



Marjorie Cohan

Pittsfield, MA

Marjorie Cohan loves the Berkshires.

In the 1980s, when Cohan arrived in Pittsfield, the General Electric plant was closing and thousands lost their jobs. For Cohan, however, the Berkshires proved an excellent place to pursue her career. The closure of Northampton State Hospital meant local communities were building a network of community-based behavioral health services. Cohan helped create that network in the Berkshires, eventually becoming director of the Brien Center. Cohan is proud of the excellent integrated behavioral health system that she and others developed in the Berkshires. But when she retired, she started a new phase of her life.

Cohan knew she wanted to stay in the Berkshires because her wonderful network of friends is here. And for Cohan, the Berkshires are just right - the right size to feel that she is part of the community, rich with outdoor resources, and rich with cultural institutions. Cohan also wanted to give back to the community she loves. For ten years, Cohan continued to work on many local boards including the Berkshire Immigrant Center, the Berkshire Visitors Bureau, and Berkshire Democratic Brigades. When she turned 70, however, she ended most of her board service, ready to hand the baton to the bright, younger leaders who are transforming the Berkshires.

Cohan continues, however, to promote social justice and a diverse, accepting local community. Cohan is a member of the Multicultural BRIDGE Race Task Force and NAACP and actively supports Youth Alive and ROPE (Rites of Passage and Empowerment). For anyone looking for a model of healthy living, Cohan's participation in the Josh Billings Race, speed skating, bicycling, and skiing is inspirational.

An enthusiastic nomad, traveling by bicycle is her preferred mode whether in the U.S. or abroad. As the founder and president of the Berkshire Bike Path Council for 20 years, she continues to promote biking in the Berkshires. As Cohan rides around the Berkshires she know every day is a gift.

Photography: Susan Geller

Words: Katherine Kidd

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