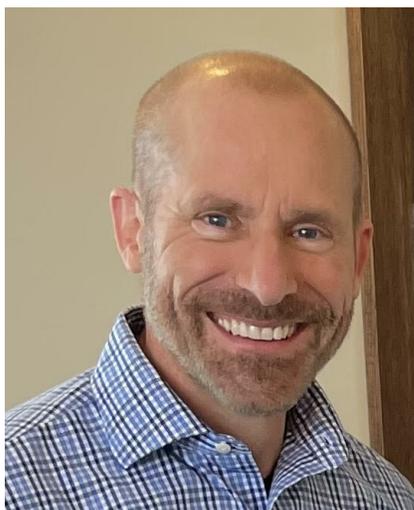


## *Rural Matters October 2022*

### Leadership Message



I would like to thank everyone who participated in On the Hunt for Good Health this year. We would like to give a special thank you to all our sponsors. Below is a list of the sponsors who supported On the Hunt for Good Health financially and/or with their talents.

We are in the process of finalizing and announcing our third Annual Rural Health Day Award winners. The awards are in conjunction with National Rural Health Day, which is celebrated the 3rd Thursday of November. This year's categories are:

**RURAL HEALTH CHAMPION**-Presented to an organization that exhibits concern for rural issues and takes steps to address those concerns in the region.

**RURAL HEALTH LEADER** - Presented to an individual who has made significant contributions to rural health and well-being through advocacy, leadership, or volunteer/professional work.

**RURAL HEALTH PARTNER** - Presented to an individual or organization who has partnered with Rural Health Network to advance our work in serving rural people and communities.

**RURAL HEALTH PRACTITIONER** - Presented to a healthcare practitioner who works in rural communities and/or works to address rural health issues.

October is National Long-Term Care Plan Month. Long-term care incorporates services outside of medical care such as support for everyday living and basic personal care. Medical insurance does not usually cover these services, so advanced planning to cover these services is needed. Advance planning offers seniors more choices and decision-making opportunities. When seniors plan ahead, they have more time to save for long-term care, too. [These resources](#) can help families develop long-term care plans.

We are proud to support our seniors in Northern Broome County through our Northern Broome CARES Program. Thanks to the Support of NYS Office for the Aging, our program is one of only two rural programs of its kind in New York State. [Click here](#) for a brochure that will tell you more about Northern Broome CARES.

Enjoy this month's edition of *Rural Matters*. Be kind to yourself and your rural neighbors.

-Mark Bordeau  
Executive Director

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In addition to the sponsors listed here, WBNG-TV provided in-kind services as Media Sponsor by producing and airing a public service announcement about On the Hunt for Good Health.

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## **Expanding Community Health Education Certifications**

The Community Health Education team is proud to share the new certifications for evidence-based programs that we've earned this year.

Health Educator Jules Lee has completed their certification in First Aid, and has earned certifications as a leader for Walk With Ease and as an instructor for Adult Mental Health First Aid.

**Walk With Ease** is a motivational program designed by the Arthritis Foundation for people who need relief from pain or just want to be active. WWE can teach participants how to safely make physical activity part of their everyday life. Studies show that the program can increase balance, reduce pain, build confidence and improve overall health. Jules is piloting their first program at RHN as worksite wellness, and will introduce it with community partners soon!

Adult **Mental Health First Aid** is a well-known, multi-national program designed to teach participants how to recognize signs of mental health or substance use challenges in adults ages 18 and older, how to offer and provide initial help, and how to guide a person toward appropriate care if necessary. Be on the lookout for an announcement soon about upcoming Adult Mental Health First Aid training opportunities!

To learn more about Walk With Ease or Adult Mental Health First Aid, [contact Jules](#).

Health Educator Wendy Hitchcock has earned her certification as a Peer Leader in the **Chronic Disease Self-Management Program**. CDSMP, known as Living Healthy, was originally developed at Stanford University and is designed to help people with long-term health conditions and the people who care for them to learn to manage their symptoms. The program, which runs for 7 weeks, is proven to reduce unnecessary hospitalizations and to increase well-being and confidence among participants. To learn more, [contact Wendy](#). Soon, Wendy will cross-train to also offer the Chronic Pain Self-Management Program in 2023.



## October is National Farm to School Month!

### WHAT DOES FARM TO SCHOOL LOOK LIKE? .....

In cooperation with Broome-Tioga BOCES' Rock on Cafe, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County, Delaware-Chenango-Madison-Otsego BOCES, and many other community partners, our farm to school program serves 27 school districts.



### PROCUREMENT .....

Farm to school seeks to get local foods into school lunches. That means connecting school food authorities to local suppliers.

### NY THURSDAYS .....

We help coordinate 2-3 NY Thursdays celebrations a month! Schools serve students lunches that feature fresh, local products.



### TASTE TESTS .....

We invite students to taste test future NY Thursday recipes and vote on whether they should be added to the lunch menu. We recently tested a cheesy kale casserole!

### SCHOOL GARDENS .....

In 2022, we awarded 23 schools with school garden grants of up to \$500. These funds supported the purchase of materials to start or expand school garden projects!



"Celebrate National Farm to School Month with the Food and Health Network! This year's theme is "Who's at the Table? Farm to school envisions a food system where no one is left out, where everyone has access to nourishing food. To build this, we must lift up the perspectives of the people at each step of the food chain, especially those who are not always recognized or valued.

This year's National Farm to School Month celebrates people who play important roles at all parts of the food system. Take a moment to think about all the people in your community who are part of the food system, and celebrate them!" (Text courtesy of [National Farm to School Network](#)).

Our farm to school program has plenty of projects and updates! We recently checked in with our 2022 SCNY School Garden Grant recipients. Stay tuned for a special National Farm to School Month edition of our newsletter for this and other exciting updates.



## Help Contribute to Food Equity in Broome County!

Public Health AmeriCorps and the [Broome County Council of Churches](#) (BCCC) have an available part-time position as a Community Engagement Specialist. In this AmeriCorps role, the member will educate the community on existing programs at BCCC to ensure access to healthy foods for all. BCCC operates the Community Hunger Outreach Warehouse (CHOW - a grass-roots food bank) which supports 100 emergency food programs in Broome County. They also run the Greater Good Grocery, a non-profit grocer providing high-quality food at affordable prices that offers programs designed to address food access issues. The Community Engagement Specialist will work with both of these programs, in addition to Faith In Action, a program that helps meet the nutritional and social needs of seniors in our community.

This position involves 20-25 hours/week from November 2022 - August/September 2023, and requires a driver's license and full COVID vaccination. For more details or to apply, please [visit our website](#).

[Follow us on Facebook](#) and share our posts with your connections.

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## Welcome to Rural Health Network

Meet the newest members of the Rural Health Network team.

### Megan Blenis, Getthere Mobility & Transportation Advocate

Megan is a graduate of SUNY Cortland where she earned her Master's degree in Health Education. Megan has worked within the school system, in public health and most recently in Health Homes Care Management. She has worked as a Care Manager with various populations (people with developmental disabilities, serious mental illnesses, and other chronic conditions). Her lifelong goal is to help people lead happier and healthier lives. In her free time Megan is busy spending time with her husband, three children, and family. Megan also enjoys walking, hiking, and crafting. She said, *"I am excited to join the team and continue the great work that Getthere does. I have seen first hand how much this program helps folks in the communities and I am hoping to help with my experience working in these communities."*



### Karli McGrath, Northern Broome CARES Community Health Worker

We are pleased to announce that Karli McGrath has joined our team as a Community Health Worker. Karli grew up in Binghamton and graduated from Excelsior College with her Bachelors Degree in Health Sciences. She is excited to take on this role at Rural Health Network as a Community Health Worker and said she *"I can't wait to work at the Northern Broome Senior Center and have a strong impact on the aging population."* Karli likes to coach cheerleading on the side and play fetch with her dog Remi.



## Reducing Loneliness of Rural Aging Population Through Innovative Strategies

Local offices for the aging and Rural Health Network's Northern Broome CARES Program received free animatronic pets from NYSOFA (New York State Office for Aging) for distribution to older adults in the community.

These plush, lifelike mechanical animals help reduce social isolation. A NYSOFA study found that 70 percent of older adults receiving these pets reported a reduction or significant reduction in loneliness as well as a 75 percent decrease in pain.

Learn more about some of NYSOFA's programs to address social isolation at <https://aging.ny.gov/tools-and-innovations>.



MSW intern Erin Gray says, "I am really looking forward to distributing the animatronic pets to the Northern Broome CARES clients who are facing social isolation. I am eager to see their reactions when they receive their pets and look forward to following up with them to see how the pets have helped with their feelings of social isolation."

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## Update - White House Conference on Nutrition and Health

The White House Conference on Nutrition, Hunger and Health was held on September 28th. During this conference the Biden-Harris administration outlined their **National Strategy** for realizing their goal which is **ending hunger and increasing healthy eating and physical activity by 2030, so that fewer Americans experience diet-related diseases like diabetes, obesity, and hypertension.**

The strategy has been broken down into these five pillars:

**Pillar 1—Improve Food Access and Affordability:** End hunger by making it easier for everyone—including individuals in urban, suburban, rural, and Tribal communities and territories—to access and afford food.

**Pillar 2—Integrate Nutrition and Health:** Prioritize the role of nutrition and food security in overall health—including disease prevention and management—and ensure that our health care system addresses the nutrition needs of all people.

**Pillar 3—Empower All Consumers to Make and Have Access to Healthy Choices :** Foster

environments that enable all people to easily make informed, healthy choices, increase access to healthy food, encourage healthy workplace and school policies, and invest in public education campaigns that are culturally appropriate and resonate with specific communities.

**Pillar 4—Support Physical Activity for All:** Make it easier for people to be more physically active—in part by ensuring that everyone has access to safe places to be active— increase awareness of the benefits of physical activity, and conduct research on and measure physical activity.

**Pillar 5—Enhance Nutrition and Food Security Research:** Improve nutrition metrics, data collection, and research to inform nutrition and food security policy, particularly on issues of equity, access, and disparities.

The Hunter College New York City Food Policy Center has presented a synopsis of the National Strategy [posted here](#).

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## It's Time to Review Your 2023 Health Insurance Coverage

Rural Health Network's Community Health Workers encourage you to review your 2022 medical bills, insurance plans, medication lists and clinical providers, prescribers and pharmacies of choice. During your annual review, calculate your expenses for the 2022 calendar year (out of pocket costs including premiums and deductibles), and examine your covered services and participating providers for the upcoming year. [These resources](#) may help guide you in making informed decisions about your health insurance carrier and changing needs due to your own health and well-being. Rural Health Network encourages you to read the resources, call early in the enrollment period for appointments, have your insurance cards and medication lists with you and prepare questions ahead of time. We hope you find the right coverage for you!

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## News and Resources

### National Drug Take Back Day is Saturday, October 29th

DEA's National Prescription Drug Take Back Day reflects DEA's commitment to Americans' safety and health, encouraging the public to remove unneeded medications from their homes as a measure of preventing medication misuse and opioid addiction from ever starting. Use the [Collection Site Locator](#) to find a site near you.

### COVID-19 Talking Points Resources

Although much of our daily lives are no longer consumed by COVID, it remains a public health issue. We have found the [Public Health Communications Collaborative](#) to be a good resource for messages to consumers. Their site is regularly updated to reflect new development and emerging issues.

### Community Health Fair at American Civic Association

The American Civic Association in Binghamton is hosting a health fair on Thursday, November 10th. See their [flyer](#) for more details.

### Save the Date - National Rural Health Day is November 17th

The National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health invite us all to celebrate the Power of Rural - it's more than a day, it's a movement. [Learn more](#).



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