

# Alternatives Federal Credit Union Members Quarterly

*Alyssa, owner of **Dynamic Body Massage + Energy Healing** and one of our happy IDA graduates.*



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### Going digital!

Members Quarterly will transition to an all-digital format starting with our July 2018 edition. Watch your email or check online at [alternatives.org](http://alternatives.org).

## Upcoming events

### April

- 11 Business CENTS: Coffee Talk
- 17 A quick guide to content creation

### May

- 4 Finding the confidence to make your first sales
- 9 Business CENTS: Coffee Talk
- 14 Becoming a Business Owner at Watkins Glen Chamber (May 14 and 21)
- 18 Building a Website

### June

- 13 Business CENTS: Coffee Talk
- 19 Annual Meeting

Details and how to participate are online at [alternatives.org](http://alternatives.org).

### Holiday closings

Memorial Day: Monday, May 28  
Independence Day: Wednesday, July 4

## Artist of the Month

### April

Ruth M. Yarrow

### May

Brian Auge

### June

Meredith E. Lawhead

## Business of the Month

### April

Jamie Love  
Photography

### May

Viv (Kala) Williams

### June

Village at Ithaca

## 01 CEO search update

**By: Alison Christie, Alternatives Board of Directors, President**

We've made it through another Ithaca winter, and, as our minds pique with the promise of spring and its sweet rewards, we begin our permanent CEO search in earnest. Our search team has been convened and includes four Alternatives board members, **Dan Apfel** (advisory), **Ariana Blossom**, **Michael McNeil**, and **Alison Christie**; two staff members, **Karl Graham** and **Reiley Schoen**; and our former COO, **Leni Hochman**.

The board has approved the use of a recruiting firm for our search, and the Team is interviewing prospects as I write. The Search Team is tending to a range of preparatory tasks such as reviewing the CEO job description in anticipation of working with a firm. We've also conducted a Leadership Characteristics Survey seeking individual input from each staff and board member about the type of leader we seek for this next chapter in Alternatives' history. Our next CEO will be but the third to lead our organization in its 39 years.

Our staff continues to deliver services with distinction under the leadership of Acting CEO **Eric Levine**. The board is grateful to all of our staff for the depth of skill and expertise they possess that allows us to keep moving forward while we pursue a thorough and thoughtful CEO search.

Our work on a new strategic plan is undergoing final revisions, and we look forward to offering more products to our members, reaching more community members, and strengthening our operations. If you are a satisfied member, recommend us to your friends and family. We are always ready to listen to suggestions of where our service can be improved as well. Stop by the branch and tell us how we can help you.

Happy spring everyone!

## 02 Mobility+

**By: Grace Rychwalski**

In March, [Text Alerts for Fraud](#) became available for [Alternatives Visa Debit Card](#) holders. If you enroll in this service, rather than receiving a robo-call when there is suspected fraudulent activity on your card, you will receive a text.

If you did not receive an enrollment text for [Text Alerts for Fraud](#), please make sure the mobile number associated with your [Alternatives Visa Debit Card](#) is current in the **Profile** tab in [Online Access](#). If you still have not received an enrollment text several business days after updating your number, please contact Alternatives and we will be happy to enroll you.

[Text Alerts for Fraud](#) will be sent from the number 207-33. While this service is free from Alternatives, mobile carrier charges may apply.

If you would like to set up other alert systems for your Alternatives accounts, such as [Transaction Alerts](#), please visit the **Alerts** tab of [Online Access](#).

## 03 New look, same statement

**By: Mary Ziegler**

Still using paper statements? We will have a new look starting with the paper statements for April. Basically, our vendor is removing the blue highlighting. We have no additional changes planned at this time. Please consider using [Online Access](#), where your account information is available 24/7. With [Online Access](#), you can sort transactions by date, amount, and type. You can see your cleared checks, search for transactions, and of course, your statement is there, too. It's so easy and convenient!

## 04 Good savings

**By: Grace Rychwalski**

Do you know about Alternatives' matched savings accounts? [Individual](#)

[Development Accounts \(IDAs\)](#) are designed to help you reach a financial goal with matched savings and education.

Our [Asset IDAs](#) allow participants to save up to \$1,000 (maximum savings of \$125/month) which will be matched at a 2:1 ratio for a total of \$3,000. Savings and match can be used to buy a home, start or continue a small business, or to further the education of you or a dependent.

Alternatives also offers the [First Home Club IDA](#). This matched savings program allows participants to save \$1,875 (maximum savings of \$188/month) which will be matched at a 4:1 ratio for a total of \$9,375. These savings can be used for a down payment and closing costs for the purchase of a home.

Featured on the front page of Members Quarterly is **Alyssa**, owner of [Dynamic Body Massage + Energy Healing](#) and one of our happy Asset IDA graduates. With the help of the [Asset IDA program](#), Alyssa was able to gain further education for her practice, update her website, and maintain other business expenses.

If you think either of our [IDA programs](#) might be a good fit for you, visit [alternatives.org](#). Under our **Community Programs** tab, click on [Matched Savings](#) for information about the programs, and to get in touch with our [IDA Coordinator](#) about your eligibility.

## 05 Our mortgage team

**By: Carol Chernikoff**



Left to right: Alternatives mortgage team is **Barbara Nellenback**, **Phil Shay**, and **Amy Chapman**.

Our team works collaboratively to ensure your application process is smooth and that we answer your questions along the way. We focus on providing individualized

member service, clear, and prompt communication, with careful attention to detail. Whether you need to buy your first home, refinance your existing mortgage, or apply for a home equity line of credit, we're happy to help you. Unsure which mortgage products are right for you? Let us help you find the right product for your circumstances. We look forward to working with you!

**Amy Chapman**, [achapman@alternatives.org](mailto:achapman@alternatives.org), has been with Alternatives for five and a half years. Amy started out as a loan processor and was promoted to handle the legal aspects of closing home loans. The job she does today has evolved into a mortgage department air traffic controller, legal closing specialist, problem solver and all around wonderful co-worker. Amy is an Ithaca native, a dedicated volunteer at the [Cancer Resource Center](#) and enjoys volunteering for [The Sophie Fund](#). She also keeps the birds happy at the corner of State and Fulton.

**Phil Shay**, [pshay@alternatives.org](mailto:pshay@alternatives.org), is a Trumansburg native and has been with Alternatives for more than four years. He started as a teller, gained experience in collections and consumer lending before becoming a Mortgage Loan Underwriter, and finally a Mortgage Loan Originator. Phil personally realized the impact that affordable financing offered when he took out his first car loan at Alternatives over ten years ago. In his spare time, Phil is a talented drummer with the local band [Kitestring](#), 2017 Winner of the Downtown Ithaca Battle of the Bands. He also enjoys traveling the world and sampling the regional food and drink.

**Barbara Nellenback**, [bnellenback@alternatives.org](mailto:bnellenback@alternatives.org), has made her home in Ithaca since 2003. She joined the staff at Alternatives in September 2017 as a Mortgage Loan Underwriter, and has been a member since 2003. Barbara saved money towards her down payment on her home through Alternatives' [First Home Club](#) and has her mortgage and car loan with Alternatives. Her background is in

financial aid, consumer education, and community action work. In her spare time, she is a licensed massage therapist and teaches Let Your Yoga Dance.

## 06 Meet Steve

*By: Kathleen Clark*



*Steve Messmer recently joined our Business CENTS Program as a Business Consultant and Trainer.*

Steve is responsible for developing, delivering, and administering services to help small business owners succeed.

Business success depends on having a detailed understanding of the nuts and bolts of the business. Steve's experience running his own business and background as an engineer, allow him to drill down into the technical issues that drive success. Steve is comfortable with numbers, math, and logistical analysis —areas that can intimidate many new business owners. He works hard to help business owners prepare realistic business plans based on a foundation of sound math and financial planning.

In addition to his advisory role, Steve remains actively involved as co-owner of [Lively Run Goat Dairy](#) located in Interlaken. Along with his wife Susanne and two sons Peter and David, Steve and his family have owned and operated Lively Run for over 20 years. Steve led his family business from relative obscurity in 1995 to prominence as a leading purveyor of farmstead/artisanal cheese in New York State and beyond. In 2015, [Lively Run Goat Dairy](#) was recognized by the [Small Business Development Center](#), as New York State Agricultural Business of the Year, 2015.

Steve's career also includes a decade of public service as a military engineer overseas, and 20 years of private sector

engineering consulting with various architect and engineering firms. Finally, Steve has been active in public service volunteer work throughout his career, beginning with founding and leading a faith-based volunteer refugee relief organization that operated for six years in Germany during the Cold War.

For information about [Business CENTS](#) contact **Steve** at (607) 216-3443 or [smessmer@alternatives.org](mailto:smessmer@alternatives.org). To schedule a free consultation, visit [alternatives.org](#).

## 07 Business lending

*By: Kathleen Clark*

[BusinessLoanConnection.org](#) is your source for small business lending information and resources. Developed as a collaborative effort with fellow Community Development Credit Union [Cooperative Federal](#), the website contains helpful information to assist you in identifying the types of loans that are available, documents needed as part of the application process, and allows you to apply online easily.

Do you have questions about business loans and which one might benefit you? Visit the **Education** tab to find educational videos explaining the variety of loans available and how to determine if one might be right for your business. If you prefer to read up on the topic when doing your research, visit the **Blog** tab to find helpful posts addressing a variety of business lending topics such as "[A First Timer's Guide to Small Business Loans](#)" or "[Small Business Loans; Fixed Rates vs. Variable Rates.](#)"

Once you are ready, you can complete and submit an application right from the site which will be sent to our business loan officers, **Bob Anderson** and **Branka Gligoric**. Need help putting the application package together? [Business CENTS](#) is here to help. Business advisors are available to help review or prepare necessary documents such as your business plan or cash flow projections.

Visit [BusinessLoanConnection.org](#) to learn more.



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Photography by Jamie Love Photography unless noted.

## 08 Mad City Money®

By: Grace Rychwalski



Alternatives staff members volunteer at the Credit Union table during Mad City Money on February 9. Photo credit: Grace Rychwalski

On Friday, February 9, Alternatives partnered with [Cornell Cooperative Extension](#) and [Ithaca High School](#) for an afternoon of financial education. Along with volunteers from all parts of the community, including local businesses, organizations, and individuals, Alternatives was able to coordinate another successful year of Mad City Money.

After being assigned various life circumstances, like careers, number of children, and debt to manage, the IHS senior class was launched into this financial awareness simulation. Throughout the afternoon, the students were tasked with buying their monthly necessities—groceries, child care, housing, entertainment, and much more—all while ensuring they retained a healthy budget.

Sticking to the budget wasn't always easy, though. Of the dozens of community volunteers who acted as vendors, many wanted to give the students an experience that reflects the way the world really works. To that end, some vendor volunteers tried their hand at upselling more expensive products that the students may not have needed, just as real retailers do! It was then up to the students to decide if they could afford the more expensive options—and if they couldn't, how to not be persuaded otherwise. Luckily, if students ran into financial trouble or had questions about what they could afford, they were able

to receive financial counseling at the Alternatives Federal Credit Union table.

Once Mad City Money drew to a close, IHS students had the opportunity to give feedback about the event. One of the most common sentiments was that children are a lot more expensive than the students realized! After filling out a brief poll, 82.5% of students said they would recommend Mad City Money to a friend, and the students reported that their knowledge of personal finance significantly increased because of the event.

If you or your organization would like to hold a Mad City Money financial awareness simulation or if you would like more information about Mad City Money, please contact **Joe Cummins** at [jcummins@alternatives.org](mailto:jcummins@alternatives.org).

## Support economic justice with a gift today.

### Ways to donate:

- By mail to 125 N. Fulton St. Ithaca, NY 14850
- In-person at the N. Fulton St. Branch
- Online at [alternatives.org/impact](https://alternatives.org/impact)

I want to become a Sustaining Supporter by making a monthly gift of:

\$25  \$15  \$5

or give a one-time gift of:

\$500  \$250  \$100  Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Check** (payable to [Alternatives Impact](#))

or **Credit Card** (Visa/Mastercard/Discover)

Account # \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (     ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_



For more information about how you or your business can support Alternatives Impact, contact:

**Liz Hudson**

Director of Development

**(607) 216-3452**