

# Ithaca Health Alliance Newsletter

## Allies in Community Health for 15 Years

By Brooke Hansen and Rob Brown

The marking of a decade and a half of the Ithaca Health Alliance is a time for celebration and reflection on the innovative, grassroots community building the IHA has achieved. There are many milestones in the IHA's journey, from the development of the Ithaca Health Fund and securing a physical location for the IHA, to opening the Ithaca Free Clinic in 2006. Operated by an entirely volunteer team for its first eight years, the Health Alliance hired its first employee in 2005; today, the work of the Alliance is carried out by a paid staff of four and more than 100 volunteers.

The Ithaca Health Fund was created in 1998 to provide support for medical and holistic services and has to date given out a quarter million dollars in grants for health care not covered by insurance. In the beginning, the Fund started with small grants to help with the cost of broken bones and dental exams, and added new categories like emergency room visits, stitches, and tooth extractions as a direct result of healthcare needs experienced by those the Alliance serves. The Ithaca Health Fund was originally implemented through a membership model, but is being restructured as a requirement of charitable tax-exempt status received in 2011. When this restructuring is complete, the Fund will provide grants for similar emergency needs to low-income persons through a simple application process. In 2004, the Health Fund added a Community Grants program that gives small grants to other organizations for health-related projects, and this part of the Fund continues unchanged.

Since 2000, the Health Alliance's outreach and education program has provided over two hundred educational and community outreach programs free of charge. This program, too, grew out of the grassroots structure that defines the IHA: presenters and authors drawn from our local community volunteer to share their expertise in health fields with their neighbors, facilitated by the resources of the Health Alliance.

The Ithaca Free Clinic is the IHA's youngest program, but quickly became the largest. Health Alliance members saved money for eight years to open the Clinic, and studied other free clinics while planning the program. Widely considered the first free clinic in the United States designed from the start as a medically integrated facility, the IFC served more than twice the anticipated demand in its first year, and has grown rapidly since. In the Clinic's six years, health-care providers at IFC have treated more than five thousand people through over 14,000 individual visits. Medical doctors and clinicians work together with the Clinic's holistic medicine practitioners to provide

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## THE ITHACA HEALTH ALLIANCE

The IHA was founded in 1997. Our mission is to facilitate access to health care for all, with a focus on the needs of the un- and under-insured of New York State.

Our programs include the Ithaca Free Clinic, Health Education and Outreach, and the Ithaca Health Fund. More than 80 percent of our work is completed through volunteer efforts. If you're interested in volunteering, or for more information about the Ithaca Health Alliance, please call the Administrative Coordinator at 607-330-1253 or fill out an application online, available at [www.ithacahealth.org](http://www.ithacahealth.org).

Inquiries can also be made by mail:  
Ithaca Health Alliance  
P.O. Box 362, Ithaca, NY 14851

## ITHACA FREE CLINIC Hours and Operations

Mondays: 2–6 p.m. (walk-ins to MDs, appointments for holistic and specialty providers)  
Tuesdays: 3–7 p.m. (by appointment only)  
Thursdays: 4–8 p.m. (walk-ins to MDs, appointments for holistic and specialty providers)

Located at 521 West Seneca Street, Ithaca, NY. (607) 330-1254

The Ithaca Free Clinic is a project of the **Ithaca Health Alliance.**

*This quarterly newsletter is a production of the Ithaca Health Alliance.*

## 15 Years of Health

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comprehensive integrated primary care. From a small starting facility rented with an exit clause in the lease in case the program didn't succeed, the Clinic moved to a new building twice the size of the original suite in 2010. Community members collaborated on the remodel of this Clinic to ensure that it is an open and inviting place that affirms the right of every person to receive quality care in a quality environment.

The cooperative community spirit which gave rise to the IHA and led it through several transformations will also sustain it. It was started by the underserved for the underserved and along the way many people from all backgrounds and experiences have joined in. While national initiatives and debates continue regarding health care, it is essential for us to brainstorm, collaborate and create opportunities locally to care for each other and promote health in its broadest understanding.

As with many organizations relying mostly on local donations and grants, it has been a struggle to maintain economic security for essential IHA programs. While the insecurities of large international markets and globalized capitalism make headline news, in Ithaca, the people who bear the brunt of the current recession are known by name at the Ithaca Health Alliance's programs and events. IHA staff and volunteers see these effects and live them too. All efforts big and small are deeply appreciated to see the IHA far into the future and make our local communities healthy and strong.

The unique qualities of the IHA and its many accomplishments belong to everyone in Ithaca and Tompkins County. This is your Alliance. ❀

*Brooke Hansen is professor of Anthropology at Ithaca College. She has long been affiliated with the Ithaca Health Alliance as a former board member, a regular newsletter contributor and committee member, and a spokesperson for the Ithaca Free Clinic.*

*Rob Brown has been affiliated with the IHA since 1998 and has been employed as the administrative coordinator since 2005.*

# Our Celebration

About 200 people—community members, patients, volunteers, staff, entertainers and musicians—gathered in the parking lot of the Health Alliance on August 1st to celebrate our 15th birthday and welcome Abbe Lyons as our new Executive Director. Deirdre Silverman and Barbara Alden were recognized for their work on the Board with special doctor duckies. A letter from Governor Cuomo was read congratulating IHA and wishing good luck to Abbe.

We asked, “What does IHA mean to you?” Here are some of the answers!

“The Ithaca Health Alliance is a bridge between how we imagine health today and what it can become. To nurture each other, because it is needed and because we can. To restore Humanity in the face of greed, in a confused world. Thanks for doing what ya’ll do! Much love.”

***“It’s great to know that these resources are available—just in case.”***

“IHA means that healthcare is available to everyone regardless of their financial status. It means that our community has a real heart. It means that anyone willing and able can help others receive healthcare and learn self-care. Thanks to IHA! Happy Birthday!”

***“The Free Clinic is a stopgap measure providing healthcare for the uninsured and the grossly underinsured. It will be around for a long time, because there will still be lot of uninsured and underinsured under PPACA. I dream of the day when we will have Medicare For All, and the clinic can be repurposed.”***



“Grassroots Community Health”

“I saw the Health Alliance for the first time today, but I had heard about it for a long time. I would like to see its principles spread everywhere, so that healing is always separated from the economy of buying and selling.”

***“The IHA means community support.”***

“A place to be, to belong, to be taken care of, and to care for. I can rest easier knowing there is a place to go if I’m hurt. I pay taxes and I have 4 jobs, but have no insurance. I’m glad, so proud to volunteer here and to come when I’m in need. Thank you for being here for me.”

***“IHA means security and a sense of community belonging. My husband and I used IHA services a few years ago when we were suddenly losing our healthcare. Loved the help and care we received.”***

“The Ithaca Health Alliance is community and caring at its best- an expression of the value of every human being. Yay, IHA!”

We appreciate the donations by Tamarind, GreenStar, TOPS, Wegmans, and Veterans’ Sanctuary Community Garden. Many thanks to our entertainers and musicians: Marc the Zani, Danielle Kelly with Pop Lock and Hoop It, Tali Fridman, Judy Stock, Herman, Chris White, Nate Richardson, and Jonathan Hausrath. Thank you for your sharing your tables and canopies for our celebration: Southern Tier AIDS Program, TC Health Department, Rotary Club, Cancer Resource Center, 2-1-1, and Slaterville Fire Company.



## Volunteer of the Quarter Ken Kling

Physical disability hasn't kept Ken Kling from making a difference in our community. After a 25-year career, disability rendered Ken physically unable to work and battling depression. Then he discovered that helping others was one of the best ways to take care of himself. In Elmira, NY, he volunteered at an addiction recovery home and with programs for senior citizens.

After he moved to Ithaca, the Health Alliance was his first choice of where to volunteer. In his application, Ken described himself as "the ultimate paper pusher," and he's lived up to that claim. More so, he has helped out in every part of IHA's operations. Among his other contributions, he does laundry weekly, handles phone calls, conducts follow-ups for Free Clinic patients, supervises fundraising mailings, staffs shifts after last-minute cancellations, represents us at community events, and even covered for our administrative coordinator when he went on vacation.

Ken does it all with good humor and keeps everyone laughing. Asked why he chose the IHA, Ken says it's "because we're doing something about a problem that nobody else is." He says that he's been given an opportunity not only to help patients, but to work with many great people who he admires for their dedication to the wellbeing of all. "I appreciate that

the Alliance gives me a chance to use the skills I developed in my working life, and to feel like a normal person." The appreciation is mutual, and Ken's work invaluable.

Thank you, Ken Kling! ❖

## Make Your Own Elderberry Syrup

By Deirdre Silverman, President of the Board

This is the season when nature presents us with the wonderful healing gift of elderberries. This prolific fruit, which grows wild throughout our area, is rich in Vitamin C, bioflavonoids and antioxidants. It's easy to find, easy to pick and makes a syrup that helps mitigate seasonal allergies, eases the symptoms of colds, coughs and the flu, and, as a bonus, is beautiful and delicious. I've found that the fussiest children are willing to take elderberry syrup because of its rich purple color and sweet honey taste.

The first step is to find elderberries, which most often grow in wet areas, along streams and culverts. The berries, which are small and blue-black, grow in large hanging clusters called umbels. Around here, they usually ripen mid-late August. (You can also locate your berry picking spots in June, when the bushes have large umbels of tiny white flowers.) It's easy to fill a large bucket with berries in 10 minutes or so by snapping or cutting off the bunches with small stems attached.

Then you need to separate the berries from the stems. It's important to remove all but the smallest stems because they can be toxic if ingested in large quantities. The easiest way to do this is to spread the berry clusters on cookie sheets, place in the freezer, take them out after 30 minutes and use a fork to separate the berries from the stems. You can then freeze the berries for future use through the year, or use them immediately.

To make the syrup: Use 1 part berries and 2 parts  
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## Elderberries

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water. Bring to a boil and simmer until the strained liquid is reduced to half its original volume. Then mix it well, while still hot, with an equal amount of honey. So, for example, add 2 cups of water to 1 cup of berries, cook the liquid down to 1 cup and add 1 cup of honey. Whether you crush the berries or not is a matter of taste and aesthetics. Let it cool and keep refrigerated. One tablespoon each day helps with allergies, and taking it several times a day can ease sore throats and relieve coughs.

Is this more complicated than buying bottled elderberry syrup (if you can find it)? Yes, but it gets you outdoors, saves money, and is much more satisfying! ❀



*Have a health or resource question?* Interested in a certain health topic? Call the Health Alliance or email your questions to outreach@ithacahealth.org with subject line *Ask the Health Alliance*, and we'll answer your questions in the next newsletter. ❀

## Spotlight On Community Partners: Mighty Yoga

Special thanks to Heather Healey, Lara Green and Zainab Zakari! Mighty Yoga, Ithaca's power yoga studio, celebrated its 3rd anniversary with \$3 yoga classes, open to all, for the week of August 20-26. They donated all \$2,647 of proceeds from the classes to the Ithaca Health Alliance!

Mighty Yoga offered an expanded class schedule throughout the week, and gave 10% off all multi-class passes. They also provided a workplace yoga class for IHA staff. On Friday August 24, an evening celebration provided a chance for attendees to join teachers and fellow yogis for complimentary refreshments, a retail sale, and a silent auction. The auction included products and services ranging from crafts made by local artisans, gift certificates, goodie baskets and more. Representatives of the Ithaca Health Alliance were on-hand with information about IHA services.

"We've chosen the Ithaca Health Alliance as our beneficiary for the past three years because we share their commitment to community support, promoting wellness, and helping those in need," said Heather Healey, owner of Mighty Yoga. "We want to give people a chance to try yoga at an affordable price, and reward and thank our regular students with a great discount!" Mighty Yoga continues to offer year-round access to affordable yoga, with their community classes at designated times every week. All levels are welcome at the Mighty Yoga studio, (106 W. State St./MLK Jr. Blvd.). With its anniversary celebration, the Mighty Yoga staff marks three years of expanding community participation, and looks forward to reaching out to many more who can benefit from yoga's healing potential.❀

## FREE CLINIC UPDATE

by Valarie FitzRandolph, Clinic Coordinator

These past several months the Ithaca Free Clinic has been fortunate to see an influx of medical professional volunteers. The clinic is now able to schedule two medical providers for most of the Monday and Thursday walk in clinics. This has helped to reduce the patient's wait time to see a provider and enables the Medical Doctor, Nurse Practitioner or Physician's Assistant on duty to spend more time with each patient.

The clinic continues to provide pre-employment physicals on the third Tuesday of the month for those without insurance. These physicals are of a low to moderate complexity and can be categorized as general wellness physicals. Physicals are available by appointment. Please call 330-1254 for details or to schedule an appointment. ❀

## OUTREACH UPDATE

by Andrea Levine, Outreach Coordinator

The highlight of the summer was the August 1st celebration; it felt like a block party with so many good wishes from the community. We enjoyed outreaching at: the Juneteenth Festival, GrassRoots Healing Arts Tent, "Building a Coalition: Single Payer Movement in Oregon" Presentation, Loaves and Fishes, Herbal Hoedown, Boriqua Afro Americano Festival at the Southside Community Center, Area Congregations Together meeting, and sponsored the Wellness Tent at the Dragon Boat Festival hosted by the Ithaca Asian American Association.

In early September, we were at the Workers' Center Labor Day BBQ, the Backpack Giveaway at Southside, and "Know Your Rights" at AME Zion Church. Please come see us at Latin Roots 2012 on The Commons 9/22. IHA will sponsor the First Aid/ Wellness Stop on the Food Justice Walk-a-thon as we build the good food revolution! See more details under events! ❀

## HEALTH FUND UPDATE

by Rob Brown, Administrative Coordinator

At the Health Alliance's Finance Committee's July meeting, we discussed nuts and bolts of new grant applications for the Ithaca Health Fund. We intend to ensure that our application is simple. We will continue to help people with financial assistance applications from medical billers, as we do now, which will also make it easier to complete our own application. As the Health Fund gets ready to re-launch, we will offer grants for services that our other programs can't provide, but are especially hard for people to afford — things like emergency or dental care, with some options for prevention.

As always, we need your donations to make the Health Fund possible. Please let us know if you'd like to help out. ❀



## Gallery Night Reception with Combat Paper by Veterans' Sanctuary

IHA is pleased to host rotating art shows by different community artists in the halls at Ithaca Free Clinic. Our show for late summer highlights Combat Paper, which allows veterans to transform military uniforms into handmade paper. Big sheets and small sheets represent years of collaboration with many different veterans. Veterans Sanctuary chose their most hopeful and visually pleasing pieces to grace the walls of the Ithaca Health Alliance. This exhibit will be on view at the Health Alliance until September 30, 2012.

Veterans' Sanctuary Combat Paper Studio offers free open studio hours every Thursday from 2–10pm located behind Ithaca Antique Mall 1407 Trumansburg

Road (RT 96), Ithaca, NY.

For more information contact Nathan Lewis at 716.531.5362 or [veterans.sanctuary@gmail.com](mailto:veterans.sanctuary@gmail.com). Visit [www.veteranssanctuary.blogspot.com](http://www.veteranssanctuary.blogspot.com) or [www.combatpaper.org](http://www.combatpaper.org). ❖

## Working Toward a Tobacco Free Generation

For our most recent public workshop, IHA hosted Tobacco Free Tompkins and Cayuga Center for Healthy Living for an in-depth discussion of tobacco and cessation.

### *Tobacco Free Tompkins (T-Free) highlighted:*

- The complexity of tobacco use in our society and tobacco addiction
- Tobacco free outdoor policies and tobacco marketing
- How these initiatives support those who want to quit smoking and reduce youth tobacco use.

### *The tobacco cessation program at Cayuga Center for Healthy Living (CCHL) shared information on:*

- Challenges associated with tobacco addiction
- Tobacco cessation services

**Tobacco Free Tompkins (T-Free)**, a program of the Tompkins County Health Department, is a Community Partnership funded by the New York Tobacco Control Program. T-Free engages in community education and advocacy dedicated to keep the air smoke-free, support smokers who want to quit, and help teens beat the tobacco trap, because we cannot afford another generation of tobacco addiction. Visit Tobacco Free Tompkins on the Web at [www.tompkins-co.org/](http://www.tompkins-co.org/)



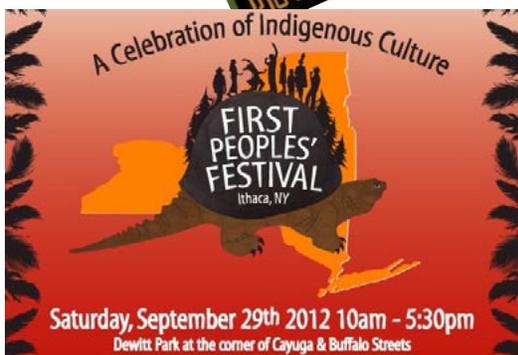
tobaccofree.

**Cayuga Center for Healthy Living**, a program of Cayuga Medical Center, is a lifestyle and health promotion program for people with chronic health problems. Lifestyle coordinator, Kathy Eliason runs the Tobacco Cessation Program which includes the Healthy Living without Tobacco cessation classes (7 one hour classes that offers support and motivation to those ready to commit to tobacco-free life) and the Staying on the Right Track monthly support group for individuals who are thinking about quitting or working on maintaining a tobacco free lifestyle. Visit Cayuga Center for Healthy Living on the web at [www.cayugamed.org/CCHLhome.cfm](http://www.cayugamed.org/CCHLhome.cfm). Remember to check in with the IHA's online calendar for info on upcoming classes. [www.ithacahealth.org/calendar.html](http://www.ithacahealth.org/calendar.html). ❖

## Concert to Initiate Chinese Herbal Medicine through Ithaca Health Fund

Sunday, October 28 from 3–7pm  
The Rongovian Embassy  
Trumansburg, NY

Featuring IHA's new Executive Director Abbe Lyons with "Mel & Sol" (Will Fudeman & David Frumkin), Answer the Muse and other local musicians. ❖



## Latin Roots 2012

is commemorating Latino Heritage month (Sept.15-Oct.15). Music and performers headlined by The Gunpoets, Latin food and crafts, kids fun area and cultural displays from different Latin American countries. Join us Saturday, September 22 from 11am-7pm on the Commons. Facebook: 'Latin Roots 2012.' ❀

## Food Justice Walk-a-thon & Street Fair

Building a system of regional food sustainability that promotes health, equity, and community control of essential resources. Celebrating people and place. Building community unity. Supporting healthy lifestyle choices. Growing the good food revolution! [www.greenstarcommunityprojects.org/FJS/](http://www.greenstarcommunityprojects.org/FJS/)

- 10 am – Check-in begins for the walk-a-thon at Neighborhood Pride, 210 Hancock Street, Ithaca NY
- 10:30am – Walk-a-Thon
- 12-7 pm – Street Fair outside Neighborhood Pride with live music, local organic BBQ, youth activities, performances, craft vendors, educational tabling and more! ❀

## First Peoples' Festival

The festival, held in conjunction with Ithaca's Apple Fest, will be at the Dewitt Park, Saturday, September 29 from 10 am to 5:30 pm. This is a celebration of Indigenous peoples of New York State and an educational opportunity for the public to learn more about the traditions and unlearn the stereotypes connected with Indigenous cultures. ❀

Traditional music featuring Allegany River Indian Dancers and Bluesman Butch Mudbone, art, crafts, traditional food -corn soup, buffalo burgers, fried bread and more, storytelling, song, dance, and displays. Free and open to all. <http://multicultural-resource.org/> ❀

# Join Us and Make a Difference!

In June 2012, the Alliance was approved for federal malpractice coverage through the Free Clinic FTCA Program from the Health Resources Services Administration. We are excited to announce this will save us \$25,000 a year in insurance expenses while covering both current and future provider volunteers at the Free Clinic!

## We Are Recruiting Board Members and Healthcare Providers

*Are you are passionate about access to health care and have time to commit to addressing the needs of the un-insured and under-insured in Tompkins County?*

We are accepting applications for the Board of Directors. We welcome individuals from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and experiences. The Board of Directors is responsible for planning and oversight of the Ithaca Health Alliance's operations.

*Are you a healthcare provider and interested in donating your time and services in the clinic or at your private practice?* We have a particularly acute need for resources for dental care, dermatology and orthopedics. Acupuncture and massage are always in high demand at the clinic and we generally have a waiting list for those services. We have been without an in-house chiropractor at the Free Clinic since January 2012.

We work with health care providers in a variety of ways. Some choose to come to the clinic and offer services there by appointment. In those cases the staff and volunteers at the clinic manage the details of the scheduling and reminder calls for patients.

Others choose to enter into an agreement to see patients at their private practice by referral from the clinic. This is particularly helpful when a provider

requires specialized equipment in their work that is not available at the clinic. In other cases, a provider may opt to issue vouchers similar to a coupon for a particular service.

We work with the provider to set up the parameters of these agreements to reach an arrangement that they are comfortable with. In these ways clinic patients gain access to care that for a variety of reasons we are not able to offer directly at the clinic.

To apply, complete our online application [www.ithacahealth.org/ally](http://www.ithacahealth.org/ally). ❖

## News You Can Use

### The Healthcare Visual Storytelling Project

Finger Lakes for New York Health, a part of the Single Payer New York movement is a grassroots organization working to obtain passage of A7860/S5425 that would ensure health coverage for all residents of New York State. The local chapter is working on The Healthcare Visual Storytelling Project, videotaping stories of individual struggles with the current system. It's important that the impact of the healthcare crisis is heard from diverse voices across the state, because it affects everyone. For more information, or if you are interested in participating, please contact Barbara Harrison by email at: [fingerlakesfornewyorkhealth@gmail.com](mailto:fingerlakesfornewyorkhealth@gmail.com) or by telephone at: 703-268-4551.



**Ithaca Health Alliance**  
PO Box 362  
Ithaca, NY 14851

607-330-1253  
Find us online at  
[www.ithacahealth.org](http://www.ithacahealth.org)

A large, stylized 'IHA' logo in yellow and white is positioned on the left side of the page. The background features a blue sky with white clouds and a field of yellow wildflowers in the foreground. A semi-transparent white box is overlaid on the bottom half of the image, containing the main title and subtitle.

# Ithaca Health Alliance Newsletter

**15 Years of the IHA  
Community Partners • News  
Upcoming Events**