



A collaborative endeavor to serve the Camden community providing the services you need, in one location

From the Director's Desk:

Over the past few weeks, I've been surrounded by the most beautiful colors of fall—gold, amber, and fiery reds lighting up the trees around us. Each year, I'm reminded that embracing this season takes a bit of intentional recovery work for me. It's easy to let worries about the cold months ahead sneak in, but again this year I'm practicing gratitude and presence—pausing to breathe in the crisp, cool air and appreciate the beauty that nature offers in this fleeting moment. I invite you to do the same—step outside, take a deep breath, and let yourself be reminded of all there is to be thankful for.

This issue of our newsletter is packed with important updates and exciting opportunities! Don't miss page 6 for details on HEAP, Rotary Club and Toys for Tots sign-up nights, and our brand-new event—Drum Circle! We're thrilled to welcome our new partner, The Keys Program, and I can't wait to join you all in making some music together. I am sooo excited about this one! No musical experience (or talent) needed. You'll also find information on our growing list of youth programs designed to bring connection, creativity, and wellness to our community's youth.

As we move into the holidays, I encourage you to check out our "Holiday Thoughts" on page 5 for tips on making the most of this special season—focusing on peace, presence, and joy rather than stress and expectations.

Finally, as we enter this season of thankfulness and giving, I want to take a moment to share my heartfelt gratitude. To everyone who has supported, encouraged, volunteered, recommended, donated, or simply shared a kind word about the Camden Life Center—you are the heart of this mission. Your care and belief in this work keep us moving forward.

I'm reminded of one of my favorite quotes: "I cannot do all the good the world needs. But the world needs all the good I can do" - Jana Stanfield.

Thank you for doing the good that you do—and for being part of this incredible community.

With gratitude and warmth,
Jessica Perusse
Director, Camden Life Center

**SAVE
THE
DATE!**

- 11/27 & 11/28: Office Closed
- 11/29: Camden Christmas Tree Lighting
- 12/12: Camden Holiday Stroll
- 12/24-12/26 & 12/31-1/2: Office Closed



Camden Life Center Partners

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Camden Life Center Daily Partners

Come to the Table Counseling (CttT)

CttT offers behavioral health treatment for teens and adults both in person and TeleHealth. Self-pay and insurance options available. Call (315) 533-2570 or visit www.cometothetablecounseling.com

Helio Health in Camden NY

Helio Health offers a wide range of treatment, counseling, and support programs for mental health and addiction. Visit our website www.helio.health

Camden Life Center Visiting Partners

Willow Network

Willow Network offers free services including pregnancy testing, ultrasounds, parenting classes, pregnancy loss support, as well as baby items. Contact Willow Network, Camden at (315) 245-2364 or check our Willow Network's website: www.willownetwork.org

Office Hours Tuesdays 10:00am-4:30pm

National Grid Consumer Advocate

Are you finding yourself overdue on your energy bill? Does it seem that everything that you are doing isn't moving the balance? Curious about cutting costs? National Grid is on site 10am-4pm Tuesday, November 18th & Tuesday, December 16th

Tri-County WIC @ the CLC

WIC supports pregnant women, new moms, and kids under 5 with nutrition education and healthy foods. Many working families qualify and don't realize it. WIC will be on-site the first Thursday of the month from 9:30-3:00pm. WIC will be in Camden on Thursday, November 6th & Thursday, December 4th.

Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency (MVCAA)

MVCAA brings a wide range of services to our community including Section 8, HEAP, and all the other programs that MVCAA offers. Mark your calendar for Thursday, November 6th & Tuesday, November 18th or Tuesday, December 4th & Tuesday, December 16th from 9am-3pm.

Clear Path for Veterans

Meet with a Clear Path team member to learn about peer services and resources available to veterans and military families. This is a great first step for those looking to connect with support—especially in our rural communities. Stay posted for on-site dates coming soon!

Coordinated Entry

Coordinated Entry, part of the Mohawk Valley Housing and Homeless Coalition, offers a streamlined process to access resources in the homeless crisis response system. It prioritizes the highest-need, most vulnerable households and ensures housing and supportive services are used effectively. The coalition serves Madison and Oneida Counties. Office Hours Thursdays 9:00am-2:00pm.

Center for Family Life and Recovery

Center for Family Life and Recovery supports individuals struggling with addiction, mental health & behavioral issues through a variety of services. Call (315) 820-2638 or go to our website www.whenthereshelpthereshope.com

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November: Honoring Veterans and Their Families

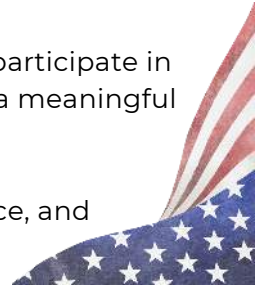
This November, the Camden Life Center is proud to honor the courage, commitment, and sacrifice of our veterans and their families. Their service has strengthened our communities and safeguarded the freedoms we enjoy each day.

Throughout this month, we not only celebrate their contributions but also focus on connection, support, and well-being. Veterans and their loved ones often face unique challenges as they transition back into civilian life, and as a community, we have the opportunity to show our gratitude by standing beside them with compassion and care.

At the Camden Life Center, we remain committed to providing a welcoming space and connecting individuals and families to the resources they need—from mental health support and community programs to opportunities that promote belonging and stability.

We encourage everyone to take time this month to thank a veteran, reach out to a military family, or participate in community activities that honor their service. Small gestures of kindness and appreciation can make a meaningful difference.

To all who have served and to the families who stand behind them—thank you for your service, sacrifice, and unwavering strength.



December: A Month of Giving

As the year comes to a close, December reminds us of the power of generosity and the joy that comes from giving. At the Camden Life Center, we're celebrating this Month of Giving as a time to reflect on how each of us can share kindness, support, and hope within our community.

Giving isn't just about financial contributions—it's about opening our hearts and finding meaningful ways to make a difference. This season, we encourage everyone to give in one or more of these five ways:

1. **Give Time** – Volunteer with a local organization or offer a helping hand to someone in need.
2. **Give Talent** – Use your unique skills to bless others, whether that's cooking a meal, mentoring youth, or sharing creative gifts.
3. **Give Money** – Support a cause that inspires you, helping local programs and services continue their important work.
4. **Give Prayer** – Lift up those who are struggling or serving others—prayer is a powerful gift of hope and encouragement.
5. **Give a Visit** – Step into something new in 2026! Visit a local community space, attend an event, or explore a new way to connect with others.

This month, let's celebrate generosity in all its forms. Every act of giving—big or small—helps build a stronger, more compassionate community. Together, we can end the year with kindness and carry that spirit forward into the new year.

Thank you for being part of the Camden Life Center family and for all the ways you give.



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New Events

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Drum Circle - Free to All Ages

Get ready to feel the beat with Danielle Caringi, MT-BC, for a rockin' night! Come laugh and experience the power of a drum circle. No musical experience needed! Each participant will have the opportunity to play a drum or percussion instrument in a collaborative and improvisational musical experience. Drum circles offer an outlet for self-expression, community building, and the connection built in the music. All ages and all musical abilities are welcome!

Dates: Friday, November 7th & Friday, November 21st

Location: Camden Life Center (20 Main Street, Camden)

Time: 4:30-5:15pm

Danielle Caringi is a 2019 graduate of Camden High School who went on to complete her bachelor's degree in Music Therapy from Nazareth University. She is now a board-certified music therapist with the KEYS Program out of Oneida! You may recognize her from the golf and tennis teams at Camden or from her fiddle band she was in for almost 10 years! She is excited to be offering services with the Camden Life Center and to bring music to Camden!



Save the Dates! Camden Youth Events Are Back!

Hey high schoolers (grades 9–12) - mark your calendars for these exciting upcoming events hosted by Camden Life Center:

 November 10: BINGO Night!

Enjoy a fun night of BINGO, snacks, and awesome prizes!

 November 24: Friendsgiving Dinner!

Bring your favorite side dish and your favorite friend for a night of food, fun, and community.

 December 8: Envision Your New Year!

Create your own vision board and set goals for 2026 while enjoying snacks and great company.

 Grow Your Grit (3-Day Program – Dates Coming Soon!)
Build confidence, strengthen resilience, and discover your inner drive through hands-on activities and personal growth challenges designed to help you step into your best self.

Don't miss out - more details and registration info coming soon!

HEAP Sign-ups at the Camden Life Center

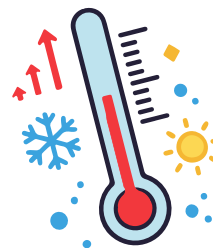
The Camden Life Center will host HEAP (Home Energy Assistance Program) sign-ups this November to help families prepare for the winter season. Staff will be available to assist with applications on:

 Tuesday, November 4th

 Tuesday, November 18th

 5:00–8:30 PM

 20 Main St., Camden, NY 13316



Please bring:

- ID
- Birth Certificate
- Marriage Certificate (if applicable)
- Social Security Card
- Proof of Shelter Expenses
- Proof of Income
- Proof of Resources

Toys for Tots and Rotary Christmas Basket sign-ups will also be available for Camden CSD families.

For more information, please contact the Camden Life Center with any questions.

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After the Feast: Teas to Soothe and Support Digestion

The holidays invite us to celebrate, share, and sometimes overindulge—and that's perfectly human. When your stomach feels a bit too full or sluggish, a simple cup of tea can bring gentle relief. You don't need anything fancy; most grocery stores carry a variety of soothing blends that help the body settle after rich meals.

Look for peppermint tea, which relaxes the digestive tract and can ease bloating or discomfort. Ginger tea warms the body and supports healthy digestion while reducing nausea. Chamomile is a calming choice that helps reduce inflammation and tension in the gut (and mind). Fennel tea has a slightly sweet, licorice-like flavor and is wonderful for easing gas and improving digestion. For something cozy and seasonal, cinnamon tea helps regulate blood sugar while adding a comforting holiday aroma.

Sip slowly, breathe deeply, and let your body catch up with your heart. These teas are small acts of care—a reminder that nourishment also means listening, resting, and tending gently to ourselves, even after the feast.



Thanksgiving Connection

The holiday season is a time to connect with family and friends, as we share memories, pass dishes of homemade recipes, and exchange gratitude. Sometimes, however, the events and news happening in the world can draw us away from what is essential during the holiday season.

At the Thanksgiving table, sensitive topics may arise, causing some rather passionate conversations amongst the turkey and stuffing. To avoid the food fight around this year's Thanksgiving table, let us take a step back to remember what is important to us: togetherness. Remember to let opinions slide as the side dishes glide on your plate this peaceful Thanksgiving with your relatives.

Nourishment Beyond Nutrition

As the holidays approach, much of the conversation around food turns to what's "healthy" or "clean." But some foods nourish us in a different way—through memory. Not every dish needs to be nutrient-dense to be healing; some are memory-dense, rich with love, belonging, and story.

Every Christmas morning of my childhood began with my grandmother's breakfast casserole—a dish that could have been pulled straight from a 1950s Campbell's soup ad. Wonder bread, frozen sausage links, and canned cream of mushroom soup—humble ingredients that somehow created something extraordinary. It wasn't fancy, but it was full of heart. The smell of it baking still evokes a flood of warmth, laughter, and connection. Over the years, I've made it my own, yet I always keep its spirit intact. It's my way of honoring her—and the love that filled that kitchen.

Food memories like this are powerful. The senses of smell and taste are wired directly to the brain's limbic system—the place where emotion and memory live. One whiff or bite can transport us back in time, stirring comfort and joy, a phenomenon known as the Proust Effect. Research shows that recalling favorite food memories can lift mood, foster connection, and even strengthen self-esteem. These moments remind us that food is more than fuel—it's a language of love and continuity.

So, as we gather this season, perhaps we can release the pressure to make every dish "perfect." Sometimes nourishment is a casserole made with wonder bread and care, passed down through generations. It's not the nutrition facts that heal us—it's the memory, the laughter, and the way a simple meal can reconnect us to who we are and where we come from.



Merry
Christmas

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School of Recovery Programs

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Yoga Programs

At the CLC we offer two unique yoga opportunities designed to support your body, mind, and spirit—no experience needed!

Our **Chair Yoga** class offers gentle movement using a chair for support, making it accessible for all abilities. It's a great way to improve strength, flexibility, and balance while boosting overall well-being.

Join us on ****Thursday, November 20th and Thursday, December 11th and 18th** at 12 PM** in the Conference Room. No sign-up required—just wear comfy clothes and stop in!

We're also excited to continue our relaxing **Mindful Movement** classes, led by certified instructor Colleen, who brings over 20 years of experience and specialized training in mindfulness and trauma-sensitive practices. This calming, supportive class helps reduce stress, foster resilience, and promote emotional healing.

Stay tuned for upcoming dates on our facebook page!

Come as you are and discover how yoga can help you heal, grow, and thrive.

Our Yoga programs are brought to you by a generous grant from the



Crafts and Conversations

 New at the Camden Life Center — Art & Conversations Group! 

Looking for a creative outlet and good conversation? Our Art & Conversations Group is a welcoming space where self-expression meets community connection.



 Step 1: Each session starts with a guided group discussion on a theme or topic.

 Step 2: We dive into a hands-on art activity — paint, draw, or experiment! No experience needed & all materials provided.

Why join?

-  Explore your creativity
-  Reduce stress & process emotions
-  Build connections with others
-  When: Wednesdays, 12:30–3:00 PM
-  Where: Camden Life Center

Come ready to chat, create, and leave feeling inspired! 



You're Invited to Recovery Café Camden. A Place for Connection, Healing, and Hope

Recovery Café Camden is a welcoming community for anyone seeking support, connection, and purpose—whether you're navigating recovery, grief, mental health challenges, or simply want to be part of something meaningful.

Rooted in trauma-informed care and built on love, belonging, and compassionate accountability, the Café is a safe space to be your true self, grow through life's challenges, and support others doing the same.

What to Expect:

Each gathering begins with a shared meal and conversation, followed by small, supportive Recovery Circles where we check in, share highs and lows, and encourage one another.

- Mondays | 10 AM – 12 PM
- Thursdays | 5 PM – 7 PM

Come as our guest—no pressure, just a warm meal, genuine conversation, and a caring community ready to welcome you. Follow us on Facebook & Instagram for updates. We'd love to see you soon!



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Food Programs

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Food \$en\$e

Food \$en\$e is a monthly food buying co-op for anyone who wants to stretch their grocery dollars.

Monthly Package- \$20.50

Monthly specials can be purchased in addition to the box.

Location: 20 Main Street, Camden

November Food \$en\$e Information:

Order Dates - Friday, October 31st (1:30-3pm), Monday, November 3rd (9am-11am)

Order Online by - Monday, November 10th at midnight

Pick up - Friday, November 21st 1:30-3pm

December Food \$en\$e Information:

Order Dates - Friday, November 21st (1:30-3pm), Monday, December 1st (9am-11am)

Order Online by: Monday, December 8th at midnight

Pick up - Friday, December 19th 1:30-3pm

In person sign ups accept Cash or EBT (SNAP) payments.

Want to order online? Visit:

<https://foodsense.foodbankcny.org/>

Need more info?

Contact our office at (315) 820-2638.

Mobile Food Pantry

The Mobile Food Pantry of CNY Food Bank comes to Camden on Friday, **November 21st at 3pm. The October date will be posted on our Facebook page when released.**

There are no income requirements for families to receive food—available while supplies last.

Please note: To allow for other scheduled events and pantry set up, DO NOT LINE UP on the road or in the parking lot before 3pm. You will be asked to move.

Location: 86 Mexico Street, Camden



Camden Shelf and Sharing Fridge Update

As we prepare for the colder months ahead, we wanted to share a few important updates about our Camden Sharing Shelf & Fridge:

❏ The Community Fridge has been put away for the winter season.

With freezing temperatures on the way, it's difficult to safely store perishable items outdoors. The fridge will return in the spring when the weather warms up!

❏ Please be mindful of freezing temperatures. Some items placed on the Sharing Shelf—such as canned goods, bottled liquids, and other temperature-sensitive foods—can freeze and potentially burst or spoil.

We recommend donating non-perishable, cold-safe items such as:

- Dry goods (pasta, rice, cereal)
- Shelf-stable snacks
- Boxed meals
- Toiletries and household items

♥ Thank you for helping us keep the Sharing Shelf a safe and reliable resource for our community throughout the winter months. Your continued generosity truly makes a difference!



Food Fact of the Month

Studies show that produce harvested in its natural season can contain higher levels of nutrients and phytochemicals — proof that nature knows the perfect timing for nourishment.



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Opportunities

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CLC Store

We're excited to announce that our Public Store is officially back open and ready for you!

Stop by online to grab your favorite Camden Life Center and Recovery Café gear and wear it with pride.

Shop now:
store.masteryourimage.com/CLCPUB/shop/home



Quote of the Month

"Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring — all of which have the potential to turn a life around."
— Leo Buscaglia

Kindness
Matters

Donations Needed

The need for grocery basics is rising, and your generosity helps us keep our shelves stocked for neighbors in need.

We're currently collecting:

- Breakfast: cereal, shelf-stable milk, pancake mix, syrup, oatmeal
- Lunch: peanut butter, jelly, tuna, canned chicken, mayonnaise
- Dinner: Hormel Compleats, Chef Boyardee, boxed mac & cheese, canned fruits/vegetables
- Snacks: granola bars, breakfast bars, Pop-Tarts
- Hygiene essentials: deodorant, body wash, shampoo

Donations can be dropped off during business hours or placed anytime in our outdoor pantry.

Please check expiration dates, ensure packaging is in good condition, and donate only food or hygiene items to keep our pantry safe and welcoming for all.



Volunteer Opportunities at the Camden Life Center!

Looking for a meaningful way to give back? Whether you enjoy greeting visitors, lending a hand at special events, working directly with community projects, or sharing your skills for building improvements, there's a place for you at the Camden Life Center!

Current Opportunities:

- Front Desk Shifts: 9–12 PM or 12–3 PM
- Special Events: Spooktacular, Holiday Stroll, and more
- Youth Mentorship: Help guide and inspire local youth
- Riverwalk Display: Assist with updates and upkeep
- Community Outreach: Post flyers around town each month
- Food Programs: Assist with Food \$en\$e or the Mobile Food Pantry

Your time and talents can make a lasting difference for our neighbors. Stop by, call us, or email info@camdenlifecenter.com to learn how you can get involved!

Office Information:

All services at the Camden Life Center operate during traditional business hours - Monday-Thursday 8:30am-4pm, Friday 8:30am-12pm. For assistance outside this time, contact the following services:

Mental Health Emergency:

- MCAT - (315) 732-6228
- Crisis Life - 988 (press 1 for the Veterans Crisis Line)

Emergency Substance Treatment Services:

- Outreach and Engagement team - (315) 401-4288

Never Use Alone:

- 800-484-3731 or <https://neverusealone.com>

Social Services After-Hours Emergency

- Oneida County - (315) 736-0141

!!Camden Life Center Survey !!

If you've used any of our services, please take a few minutes to complete our anonymous Camden Life Center survey. Your feedback helps us learn, grow, and continue improving our programs to better serve our community.



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