



# THE BCAP NEWSLETTER

Updates | October-November 2025

Dear Reader,

October was an exciting month for us at BCAP. Our community came together to celebrate our Dashain and Deepawali/Diwali festivals. We are proud to work together to keep our cultures vibrant.

BCAP is happy to announce the new additions to our team. We gave a warm welcome to our first ever MSW intern from the University of Pittsburgh, Alexandria D'Alessio, and our new OST Program Coordinator, Timothy Reidell. With his added support, we are able to celebrate the renewal of our After School Program and start on the Student Success Project.

In the midst of these celebrations we also worked tirelessly to increase voter engagement to prepare for the November 4th election because BCAP knows your voices matter.

November is serving as a reminder that 2025 is coming to a close. Our main goal this month is to focus on ensuring we can continue to provide programs and services to families in need in the upcoming year. We plan to reach this goal by building our capacity-fundraising and community support.

Currently, we have an urgent need for a 12 or 15 seater van to provide transportation for school children to our After School Program. If you know of any listings of vans, please contact the BCAP office.

BCAP stands for equity and inclusion. We are not just a Bhutanese/Nepalese American serving community, we are here to serve everyone who comes to our door.

Sincerely,

Khara Timsina, Executive Director

# WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO OCTOBER HIGHLIGHTS:

## AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM & YOUTH MENTORSHIP

Welcome back families! We are excited to announce that all four after school locations are up and running. We are currently working with students from Baldwin-Whitehall School District, Brentwood Borough School District, West Jefferson Hills School District, and Pittsburgh Public Schools.

Middle School and High School programs will begin this fall as well, but the dates are not yet finalized. You can find updates on our Facebook and in these monthly newsletters.

If you are interested in, or have questions about registering please call BCAP office.



## CITIZENSHIP CLASSES

BCAP offers citizenship classes for anyone looking for opportunities to learn about the United States' naturalization process.

The classes provide lessons on English speaking, reading, and writing. It also includes information on US history, geography and Civics, which are all necessary to learn for the Naturalization Interview.

Classes still have space available and are open to everyone!

These classes are available virtual and in person:  
In person: every Saturday and Wednesday at 10am-12pm.  
Virtual: every Monday through Thursday at 7pm-8pm.

# WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO OCTOBER HIGHLIGHTS:

## BALDWIN LIBRARY'S TIHAR CELEBRATION

BCAP strives to celebrate traditions and culture. This past month, we joined Baldwin Borough Public Library to host our third annual (Diwali) Tihar Festival. The celebration took place on Friday, October 17th. At this event we highlighted three of the five celebration days:

1. Kukur Tihar, where we had two dogs from our community come to be adorned with flower garlands and worshipped for their loyalty.
2. Deepawali/Laxmi Puja to honor the goddess of wealth and prosperity.
3. Bhai Tika, where a brother and sister from our youth community participated in the traditional ritual and ceremony, as seen in the top photo on this page.

After these traditions were performed, we showcased Deusi and a few dance performances, which are shown in the other photos on this page. We are so thankful to see the participation grow each year, and we hope to see everyone at future events.



# UPCOMING EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

## YOUTH Mental Health First Aid Training (YMHFA)

For parents and guardians or adults  
working with youths.

YMHFA TEACHES YOU HOW TO IDENTIFY, UNDERSTAND AND RESPOND TO SIGNS OF MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE CHALLENGES AMONG CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS AGES 12-18.



THIS TRAINING IS MADE POSSIBLE WITH  
FUNDING SUPPORT FROM STAUNTON  
FARM FOUNDATION, ALLEGHENY COUNTY  
DHS AND POSNER FOUNDATION OF  
PITTSBURGH

**10.2%**  
of youth will be  
diagnosed with a  
substance use disorder  
in their lifetime.  
Source: Youth Mental Health  
First Aid™

**1 in 5**  
teens and young adults  
live with a mental  
health condition.  
Source: National Alliance for  
Mental Illness™

**50%**  
of all mental illnesses  
begin by age 14, and  
75% by the mid-20s.  
Source: Archives of General  
Psychiatry™



**SATURDAY  
NOVEMBER 15**  
ADDRESS - TBD

Any Questions?

412-668-3197

STOP THE STIGMA.  
LET'S TALK ABOUT  
MENTAL HEALTH.

## MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING

Mental health awareness and understanding is an important way for you to connect with and support youths. Young adolescents between the ages of 12 and 18 experience high levels of stress and change in their personal lives, which can negatively impact their mental health.

We encourage anyone who is a parent, guardian, or those who work with youths to attend this training. You will learn valuable information regarding different mental health challenges, including early substance use concerns.

Let's come together to support the youth in our community and pave way for a brighter future!

## THANKSGIVING EVENT

With holidays just around the corner, we have been feeling very thankful for the community we have built here in Pittsburgh. Each of you are an essential piece of our BCAP family, and we want to celebrate your continued support and faith in BCAP.

We are having a Friendsgiving event on Saturday, November 22nd from 11:00-1:00. The location will be at Zion Lutheran Church. Updates regarding this event will be available on Facebook soon!

Families are asked to bring a food item to share. We will have crafts, music, and games for everyone to enjoy.





# EXPLORING IDENTITY THROUGH TEEN VOICES

Join BCAP and 4 other organizations in watching videos that feature teen stories with food testing from different cultural backgrounds and dance performances.

The event is hosted by Sharing Our Stories. BCAP is represented by three of our teens in the program.

Registration is required to get admission in the event hall, and you can register through the QR code on the flyer.



**Exploring Identity Teen Voices**  
Join this Community Celebration!

Hear powerful digital stories created by Pittsburgh teens—refugee, immigrant, African American, and Jewish—as they share how they define themselves. Enjoy multicultural performances, sample global flavors, and be part of a unifying experience that uplifts teen voices.

Scan to RSVP

**Celebration 1**  
November 2, 2025  
2–4 PM  
Levinson Hall, The Squirrel Hill Jewish Community Center of Pittsburgh

**Celebration 2**  
January 31, 2026  
2–4 PM  
St. Paul's Episcopal Church

**Sponsors:**

**For more info, contact:**  
 Sally Rafson  
 sally@sharingourstory.com  
 412-418-1439

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Your voice matters!

Voting allows you to express your opinions, and choose representatives that align with your values to work towards addressing issues that matter most to you, your family, and your community.

If you have questions or need assistance on the voting process, please reach out to us. We can provide training on how to fill out the ballot correctly. No appointment is necessary, just come in and ask staff for assistance. We are here to help!

BCAP has assisted more than 100 new citizens to register to vote and request a mailing ballot in 2025 voting cycle.



# LOCAL NEWS UPDATES

## SNAP RULES IN PITTSBURGH ARE CHANGING!

Adults will need to prove a minimum of a 20 hours work week to keep SNAP benefits.

Starting on November 1, 2025, only these listed groups will be eligible for SNAP:

- Green card holders:
  - Many green card holders will need to wait five years before being eligible for SNAP.
  - Some exceptions to the five year wait period:
    1. Those who had refugee asylee, or T-Visa status before having a green card.
    2. Children under 18
    3. Adults receiving Medical Assistance for a disability
- U.S. Citizens
- Cuban or Haitian entrants
- Citizens of Micronesia, Palau, or the Marshall Islands

[Learn more about your eligibility at:](#)

<https://clsphila.org/highlights/many-immigrants-could-lose-snap/>

Due to the government shutdown, November SNAP benefits will not be dispersed. There are alternative food resource options offered around Pittsburgh until SNAP resumes. Some of these resources are listed on the right of this page. If you have any concerns, please call BCAP for assistance in navigating this difficult time.

## ALTERNATIVE FOOD RESOURCES:

- [www.phila.gov/food](http://www.phila.gov/food)
- [www.feedingpa.org/find-food/local-food-pantries](http://www.feedingpa.org/find-food/local-food-pantries)
- [www.sharefoodprogram.org/find-food](http://www.sharefoodprogram.org/find-food)
- [www.pa.gov/agencies/pda/food/food-assistance/food-security-in-pennsylvania/food-resources-for-pennsylvanians](http://www.pa.gov/agencies/pda/food/food-assistance/food-security-in-pennsylvania/food-resources-for-pennsylvanians)

October 2025 LASP Legal Aid

**SNAP** Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program  
Putting Healthy Food Within Reach

**SNAP benefits are CURRENTLY STOPPED!**

ALERT from PA Dept. of Human Services (DHS):

**November 2025 SNAP benefits will not be paid.**

**SNAP benefits will NOT be paid** until the federal government shutdown ends & funds are released to PA.

**PA DHS will notify SNAP recipients** when payments can resume & when to expect SNAP payments.

**Resources**  
[pa211.org](http://pa211.org) | [feedingpa.org](http://feedingpa.org) | [pa-navigate.org](http://pa-navigate.org)

**If you receive SNAP, you still must:**

- **Complete renewals & report changes** to your income, contact information, or the people living in your home.
- **Meet new federal requirements.** SNAP recipients must **report work, schooling, or volunteer participation** to PA DHS. There is a new 90-day limit to receive SNAP, unless you get an exemption.
  - File a **SNAP Medical Exemption Form** if you have a disability. Get the form filled out by your doctor ASAP.
  - **Other exemptions:** [pa.gov/agencies/dhs/resources/snap/snap-work-requirements-abawds](http://pa.gov/agencies/dhs/resources/snap/snap-work-requirements-abawds)

**Did you receive a denial for SNAP?**

- Contact Legal Aid of Southeastern PA (LASP) at **877-429-5994**, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Monday-Friday, or apply online 24/7: [lasp.org/apply](http://lasp.org/apply).
- LASP provides free civil legal services in Bucks, Chester, Delaware & Montgomery counties.

[dhs.pa.gov/SNAP](http://dhs.pa.gov/SNAP) | [dhs.pa.gov/work](http://dhs.pa.gov/work) | [lasp.org/news](http://lasp.org/news)

# **NOVEMBER OPPORTUNITIES TO VOLUNTEER**

## **CITIZENSHIP CLASS TUTORS NEEDED:**

As the demand for the citizenship classes has increased, we are looking for passionate volunteers to help us run these classes by tutoring.

We need such individuals for the women's class on Wednesdays and Saturdays, 10:00am-12:00pm. Please let us know if anyone is interested to volunteer.

## **AFTER SCHOOL TUTORS NEEDED:**

As the after school youth programs start back up, we have begin to notice a need for more tutors. We are looking for driven and responsible volunteers to help our younger community members with their homework and supervise fun, educational activities.

We need volunteers on weekdays, 3:15pm-6:00pm. If you are interested, please call BCAP for help with connecting to the school volunteer opportunities.

## **SCHOOL CAFETERIA VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:**

The school year is in full swing!

We are working with the school to find volunteers to assist in school cafeterias. This opportunity does not require too much of your time; you can even just stop by to help during your lunch break!

Every district has different opportunities, so if you are interested in lending a helping hand, we encourage parents to check with the school office about the school's PTA/PTO membership and volunteer opportunities. If you are interested in learning more about this volunteer position, please reach out to BCAP.

# WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS TO OUR TEAM



Dear BCAP Community,

I am sincerely thrilled to be joining the dedicated team at BCAP as the new Out of School Time (OST) Program Coordinator. I recently completed my Bachelor of Arts in Criminology, with minors in Psychology and Forensic Science, at West Virginia University. In my role, I will be working closely with our students and staff at the various After School locations.

One of my first goals is to enhance our services by administering feedback surveys to both children and parents. This will ensure our OST program remains highly responsive and effectively meets the evolving needs of our participants, thereby continuing BCAP's mission to serve the residents of Pittsburgh.

I eagerly look forward to engaging with our community members and partnering with you to support our youth. Please feel free to contact me directly at [treidell@bcap.us](mailto:treidell@bcap.us) with any questions or introductions.

Sincerely,

Timothy Reidell, Out of School Time (OST) Program Coordinator

Hello BCAP community,

My name is Alexandria D'Alessio, but everyone can call me Alex! After earning my Bachelor's degree in Sociology from Florida State University, I moved to Pittsburgh to continue my education. Currently, I am a first year graduate student at the University of Pittsburgh, pursuing a Master's degree in Social Work.

I started interning at BCAP in the beginning of October, and I am fortunate to be given the opportunity to work alongside the rest of the team until April. I am learning from each person on our team and will be assisting wherever I am needed. Some of my responsibilities include assisting with the After School Program, resource research, working alongside Benu on individual and family needs, and creating a monthly newsletter to update our community on past and upcoming events. I am excited to meet members of the community over the next six months, thank you for the warm welcome!

Sincerely,

Alexandria D'Alessio, MSW Social Work Intern



TURN COMPASSION  
**INTO ACTION**

Support BCAP and become part of our ever-growing community. We need your help, choose today to make a difference!



**Dear BCAP Friend and Supporter,**

2025 has been a year full of successful opportunities that engaged hundreds of people of all backgrounds. Through the generous funding support from local Foundations and individual donors, we were able to provide a multitude of resources to our community members in 2025. As program expenses and our community continues to increase, we are needing your help now more than ever before.

To our past donors, we thank you and ask for your continued support. To our prospective donors, we implore you to take action to help us create a positive, inclusive future. This future starts with the children in our community, and BCAP's After School Programs in four different school districts require continuous donations. And now we wish to purchase a van of our own for smooth running of our programs.

Funds raised also go into supporting BCAP's ability to stay open. Through your assistance, we can continue to nurture our vibrant culture and traditions through hosting ethnic festivals that provide leadership roles for the youth and women in our community.

Your donation between now through December 26th will make a significant impact as it is going to be matched dollar for dollar by a local Pittsburgh foundation.

**Sincerely,**

**KHARA TIMSINA  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**JULIA BARAILY  
BOARD CHAIR**

**November 2025**

**HERE ARE WAYS YOU CAN DONATE TO BCAP'S EFFORTS:**

- 1. Check written to Bhutanese Community Association of Pittsburgh and mail to: BCAP, 3000 Brownsville Road, Suite C, Pittsburgh, PA 15227**
- 2. Use this link or QR code to safely reach your donation to our bank directly. You will get a receipt instantly in your email.**  
<https://www.zeffy.com/fundraising/donate-and-make-a-difference-in-someones-life>
- 3. Drop your check, Money Order, or Cash at our address.**



# THANK YOU!

Our sincere gratitude is extended to the following funders:  
The Jefferson Regional Foundation, The Pittsburgh Foundation, The Mary Hillman Jennings Foundation, The Posner Foundation of Pittsburgh, The Grable Foundation, United Way of SW PA, FISA Foundation, The Staunton Farm Foundation, The Opportunity Fund, McElhattan Foundation Allegheny County Department of Human Services, Allegheny County Department of Children Initiatives, Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, Eden Hall Foundation, Dollar Bank, S&T Bank, City of Pittsburgh, Adams Foundation, Four Freedoms Fund, PA Alliance Foundation, Center for Empowered Politics  
and all our individual donors.

## WHAT IS BCAP?

The Bhutanese Community Association of Pittsburgh is dedicated to improving the quality of life for all Bhutanese/Nepalese Americans and that of other residents in the greater Pittsburgh region. We work to support the transition of our community into American society through culturally-informed programs and services.

Visit our website [www.bcapgh.org](http://www.bcapgh.org)

Follow us on Facebook

Donate

