There are a number of businesses that have consistently contributed generously to make our events a success. Since the nature of this issue is to highlight those behind the scenes, we would like to take this opportunity to thank some regulars. Walmart and Wegmans are the two main cash donors, Green Hills has consistently provided bushels of peppers and onions for our delicious chili, Gannon’s always makes us the best pumpkin ice cream in town and gives us ice cream tokens for our bike race participants, McClusky Orchards and Beak & Skiff give us apples for our apple crisp, Cazenovia Equipment in Lafayette donates really cool John Deere toys, we have received Syracuse Stage tickets for our raffle every year, more recently we have been given MOST tickets and Rosamond Gifford Zoo passes, we always receive certificates from Doug’s, Boom Booms and Daniels Grill, Fairmount Glen Putt Putt gives us golf passes for our bike event and many of the same Great Musicians keep coming back year after year to make our Fall Festival the wonderful tradition it has become.
Kambuyu Marimba Ensemble

The Kambuyu Marimba Ensemble is a group of talented musicians that began playing together about the same time Amberations was started. We have been fortunate to have had them at every Fall Festival and attribute a lot of our success to their popularity. If you have never heard Kambuyu play there is no better time than during our Fall Festival. The band members have built all their own instruments, which are basically various sized xylophones made of wood and PVC pipe. Beautiful to look at as well as listen to, the marimba sound resonates with rich and complex tones. There is a base, a baritone, 2 tenors, 3 sopranos and a hosho (gourd rattle). The music Kambuyu plays is the traditional dance music of Zimbabwe. When asked to share something for this newsletter, this is what they had to say.

At first we were shivering and wearing lots of clothes as we played our marimba music at the Amberations’ Harvest Festivals which were initially held at the end of October. But we were always quickly warmed by the fabulous chili, spanakopita, pumpkin cookies, pumpkin people and T-shirts that Gloria and her friends made. Not to mention that we were playing for a great cause!

Now we make Amberations’ Fall Festival – thankfully held now at the beginning of October – first on our gig list for the year. It’s an event we look forward to. What creative T-shirts will Gloria make this year? Will there be a new Treasure Hunt? What other fabulous music will be there? How early should we arrive so we can check it all out, see the new gourd-draped arbor or take a hike? The event has become synonymous with inaugurating the Fall. We are excited to be playing again in such a setting and to help get the word out about this unique place in our community. Come to Amberations’ Fall Festival, dance to some infectious music from Zimbabwe & help build a place in nature that can be shared with people of all abilities!
Karen Winters Schwartz

Karen Winters Schwartz is one of the first people to support Amberations and has become one of our most faithful advertisers. Karen lives in close proximity to our site and has recently come to appreciate our diverse terrain for some rigorous training she has undertaken. Her passion about opening the door on mental health issues ties in very nicely with Amberations’ goal of supporting mental health.

Karen’s debut novel: Where Are the Cocoa Puffs?: A Family’s Journey Through Bipolar Disorder is the third of four novels she’s written. Based on true events, this is a fictionalized story of what a family goes through when the teenage daughter is diagnosed with bipolar disorder. While this novel follows a family through the tragedy of bipolar disorder, it’s not tragic. It’s funny, sad, and thought provoking—and as real as mental illness itself. Her main goal with this novel is to decrease stigma.

Karen’s next novel will be released late winter or early spring 2012. In keeping with the food theme, it’s likely to be titled: Reese’s Pieces and deals with a Cornell University botany professor who is trying to come to grips with his diagnosis of schizophrenia.

An autographed copy of Where Are the Cocoa Puffs?: A Family’s Journey Through Bipolar Disorder will be one of the many raffle prizes offered at Amberations’ Fall Festival. You can learn more about Karen and her novels at: www.karenwintersschwartz.com.
The Brittenham family is often described as half the driving force behind Amberations. Anne and Paul are responsible for our web site, posters and publications (like this newsletter). Their three daughters Sarah, Chloe and Leda have all consistently pitched in to make our events a success. Their artistic talents include Anne’s wonderful Pumpkin People drawing that adorns our festival posters, Chloe’s beautiful painting of her sister that hangs in our barn and Paul’s professional production of our newsletters.

Their creative spirit and off center humor lends a nice twist to many aspects of our events.

Last year five students from the University at Buffalo created a database for Amberations as a class project. Jessica Yox, Ian Washington, Natalie Tronolone and Taylor Walton learned from Ayla Wiley that Amberations was constantly struggling with keeping track of their accounts.

These students worked hard to create a successful database that allows us to input and access information efficiently. A donation from Walmart enabled us to purchase a laptop and we now have years of lists, scraps of papers and piles of index cards easily available. Thank you Jessica, Ian, Natalie, Taylor and Ayla.

There are Two loyal supporters of Amberations that we would like to tell you about, Harvey Nusbaum and Barb Root. Harvey is the music coordinator extraordinaire for our Fall Festivals. He has served in this role since our inception. Harvey is an extremely talented musician that plays at all our events. He began playing professionally in the 1970s with the Cranberry Lake jugband. Throughout the years he picked up claw hammer banjo and he has played with various collections of musicians for dances and concerts. Currently he is a member of “The Salt Potatoes” a 4-piece acoustic band, “the Little Jazz Trio” a combo that plays mainly in the senior living circuit, and “Joe and Harvey Fiddle and Guitar”. He is also an active member of the “Syracuse Irish Session”, a mixed group of folks that meet twice a month at local pubs for jamming or concerts. We are fortunate to be able to count Harvey as a true friend and are extremely thankful for all that he does for us.

Barb Root, a talented musician who plays with Kambuyu, is also an invaluable supporter of Amberations. Together with Harvey she planted and tends a variety of gourds. The gourds have been trained to grow on the black locust arbor the Marcellus 7th graders built in our upper fields. Barb tells us there are four different varieties growing, each of which is a hard-shell variety that can be used for other purposes once dried. The varieties include bushel gourd, spinning gourd, caveman club and birdhouse (you can guess what this might be used for). All were started in peat pots in the spring to give them a head start on our short growing season. The goal is to have them climb over the top of the arbor and have gourds hanging like pendants. So far they’re looking great.

Together Barb & Harvey can also be credited with always being willing to help. Whether it be feeding the animals or moving the outhouse, they never say no. Thanks Harb & Barv (sic).