

# North Shore Mental Health Group Says Thank You to Americorps Vista Ryan Babcock

North Shore Mental Health Group



**Ryan Babcock** (submitted photo)

The North Shore Mental Health Group wishes a fond farewell to Ryan Babcock, an Americorps Vista attached to the Regional Sustainable Development Partnership through the University of Minnesota.

Ryan was a dynamo, working with several agencies and community groups along the North Shore. According to Carrie Anderson, “When the NSMHG received the one-year RSDP grant to help raise awareness and skills around mental wellbeing, we were lucky to have Ryan join our team. He helped plan events funded by the grant and was a key person facilitating our work. Ryan’s attention to detail, analysis skills, dedication

to the cause, his gentle positivity, and the perspectives he added have been wonderful.”

With the North Shore Mental Health Group and a coalition team, Ryan worked on the year-long Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) Strategic Planning Cohort with Dean Rudloff, Zomi Bloom, and Carrie Anderson. The Cohort was tasked to develop programs and approaches addressing our local mental health and suicide prevention using an equity lens.

Ryan was also assigned to work with other agencies. According to Babcock, “For 100 Rural Women, I learned NVIVO to assist with coding hundreds of documents, managing that data, and assisting with reporting on that data in a webinar and a report.” Using his training and expertise in Marketing, Ryan also managed the YouTube channel for 100 Rural Women, advancing their mission to build “a future where more rural women lead positive change for themselves, their families and communities, the nation and the world.”

Babcock also worked with sustainable food systems and community redevelopment as a grant writer: “With the Land Access Alliance, I drafted a Blandin grant. At Ei Roskaa, I worked with a team of grant

writers on a funded, \$235,377 grant from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to build a composting facility in Finland, Minnesota.” With the Riverfront Community Development, Babcock has worked on a housing cleanup grant.

In his time as an Americorps Vista, he came to understand the North Shore region and the unique, diverse needs of its residents informed by a commitment to equity. He also deployed his communication skills to make lasting change in our region. The North Shore Mental Health Group wishes Ryan the best.

*For more information on the Regional Sustainable Development Partnership, visit <https://extension.umn.edu/regional-partnerships/northeast-rsdp> The RSDP Board seeks partners throughout the region for projects that build sustainable communities.*

*The North Shore Mental Health Group strives to create safe and welcoming spaces in the Silver Bay, Finland, Beaver Bay, and Isabella areas for those living with or wanting to support others living with mental health challenges. If you would like more information about the group, please contact us at [nsmmentalhealth@gmail.com](mailto:nsmmentalhealth@gmail.com).*

## OPEN LETTER TO THE COMMUNITY

### *Two Harbors Lake View Nurses Need Your Support*

The nursing staff at Lake View Hospital, a team of competent, compassionate, and devoted professionals you have come to know and trust in our greater Northern Minnesota communities, have come together unanimously to address a longstanding staffing shortage—a sore spot that pre-dated the pandemic, and has steadily snowballed into a full-scale care crisis under our hospital management.

For over two years, each nurse at Lake View has worked well over their hired hours. Those cumulative hours have greatly disrupted our personal lives, taking hours turned into days, weeks and even months away from our loved ones. We have asked Lake View Administration and executives to ease the strain with incentive pay, and a recruitment and retention program as these demands on our nursing staff are no longer sustainable. Other major hospital systems, on both a local and national scale, have made adjustments to help bridge the hardships. We are asking for a reform from the ground up at Lake View.

The core staffing model set by our hospital executives consists of two registered nurses on duty per shift. These nurses are responsible for patients of varied medical conditions and severity, including but not limited to: inpatient rehab, acutely ill inpatients, emergency department patients, urgent care patients, and outpatients who come in for short treatments (such as receiving blood, medication infusions, etc.). Compared to larger hospitals with more support, we function with limited resources like a well-oiled machine. As registered nurses, we often also fill the role of respiratory therapist, IV team, after-hours pharmacist, fill-in paramedic, and the rapid response team to the whole hospital.

Short staffing by hospital executives has proven to be the biggest challenge, whether it applies to keeping our veteran nurses or recruiting eager and engaged individuals to the workplace. Because of the decisions of our hospital managers, Lake View is operating with a skeleton crew with what health care professionals remain. This hole leaves the burden on the staff—we are expected to

pick up extra shifts, plus all on-call shifts with the limited nurses we have. We simply cannot expand ourselves anymore. Studies have shown that nurse fatigue increases medication errors to our patients, precipitates employee illness, and seriously poses detrimental effects on our mental health and cognitive function.

In addition to dire staffing needs and stressors wrought by the pandemic, we have become a divert destination for area hospitals. This means our ability to stabilize and transfer a critical patient to a higher level of care is often complicated by the receiving facility’s inability to accept more patients. Because of this, nurses at Lake View are responsible for patients who need maximum specialty care for extended periods of time, which further contributes to poor nurse to patient ratios.

And yet in the face of these hardships, Lake View was recently presented with the Guardian of Excellence Award for high scores in patient experience, thanks in large part to our nursing staff. Maintaining a high standard of care for our patients and their loved ones amid these unprecedented times is something special. We ask Lake View Hospital administrators and executives to treat us with the same support, benefits, and incentives that many nurses have received elsewhere, to reward our care teams and to stem the tide of nurses exiting the profession. After a series of ineffective conversations with administration at Lake View, we are only asking for the same compensatory treatment and consideration that our fellow nurse colleagues have received.

Now more than ever, we need you to stand alongside Lake View nurses to not only help retain the wonderful RNs you have come to know and respect, but to continue to provide the best quality care to all that we serve—and the care that you deserve—at Lake View Hospital. Tell Lake View’s executives to put patients before profits, and to take action now.

In Solidarity,  
The nurses of Lake View Hospital  
in Two Harbors

## Pop Up Book Sale to Benefit Local Libraries Friday & Saturday, August 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> *Organized by the Library Friends of Cook County*

Library Friends of Cook County is happy to announce a “Pop Up” Used Book Sale on Friday and Saturday, August 5th and 6th, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. All proceeds from the sale of books will go to benefit area libraries and reading programs. The sale will take place at Oddz & Endz, 2066 West Highway 61 in Grand Marais. Library Friends of Cook County has partnered with Oddz & Endz to create a used book room at the store with titles in every genre—from popular novels and local lore to cookbooks, children’s titles and more. According to Library Friends President Jan Smith, “there really is something for everyone!”

If you would like to donate books for the sale, bring your items to the Oddz & Endz donation door during open hours: Mondays, Fridays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Hardcover and paperback books in good to excellent condition will be accepted in all genres. But please, no encyclopedias or textbooks. Thank you.

Library Friends of Cook County is an all-volunteer non-profit organization, composed of members who care about books and information resources, people, and particularly libraries - those places where books and people get together. We focus on advocacy, public relations, fund-raising and volunteer services. Library Friends is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. For more information about book collection days or the “Pop Up” sale on August 5th and 6th, please contact Jan at [Library.Friends.CC.MN@gmail.com](mailto:Library.Friends.CC.MN@gmail.com).

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**Don't hesitate to call:**  
**218.623.1800**  
**or visit: LetsTalkMN.com**  
**or TEXT: "MN" to 741741**  
**Help is free & confidential**