

## *Rural Matters March 2021*

### **It Takes a Village**

**By Stephanie Button, Mobility and Transportation Advocate, Getthere**



Pictured L-R: Caren Bush, Stephanie Button, Joe DeMarco Sr., Bill Dalton

Throughout the month of February, I had the privilege of working with a great team to help Bill Dalton, Getthere Connection to Care (CTC) client, get to the Cleveland Clinic in Ohio for medical treatment he could not receive locally. Getthere played a major role in securing transportation from Mr. Dalton's home to the Binghamton Airport and coordinated a flight to Cleveland with Wings Flights of Hope, as well as transportation from the airport in Cleveland to his appointment and back home again.

Wings Flights of Hope is an organization that provides free air transportation for medical and humanitarian purposes through volunteer pilots. Amanda, a Wings employee, was incredibly helpful coordinating the flight - she was kind, compassionate, and determined. Amanda was in touch with me several times a week leading up to the flight.

The trip would not have been possible without the help of Caren Bush, a Wellness Coordinator at UHS Primary Care in Endicott. Caren works closely with Mr. Dalton to assist him with many of his health related needs. She went above and beyond to make sure all required paperwork leading up to Mr. Dalton's trip was complete. Caren also assisted with paperwork for Mr. Dalton's friend to ensure he would not have to make the journey alone. Caren played a vital role in keeping Mr. Dalton's spirits high so that he remained motivated to get to the Cleveland Clinic for care.

When we began working with Mr. Dalton on his referral to the Cleveland Clinic, he felt depleted and believed he was nearing the end of his life. With the thought of so much work being put into getting him to his appointment, Mr. Dalton expressed concern that he wouldn't make it. When Mr. Dalton learned that we were able to coordinate a private plane to take him to his appointment and he would arrive in Cleveland in just over an hour and be back home the same day, his entire attitude about the trip changed.

This is when Mr. Dalton started to find hope. He called us his angels and even started envisioning himself on the other side of this obstacle, living a better quality of life. He was lucky enough to take the trip and have the founder of Wings Flights of Hope, Joe DeMarco Sr., as his pilot. Joe was full of positive energy and started sharing so many heartwarming stories and pictures as soon as he got to the Binghamton Airport. I immediately knew Mr. Dalton was in good hands and was going to have an incredible trip that day.

I am truly thankful for the experience and the opportunity to work with an amazing group of people. While we all come from different organizations, we managed to come together to coordinate services for Mr. Dalton and have a positive impact on his life. This motivates me for the future. I have confidence that with this level of collaboration we can continue to make an impact not only on Mr. Dalton's life but for others, too. It is important for the residents in our communities to know they can access better health

care outside of the area, regardless of their health conditions, income, or location. When we all work together, the sky is the limit!

## Introducing Brooke and Gabrielle, AmeriCorps VISTA Members joining Food & Health Network



My name is Brooke Ward and I am the new FVRx Program VISTA for the Food and Health Network at Rural Health Network of South Central New York. I recently graduated from the State University of New York at Geneseo, where I graduated with an undergraduate degree in International Relations and Sociology. During my time at Geneseo, I recognized my passion for both food systems and food justice. My interests only grew as I learned about the connection between sustainable food systems and the important role these systems play when determining one's health. Learning about the struggles those in food-insecure communities face has motivated me to help find and execute sustainable solutions through neighboring food retailers, healthcare settings, and other entities.

I am very excited to work with the Food and Health Network and the rest of those at the Rural Health Network of SCNY to help support healthy individuals and communities. As a Syracuse, NY native, I am also eager to learn more about the Southern Tier and the communities within it. In the future, I hope to continue a career that helps mitigate food insecurity in a way that also supports the local area. I am thankful that I have been given the opportunity to serve the Food and Health Network at Rural Health Network of South Central New York as an AmeriCorps VISTA and look forward to learning along the way.



My name is Gabrielle Costley, and I am the new VISTA Program Assistant for the Food and Health Network at Rural Health Network of South Central New York. I recently graduated from Binghamton University, from which I received an undergraduate degree in Environmental Studies Public Policy. In my time at Binghamton, I developed an interest in environmental planning and sustainable communities. Thanks to my coursework I was able to learn more about the surrounding history of Binghamton, which offered me insight into local food systems and community stakeholders. Meeting with local government representatives during my university time has encouraged me to use my knowledge to find and bring about a sustainable advancement in the health and well-being of the surrounding communities.

I am very eager to work with the incredibly dedicated individuals at the Food and Health Network. It is also an honor to be a part of the Rural Health Network of South Central New York, which I had always heard so much about as a student. I am incredible excited to learn from the FaHN staff and to work with our many community partners and fellow organizations. I hope to build a solid foundation for future work in food projects and make my VISTA term as successful as possible. As I move forward in my career I hope to use the experiences I gain to further provide aid and solutions to communities that are in need.

By Pamela Guth, Director of Community Health Services

Rural Health Network SCNY Leadership Team and Community Health Workers check in with clients, communities, partner organizations and each other! We conduct daily phone calls, health and well-being checks verbally, virtually or while visiting and practicing social distancing and masking. We may ask, "How are you doing?" We listen and watch for signs, and seek clarification when people are struggling, surviving, thriving and most often, somewhere in between. We explore deeper by asking, "Do you/family have what you need? What would be helpful to you? What can you do today? What is getting in your way? "

As spring approaches us this month, along with the one- year milestone of living during a pandemic, the Rural Health Network Community Health Workers encourage you all to visit the Mental Health First Aid curriculum for resilience and self- care tips. Please consider paying it forward by checking in with socially isolated individuals.

- Prioritize self- care for own health/well-being to improve caregiver resiliency
- Let friend/loved one set pace/tone for supportive conversations
- Listen and communicate empathetically without judgement
- Acknowledge life experiences, changes, stress responses and emotions due to pandemic
- Share community resources
- Encourage additional social supports or professional help

Adapted from an article by [Mental Health First Aid](#)



## The American Rescue Plan's Significance for Rural Communities

By Tom Lewis, Community Foods Coordinator

The American Rescue Plan was signed into law last week. The legislation will have a significant impact on rural communities in South Central New York. In addition to a new round of stimulus checks and expanded unemployment insurance, the bill also includes significant aid to states, counties, towns, and villages. Local municipalities can use the funding for a variety of options including closing budget holes, investing in community infrastructure, and fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. Other public health provisions include aid to rural hospitals, significant funding for rural vaccine distribution and outreach, and funding for rural public health departments. Additionally, the legislation expands the Child Tax Credit by broadening eligibility and providing payments of \$3,600 (under 6 years old) or \$3,000 (ages 6-17) per child. It's estimated that the new tax credit will cut the child poverty rate by over 40%! Learn more about the bill and additional provisions by

visiting [here](#).

View **my presentation** on the Plan and its impact on Broome, Chenango, Delaware, Otsego, and Tioga counties.

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By Sandy Atwood, Program Coordinator

The Northern Broome CARES Program has been assisting clients by scheduling COVID immunizations. Individuals without computer access and those having difficulty navigating the immunization registrations can call our office at 607-352-4681. We are happy to help! During the months of March and April, clients are participating in a journaling activity created and set up by the MSW interns, Cristina Bruno and Sarah Calderone. Each journal has a table of contents with bi-weekly prompts. These prompts include sharing big life moments, life topics, favorite memories, and things they enjoy about being their specific age. The journal prompts flow along the lines of reminiscence therapy, which shows positive benefits in memory recall, reduction in stress, and a way to connect with others. This can be a great activity for anyone to participate in during isolating times. With the appropriate questions, one is able to look back on joyful memories and moments in time. It can serve as a fun experience to almost relive or remind one of some great times in their lives.

Our Friday afternoon ride service (within our service area) is seeing an increase in use as the weather improves. Seniors are feeling more confident getting out once they have been vaccinated. Clients can be picked up at their home to run errands, go to an appointment, or to shop at the businesses in Whitney Point.

May Geiger, our Nurse Care Manager, provides healthcare management to seniors with chronic health issues. She also provides healthcare assistance and monitoring support to individuals.

We offer case management and support services to individuals ages 60 and older who reside in the towns of Lisle and Triangle (including the Village of Whitney Point). If you, or anyone you know could benefit from our assistance, please call our office or stop by the Northern Broome Senior Center where our office is located.

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## News of Interest

The New York State Health Foundation is hosting a webinar: "**A Conversation about Food Scarcity in New York During the Pandemic**" on Wednesday, March 24 from 12 PM - 1 PM.

Overdose death in the United States continues to climb during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Recent provisional data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show that **over 81,000 drug overdose deaths** occurred across the country in the 12 months ending in May 2020—higher than any previously recorded 12-month period. The CDC recommends that clinicians **co-prescribe naloxone** to patients with high morphine milligram equivalents and those receiving opioids and benzodiazepines. Prescribers such as physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants can help by optimizing how we use prescription drug monitoring programs (**PDMPs**) in clinical care. A number of organizations in the area are hosting virtual NARCAN training sessions.

The following organizations are offering **FREE VIRTUAL**

# NARCAN TRAININGS



Kits can be dropped off for zero face-to-face contact. Other options are available.



Call 607-723-7308 ext. 0 or text "NARCAN" to the numbers below and a peer advocate will contact you to set up a training and provide Narcan:

Christopher Scott: 607-608-0315  
Amanda Lewis: 607-644-2987  
Timothy Decker: 607-238-6956  
Denton Johnson: 607-752-5743



Call or text 607-227-8159 to speak to Jessica Irvine to set up a Naloxone training virtually or via phone. Training takes 15-20 minutes and both nasal and intramuscular kits are available.

Kits can be picked up at the Johnson City office (located at 277 Main St.) or delivered to an agreed upon location. All pickups and deliveries are done without direct contact.



Call or Text: 607-296-3016  
Email: [truthpharm@gmail.com](mailto:truthpharm@gmail.com)  
Message: Truth Pharm's Facebook page

Interested community members will be asked questions to determine the easiest way to do the training virtually. Then a kit can be delivered with curbside drop off. For more information visit Truth Pharm on Facebook.



Call 762-2622, Monday - Friday from 9am to 3pm

UHS provides free overdose prevention training and naloxone kits to the public. Anyone can call 762-2622, Monday through Friday from 9 AM to 3 PM to receive training over the phone. Our staff will arrange contact-free pick up of naloxone for those in need.

**We're Here To Help**

**Virtual Narcan Trainings Available**

To schedule, please contact  
Erica Robinson at  
(607) 745-4291 or [erobinson@helio.health](mailto:erobinson@helio.health)



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