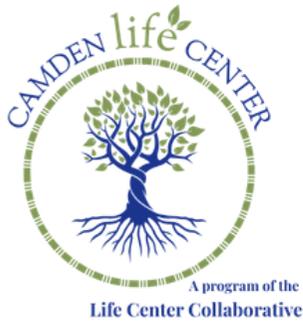




20 MAIN STREET, CAMDEN NY | 315-820-2638



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

From the Director's Desk:

As winter begins to loosen its grip and we catch those first hints of spring, this season reminds us how growth often begins quietly—through small steps, new connections, and communities coming together to support one another.

March and April give us many reasons to celebrate the people and partnerships that make this work possible. March is both National Social Work Month and National Nutrition Month, and it feels fitting to recognize the heart of the Camden Life Center. Most of the individuals you meet here are social workers—or social workers in training—bringing a unique perspective that blends understanding of people, families, and the complex systems that shape everyday life. Our goal is always to help make life's journey a little easier by connecting neighbors to resources, support, and one another.

As we move into April, we also recognize Volunteer Month and Stress Awareness Month, reminding us how important it is to care for ourselves while also caring for our community. Volunteers, partners, and neighbors stepping up for one another are part of what makes this place feel like home.

And speaking of listening to our community—our youth told us what they needed, and we listened. Beginning this spring, youth can now drop in every Tuesday from 3:00–5:00 PM to spend time with our Youth Engagement Coordinator. There's no pressure and no expectations—just a safe, welcoming place to hang out after school... and yes, there will be snacks.

You'll also find information inside about upcoming Let's Eat culinary programs, Chair Yoga, and our popular Crafts & Conversations gatherings. Whether you're looking to try something new, connect with others, or simply enjoy a moment of creativity or wellness, there is something here for everyone.

This season also marks an exciting step forward as the Life Center continues to grow. Over the past few years, we've watched the Camden Life Center evolve into a vibrant community hub, and through that growth we've learned that many rural communities share similar hopes and challenges. Because of this, we're excited to expand our work into another community we feel deeply connected to—Boonville. 🍀🍀 We've started spending time in Boonville listening to residents and learning what supports and connections would be most helpful there. If you know someone in the Boonville area, we'd love for you to share this invitation with them. ACS community members are welcome to stop in and meet Life Center staff on Tuesdays at 44 E. Schuyler Street, and are invited to join our upcoming ACS Community Conversations on Saturday, March 7 from 10:00 AM–12:30 PM, where neighbors can help shape what community support might look like moving forward.

As always, this newsletter is filled with opportunities, updates, and ways to stay connected. We hope you'll read on and join us as we continue building welcoming spaces where neighbors support neighbors and everyone has a place to belong.

With gratitude,

Jessica Perusse
Executive Director, Life Center Collaborative, Inc

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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 Thursdays 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, March 17th & Tuesday, April 21st.

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, March 5th & Thursday, April 2nd.

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, March 5th & Tuesday, March 17th,
Tuesday, April 2nd & Tuesday, April 21st 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. 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.

Fidelis Care

A Fidelis Care Support Navigator visits the Camden Life Center to provide support for individuals needing help enrolling in health insurance, updating paperwork, and renewing their coverage. This service helps ensure community members have continued access to affordable health care and support when they need it most. Fidelis will be on-site the first Monday of the month from 9-1pm. Mark your calendar for Monday, March 2nd & Monday, April 6th.

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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National Social Work Month

March is National Social Work Month, a time to recognize and celebrate the vital role social workers play in strengthening individuals, families, and communities. Social workers provide support, advocacy, and guidance during some of life's most challenging moments — helping people navigate barriers while promoting dignity, hope, and resilience.

Social work is more than a profession; it is a commitment to walking alongside others during difficult seasons and celebrating their progress along the way. Whether connecting someone to essential resources, supporting mental health and recovery, or simply offering a listening ear, social workers help restore stability and empower individuals to move forward.

At the Camden Life Center, social work is rooted in compassion, respect, and meeting people where they are. Social workers are at the heart of our mission — building connections, reducing stigma, strengthening families, and creating pathways to support.

This month, we honor the dedication, empathy, and quiet strength of social workers who show up each day to make a meaningful difference.

Your work matters, and the impact you make reaches far beyond what is often seen. 



National Nutrition Month: Finding Inspiration in the Kitchen

When I was in high school in the mid-90s, we had a guest speaker come talk to us about nutrition and food. At one point, he held up a single bean and talked about how much life it contained. Inside that one small bean was the potential for a whole plant—roots, leaves, nourishment. He talked about the energy of food, not just what it's made of, but what it becomes.

Something about that moment stuck with me. I felt inspired to take charge of my food, to understand it, and eventually to express that inspiration through cooking. That small story planted a seed that has stayed with me for decades.

Over time, I've learned that it's not information alone that keeps me coming back to the kitchen—it's inspiration. Most of us already know, at least generally, how we “should” be eating. More vegetables. More whole foods. More balance. And yet, knowing doesn't always translate into cooking, enjoyment, or consistency. Sometimes what's missing isn't knowledge—it's curiosity.

So I find myself wondering: can we create inspiration? Is it something as simple as making our kitchen feel more inviting? Is it about not knowing what to cook and feeling stuck in the same rotation? Or is it that we've lost the sense of play and exploration that food once held?

What if we approached cooking with curiosity instead of pressure? What if the goal wasn't perfection, but engagement —trying one new ingredient, revisiting a recipe with fresh eyes, or simply noticing how a meal makes us feel? When inspiration leads, cooking can shift from a chore to a creative act, and nourishment becomes something we participate in, not just something we're told to do.

This National Nutrition Month, my invitation is simple: look for inspiration first. The rest often follows.

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National Volunteer Month

April is National Volunteer Month — a time to celebrate the incredible individuals who give their time, energy, and heart to serve others. At the Camden Life Center, our volunteers are truly the heartbeat of everything we do.

From warmly greeting individuals at the front desk to offering kindness and conversation in our waiting room, our volunteers help create an atmosphere of connection and belonging from the moment someone walks through our doors. Their presence ensures that every guest feels seen, welcomed, and valued.

Behind the scenes and out in the community, volunteers also play a vital role in our Food Sense and Mobile Food Pantry programs. Whether they are sorting food, packing orders, or helping families navigate the process, their dedication directly supports food access for individuals and families in need.

We are deeply grateful for each volunteer who chooses to serve alongside us. Your time, compassion, and commitment make a meaningful difference in the lives of those we support.

If you have ever considered giving back, we would love to welcome you to our team. We are always looking for caring individuals who want to make an impact in our community. Call us today to get started, or apply to become a volunteer here:

<https://forms.gle/t7RUFwP5DipeEdz3A> ❤️

In 2025 alone, our volunteers generously served a total of **1,159 hours at the Camden Life Center**. Based on the National Volunteer Value Rate of \$33.49 per hour, that equates to an **incredible \$38,814.91 in donated service**. These numbers represent more than just hours — they reflect time, compassion, and commitment that allow us to stretch our resources further and serve more individuals and families. The impact of our volunteers is not only felt in hearts, but also in real, tangible dollars saved that strengthen our mission every day.

National Stress Awareness Month

April is National Stress Awareness Month, a time to recognize the impact stress can have on our mental, emotional, and physical well-being. While stress is a normal part of life, ongoing or unmanaged stress can affect our health, relationships, productivity, and overall sense of balance.

Stress can show up in many different ways — fatigue, irritability, headaches, difficulty concentrating, disrupted sleep, or feeling overwhelmed. Over time, chronic stress can contribute to anxiety, depression, high blood pressure, and other health concerns. Becoming more aware of how stress affects us personally is the first step toward responding in healthier, more supportive ways.

At the Camden Life Center, we believe that managing stress starts with connection and compassion — both for others and for ourselves. We encourage awareness, balance, and practical coping strategies that help build resilience. Small, intentional steps — such as practicing mindfulness, engaging in physical activity, setting healthy boundaries, spending time in nature, journaling, or reaching out to a trusted friend — can create meaningful and lasting change.

It's also important to remember that asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness. Whether through counseling, peer support, community programs, or simply having a safe place to talk, support can make a significant difference in navigating life's challenges.

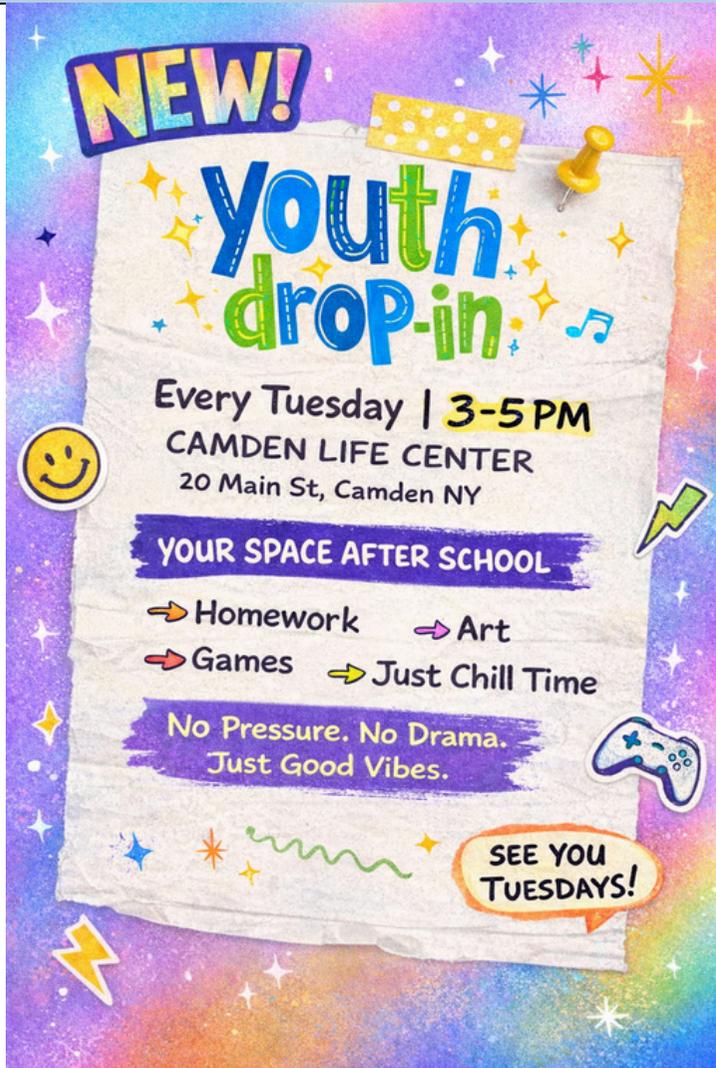
This month serves as a reminder that caring for your mental health is just as important as caring for your physical health. Managing stress is an essential part of overall wellness, and no one has to carry that burden alone. At the Camden Life Center, we are here to walk alongside you — offering connection, encouragement, and resources every step of the way. ❤️



**NATIONAL STRESS
AWARENESS MONTH**



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Let's Eat March Event: Less Stress, More Yum

Less Stress. More Yum. is a hands-on cooking class happening on **Wednesday, March 18th from 5:30–7:00 PM** focused on making flavorful, nourishing meals without the overwhelm.

Participants will learn simple tips and practical tricks to reduce stress in the kitchen—like smart shortcuts, flexible meal ideas, and ways to build flavor without complicated steps or expensive ingredients. The class emphasizes ease, confidence, and enjoyment, helping people cook meals that support both the body and the nervous system.

This is about letting go of perfection, working with what you have, and rediscovering that cooking can feel calming, empowering, and—most importantly—delicious.



Stress Skills for Daily Life

Stress is a part of everyday life—but how we respond to it can make all the difference. Join us on Friday, May 6th from 2:00–3:00 PM at the Camden Life Center for Stress Skills for Daily Life, an engaging and practical workshop designed to help individuals build healthy coping tools they can use anytime, anywhere.

During this session, participants will learn effective stress management techniques, emotional regulation strategies, and simple mindfulness practices that support overall well-being. Whether you're navigating work pressures, family responsibilities, or personal challenges, this workshop offers realistic tools to help you feel more grounded, balanced, and in control.

You'll leave with practical strategies you can apply immediately—small skills that create meaningful change in daily life. Because managing stress isn't about eliminating it completely—it's about building confidence and resilience to move through it in healthier ways.

We hope you'll join us as we strengthen skills, build awareness, and support one another in creating calmer, more empowered days ahead.

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School of Recovery Programs

MARCH & APRIL 2026
EDITION #36

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Chair Yoga

At the CLC, we offer Chair Yoga, a gentle and welcoming class designed to support your body, mind, and overall well-being—no experience needed!

Our Chair Yoga class uses a chair for support, making it accessible for all abilities. It's a great way to improve strength, flexibility, and balance while enjoying mindful movement in a comfortable, supportive environment.

Join us on **Thursday, March 12th & 26th and Thursday, April 9th & 23rd at 12 PM** in the Conference Room. No sign-up required—just wear comfy clothes and stop in!

Come as you are and discover how Chair Yoga can help you feel stronger, more relaxed, and more connected.



yoga

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, 12:00–3:00 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

MARCH & APRIL 2026
EDITION #36

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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

March Food \$en\$e Information:

Order Dates - Friday, February 27th (1:30-3pm), Monday, March 2nd & 9th(10am-12pm)

Order Online by - Monday, March 16th at midnight

Pick up - Friday, March 27th 1:30-3pm

April Food \$en\$e Information:

Order Dates - Friday, March 27th (1:30-3pm), Monday, March 30th & April 6th (10am-12pm)

Order Online by: Monday, April 13th at midnight

Pick up - Friday, April 24th 1:30-3pm

In person sign ups accept Cash payments. Online orders accept EBT or credit/debit card - 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 **Thursday, March 26th at 3pm. The April 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



Let's Eat Update

Let's Eat is all about getting into the kitchen, having some fun, and building confidence with food. Our hands-on workshops are designed to take the pressure off cooking and nutrition while helping people learn practical skills they can actually use in everyday life. We cook together, try new things, ask questions, and keep it real—no fancy techniques or perfection required.

Each session mixes simple nutrition know-how with easy, approachable cooking. Participants learn how to put together balanced meals, understand ingredients and labels, and make food choices that support both body and mood. It's less about rules and more about discovering what works for you—one recipe, tip, or taste at a time.

At the end of the day, Let's Eat is about connection and confidence. Cooking together builds skills, yes—but it also builds comfort, creativity, and a better relationship with food. The goal is simple: make nourishing food feel doable, enjoyable, and maybe even a little fun.

Look for all our cooking classes announced regularly!

let's eat

Food Fact of the Month

Vitamin D = sunshine for your brain ☀️ In cold, cloudy weather, low D can mean low mood—keeping levels up can help brighten energy and spirits. Find it in fatty fish (salmon, sardines), egg yolks, fortified milk or plant milks, and mushrooms exposed to sunlight.



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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



Interested in Donating?

Your gift to the Camden Life Center supports vital programs and services that strengthen individuals and families in our community.

Give today:
<https://givebutter.com/camdenlifecenter>



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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