



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

From the Director's Desk:

The first signs of fall are beginning to arrive in the CNY. I heard geese overhead this morning and caught myself immediately thinking about what comes after fall—the shorter days, colder temperatures, and, yes, snow. I had to actively remind myself not to skip over this beautiful season while worrying about the one ahead. Because there is so much to love about fall here—the incredible colors, crisp mornings, that unmistakable smell in the air, and the return of familiar routines as our kids head back to school.

Maybe you experience a little bit of that “winter-woe,” too. One of the best protections against isolation and those long winter months is connection, and you don’t have to wait until winter to start building it. Recovery Café Camden is one place to find community, friendship, and support through whatever you may be recovering from. Learn more about Recovery Café and our School of Recovery events on page 8.

September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month & National Recovery Month—two observances that speak directly to why connection matters. Throughout the month, follow us on social media as we celebrate recovery, share messages of hope, and recognize the incredible resilience that exists within rural communities. We believe people heal better when they know they belong somewhere, and much of our work is about creating those places of belonging.

We saw that spirit in an incredible way at our 2nd annual Gala - Rooted in Hope, Growing in Strength. To everyone who attended, sponsored, donated, volunteered, shared our message, or simply cheered us on: thank you. The Life Center continues to grow because people believe rural communities deserve accessible resources, meaningful connection, and opportunities to thrive close to home. If you weren’t able to join us—or you’re wondering how you can help us keep that momentum growing—our next opportunity is Mohawk Valley Gives. Every gift, regardless of size, helps us continue building programs and partnerships that respond to what our neighbors tell us they need. Learn more about how you can be part of it on page 2.

Our partnerships continue to grow! One of the most common challenges we help neighbors navigate is health insurance—understanding coverage, enrollment, recertification, and where to turn when something changes. We are excited to welcome Excellus BlueCross BlueShield onsite, joining our existing partner Fidelis Care to make trusted insurance assistance easier to access right here in Camden. In October, we will also welcome Medicare advisors to help community members navigate Medicare options and changes.

There are some favorite opportunities returning this fall, too! Chair Yoga is back, along with our Halloween Costume Exchange and the re-boot of our Camden Life Center Advisory Council. If you have ideas about what our community needs—or simply want to become more involved in shaping what happens here—we hope you’ll consider joining us. (See page 5) Exciting news for our youth and families: Open Door is continuing through the school year! Thanks to our partnership with the Sgt. Eli Parker Community Youth Center, youth will continue to have a welcoming place to gather on Tuesdays and Thursdays. (see page 7)

As we enter another season together, I’m reminded that the Life Center isn’t built by one organization or one person. It is built by neighbors, volunteers, businesses, funders, donors, partner agencies, families, and people willing to show up for one another. Whether you come here looking for help, bring someone who needs support, volunteer an afternoon, share one of our posts, attend an event, become a partner, or make a donation—you are part of what makes this work possible.

So, for now, I’m going to enjoy the geese, soak in the colors, breathe in that amazing fall air, and resist worrying about the snow. I hope you’ll join me.

With gratitude,
Jessica Perusse, Executive Director, Life Center Collaborative



Growing Stronger Together

SEPTEMBER &
OCTOBER 2026
EDITION #39

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

Thank You For Growing With Us

On August 8, our community came together for Rooted in Hope, Growing in Strength: A Gala of Celebration, and we are still incredibly grateful for the support that surrounded us throughout the evening.

With 157 guests and sponsored seats, 22 generous sponsors, 39 donated auction items, and countless individuals, businesses, volunteers, and community partners who helped bring the night to life, the Gala was a beautiful reminder of what can happen when a community comes together around a shared purpose.

From the businesses and individuals who helped fill our auction tables, to those who supported the evening through sponsorships and monetary gifts, every contribution played an important role. We are equally grateful to the vendors, speakers, volunteers, entertainers, and partners who shared their time, talents, and support to make the evening so special.

More than anything, the Gala was a celebration of connection—of the people who believe in this work, the partnerships that continue to grow, and the communities we are honored to serve through the Camden Life Center and Boonville Life Center.

The Gala may have lasted just one evening, but the generosity, encouragement, and support shown that night will continue far beyond August 8.

To everyone who attended, donated, sponsored, volunteered, bid on an auction item, shared our event, or supported us along the way—thank you.

We are so grateful to be surrounded by a community that continues to believe in this work and in one another. Thank you for growing with us. 🌱

Support Life Center Collaborative During Mohawk Valley Gives!

Life Center Collaborative, Inc. is proud to participate in Mohawk Valley Gives 2026!

Early giving begins September 14, with Mohawk Valley Gives taking place on September 18.

Mohawk Valley Gives is a regional day of giving that brings our community together to support local nonprofit organizations and the work they do every day.

At Life Center Collaborative, Inc., your support helps us continue providing food assistance, recovery programming, youth activities, community education, resource navigation, and other essential supports through our Life Centers. Every donation, no matter the size, helps us continue creating welcoming spaces where individuals and families can find connection, resources, and support close to home.

We hope you will consider supporting Life Center Collaborative, Inc. during Mohawk Valley Gives this September.

Learn more or donate:

<https://www.givemv.org/organizations/life-center-collaborative-inc>



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Camden Life Center Partners

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Come to the Table Counseling (CttT)

Behavioral health counseling for teens and adults, available in-person and through TeleHealth. Self-pay and insurance options available. Call (315) 533-2570 or visit their website: www.cometothetablecounseling.com. On site daily at the CLC.

Helio Health in Camden NY

Mental health and substance use treatment, counseling, and recovery support services available right here in Camden. Visit their website for more information www.helio.health. On Site Daily at the CLC.

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, September 15th & Tuesday, October 20th.

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 in Camden on Thursday, September 3rd & Thursday, October 1st from 9:30am-3:30pm.

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, September 3rd & Tuesday, September 15th, Tuesday, October 1st & Tuesday, October 20th from 9am-3pm.

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.

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. Visit their website www.whenthereshelpthereshope.com

Fidelis Care

A Fidelis Care Support Navigator is available to help with health insurance enrollment, paperwork updates, and coverage renewals—helping community members stay connected to affordable health care. Mark your calendar for Monday, September 9th & Thursday, September 24th, Monday October 5th & Monday, October 29th from 9am-11:30m.

Excellus BlueCross BlueShield

An Excellus Enrollment Specialist is available to help with health insurance enrollment, paperwork updates, and coverage renewals, helping individuals stay connected to affordable health care. Tuesday, September 1st & Tuesday October 6th from 10am-1pm.

NYS Department of Veterans' Services

Veterans Services advisors assists Veterans access a wide variety of free federal, state, and local benefits. Mark your calendar for Monday, September 14th.

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Monthly Focus

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September: A Season of Hope, Recovery & New Beginnings

As summer transitions into fall, September brings an opportunity to reflect, reset, and move forward with renewed purpose. This month, we recognize both Suicide Prevention Awareness Month and National Recovery Month—two important reminders of the power of hope, connection, and support.

Recovery and healing are not always a straight path. Sometimes moving forward means setting a new goal, asking for help, learning a new skill, reconnecting with others, or simply making it through today. Every step matters.

September reminds us that no one should have to navigate life's challenges alone. By creating spaces where people feel seen, heard, supported, and valued, we can help reduce stigma and build a community where reaching out for support is encouraged.

Support can take many forms. It might be checking in with someone, sharing a meal, offering a listening ear, connecting someone with resources, or reminding them that they matter. Small moments of compassion and connection can have a lasting impact.

At the Camden Life Center, we believe there is always room for growth, healing, and new beginnings. As we enter a new season, we encourage you to check in with yourself and those around you, embrace opportunities for growth, and remember the importance of connection.

A new season can be a new beginning—and sometimes, one small step forward can make all the difference.

October: Power in Your Words

Words have power. They can encourage someone who is struggling, stand up against bullying, offer support during a difficult time, or simply help someone feel less alone. This October, we are focusing on the impact our words—and our willingness to listen—can have on those around us.

Whether we are raising awareness about domestic violence, supporting someone experiencing depression, standing up for someone being treated unfairly, or checking in with a friend, the way we communicate matters. Sometimes a simple “I’m here for you,” “Are you okay?” or “You matter” can make a meaningful difference.

Using our voice isn't only about speaking—it's also about listening. Giving someone space to share without judgment can build trust, strengthen connections, and remind them that they are not alone. Our words can also create change by challenging stigma, sharing resources, advocating for others, and speaking up when something isn't right.

At the Camden Life Center, we believe everyone deserves to feel seen, heard, supported, and valued. A kind word, an open conversation, or a willingness to listen can have a greater impact than we may realize.

This month, choose kindness, check in on those around you, listen when someone needs to be heard, and use your voice to help create a safer, stronger, and more connected community.

Every word matters, and every voice counts.

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Program Updates

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Halloween Costume Exchange is Coming Back!

Our Halloween Costume Exchange is returning this year! As you clean out closets and switch over clothes for the season, start bringing your gently used Halloween costumes to the Camden Life Center.

We kindly ask that donations be clean, in good condition, and Halloween costume pieces only. Donate costumes your family has outgrown or no longer needs and help give them a second chance to make someone else's Halloween extra special! 

Stay tuned to our Facebook page for details on when families can stop in and pick out a "new-to-you" costume for Halloween!  



Chair Yoga is Back!

We're excited to welcome Chair Yoga back to the Camden Life Center! Join us for gentle movement, mindfulness, and connection in a comfortable and supportive environment. Chair Yoga is accessible for all abilities, and no prior experience is needed.

 Upcoming Dates:
September: 10th & 24th
October: 8th & 22nd
 11:15 AM - 12:15 PM
 Camden Life Center



No sign-up required—just wear comfortable clothes and stop in! Come as you are and enjoy an opportunity to move, relax, and support your overall well-being.

Did You Notice Something New?

We've added TWO new partnerships at the Camden Life Center! 

If you scanned over our Partnership Page, go back and take another look! You'll now find Excellus BlueCross BlueShield on-site along with NYS Department of Veteran Services—bringing even more resources and support directly to our community.

Check out the Partnership Page for more information, upcoming dates, and how these new resources may be able to help you or someone you know!

Camden Advisory Council is Returning

The Camden Life Center is excited to announce the restart of our Camden Advisory Council and is seeking community members who are passionate about helping strengthen and shape the future of our community.

The Advisory Council serves as a group of local residents, community partners, and stakeholders who provide feedback, share ideas, identify community needs, and help guide the growth and impact of the Camden Life Center. Council members play an important role in ensuring that our programs, services, and initiatives remain responsive to the needs of those we serve.

Whether you are a long-time supporter, a community advocate, a local business owner, or simply someone who wants to make a difference, we encourage you to consider joining us.

Interested in becoming a member of the Camden Advisory Council? Complete an application online at:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdqdjH7BvFaaNkDLpkvjDijCkKdwOyX7QpX21LxmB_5lhNmMg/viewform

Together, we can continue building a stronger, healthier, and more connected community.

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Monthly Events

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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

September Food \$en\$e Information:

Order Dates - Friday, August 8th (1:30-3pm), Monday, August 31st & Monday September 14th(10am-12pm)

Order Online by - Monday, September 14th at midnight

Pick up - Friday, September 25th 1:30-3pm

October Food \$en\$e Information:

Order Dates - Friday, September 25th (1:30-3pm), Monday, October 5th & 12th(10am-12pm)

Order Online by: Monday, October 19th at midnight

Pick up - Friday, October 30th 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 **Wednesday, September 30th at 4pm. 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



Recovery Cafe Camden

A Place for Connection, Healing, and Hope 🍁

As the leaves begin to change and the temperatures start to fall, the new season reminds us that change is a natural part of life—and we don't have to navigate it alone.

Recovery Café Camden is a welcoming community for anyone seeking support, connection, and belonging. Whether you're navigating recovery, grief, mental health challenges, life changes, or simply looking for a supportive community, there is a place for you here.

Built on love, belonging, and compassionate accountability, the Café provides a safe space to connect, grow through life's challenges, and support others along the way.

What to Expect:

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

🍁 Mondays | 10:00 AM–12:00 PM

🍁 Thursdays | 5:00–7:00 PM



As the weather gets cooler, come inside and find some warmth, connection, and community with us. Come as our guest—there's always a place for you at the table.



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Youth Programs

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Borrow & Play Sports Shed FAQ

We've received some great questions about the new Borrow & Play Sports Shed! Here are a few things to know before you borrow:

? **What is Borrow & Play, and how does it work?**

Think of it like a library—but instead of books, you check out sports equipment, outdoor games, and recreational items! Stop into the Camden Life Center to create an account, complete a liability waiver, and receive your Borrow & Play ID card. Items are free to borrow for up to 7 days and can be returned so you can check out something new!

? **What can I borrow?**

We have equipment for every season, including baseball and soccer equipment, pickleball sets, yard games, sleds, skis, snowshoes, and much more!

? **Can I donate or exchange used equipment?**

Borrow & Play is not a donation program or equipment swap. Equipment in the shed was purchased specifically for lending through generous funding from The Edwin J. Wadas Foundation, Inc. We do not have the space or staffing to receive, sort, store, and redistribute donated equipment, so please do not drop off donations at the Camden Life Center.

? **What about sports clothing, shoes, or cleats?**

Borrow & Play focuses on equipment, so we do not accept or lend clothing, uniforms, shoes, or cleats. Fortunately, other resources in our community may be able to help! Consider reaching out directly to Leslie's Laundry, Cluster 13, local AYSO, Little League and Pop Warner programs, or Modified, JV, and Varsity sports teams to see what they are currently accepting or have available.

Still have questions? Send us a message or stop into the Camden Life Center—we're happy to help!

A special thank-you to **The Edwin J. Wadas Foundation, Inc.** for making the Borrow & Play Sports Shed possible!  

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School of Recovery Programs

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Tech Drop-In with Barb

Need help with your computer, smartphone, tablet, email, or other technology questions? Stop by Tech Drop-In with Barb every Wednesday from 9:00 AM–12:00 PM at the Camden Life Center!

Barb, one of our wonderful volunteers and a former IT professional, brings years of experience and knowledge to help you navigate technology with confidence. Whether you're troubleshooting a device, learning a new skill, or just have a tech question, Barb is happy to help to the best of her ability.

No appointment necessary—just drop in with your questions!

Crafts and Conversations

Our Craft & Conversations Group is a welcoming space where self-expression meets community connection. 💬✨

Each session begins with a guided discussion, followed by a hands-on art activity—no experience needed and all materials are provided! This group is designed to help you explore creativity, reduce stress, process emotions, and build meaningful connections with others in a supportive environment.

 **When: Wednesdays, 12:00–3:00 PM**

 **Where: Camden Life Center**

✨ Upcoming Special Session:

Autumn Afternoon

 **Wednesday, October 14th | 12:00–3:00 PM**

Join us for a cozy afternoon filled with seasonal crafts, fall-themed games, conversation, and connection. Come relax, have some fun, and enjoy the season together!

Come ready to create, connect, and leave feeling inspired! ✨



School of Recovery Community Event Series

Our School of Recovery is welcoming the new season with opportunities to connect, reflect, grow, and have a little fun! All events provide a welcoming and supportive environment where adults can build connections and explore new tools for their personal journey.

Letting Go & Moving Forward

 **3rd Tuesday of the Month: September 15th & October 20th | 2:00–3:00 PM**

Learn how our past experiences can shape our thoughts, habits, and behaviors. Explore what may be holding you back and discover healthy ways to move forward.

New Seasons, New Choices

 **Wednesday, September 23rd | 5:00–6:30 PM**

A new season can bring new opportunities for growth. Take time to reflect on what you want to leave behind, what you want to carry forward, and what you hope to create in the season ahead.

Fall Walk & Talk

 **Saturday, October 3rd | 9:00–10:00 AM**

Enjoy the beauty of fall with a relaxing walk, fresh air, and supportive conversation. Take some time for yourself while connecting with others and enjoying the changing season.

All events are free and open to adults ages 18 and older. Come as you are and discover opportunities for connection, growth, and support through the School of Recovery.

One Last Puppy Play Date!

Our friends from Lewis Manor Labradoodles are back for one final Puppy Play Date before taking a break until spring!

 Wednesday, September 16th

 2:30–3:30 PM

 Camden Life Center



Stop in for puppy cuddles, smiles, and a little stress relief. Come get all your puppy love before they return in the spring! 💚🐾

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Give Backs

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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; 12–3 PM or 3–6 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:

- S.T.A.R (Mobile Crisis Program) -315-624-7575
- 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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