



Week of August 12, 2024

Dear Neighbors,

Happy Monday wonderful community! July and August are often the window of the year that we all look for pockets of work downtime and time with our family. It's that stretch of gorgeous weather just before the school year and semester begins where we can feel the body's deep need for replenishment before life picks back up in earnest. I've been making sure my staff enjoys some of this time with family as well before we start our internal legislative review of the last session and methodical preparation for next year. To honor this slower legislative pace and the regrouping we all need I will be shifting the newsletters to once every two weeks. This way I can share all the resources and events I love to share and not inundate everyone with email. If there is information however, that is time sensitive, I will send separate emails to make sure you all stay in the know in a timely manner.

For me, the summer is a time that I get to dive in with the community and these two weeks were quite eventful with big funding announcements and important community conversations that I'm excited to share.

One shout out to all my fellow Women Swimmin fabulous ladies. Every year on this second Saturday in August, I find myself walking around with the biggest smile in my heart filled with so much gratitude for Hospicare & Palliative Care Services for putting so much energy and love into Women Swimmin' for Hospicare so that the whole community of women in this town can jump into the water on east shore and climb out on the west shore to join the best celebration of love and sweetness and kindness this community has to offer! I love this fundraising event and the gorgeous women who swim, boaters who boat, Yardvarks who rock it, and volunteers who volunteer their butts off. To the Hospicare staff you all are amazing and this event is a way that the community can honor everything you do for all of us! Collectively the community raised \$638,000 to help ensure that everyone in our community, regardless of ability to pay, can transition through the last days of their lives with dignity.

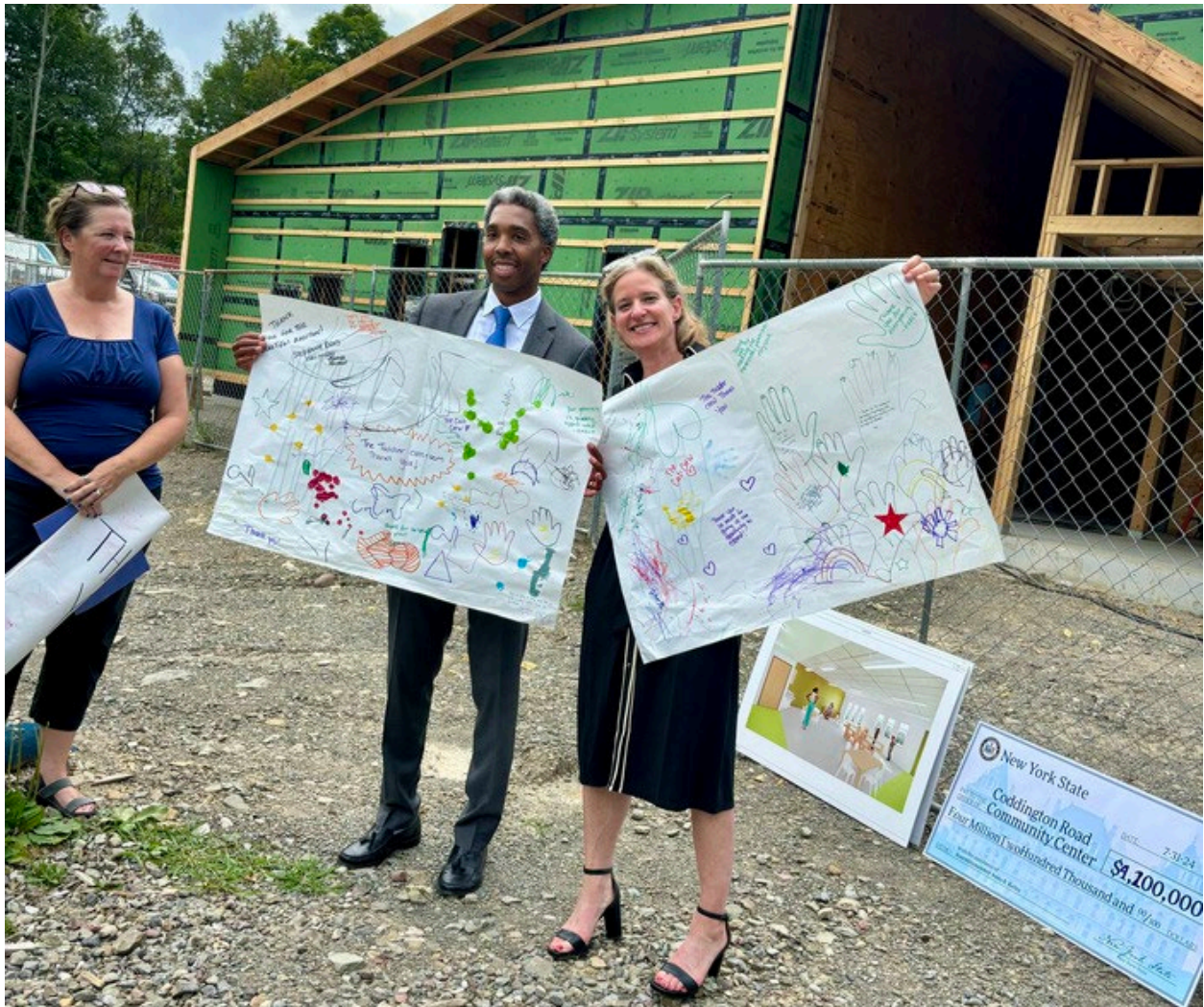
With gratitude,

Anna



At the Yacht Club after swim celebration, with Nina Miller of Hospicare, and AM Kelles's mom, Paula Jacobs

Around the District



AM Kelles and Omar Sanders, Regional Director of Empire State Development, sharing beautiful hand-painted thank you cards from children at the Coddington Road Community Center at the July 31 Grant award celebration.

Announcing investments in Child Care

At a celebration last Wednesday, I was honored to award \$4.3 million to help expand access to childcare in our district! The celebration took place at the Coddington Road Community Center, which received \$4.2 Million in capital funds for an expansion of their existing building and construction of an entire new building, nearly

doubling its capacity. I also awarded \$100,000 to the Child Development Council of Central New York (CDC of CNY) which allows the CDC to continue its mission to support local childcare agencies. Support for these agencies is so critical given the state of childcare in Tompkins County. According to a recent report by the NYS Comptroller DiNapoli, Tompkins County has one of the lowest rates of childcare availability in the state. Tompkins County also is in what is considered a [childcare desert](#). Lack of childcare access is a workforce development issue, as struggling families are often forced to make a choice between childcare or employment.

Wednesday's event showcased the "Building Community at Coddington Expansion Project," which is currently in the works with the new space expected to open in December 2024. In total, the project will receive \$5.3 million from the state and county with \$4.2 million coming from the Capital Assistance Program award I secured, \$700,000 through a grant from the [Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council](#) presented by Omar Sanders, the Regional Director of Empire State Development, and \$400,000 from the [Tompkins Community Recovery Fund](#). The combined \$5.3 million will fund an expansion to include a full-size gymnasium, a commercial kitchen, up to 48 additional childcare spaces for infants and toddlers through age five, up to 20

additional school age spaces, significant improvements for accessibility, energy efficiency, and additional space for community events. The \$100,000 award to the CDC of CNY, which has offices in Cortland and Ithaca, will ensure childcare providers in Tompkins and Cortland counties get the resources and support they need to deliver high quality services. The funds will help train staff, provide childcare referrals and also assist individuals interested in becoming childcare providers, guiding them through the licensure process. A huge thank you to all the childcare providers who work tirelessly to ensure care for children during one of the most critical periods of cognitive development in their lives and allow parents to participate in the workforce! Click [here](#) to listen to the thoughts I shared at the event.

Danby conversations

Last week I participated in a lively and productive community conversation at the Danby Small Business Chamber Roundtable. We talked about ways to make roads safer for children using public transportation, given the high volume of traffic on Route 96 daily. Some exciting ideas to promote walkability and bikeability such as wayfinding signage and the addition of bike lanes were explored. We also discussed the opportunities for both commercial and housing development in the downtown core now that the hamlet has completed and

adopted their rezoning, which allows for areas near the highway and town center to be more easily developed while preserving open space and residential properties further from the center. I look forward to having ongoing conversations with the community and supporting local businesses as they work to grow a vibrant walkable town center.



Cornell scholars celebrate the successful completion of a summer opportunity program before their first semester at college

End of Summer Program graduates

This past weekend I attended the End of Summer Program graduation with Cornell University's [Educational Opportunity Program \(EOP\)/ Higher Educational Opportunity Program \(HEOP\)](#) scholars. These promising young minds completed the [Pre-Collegiate Summer](#)

[Scholars Program](#), designed to build a supportive community and social network, strengthen study skills, provide strategies and techniques for successfully managing the stresses of college life, and facilitating connections with university faculty mentors and advisors. The EOP/HEOP program provides a space that ensures equity, diversity and inclusion on the campus by offering extra support to students from low-income or under-resourced backgrounds. Some of these students are the first of their family to attend college and some do not have the economic stability or support that some of their peers may have when they begin their college career. The EOP/HEOP teachers and mentors are dedicated to the success of their students, offering everything from academic counseling to tutoring services, peer mentoring opportunities from current Cornell students who are in the EOP/HEOP program, and writing coaches. Students enroll in summer session courses, meet with college advisors to discuss progress and plan future course schedules. They also go on field trips, get to experience guest lectures, workshops and various cultural activities. The program mission is to ensure that no students are left feeling like they have to figure out college on their own. Being present at this weekend's celebration, I heard firsthand the passion and enthusiasm of these young people and what they took away from their summer bridge experience. Each and every speaker talked about the friendships they built this summer and how the

program taught them that feeling and expressing feelings isn't weakness but strength, that asking for help is saying to someone that you trust and respect them. The depth of the bonds created through this program were palpable and beautiful. It was such an honor to be invited to attend this end of summer celebration!



Highlighting Southworks on tour

Last week I participated in an engaging and productive conversation about the proposed reimagined industrial manufacturing site, [SouthWorks](#), with Omar Sanders,

Regional Director of Empire State Development and the Southern Tier Regional CO-chair of the [Regional Economic Development Council](#) (REDC) initiative Judy McKinney-Cherry. You can always tell when someone is inspired by a vision because they lean in body and mind. It was exciting to watch the mental wheels turning for them both on possible partnerships, grants, organizations, and companies that could be great partners in this project. During a subsequent tour Omar highlighted key areas of the massive project to highlight and the order of development that would capitalize on current trends in the marketplace and areas of focus for state economic development initiatives.

The SouthWorks project is an adaptive reuse project that serves as a stellar example of innovation in the repurposing and reuse of existing spaces and enhancing the local community with over 900 units of affordable to market rate mixed income housing, a workforce development hub, childcare, manufacturing, retail for small and medium entrepreneurs and other proposed community amenities, all while aiming for net zero emissions. This site has sat mostly abandoned for decades and while many sites like this have been torn down and landfilled throughout the state and country, we have an opportunity to show what large scale adaptive reuse can really look like. To learn more about the site, visit the SouthWorks [website](#).

UPSTATE NEW YORK POISON CENTER

**POISON
HELP**
1-800-222-1222



Poison Control Meeting

My staff met with the Upstate Poison Control Center last week to gather current information for the community. Of note, the center is getting a high number of calls related to sickness in children from consumption of edible gummies. According to the center, there is an increasing uptick in the number of calls related to children from

infancy to five-years-old consuming edible gummies containing cannabis. These flavored gummies can easily be mistaken for candy and should be stored in child-proof containers where possible and stored out of reach from children. Poison centers are also reporting moderate to severe illnesses stemming from consumption of “Diamond Shroomz” brand chocolate bars, cones and gummies. As of July 2, poison centers received 82 reports of exposure and one potentially associated death is pending further investigation.

Click [here](#) to read the full report from the center. Call 1-800-222-1222 for the poison help line or visit their Web site if you have any question or need to report a case of child exposure. Symptoms reported post consumption of Diamond Shroomz brand chocolate bars and gummies include seizures, loss of consciousness, confusion and sleepiness, agitation, abnormal heart rates, abnormal blood pressure, hallucinations and nausea, vomiting or abdominal pain. For more on the U.S. [Food & Drug Administration](#) (FDA) recall, click [here](#). To make a report about illness associated from ingesting these products, click [here](#).

Community Resources

Peeling license plates?



**You can replace them
without going to the DMV!**

Guidance on peeling license plates

If your NYS license plates are peeling and you can't find the time to go to your local Department of Motor Vehicles, there's good news. You can replace your old, peeling plates remotely by mailing in a photo of your plates. For more information

visit: <https://dmv.ny.gov/registration/peeling-license-plates>.

Child Credit payments expected for families

More than 1 million families with low-to-moderate income, will get checks in the mail by the end of August to help cover childcare costs, thanks to the Empire State Child Credit program.

Gov. Kathy Hochul announced that the state is delivering about \$350 million in supplemental payments to qualifying families. "Eligible families will get a direct payment of up to \$330 per child, money that can help families afford everything from backpacks to back-to-school clothes", said Hochul. "The assistance comes at a time when the cost of groceries has gone up 23 percent over the past five years, housing prices have gone up 17 percent during the same timeframe and childcare costs have risen 20 percent – while wages have not increased to keep up with these rising costs", said Hochul in her

announcement. For more information on eligibility, click [here](#).

Take part in free Gorge walks

The Paleontological Research Institute (PRI) hosts its annual James Potorti Museum of the Earth/State Parks Gorge Walks on Fridays in August. PRI has hosted this series of free Friday morning interpretive walks in partnership with the Finger Lakes State Parks for more than 15 years. The walks were named in 2004 in memory of Ithaca native James E Potorti who died in the Sept. 11, 2001 World Trade Center attacks. Potorti was a vice president at a financial services company on the 94th floor of 1 World Trade Center but his first career was as a geologist with the U.S. Geological Survey. The guided walks introduce major concepts about local geology and walk participants throughout the different visible geologic time periods highlighted in the different strata of rockbed, giving a window into the geological history of the region while enjoying the beauty of the local area. All walks are 10 a.m. - 11: 30 a.m.

- Friday Aug. 16: [Watkins Glen State Park](#)- meet at the lower entrance at the end of the parking lot near the trail
- Friday Aug. 23: [Robert H. Treman State Park](#)- meet at Upper Treman Park, at the end of the lot near the start of the trails

- Friday Aug. 30: [Taughannock Falls State Park](#), meet at the lower falls, along Route 89, in the parking lot near the start of the trails.

Visit the New York State Parks [website](#) for more information.

Register for Cancer Resource Center's Walkathon & 5k

The Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes is holding its annual Walkathon and 5K Saturday Oct. 5 at Cass Park. Register at their Web site for the event – either the 5k run or 2-mile walk. Other ways to be involved include: signing up to volunteer at the event, starting a fundraising team to raise money, spreading the word about the event, or making a donation. For more information, contact the Cancer Resource Center at 607-277-0960.

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention hosts upcoming events

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention is hosting three upcoming events in Tompkins County. Sunday Aug. 11 from 12 noon to 9 p.m., 10 percent of all proceeds from meal purchases at the South Meadow Street Texas Roadhouse, will go to support the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. A Chicken Barbecue at Lansing Town Hall Saturday Sept. 7 will run from 10:30

a.m. until sold out and proceeds will benefit the foundation. Also Saturday Sept. 7 at Myers Park in Lansing, there will be an Out of the Darkness Community Walk. The opening ceremony is at 10:30 a.m. followed by the walk. To learn more or to register, visit their Web site.

Voting Resources

The next US General Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 5, 2024. If you're not registered to vote yet, you can do so online [here](#). Starting Oct. 26, registered voters can vote early. For early mail ballot requests click [here](#). For absentee ballot requests click [here](#). For accessible ballot requests click [here](#).

In Cortland. For more early voting information for Cortland County click [here](#). For a list of polling sites in Cortland County click [here](#). Eligible registered voters living in the City of Cortland have been sent information about changes to poll sites. Call the Cortland County Board of Elections at 607-753-5032 with questions.

In Tompkins. For early voting information for Tompkins County click [here](#). For a list of polling sites in Tompkins County click [here](#). For questions about registering to vote in Tompkins County click [here](#). For more questions for the Tompkins County Board of Elections call 607-274-5521.

State grants

Click here to view Speaker Heastie's August [Grants Action News](#) which contains a list of upcoming funding opportunities available. The list includes a wide and varied list of state and federal grants each relevant to different eligible groups from nonprofits, local governments, and centers of higher education.

Planned Parenthood seeking youth leaders

Planned Parenthood is seeking young people for its Youth Health Promoter (YHP) program which supports young people in becoming leaders in communities, training them to connect with and educate peers on topics like relationships, sexual and reproductive health and consent. The group meets once a week and also participates in community events throughout the year. The youth are also given a stipend and must be entering 9th - 11th grades. For more information about the opportunity and application process click on their Web site.

In good health,

Aimee R. Keller

Anna Kelles, Ph.D.

Assemblymember, 125th A.D.

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