

March-April Rural Roundup



From Team New Rural Project <info@newruralproject.org>
To Steve Johnston <sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org>
Reply-To <info@newruralproject.org>
Date 2023-05-18 16:07

The New Rural Project's
Rural Roundup
 Monthly Newsletter

Dear Steve,

March and April were very busy months at New Rural Project. March was Women's History Month during which we highlighted some of the strong women whose selfless work had an impact on their communities. We also learned a lot at some excellent conferences.

On April 6, we celebrated our second anniversary as an organization! On **April 20th** (Mecklenburg County) and **April 27th** (Moore County), we gathered with sponsors and supporters in "two counties" for "two Birthday Bashes" recognizing "two years" of engaging and amplifying the voices of our rural friends and neighbors! We had a wonderful turnout for each event and we're so proud and thankful for the support we have received since 2021.



As always, thank you for your continued support.

With gratitude,

Cynthia and Helen
Co-founders of NRP

VOLUNTEER

LISTENING

Hoke County

Hoke County Barbershop Conversation with Breaking Every Chain

April was "Second Chance Month" and NRP participated in a community event planned by Shamell Peterkin and Bernice McPhatter of the Hoke County Reentry Council on **April 17th**.



Executive Director Cynthia Wallace, Regional Organizer Nisea Moses, and Program Director Alexa Roberts joined Breaking Every Chain at Maggie's Outreach Center in Raeford and introduced several Hoke County barbers to the *Barbershop Conversations: Fruitful African American Discussions on Empowerment (F.A.D.E.)* program. After an introductory presentation, Bryan Gaines, owner of Game Time Barbershop in Raeford, enthusiastically offered up his barbershop to host the program and graciously agreed to be our Program Chair!

We can't wait to **chat, chew and chop it up** with the 18 - 40ish year-old Black men in Hoke County in June. **The three week program will be held on Sundays: June 4th, June 11th, and June 25th from 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM. Hoke County Black men can [sign up here](#).**

Anson County

INTRODUCING: Beauty Salon Conversations! Cultivating Unified Relationships with Ladies for Success (C.U.R.L.S.)

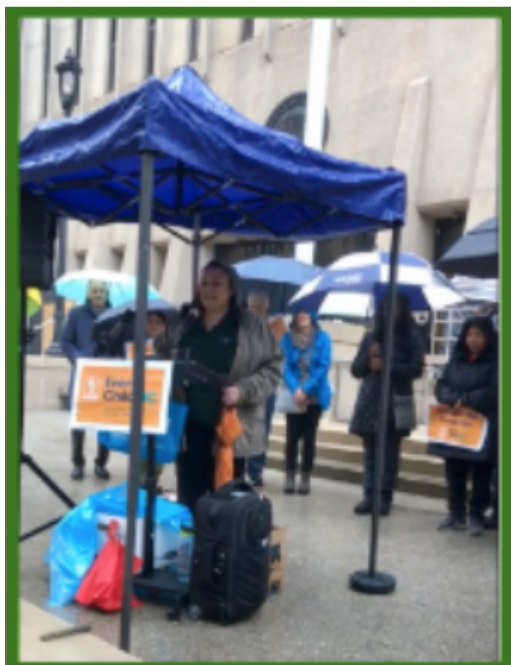


On April 30th, Cynthia, Nisea, and Alexa met with a group of Anson County women community leaders at Trend Settaz in Wadesboro. These amazing women brainstormed and named the program (C.U.R.L.S.). We are thrilled to be piloting C.U.R.L.S. in Anson County with Program Chair and stylist/salon owner Shay Jackson Green.

We spent the afternoon listening to ideas that will shape this new program series. We appreciate all the community support for this sister program to our FADE series and we will **bring the heat and the tea to the beauty salon when the full program launches in July**.



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



On **Friday, March 10th**, Alexa spoke at a Leandro Plan press event in Raleigh, North Carolina with other partner organizations who are advocating for every child in our state's constitutional right to a sound basic education. The event was held outside the state legislature and even though it was raining, it didn't deter these activists from advocating for the children of North Carolina.

The following **Tuesday, March 14th**, Alexa was back in Raleigh along with Nisea and Administrative Assistant Maryjane Conti, to attend "A People's Rally at the Capitol," which was held across from the NC Supreme Court building.

The purpose of the rally was to shine a light on two NC Supreme Court cases that the court was rehearing: [Harper v. Hall](#), which struck down North Carolina's congressional and legislative maps because of partisan gerrymandering, and [Holmes v. Moore](#), which blocked a restrictive photo voter ID bill. Unfortunately, on **Friday, April 28th**, the North Carolina Supreme Court took the unprecedented step of overturning the previous rulings for both of these and also rolled back previously granted voting rights to convicted felons who have served their time.

On March 23rd, 2023, NC Governor Roy Cooper signed the Medicaid expansion bill into law which will expand access to healthcare coverage to over half a million North Carolinians!

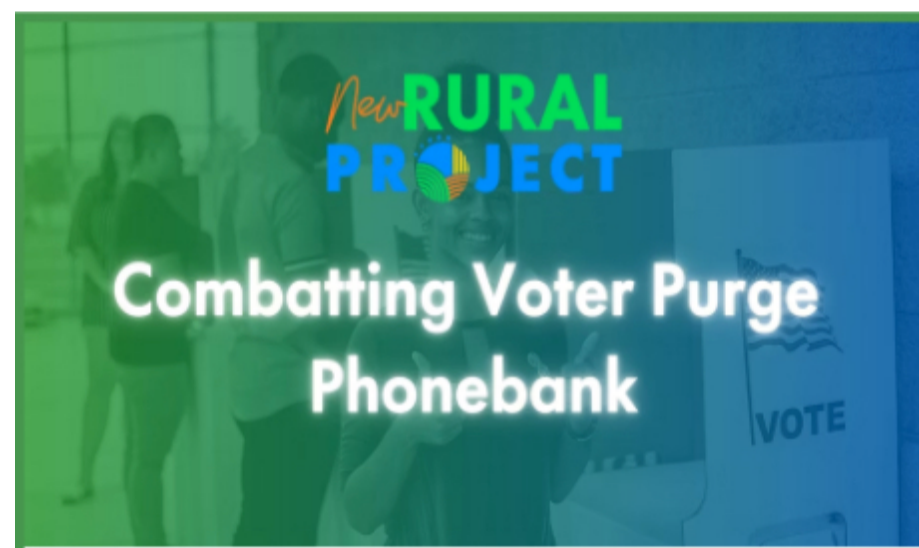
On **March 22nd**, the evening before the NC General Assembly voted to pass the bill, we launched our **Urgent Conversations** series to talk about the impact of Medicaid expansion on rural citizens and healthcare providers. Virtually on Zoom, Karen Smith, MD, FAAFP from Hoke County and Representative Diamond Staton-Williams, RN, BSN, MHA (House District 73) participated on our panel to share their wealth of knowledge and expertise.



If you weren't able to make it, a recording of this important conversation is available on our YouTube page [HERE](#).

ELECTORAL ENGAGEMENT

Combatting Voter Purge Phone Bank



As we mentioned in our February Rural Roundup, we kicked off our **Weekly Virtual Phone Bank: Combatting Voter Purge** on March 30th. Since our first [Weekly Virtual Phone Bank](#), we have trained over 30 new volunteers who have completed shifts and have made over 600 calls, but **WE STILL HAVE WORK TO DO!**

Please [register](#) to join us from wherever you are as we continue these calls on **Thursday evenings from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM**. All you need is a phone, a computer with internet access, and a change-maker attitude! [Sign up here!](#)

OTHER UPDATES

NRP Policy & Advocacy Director Helen Probst Mills and Maryjane attended the NC Rural Summit in Raleigh on **March 21st** where rural advocates from across the state gathered to discuss ways to help rural North Carolinians. Speakers at the event included NC Governor Roy Cooper and various leaders from the North Carolina General Assembly, all of whom spoke about the importance of rural North Carolina.





On **April 12th - 14th**, Cynthia, Alexa, and Nisea attended the America Votes National State Summit in Washington, DC. The NRP team was among 1,800 attendees from across the nation, all working to strengthen our participatory democracy and encourage citizens to engage in their communities and get out to vote. We spent our days listening, learning, networking, strategizing, and getting re-energized to bring positive changes to our rural focus counties through community civic and electoral engagement.

On **April 28th**, Cynthia attended the NC Black Alliance Summit seeing current partners and rural-focused county elected officials like Hoke County Commission Chair Allen Thomas and Laurinburg City Councilwoman Barbara Chanei Rogers. After also meeting reinstated Tennessee Representative Justin Pearson, she left feeling inspired about the future of our young leaders! It's always wonderful to build power with our partners in the work of defending democracy and expanding, not restricting freedom.



2023 ELECTION INFORMATION

**North Carolina
Municipal Election Dates**

Oct. 6, 2023: County Boards of Elections begin mailing absentee ballots for November 7th municipal elections to eligible voters.

Oct. 19, 2023: One-stop, in-person early voting begins for November 7th municipal elections.

Nov. 4, 2023 - One-stop, in-person early voting ends for November 7th municipal elections.

Nov. 7, 2023: ELECTION DAY in municipalities with November elections.

Nov. 7: ELECTION DAY; deadline to mail absentee-by-mail ballots (5 P.M.)



Click your county using the 2023 Municipal Elections Map on the [North Carolina State Board of Elections website](https://www.ncsbe.gov/elections/2023-municipal-elections) to see what election contests are on the ballot in 2023 and when the elections will take place. The map will be updated when new contests are added or if legislative or other actions result in changes to the 2023 elections.

Until next time,

Team New Rural Project

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