

Vicki B. Stocking

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Sent: Wednesday, March 5, 2025 8:01 AM
To: Vicki B. Stocking
Subject: Oops! Here's the Final Version of Our Newsletter



Hello ROI Community,

Well... this is a little awkward. 😊 Some of you may have received a **sneak peek (aka an in-progress draft)** of our newsletter before it was fully ready. Consider it an exclusive behind-the-scenes look at our creative process!

But don't worry— we've made the necessary updates, and **this is the official, final version** we meant to send. Thanks for your patience and for rolling with us— we appreciate you.

We're grateful to have such an engaged and understanding community, and we hope you enjoy the updates we've put together for you. As always, feel free to reach out with any thoughts, feedback, or just to say hi!

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

March 2025

Dear Friends,

Welcome back for our latest round of updates; we appreciate you joining us! This March we're looking forward to embracing change. As we reflect on February's mix of sunny days and wintery weather, and prepare for the upcoming shift to daylight saving time, what changes are you looking forward to?

Last month, our team was thrilled to enjoy the most snow N.C. has seen in years! Check out Vichi and her snowman below. We're also celebrating Graham, who kicked off February with a beautiful wedding in Yosemite National Park.

Keep reading to learn more about a Community Mental Health Journal article featuring our work, check out a highlight of one of our Community Accountability Board Members, and find opportunities to get involved in supporting our community.

Onward!
Vichi and Seth

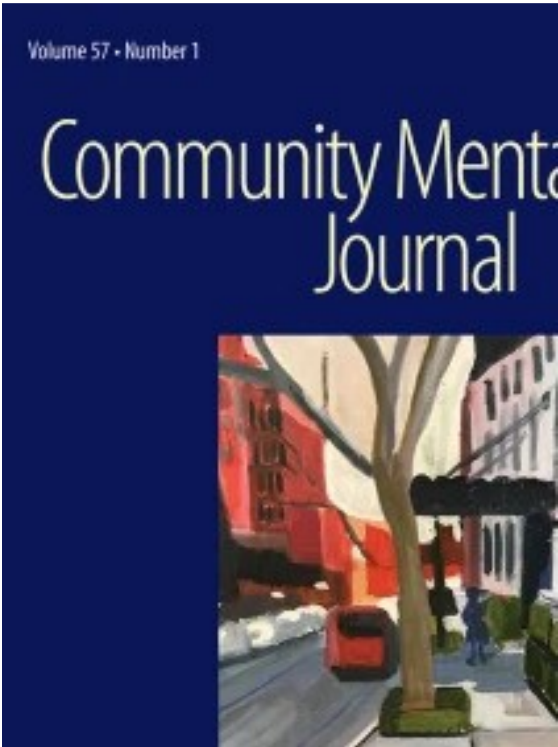


The Latest from ROI

Community Mental Health Journal Article

The findings from our Resilient Leaders Initiative were recently published in the Community Mental Health Journal. This scientific journal is committed to the improvement of public sector mental health services, prioritizing the needs of people experiencing psychological distress and the accompanying structures to support them. We operated this initiative from 2021-2022 and then collaborated with MPH students at UNC Gillings School of Public Health to conduct additional research on the program's impact. We're excited to see the findings published and made accessible in full for free.

[Read the Article](#)



Black History Month

We reflected on the significance of Black History and the ongoing fight for Civil Rights, emphasizing the relevance of this struggle in the context of the work we do in the rural South. We were reminded of the past trauma that black communities, rural communities, and other communities of color have experienced, along with the incredible resilience they continue to display. For those of you who are local to the Edgecombe & Nash County area, we encourage you to check out Rocky Mount's Civil Rights Walking Tour, which highlights historic locations honoring the Black community.

[Civil Rights Walking](#)

Trauma-Informed Training

Shoutout to Chandra Green, Eulanda Thorne, and our newest hire, La'Shanda Person, for leading several trauma-informed training sessions for staff at schools in our region including Warren County Schools and Chatham County Schools. Hundreds of K-12 educators and staff were trained in trauma-informed practices and tools such as biofeedback, in order to create more restorative classroom environments. We're eager to support our community with building the language and tools to understand trauma and resilience. Learn more and request training for your organization via the link below.



[Request a Training](#)

Community Impact Spotlight

Meet Johnathan Brunson, Resilience Trainer & Community Accountability Board Member

Johnathan has dedicated his life to service, particularly in mental health, social work, and community advocacy. His deep-rooted commitment to empowering individuals facing systemic barriers and his passion for fostering trauma-informed care and community support led him to connect with ROI, where he has since become a key figure in leading impactful initiatives. Johnathan's initiatives have already made a tangible difference in our community, and we've listed some of his accomplishments below.

- Advocated for trauma-informed care on a national platform at the Federal Reserve Bank.
- Provided financial and material support to over 30 families in Wilson, Nash, and Edgecombe counties.
- Organized mental health and professional development spaces for Black male therapists across multiple states.
- Facilitated numerous community events, including open mic nights, youth mentorship programs, and holiday giving initiatives.

We're grateful to be in partnership with pillars of our community like Johnathan, who model the process of tapping into community wisdom and resilience to create opportunities for impactful systems change.

[Connect with](#)



Opportunities

Medicaid Learning Collaborative Cohort Application

It's not too late to apply for the upcoming Medicaid Learning Collaborative 2025-26 cohort. We'll review applications on a rolling basis, although we urge you to apply by the date of our first session, Sep 9, 2025. We plan to offer a place in the Cohort to all applicants who meet the minimum criteria. This resource is more important than ever given current political uncertainty around Medicaid at the federal level. Our cohort is designed to give school systems the information and tools to adapt to changes in the policy environment, and our team is at the ready with tailored hands-on support.

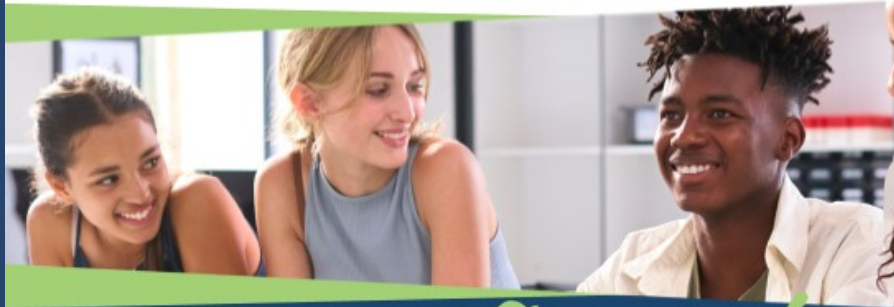
[Learn More and Apply Here](#)

Young Civic Leaders Initiative

Our Young Civic Leaders initiative is continuing to advance its scope. We're connecting with new employers and working on adding a Career and Technical Education (CTE) certification to the program. Support us with making new connections to create learning and mentorship opportunities for our community's young leaders by nominating an employer or a motivated young person you know.

Submit an [Employer](#) or [Youth Nomination](#)

 Rural Opportunity Initiative



Young Civic Leaders

ROI is recruiting Youth & Employment

for Paid Summer 2025 Internships



Apply to Host UNC School of Government Fellow

UNC School of Government is currently seeking local governments to host Lead for North Carolina (LFNC) Fellows. LFNC is a fellowship program that aims to create the next generation of local government leaders in North Carolina. LFNC places recent college graduates in high-impact positions in local governments across the state to work on transformative community projects. Apply by March 8 to host an LFNC Fellow.

Visit [Their Website](#) for More Information & [Apply Here](#)

RSVP For March Policy Listening Session

For anyone local to Nash, Edgecombe, and Wilson counties here in North Carolina: Join us virtually **on Thursday, March 6th from 12-1pm EST** to discuss important policy matters that affect our community. This session is open to all who are interested in sharing their thoughts and ideas. Let's come together to listen, learn, and collaborate on ways to make a positive impact. Don't miss this opportunity to have your voice heard!

RSVP for the 3/6

Rural Opportunity Institute supports youth, organizations and communities to interrupt the cycle of generational trauma and design innovative solutions for healing and resilience.

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