

Rural Matters January 2023

Leadership Message



Welcome to our first issue of Rural Matters for 2023. The team here at Rural Health Network has worked extremely hard in 2022 to advance the health and well-being of rural people and communities we serve. I am very proud of everything we have accomplished this year and cannot wait to share the details in the annual Impact Report which will be published this spring.

We look forward to 2023. It will be a year to remember as we begin our 25th year of serving individuals in South Central New York.

The 24 years of success of Rural Health Network and the positive impact we have made in the communities we serve is made possible by our supportive board of directors. In December, a new Executive Committee was elected to serve a 2-year term. Rick Boland, Project Manager for United Health Services, was elected as President; Shelly Bartow, Executive Director for Delaware Opportunities, was elected as Vice President; Brendan O'Bryan, Community Development Specialist for The Agency, was elected as Treasurer, and Katie Young, Retired Adjunct Professor, was elected as Secretary.

We would like to thank our outgoing Board President Lisa Bobby. Lisa was the president as I began my executive directorship of the Rural Health Network in 2021. She was such a great support and mentor to me personally and her contribution to the Rural Health Network during her presidency was immeasurable.

This month, we have four new board of directors starting a 2-year term. I am looking forward to working with the newly elected officers and members of the board of directors to advance the health and well-being of rural people and communities.

-Mark Bordeau
Executive Director

Meet Our New Board Members

Alison Handy Twang, PhD is the interim director at the Center for Civic Engagement at Binghamton University. In this role Alison develops connections between Binghamton University and the local community and supports students in developing the knowledge and skills to participate in civic life. Before joining the CCE, Alison worked in the nonprofit sector, focusing



on philanthropy and youth and young adult civic engagement. Alison looks forward to joining the board of directors to support the success of rural communities throughout south central New York.

Kristin Johnston has worked for Excellus BCBS for 18 years and is currently a part of the Claims Leadership team. She is also a student at SUNY Empire State College working on both an MBA in Healthcare Leadership and a graduate certificate in Human Resources. As a member of the Board of Directors, Kristin hopes to learn more about how we can remove the barriers encountered by our rural populations when it comes to accessing healthcare.



Christine Petras is a Trust Investment Officer at Community Bank where she has worked for 12 years. She splits her time between offices in Oneonta and Johnson City. She is an Accredited Fiduciary Investment Manager and has a B.A. in Mathematics from SUNY Geneseo. Christine lives in Vestal with her husband and two children. As a lifelong resident of Broome County, she is excited to be able to contribute to an organization that does so much to improve the lives of the members of our community.

Mary Whitcombe is the Director of the Broome County Office for Aging (OFA). She has a master's degree in Public Administration from Binghamton University. Prior to her career at Office for Aging, Mary worked for close to 20 years at a local nonprofit where she collaborated with the Rural Health Network on several projects that centered around food insecurity, access to rural services and reducing poverty in the community. Mary lives in the Town of Binghamton with her partner Michael and two children who are 17 and 15. Mary is also expecting her third child early this year. Mary currently works with the Rural Health Network in her role at OFA through collaborations in transportation, food insecurity, and health promotion programs. Mary looks forward to working further with Rural Health Network of SCNY and its partners to improve the quality of life in Broome County for the residents who reside here.



Living Healthy Workshop Series in Northern Broome

Join us at the Northern Broome Senior Center beginning February 1st for our next in-person Living Healthy workshop series. The workshop runs 7 weeks total, and is open to anyone who would like to learn skills to better manage their health including: healthy eating, medication management, communication with providers and caregivers, setting goals and taking action, and much, much more. Caregivers are welcome, too. Everyone who completes the workshop series will have their choice of either a gas or grocery gift card!

Pre-registration is required. Contact Wendy Hitchcock at 607-788-6897 or whitchcock@rhnsny.org to learn more or to sign up!



Join us for the
Living Healthy
 Self-Management Program

- Support for **health conditions and symptoms**.
- Manage **pain** and **fatigue**.
- Set **goals** and make plans to improve your health and life.
- **Proven to improve health and lifestyle factors**.

- The next workshop will be Wednesdays February 1 - March 15
- Time: 12:30-3:00pm
- Location: Northern Broome Senior Center
12 Strong's Place, Whitney Point
- Includes healthy snacks; transportation assistance may be available

To register, contact Wendy Hitchcock at 607-788-6897 or whitchcock@rhnsny.org
 Participants who complete the program will receive their choice of a \$20 fuel or grocery gift card!

Can't make it to this one? Contact Wendy for more information and to join our waiting list. We will call you for an upcoming workshop!



This program is supported by NYS Office for Aging, Bristol-Myers Squibb and Care Compass Network in coordination with the Self-Management Resource Center's Chronic Disease Self-Management certification guidelines.

MLK Day of Service at The Food Bank of the Southern Tier

On January 16, a group of AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps VISTA members traveled in one of Getthere's vans to help volunteer at The Food Bank of the Southern Tier. Volunteers from other organizations joined as well to help the food bank. Half of the volunteers helped to pack bags with peanut butter, mac and cheese, soup, canned fruit, and oatmeal. These backpacks full of easy-to-cook and ready-to-eat food are distributed to kids in schools in the Southern Tier.

The other half of the volunteers helped to organize large, unsorted pallets of food and household donations. The volunteers worked together to sort the food into the proper bin and make sure no out-of-date food or broken items were donated.

For the AmeriCorps volunteers, the day ended with a Racial Wealth Gap simulator training to learn more about the laws that have and continue to hold back African-Americans.



Introducing Brooke McGuire

My name is Brooke McGuire, but most people just call me B! I am the new Public Health Farm to School AmeriCorps Member with Rural Health Network. I am a graduate student at Binghamton University studying to get my Master of Science in Biomedical Anthropology. I also have my Bachelor's of Science in psychology and anthropology from the University of Tulsa in Oklahoma. I have always had a passion and interest in understanding people and behavior as well as early intervention with children. I am super excited to be involved in this program where I am going to be able to be a positive figure in youth's lives.

Additionally, my appreciation for locally-sourced products has been central to my personality for as long as I can remember. I look forward to making a difference in children's lives through the use of education in the realm of sustainability and supporting local businesses!



1/30 Application Deadline for VINES Public Health AmeriCorps Positions

The deadline to apply for all three VINES Public Health AmeriCorps positions is rapidly approaching! Be sure to apply by Monday, January 30th for the Urban Farm Assistant, Farm Share Program Assistant, and Community Garden Assistant AmeriCorps

positions, which will run from March - November 2023 and involve 900 total hours of service. Members in these positions will earn \$14,247.50 in total compensation (a combination of a living allowance and education award) as well as gain free entry to Cornell's Public Health Essentials training, which they will participate in as part of their Public Health AmeriCorps term.



For more details on the positions, benefits, and application, please [visit our website](#) or email [Haley Desilet](#).



AmeriCorps Opening - Food Access Member with Getthere

We have a new Public Health AmeriCorps position available with Getthere Mobility Management, a program of the Rural Health Network of South Central New York!

The Food Access Member will serve closely with local food pantries to schedule deliveries to community members experiencing food insecurity. Two positions are available, serving 20-25 hours per week.

[Learn More](#)



**New
AmeriCorps
Position with
Getthere!**

Food Access
Member





Northern Broome CARES Christmas for Seniors Initiative

The Northern Broome CARES team made the holiday season a little brighter for 200 seniors in their service area. Donations of gifts started in mid November and continued right up through the week of Christmas. Volunteers from the community as well as Community Health Worker Karli McGrath, MSW Intern Tova Wilensky, and Program Coordinator Megan Arenas-Cardoso spent many hours wrapping and packaging the gifts to ensure that every client and patron of the senior center was able to receive a gift. In the end, enough donations were received for every person to receive multiple presents.

One Northern Broome CARES client said: *"The giving and receiving of gifts from Northern Broome CARES this holiday season brought much joy and happiness to me. The commitment to their community shows in everything they do. You will always get a bright smile and kind words. Thank you for my gifts and being here for me".*



Community Health Worker Karli McGrath (right) posing with staff members from Visions Federal Credit Union. Visions provided a very generous donation to the initiative, which made it possible to give out as many gifts as we did!

News and Resources

Mental Health in Rural New York: Findings and Implications of a Listening Tour with Residents and Professionals

Researchers at the University of Chicago conducted a Rural Mental Health Listening Tour of New York State between March 2020 and September 2021 to elicit the input and

experiences of community members living and working in rural areas and to obtain first-hand knowledge about availability, access, and utilization of mental health services, resources and supports. [Read their findings.](#)

Meet Karen Madden

Karen Madden is the Director of the Charles D. Cook Office of Rural Health, New York State Department of Health and the Acting Director of the Center for Health Care Policy and Resource Development, NYS Department of Health. Louise Hoffman Broach recently interviewed Ms. Madden for [an article](#) in the Finger Lakes Times.

Job Opening - Delaware County Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council

The [Delaware County Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council](#) is seeking candidates for the position of Executive Director. View the [job description](#) and [qualifications](#).

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