



THE HOLLER

DECEMBER 2023

**DOWN HOME
NORTH CAROLINA**

IN THIS ISSUE

- What you need to know about Medicaid enrollment
- Public School Strong heads to Raleigh
- Housing and ethics in Ashe County
- Why Down Home is suing over SB747
- Big wins, small towns: How it all shook out in municipal elections this year
- Upcoming events!

Hard won win: Down Homies fought for years

↓ for Medicaid Expansion ↓



Working class heroes: Down Home with Governor Cooper the day Medicaid Expansion was signed into law.

ORGANIZING WORKS!

Medicaid Expansion Starts Dec 1st!

Today, 600,000 North Carolinians can go to the doctors, thanks to working class organizing by people like you!

For over ten years, North Carolinians wrote letters, called our representatives, held protests and rallies-- we did EVERYTHING we could to push Medicaid Expansion over the finish line. And it worked. Enrollment starts today.

This win wouldn't have happened without organizing. The long fight we all engaged in was arduous and exhausting, but it shows us what people power - and a little grit--can secure the concrete, impactful wins we need.

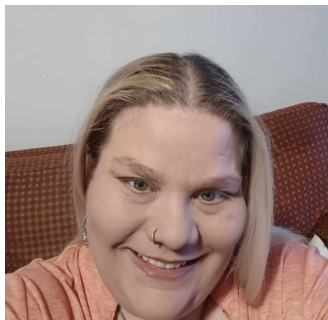
LOOKING FOR MORE ON MEDICAID?

Scan the code or find details on Medicaid Expansion next page!



SCAN ME

ITS HIGH TIME FOR CHANGE: FINDING HEALTHCARE IN RURAL NORTH CAROLINA



Tanya Robinson is a Down Home member in Ashe County. She's a mom and is raising her family in the same hills and hollers she was raised in... and she's hungry for change!

Read her essay about the state of healthcare in the high country below.

Imagine getting a call from your child's school requesting that you come pick them up because they are sick. Now, the school has a clinic connected through the local Health Department, but your child can't go there. So, they advise that you have to take your child to the urgent care facility next to the local hospital... I experienced this just a short while ago with my child.

If you keep up with the state of healthcare in Ashe County, North Carolina, you know that the Health Department building has been closed since Christmas of 2022 due to frozen pipes that burst and exposed massive asbestos problems in the building. In just a few weeks, it will have been a year that it's been closed.

Many people here rely on the Health Department as their primary care facility because they can afford nothing else. In Ashe County, 32% of children are living in poverty (2017) and 20% of the county is uninsured (2017) according to the State of the County Health Report published in 2019. Many of us were using the Health Department as a source of healthcare because of their sliding fee scale to see patients.

The day I got the call from my son's school, I took him to the urgent care facility to be seen and COVID tested. Once I got there, I was informed that they do not provide COVID testing any longer, but I could fill out the paperwork for him to be seen. I did this and provided his insurance information... After waiting an hour in the waiting room, I was called to the front and told that he could not be seen unless I paid a \$94 bill from 2018 when he was seen there with no insurance. I was floored. I simply could not believe this was the case and explained that the Health Department told me he was guaranteed to be seen, per an agreement they had made with the urgent care. They denied any type of agreement with the Health Department and would not be seeing him.

Worried about my sick child, I left and made the call to a pediatrician in Boone, more than 40 minutes away, to see if they could possibly see him. Thankfully they made the time to see him. As it turns out, he was COVID-positive as were myself and my husband.

Read Tanya's full story on Reclaiming Rural

READ MORE



medium.com/reclaiming-rural



MEDICAID EXPANSION STARTS DECEMBER 1

On December 1st, Medicaid Expansion will be implemented in North Carolina, bringing health coverage to nearly 600,000 people who were previously caught in a healthcare coverage gap. Thanks to the persistent organizing of working people, Medicaid has expanded its income threshold. The new criteria include individuals who make up to \$20,120 for a single adult. This is the power of organizing!

YOU MAY NOW QUALIFY UNDER THE NEW CRITERIA

If you are between the ages of 19 and 64 and your household income falls within the following chart, you may be eligible for Medicaid:

- Single Adults: \$20,120 or less
- Family of 2: \$27,214 or less
- Family of 3: \$34,307 or less
- Family of 4: \$41,400 or less
- Family of 5: \$48,493 or less
- Family of 6: \$55,586 or less

HOW TO APPLY

There are various options available to apply for Medicaid:

- Online
- Over the phone
- In-person or virtual assistance
- Paper application

Please click on the QR code below for more information.

THERE ARE NO DEADLINES

The Medicaid expansion in North Carolina starts on December 1st, 2023 and you can apply at any time afterward.

There is no specific deadline to apply as enrollment is open year-round. If you think you might qualify, apply!



SCAN ME

STAY UPDATED

When you scan this QR code, you will be redirected to a blog post that provides all the latest updates on Medicaid expansion. This blog post includes information on eligibility criteria, application deadlines, and other relevant details.



SMALL TOWNS, BIG WINS: DOWN HOME'S MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

From Dreama Caldwell

Like many of you, I sat at my laptop pressing refresh over and over again this past Tuesday waiting for the Board of Elections to update the vote totals. It was nervewracking!

That's because Down Home members across the state had endorsed candidates they knew would work for working-class voters like us – and in fact, a few Down Home members were on the ballot! Our members had spent the last six weeks flyers, tabling, and knocking on doors to turn out the vote for the candidates right up until 7:30 PM on Tuesday when the polls closed. When we knew we had done all we could, we just had to wait.

At 9:30 PM I refreshed my laptop screen one more time... *and I screamed!* Member endorsed [Dejuana Bigelow](#) had won her bid for Burlington's City Council. Our local members had knocked over 9,000 doors to help elect the first Black woman to that role!

And that wasn't all– our members in Alamance County had helped usher in other important local wins, including electing [Quinn Ray to Elons' Board of Alderman](#) and [Tangela Mitchell to Gibsonville's Board of Alderman](#). I was so excited for my home county that I threw my purse into the car and headed up I-40 to celebrate with our Alamance team.

But the night's successes didn't stop there. Soon news came in from Cabarrus County that two of our [endorsed candidates](#) had won their seats to Kannapolis' (Ryan Dayvault) and Concord's (Andy Langford) City Councils– important seats for our members to co-govern with. Our member-candidate, Jayne Williams, did not win on Tuesday night, but had dramatically increased her vote total, slowly building towards her next run.

Then, in the third county where we made endorsements, news came in that Down Home member [Curtis McRae](#) had won his bid for Oxford Town Commissioner and member [Guillermo Nurse](#) had won [Oxford Mayor!](#) Down Home's first member to win mayor! Our Granville Chapter went wild.

spent the rest of the night in Alamance County– there were cheers and tears and rejoicing all around. Because I was born and raised here, Alamance County is close to my heart. Winning Black and Brown candidates to office here is huge; insisting on working-class platforms is groundbreaking; mobilizing multiracial coalitions of voters to the polls is changing the course of history.

The political landscape of rural North Carolina is changing and progressing with every election cycle. I spent years, as an organizer and a candidate, trying to change Alamance County. Working at and now leading Down Home has made me realize that change will come as part of the big statewide movement we are building. When we build an intentionally multiracial movement of working people our wins in one county are amplified and can be felt everywhere across the state. Big, broad, and statewide: This is how working people win.

What I am saying is that all these small-town wins add up to something big: A multiracial, working-class movement that is primed and ready for 2024.

This week told us everything we needed to know. We know that can defeat extremists like Mark Robinson and Donald Trump. We know that we can bring in new leadership who will stand for working people and defend our communities, our schools, our healthcare, and our land. We know that we can win.



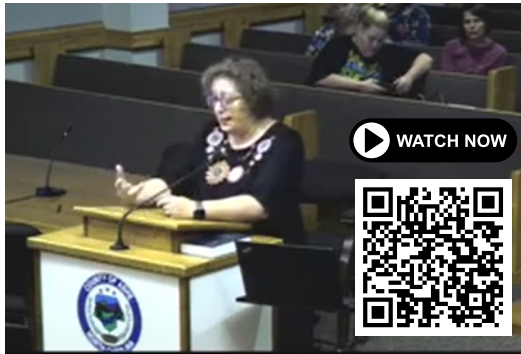
HIGHLIGHTS FROM SOME OF OUR LOCAL CHAPTERS ACROSS NORTH CAROLINA!



Listening, hearing, knowing.

This fall, local chapters from down east up to highlands have been hosting community “listening sessions.” In Person County, our members learned from their neighbors about local challenges including affordable housing, the need for funding public schools, concerns about water pollution, and more. By checking in with and listening to folks across our communities we can make sure our organizing we do is grounded in local needs and values. The input we are gathering from these listening sessions will be used by our members as they create our political platform for 2024.

Want to meet up in Person? Contact samantha@downhomenc.org



Ashe County members continue to press for housing standards

Everybody, no matter where you are from or what your income might be, deserves safe housing. But in Ashe County too many families live in substandard or outright dangerous rentals. Our members in Ashe County have been pushing for their local County Commission to adopt minimum housing standards in order to hold landlords accountable and keep families safe. Member Nancy Weaver recently delivered a righteous reminder of our duties as humans to the commissioners... and you can watch it by following scanning the code.

Want to plug in up in Ashe? Contact dolly@downhomenc.org



Fired Up in Vance County

While we don't have an official chapter in Vance County, it sure looks like we are fixin' to! Down Home members in Vance have been out knocking doors and talking to their neighbors this fall-- they've gotten a lot of insight and interest and already have a few gatherings on the books. Vance County has an important organizing history in North Carolina and it looks like local folks are ready to carry on the tradition.

Are you in Vance County? Come out to our upcoming Listening Session on Saturday, December 9th at 1 PM over in Henderson. Contact nick@downhomenc.org for location and details.



Granville County: Working Class Power Build

You're not supposed to let winning go to your head, but for our Granville County members that's gonna be hard. Local chapter members proved they have what it takes and knocked doors to even more wins this municipal election season. The local chapter is uncovering a winning formula: When you activate around important local issues, voters will turn out! Congratulations to all the winners, including Down Home members Curtis McRae, elected to Oxford Town Council, and Guillermo Nurse -- Oxford's new mayor!

Want to plug into this powerful organizing in Granville? Contact reeves@downhomenc.org



Alamance Members Help Elect First Black Woman to Burlington City Council

Alamance members always have their work cut out for them, but they also always do the damn thing! This year, they made endorsements in several local races and their hard work mobilizing voters paid off big. Our members helped elect Quinn Ray to Elon's Board of Alderman and Tangelia Mitchell to Gibsonville's Board- both of whom will work for working folks. Then they ushered in an historic win- electing Dejuana Bigelow as the first Black woman to serve on Burlington's City Council!

Love this? So do we. Get involved by contacting bryant@downhomenc.org

DISENFRANCHISING RURAL VOTERS IS BY DESIGN (OR, WHY DOWN HOME IS SUING OVER S.B. 747)



This fall, Down Home joined Voto Latino and other civic organizations filing a lawsuit over North Carolina's SB 747-- "a voter suppression bill in pure form." Down Home's Gwen Frisbie-Fulton wrote about that lawsuit and how S.B. 747 will hurt rural working class voters, especially those who are housing insecure, in an opinion piece for Democracy Docket.

"Having nontraditional or insecure housing shouldn't jeopardize a North Carolinian's ability to have their vote count just because a piece of mail gets returned. S.B. 747 makes it so that too many people would go to the polls, lawfully vote and later learn — or perhaps never learn — that their vote didn't count.

At Down Home, we think these are precisely the people whom our government needs to be listening to the most closely — the people who live at the crossroads of a precarious economy and bad policy," she writes.

READ MORE 



 WATCH NOW



CRIBS, BUT IN THE CABARRUS FIELD OFFICE?

Our social media has been hijacked! In recent social media takeover days, folks from across rural North Carolina have been showcasing their hometowns and local Down Home chapters on social media.

Make sure you check out some of the great videos from Person County, Granville County and... special shout out to the hilarious "Cribs" style video done in Cabarrus! Check it out above. If you aren't following Down Home already, you might want to get on that.



Down Homies in Pitt County are out and about talking to their community



Down Home Watauga tabling at the local farmers market

EVENTS THIS MONTH

Find our events and sign up here:
mobilize.us/DownHomeNC

ASHE COUNTY

Medicaid Expansion Enrollment,
Outreach, and Education
Monday, Dec. 11, 6 PM
@ Wilkes Community College

Ashe County Chapter Meeting
January 16, 6 -8 PM
@Wilkes Community College

GRANVILLE COUNTY

Granville County Chapter
Meeting
Tuesday, Jan 23, 6 PM
@ Granville Chapter Office

JOHNSTON COUNTY

IRA Information Session
Thursday, Dec 7, 6:30 PM

JOCO New Year Celebration
Friday, January 12th, 6 PM

PERSON COUNTY

Person County Holiday Party
Tuesday, December 12th, 6 PM
@Person County Senior Center

PITT COUNTY

Pitt County Pulse!
Thursday, Dec 7, 6 PM
@ South Greenville Rec Center

VANCE COUNTY

Vance County Listening Session
Saturday, Dec 9, 1 PM

STATEWIDE

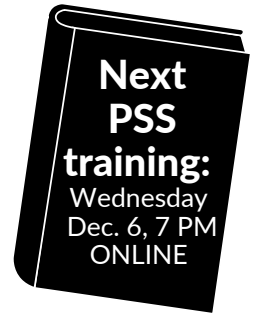
Public School Strong Training
(online)
Wednesday, Dec 6, 7 PM



PUBLIC SCHOOL STRONG HEADS TO RALEIGH: “KEEP PUBLIC MONEY IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS”

This fall, our folks working with Public School Strong have been circulating a survey asking about their neighbor's experiences with public education and what needs their local schools have.

By mid-November, they had gathered more than 1,000 responses from over 70 North Carolina counties. So they decided to bring those responses to Superintendent Truitt at the Department of Public Instruction in Raleigh--- and they went with a clear message: *North Carolina parents reject vouchers and want to keep public money in public schools!*



READ MORE



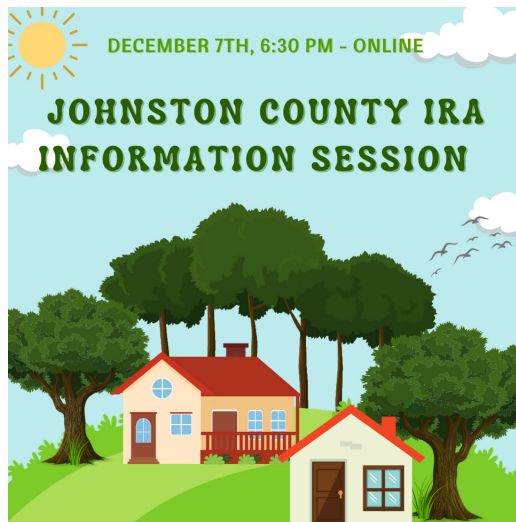
While the responses demonstrate that our schools have locally specific needs and issues- some parents want to see more investment in school libraries, others are concerned that bus transportation is underpaid and understaffed- it is clear that parents across the state believe that schools are in dire need of real funding. And that funding is needed now. *Frankly, it was needed yesterday.*

However, North Carolina's public schools are at great risk of losing funding right now due to the recently passed legislation expanding vouchers that will pull public dollars out of public schools and put them in private hands.

Got something to say?
Say it in The Holler!

Send us your updates about your chapter, photos, their opinion pieces about your campaigns and your community!

Gwen Frisbie-Fulton
gwen@downhomenc.org



HEATING AND COOLING OUT OF CONTROL?

Our members in Johnston County have been researching Inflation Reduction Act funds and looking at ways that we might be able to use them to help homeowners in our community as we face extreme weather and climate change. Come learn with us!

RSVP



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