued collaboration: “It’s not about competition with other CoCs—it’s about working together within our own communities to improve.

By pulling together our resources and ideas, we’ll keep strengthening the system and increasing funding to meet the needs of those we serve.”



# 2024 Annual Luncheon

Fundraiser & Partner Appreciation Event

The HAWNY luncheon will be held:

Friday, December 13th, 2024

Classics V Banquet Center

2425 Niagara Falls Blvd. Amherst, NY

12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. (Doors open at 11:30 am)

**[Click Here to Secure Your Tickets](#)**

## ✦ ✦ ✦ **HIGHLIGHTING OUR** ✦ ✦ ✦ **LIVED EXPERIENCE BOARD AND COMMITTEE**

The Homeless Alliance is proud to spotlight our Lived Experience board and committee. These initiatives, including the Youth Action Board (YAB) and the Program Advisory Committee (PAC), offer paid opportunities for individuals with lived experience to drive positive change in our community.

The Youth Action Board (YAB) is comprised of young people ages 17 to 24 who have experienced homelessness, while the Program Advisory Committee (PAC) consists of adults over the age of 25 with similar experiences. Both groups play a crucial role in shaping inclusive solutions by ensuring that the voices of those with lived experience are heard and valued. Members participate in initiatives such as CoC funding decisions, determination of project performance standards, and more.

For more information on how to apply, please contact  
Community Engagement Coordinator,  
Daniella Gallego, at [gallego@wnyhomeless.org](mailto:gallego@wnyhomeless.org).





## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS: CALEIGH SKINNER, LMSW GIVES INSIGHT



Caleigh Skinner, LMSW is the Director of Domestic Violence Services at Pinnacle Community Services. Caleigh has held this position for roughly 2.5 years and has been working in this realm for much longer. Caleigh is a dedicated member of our community who is very passionate about providing resources to domestic violence survivors.

### Recent Training

On October 7th, Caleigh facilitated an “In Her Shoes” training simulation. The simulation provides a very intimate lens into several real Domestic Violence scenarios. Through the eyes of these survivors, participants are able to make life decisions that result in various outcomes. The scenarios serve as a reminder of how complex each and every survivor's situation is and how only the survivor can truly understand their situation.

### Special Considerations for Students and Young Adults

Caleigh recently conducted an “In their Shoes” training at Newfane high school. Caleigh makes it a point to discuss “cyber tracking” with students. She notes it is commonplace for students to track location with family and friends on their phones. She is very concerned that this type of tracking can put students and others in a very vulnerable position.

### Best Practices for Providers

Caleigh offered up a few tips when an individual discusses a DV situation with you. Caleigh says, “start with emotional support first.” It's important to listen to the individual and avoid throwing out phone numbers and information right away. She advises to never sneak a pamphlet or flyer in someone's belongings as it could be found by their abuser. She says, “when offering a phone number” or informational pamphlet :give the person a choice.” For example: “Would you like the DV Hotline phone number?”

If you are organization interested in hosting one of these trainings, Caleigh will work with you to set up a time and place for the training.



**ON AVERAGE, NEARLY 20 PEOPLE PER MINUTE ARE PHYSICALLY ABUSED BY AN INTIMATE PARTNER IN THE UNITED STATES.**



**1 IN 4 WOMEN AND 1 IN 7 MEN HAVE BEEN VICTIMS OF SEVERE PHYSICAL VIOLENCE BY AN INTIMATE PARTNER IN THEIR LIFETIME**



**ON A TYPICAL DAY, THERE ARE MORE THAN 20,000 PHONE CALLS PLACED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINES NATIONWIDE**



**1 IN 15 CHILDREN ARE EXPOSED TO INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE EACH YEAR, AND 90% OF THOSE CHILDREN ARE EYEWITNESSES TO THIS VIOLENCE**



# Project Homeless Connect

## Buffalo New York

Buffalo's 15th annual Project Homeless Connect was held at the Buffalo Convention Center on October 8th, 2024. An event led by the WNY Coalition for the Homeless and spearheaded by Stacy Arlain of Cazenovia Recovery Systems. This was a one day, one stop event including countless amenities and resources for people experiencing homelessness including free lunch and clothing, medical services, housing resources, and more. Hundreds of local individuals attended the event.

At the event, reporter Pheben Kassahun of Channel 7 WKBW News sat down with a local individual experiencing homelessness. He spoke about his journey from losing his housing, to becoming unsheltered, and how he was referred to a local housing program while attending Project Homeless Connect that day. The individual spoke about the harsh reality of sleeping outside and the challenge of finding a new spot outdoors when he was asked to move.

The news story also featured a conversation with Homeless Alliance CoC Program Director Ashley Matrassi and Senior Program Manager Tracy Schmidt. Ashley shared that homelessness is not a choice and rather, it stems from a lack of affordable housing in the community. The story also featured local homelessness data provided by the Homeless Alliance HMIS team that put into perspective the number of people experiencing homelessness in the City of Buffalo and Erie County.

This news story was a change in pace from other, commonly heard narratives that suggested people experiencing homelessness do in fact have access to housing resources, but are choosing not to utilize. This false narrative is harmful to efforts fighting for more outreach, prevention, and housing resources we desperately need to help the most vulnerable in our community.

Overall this massively successful event could not have happened without Stacy's leadership, the dedicated event volunteers, and dozens of agencies that participated!

[Click here](#) to read the entire WKBW story

### Longitudinal Systems Analysis

November 7  
10 – 11am

#### Privacy and Security

Option 1: November 14  
10 – 11am *virtual*

Option 2: November 19  
1 – 3pm *in-person*

Option 3: November 21  
11am – 12pm *virtual*



**Register now!**



# 2024 Fall HMIS Workshops

## Spotlight Resources

### GLYS WNY

GLYS Western New York is an organization that provides a safe and positive space for LGBTQ+ Youth

GLYS has been an active force in the community with events like their annual youth leadership conferences, GLYS prom, and pride month celebrations.

Access GLYS Resources here  
[GLYS WNY](#)

GLYS Assists LGBTQ+ Youth By Providing:



**211 WNY: Call 2-1-1 or 888-696-9211 for Essential Community Resources**

**VA Benefits/Services Hotline 1-800-827-1000**

### FeedMore WNY

In need of a food pantry? Click the logo to navigate to the "Pantry Locator" where you can find food near you!

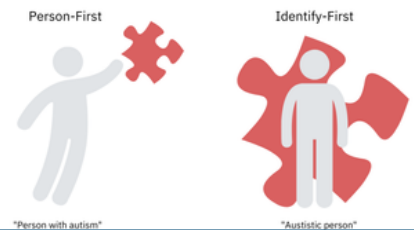


### Person-First and Identity-First Language Glossary

The glossary, published by the NYS Office of Language Access, is designed to bring awareness and support the use of culturally sensitive terms and phrases that center the voices and perspectives of those who are often marginalized or stereotyped.

The guide covers terms to be avoided and gives suggested alternatives.

[Click here](#) for the full guide



## GET HMIS CERTIFIED

Use our self-paced courses to master the HMIS workflow for your HMIS project types and get a sharable certificate of completion. Each course contains targeted resources, by project type, to help you manage your organization's HMIS data quality.



### HMIS WNY Certification Pathways

Each of these programs has been specially designed to support homeless services professionals working in the Western New York's (NY-508) HMIS.



Emergency Shelter (ES)



Rapid Re-housing (RRH)



Street Outreach (SO)



Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)

## Updates

### Upcoming CoC Events



Save the Date!  
Human Trafficking Training  
December 3rd at  
11 AM by People Against  
Trafficking Humans.  
Sponsored by the Homeless  
Alliance. Details to come!



HAWNY MEETING  
November 20th | 3 PM | Zoom  
[Meeting Link](#)



Point in Time (PIT) Count  
January 29-30, 2025



Code Blue is an emergency  
weather safety plan that  
provides outreach,  
transportation, shelter, and a  
warm meal during the winter  
months.

An official media release  
regarding Code Blue is slated for  
November 1st in the City of  
Buffalo.

The preliminary plan is said to  
include two code blue locations  
this winter.

Code Blue is expected to run  
between November 15th-April  
30th this year in Buffalo.

Look for Code Blue efforts in  
other areas of our CoC in future  
editions!



CEO and President of  
Community Missions of  
Niagara Frontier inc.  
**Robyn Kreuger** was  
recently honored by  
Buffalo Business First  
Magazine as a "Woman  
of Influence" and  
nonprofit leader!  
Congratulations Robyn  
on this well deserved  
distinction!  
[Check out Robyn's  
profile here.](#)

## THANKS FOR READING

### CONTACT

Homeless Alliance of WNY  
625 Delaware Ave, Suite #410  
Buffalo, NY 14202  
716-853-1101  
[wnyhomeless.org](http://wnyhomeless.org)



SUBMIT FEEDBACK  
HERE



FACEBOOK X (TWITTER) LINKEDIN



HEART Love & SOUL !!!

Heart, Love and Soul is  
awarded a 3 year grant  
to expand their  
outreach team in  
Niagara County from  
the NYS Office of  
Temporary and  
Disability Assistance's  
Solutions to End  
Homelessness  
Program! Keep up the  
amazing work HLS!