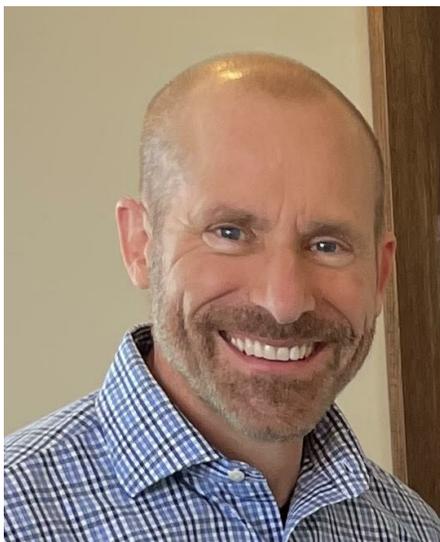


Rural Matters March 2022

Leadership Message



At the Rural Health Network, we cannot do what we do without our great community partners who believe and support our mission of “advancing the health and well-being of rural people and communities”. In this issue of Rural Matters we will introduce 5 new team members hired in the beginning of March. Four of these new positions were created thanks to grants that were awarded in the last several months including the grant from the Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation that we announced last month.

The most recent grant awarded comes from Excellus BlueCross BlueShield and will be spread over the next 3 years. This project will be a partnership with Ascension Lourdes Hospital and their Primary Care Network. The primary goal of

this project is to improve the health and wellbeing of rural people in Broome County by providing Rural Health Network non-clinical staff support within primary care offices. The project will address issues including social determinants of health, closing care gaps related to primary care utilization, and improving management of pre-diabetes and diabetes. Thank you to Excellus BlueCross BlueShield and all our community partners. We could not do what we do without your continued support.

Last week we unveiled our Donor Recognition Wall at 455 Court St., recognizing everyone who generously gave to our capital campaign. Funds from the campaign allowed us to create a new center for rural health service, innovation, and learning. Later this spring we will be hosting an open house and tours. I hope you enjoy this issue of *Rural Matters*.

-Mark Bordeau
Executive Director

Meet our new Community Health Workers and Community Health Educators

The Community Health Services and Community Health Education teams are pleased to welcome four new staff - two Community Health Workers (CHWs) and two Community Health Educators (CHEs). CHWs work one-on-one with clients to identify and meet needs related to primary care access, financial stability, food, transportation, and other social determinants of health. CHEs provide groups of clients and the larger community

with evidence-based interventions and information so people can better understand, prevent, and manage health conditions.



My name is Alex Castro. I am originally from New Orleans, Louisiana and have lived in this area going on 4 years now. My wife is originally from this area and she moved to Louisiana after hurricane Katrina with the Teach for America organization. We have a full house with our 9-year-old daughter Kinzie, 3 dogs, and a cat! I am an Army veteran newly retired and have worked in the human services field since we moved here. I have worked with all aspects of life from toddlers to elders. I love what I do and am proud to be a part of this organization!

My name is Erin Wank. I come from a background in Mental Health. During my time as a Case Worker, my job was to reduce barriers to services for community members who had been diagnosed with a serious mental health condition. Some of the other services that were provided included advocacy, crisis intervention, transportation, and housing. The program also worked within the jail system and inpatient hospital setting. In my role, I was also the Representative Payee for those members who were enrolled in the program. While working within the mental health system, I was able to receive my New York State Peer Certification. I have also previously worked with the Lourdes and UHS systems.



I am excited to join the Rural Health Network team. I look forward to bringing my knowledge and training to my new role as a Community Health Worker. I believe it is important to have support within the community and I believe that this organization will reach countless people who struggle daily. Thank you for welcoming me aboard.



Julianne "Jules" Lee (she/her, they/them) is one of Rural Health Network's newest Community Health Educators. Jules has always been drawn to service. She attended Binghamton University for a Bachelor's Degree in English Literature, with intentions of becoming an English teacher. Along the way, Jules also realized their passion for work that seeks justice in gender-based violence, which led to them also earning a bachelor's in Gender Studies and working for several years in Domestic Violence shelters across New York and Vermont. In her work and life, in the shelters and beyond, Jules has been an advocate and an educator, working with adults and children of all ages on skills as diverse as youth behavior management, navigating social service systems,

and daily living skills. A Binghamton local, Jules is absolutely thrilled to be back in the Southern Tier, serving the community she loves so deeply. Jules believes that at the core of every community's well being is health equity, and is honored to work with Rural Health Network elevating the health of our community.

Wendy Hitchcock joins us as a Community Health Educator. An alumna of Binghamton University, Wendy has almost 20 years of human services experience within the Southern Tier community including positions with Mental Health Association of the Southern Tier and Binghamton Housing Authority.

Wendy says that she has been watching Rural Health Network's growth and service expansion for a number of years, and is happy to have the opportunity to join the organization's health education team.



Getthere is happy to welcome Kenneth Hauer as our newest Mobility Transportation Advocate (MTA)! MTAs assist individuals contacting the Getthere Call Center in need of transportation to health-related services through comprehensive case management.

"My main focus of joining Getthere is to help the people of Broome and surrounding counties with all their transportation needs. I come to Getthere with 15 years of experience as a paratransit dispatcher at Broome County Transit. In my spare time, I enjoy hanging out with my two boys, running my antique shop, Little Red Fox Antiques, on Main Street in Johnson City and am the Vice President of Little Italy Endicott."



Thank You Rural Health Service Corps AmeriCorps Members

As we wrap up AmeriCorps week, it seems like a good time to thank all of our RHSC AmeriCorps members for their service in making our communities better. Through their tireless efforts, RHSC members bring food security, education, and greater health access to the Southern Tier. They have persevered throughout the pandemic and kept people informed, assisted at vaccination pods, and delivered food to families and individuals. The purpose of AmeriCorps is to fill a gap in services that already exist, and that is exactly what our members have done this week, just as they do every other week throughout the year. Without them, not-for-profits throughout our area would have less resources and fewer individuals would receive crucial services. Thank you, AmeriCorps members at RHSC and beyond! At Rural Health Network, we are inspired by the work you do.

To join our team, please visit our website: ruralhealthservicecorps.org. We have positions available and are always looking for people who are passionate about improving their communities.

Happy AmeriCorps Week!

Celebrating the millions who wear the **AmeriCorps A** and serve communities across the US.

Together, We are AmeriCorps.



We're Hiring

We are currently seeking candidates for Director of Getthere Mobility Management Program and Community Health Worker positions.

Rural Health Network is seeking an entrepreneurial and innovative leader to become the next full-time **Director of our Getthere Mobility Management Program**. Getthere improves the health and wellbeing of our region by improving access to affordable and efficient transportation options. Safe, reliable transportation to health care, food, and employment has the power to transform the lives of individuals, families, and the community. The ideal candidate should understand the importance of developing strong relationships with community partners, be highly organized, attentive to details and have excellent communication skills.

Community Health Workers provide outreach to engage identified individuals from rural county specific populations to efficiently access health related services including: prescription medication, vision/dental services, financial assistance, health literacy/insurance, transportation, healthy foods, housing, and self advocacy.

[Learn more here](#). After reviewing the position descriptions, [apply here](#).



Food and Health Network is accepting applications for their School Garden Grants.

SCNY School Garden Grant

Start or expand your school garden today!

Applications due April 4th, 2022

Contact Hannah Rion, Farm to School Coordinator, with any remaining questions
hrion@rhnscny.org or 607-376-3619

RURAL HEALTH NETWORK
Serving South Central New York



Any school in Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Otsego, Tioga, or Tompkins County can apply for funding ranging from \$250 to \$500. [Apply Here](#).

[Watch Farm to School Coordinator Hannah Rion](#) talk with WBNG-TV about the School Garden Grants.

March is National Nutrition Month. Visit the [Food and Health Network website](#) for a variety of resources and suggestions of how you can create healthy habits and explore new foods and flavors.

Earlier this week we said goodbye to AmeriCorps VISTA member Gabrielle Costley who left us with some thoughts on the year she spent with us.

"I wanted to reflect on what I have learned in this year that has gone by so quickly and taught me so much. As many know, I joined AmeriCorps VISTA right out of college. I intended for this year to help build skills and volunteer my time to the community I had grown familiar with while going to Binghamton University.

It became so much more than a VISTA term. I got to see the hard work and dedication that is the foundation of nonprofits. Every project I worked on wouldn't have been possible without weeks of behind-the-scenes work and passion-driven collaboration from team members. And to meet the people our programs have benefited has made me more passionate than ever to continue volunteering my time to the nonprofit sector and serving the public.

The Rural Health Network has been nothing but welcoming and kind, and I will miss the



coworkers and friends I have made in this short year. I look back on this experience and am so thankful for all that I have done and the opportunities offered to me. Even as I move on in my career, I will continue to follow the growth and success of an organization that does so much for the community.

Thank you again for this year of opportunity and for the gift of working with all of you."

Volunteer Drivers Wanted!



Featured Programs March 2022

Help your neighbors get where they need to go!

Sign up today to become a

VOLUNTEER DRIVER

*Provide rides to the grocery store, health care, pharmacy,
bank, post office, and more!*

- Drive your own vehicle & set your own hours
- Help people in your community
- Mileage reimbursed at 58.5¢ per mile
- Secondary insurance coverage provided



Drivers especially needed in:

- 📍 Deposit 📍 Unadilla and Sidney
- 📍 Western Broome Co. 📍 Norwich

Call Getthere to learn more and sign up today!



1-855-373-4040

7 AM - 7 PM

Honoring our Capital Campaign Contributors

Last week Robbins Signs installed these panels honoring the many contributors to our Capital Campaign conducted from 2019- 2021. We continue to be thankful for all of the support that enabled the purchase and renovation of 455 Court Street.



Creating a New Center for Rural Health Service, Innovation and Learning.

A Message of Thanks

It's always nice to be appreciated. Program Coordinator Michael Trieman passed along this note that a member of the Northern Broome community sent to him:

"The Northern Broome CARES program is a real lifesaver for us seniors. If you have health issues it is so nice to know someone is there to help you. They are always willing to do whatever you need. Plus we learn so much through this. They are polite and highly respected."

-Lonna Bogart-



607-352-4681

Public Policy Alerts

By Pamela Guth, Director of Community Health Services

How does Rural Health Network advocate for health access and equity? We participate in local, regional, statewide and federal policy committees and webinars to bring messages back to our communities and empower individuals and organizations to take action. This month we share with our readers ways to engage in tax advantages, food and nutrition programs, and broadband services. Please explore the links below:

"How to Help New York Families Claim the Full **2021 Expanded Child Tax Credit**" [Presentation slide deck](#). A provider toolkit is [here](#), and a toolkit for 2022 public benefits agencies is [here](#).

Please contact Broome County United Way 2-1-1 for free **tax preparation services** for working families and individuals.

The Department of Agriculture is looking to add online shopping to the nation's third largest federal nutrition assistance program - the **Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children** meant to help low-income moms and kids. [Learn more](#) about this option and the challenges that will need to be overcome before implementation.

Complete an **online broadband speed survey** from your home computer. <https://www.empirestatebroadband.com/speed-test>

Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) reports on School Meals
PBS News Hour reports on how [School officials struggle with how to feed students as omnibus bill skips meal waivers](#). School nutrition and child development experts say millions of children in the United States could go hungry as soon as this summer, because the \$1.5 trillion omnibus spending bill moving through Congress this week failed to include waivers that give schools flexibility in preparing and distributing food to students.

[Millions of Kids Face Risk of Hunger if Congress Doesn't Extend Pandemic School Lunch Waivers](#)

Students now eating free meals at school are living in households that are just above the income threshold but still struggle to put food on the table. Crystal FitzSimons, Director of School Programs at FRAC, an anti-hunger group states, "One of the easiest things you can do... is to make sure kids are going to be in class, able to focus and learn and concentrate, is making sure that they have access to a school breakfast and school lunch."

News and Resources

[Greater Good Grocery](#)

[Greater Good Grocery](#) announced another Free Produce Day to be held Wednesday, March 30th from 10 AM - 12 PM or 4 PM - 6 PM. Everyone is eligible. 435 State Street, Binghamton, NY.

[US Government Offers More Free COVID Test Kits](#)

Every home in the U.S. is eligible to order 2 sets of 4 [free at-home COVID-19 tests](#). If you already ordered your first set, order a second set today.

[Thrive Rural Framework](#)

The Aspen Institute's Community Strategies Group has announced a new tool, [Thrive Rural Framework](#). This new tool will help you understand the key elements of equitable rural prosperity and how they are interconnected, as well as take stock, target action, and gauge progress on rural prosperity.

DONATE

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www.rhnsctny.org

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