



Advancing the health and well-being of rural people and communities

Rural Matters January 2025

A Message from our Board President

Dear Members, Staff, and Partners,

I am Dr. Shelly L. Bartow, and I am honored to serve as the newly appointed President of the Rural Health Network of SCNY Board of Directors. I want to take a moment to introduce myself and share my vision for 2025 as we navigate the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

Throughout my career, I have been deeply committed to the nonprofit sector and currently serve as the Executive Director of a partner nonprofit organization in Delaware County. Having grown up in Tioga County, attended college in Broome County, and now living in Chenango County while working in Delaware County, I have developed a nuanced understanding of the unique needs and diverse characteristics of the rural communities we serve.

I also recognize the critical relationship between an agency's Executive Director and its Board of Directors. Whenever I am entrusted with the responsibility of serving on a board, I strive to bring thoughtful leadership, collaboration, and dedication. In addition to my role with Rural Health Network, I am privileged to serve on the boards of Family Planning of South Central New York, FORDO, and the United Way of Mid-Rural New York. My goal as President is to support the growth, capacity, and long-term sustainability of the network to ensure we continue to meet the evolving needs of the communities we serve.

As we step into 2025, I must also acknowledge a significant transition within our organization. Demetra Alberti, our esteemed Executive Director, will be leaving Rural Health Network to pursue another professional opportunity. Having worked with Demetra in various capacities, I can attest to her remarkable leadership, dedication, and compassion. Her contributions have been invaluable, and while we will greatly miss her, we wish her all the best in her future endeavors.

Though I am not yet in a position to announce specific details regarding our transition plan, please rest assured that we are working diligently to ensure a smooth and thoughtful process. Our priority remains the well-being of the agency, its staff, and the communities we serve. We will share more information soon.

The year ahead promises to be dynamic and perhaps unpredictable, as the landscape of nonprofits continues to evolve. Rural Health Network is committed to adapting and thriving in this changing environment. I look forward to working with all of you to strengthen our agency, foster collaboration, and seize new opportunities to make a lasting impact.

Thank you for your ongoing support and partnership,

Welcome to our Team

Ahilya Hutchinson has joined our team as Office Manager.

Ahilya said, "I am very happy to be a part of the Rural Health Network as the new Office Manager. I have over 15 years of Human Relations and Customer Service Management experience. I have always wanted to be a part of something that truly helps out members of our community. I am beyond excited to call Rural Health Network my home!"



Food For Thought - Wishes for 2025

Kevin Davidson, Farm to Early Care & Education (ECE) Coordinator, published a Food for Thought blog post earlier this month.

"Starting out 2025, we'd like to take a moment to reflect on our wishes (and maybe to-do list) for the new year. Building on our successes in 2024, we have three main goals this year."

Take a moment to [read his thoughts](#) on growing our team, coordinating with others, and deepening our impact this year.



Exciting News from the Rural Health Service Corps

The Rural Health Service Corps has launched a quarterly newsletter for our VISTA program, titled the [VISTA Vanguard!](#) This publication is designed to connect, inspire, and celebrate the incredible work of

our VISTA members and partner sites. Each issue will feature project highlights, updates, self-care tips, and more, to foster collaboration and build a stronger service network.

Click on the newsletter title above or the image to read the full issue.

Want to stay informed and celebrate the impact of our VISTA program? [Subscribe here.](#)

DECEMBER 2024

ruralhealthservicecorps.org

RURAL HEALTH
SERVICE CORPS

VISTA VANGUARD



BUILDING BRIDGES, STRENGTHENING SERVICE

Welcome to the very first issue of the VISTA Vanguard!

As we welcome a new year, I'm excited to introduce this newsletter as a space to connect, share, and celebrate the incredible work being done across our programs. This inaugural issue is all about building bridges—introducing the diverse projects and sites within our cohort to foster understanding, collaboration, and community.

I look forward to learning from and alongside each of you as we continue this journey. Thank you for the energy and passion you bring to your work—you are truly making a difference, and it is my hope to help you see and appreciate your impact through these highlights!

In Service,
Lani
RHSC VISTA Leader

• THE BRIEFING

Members, as we kick off 2025, there are several exciting initiatives lined up. In January, we'll participate in the **21-Day Racial Equity Challenge starting 1/6**, as a chance to deepen our understanding of racial equity and reflect on how it intersects with our service. January also brings the **MLK Day of Service on Monday, 1/20** to coincide with the Challenge.

Looking ahead, mark your calendars for **AmeriCorps Week**, taking place **March 10-16**, where we'll celebrate the power of service and the contributions of VISTA's across the nation.

We'll begin **monthly one-on-one check-ins** with your VISTA Leader in January. These meetings are an opportunity to discuss your goals, challenges, and successes, and to ensure you feel supported in your role. Additionally, we'll hold **monthly cohort meetings** during months without a group activity already planned. These meetings will provide space for professional development, peer learning, and updates.

Public Health AmeriCorps Position Available

The **Northern Broome CARES** team is looking for a part-time Public Health AmeriCorps Rural Service Member. This is a unique position that enables older rural adults to age independently in their own homes. From an office in Whitney Point NY, the PHA member will directly support rural older adults in Northern Broome County with daily errands such as delivering food, assisting with shopping, and providing transportation in and around the local area. The PHA member will also have the opportunity to promote the services available in Northern Broome through community presentations.

This position will require the member to be in Whitney Point, NY on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. A valid driver's license is required. This 675-hour Public Health AmeriCorps position runs from Jan – Oct 2025, with a projected 15-18 hour a week schedule.

We are looking for a
**RURAL SERVICE
MEMBER**

Whitney Point, NY

Part-time position
675 hour term



Help rural older
adults age
independently in
their own homes!

Visit ruralhealthservicecorps.org
for more information and to apply

For more information about this and other AmeriCorps positions available with Rural Health Service Corps, please [visit our website](#) to learn more about the benefits that come with serving. You can also reach out to [Haley Desilet](#) or [Alexis Sankofa](#) with any questions you may have.



The Northern Broome CARES team spread some holiday cheer to seniors in the Northern Broome area in December. Over 600 gifts were distributed to approximately 175 seniors, with each senior receiving multiple gifts such as puzzles, blankets, calendars, socks, cold weather gear, holiday treats and more. Recipients were overjoyed, with many saying things like "I wasn't expecting anything" and "Is this really for me?"

Gifts were donated by community members, Rural Health Network Staff, and Care Compass Network. Additional gifts were shopped for with donations received from community members, Whitney Point Caryl E Elementary School, and Visions Federal Credit Union.

Northern Broome CARES staff would like to thank everyone who helped make this our biggest year yet. A special thank you to all of our donors as well as everyone who took the time to help us gift wrap.



Karli Jeavons, Community Health Worker, and Megan Arenas-Cardoso, Program Coordinator, were all smiles while delivering gifts to seniors last month.



Getthere connects people to transportation options that can get them to their destinations through mobility management. Our friendly Mobility and Transportation Advocates help folks who call into the call center with transportation options. We can help with transportation resources to health care appointments, transportation to employment, travel training, volunteer transportation options and trip planning.



1-855-373-4040
M-F 7:30am-5:30pm

Travel Training



Helps people navigate urban and rural transportation resources safely and independently.

Connection to Care



Helps people without Medicaid travel to health related appointments. Prescription pickup and delivery available.

Transportation to Employment



Helps people navigate transportation options and create a plan to get you to and from work.

MAS Navigation



Helps people with Medicaid set up rides through MAS Medicaid's Non-emergency medical transportation provider.

Volunteer Driver Program



Help Getthere and your neighbors, sign up to be a Volunteer Driver! Drivers are reimbursed for their mileage.

News, Articles of Interest, and Resources

NYSOFA and GetSetUp offer Winter Wellness Initiative for Older Adults

The New York State Office for Aging has partnered with GetSetUp, an online platform offering wellness, educational, and social engagement opportunities designed specifically for older adults. [Learn More](#).

Aspen Institute - Community Strategies Group - Thrive Rural Framework

"Thriving communities are built on utilizing all of the talents and assets of a region towards the ultimate outcome of improved well-being for all people. Achieving this requires authentic welcoming—the kind that fosters true agency, as outlined in the first building block of Aspen CSG's [Thrive Rural Framework](#), [Welcome All to the Community](#). This approach ensures that each person is genuinely welcomed, feels a sense of connection, and can influence decision-making."

NYSARH is Hiring

The New York State Association for Rural Health has position opening for an Executive Director and a Project Coordinator. [See Details](#)

Learn More about Mental Health First Aid

According to Harvard Health, 65% of people in the United States have a general understanding of first aid, the Heimlich maneuver and CPR — important skills for responding to emergencies. However, what about mental health? Would you be able to recognize the signs of depression or substance use? Would you know how to respond if a family member, coworker, or neighbor were experiencing a mental health crisis? If you're unsure, it might be time to get trained in MHFA. [Read this article](#) and watch our newsletter for future workshop announcements.

Healthy and Free School Meals for All

If you have followed our advocacy messages the last couple of years, you know that we and many other organizations have supported universal school meals for all public

school students. Advocates across the state are excited about NY Governor Kathy Hochul's [announcement](#) as part of the 2025 State of the State. Learn more in this [blog post](#) by David Sandman, President and CEO of the NYHealth Foundation.

[2023 Impact Report](#)

[DONATE](#)

Did you know that you can schedule recurring gifts via our online donation form? Many people find it more convenient to spread their donation out over time. The default setting online is "one-time". By selecting the drop down arrow next to Frequency, you can schedule monthly, quarterly, semiannually, or annual gifts. If you are planning your philanthropy budget for 2025, we invite you to support our mission in ways that work best for you.

Stay Connected

www.rhnsctny.org

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