



**Media Contact:**  
Deborah Muhwezi  
dmuhwezi@outreachstrategies.com  
202-507-4840

## **Children's Mental Health Collaborative Announces Heroes for Health**

New profile series launched on National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day

RACINE, Wis. (May 9, 2013) – [The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread](#) and the Racine Collaborative for Children's Mental Health is recognizing [National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day](#) with the launch of [Heroes for Health](#), a new online series that highlights individuals in the Racine area who are committed to strengthening the social and emotional development of children.

The first *Heroes for Health* to be profiled are Debby Ganaway, the outgoing Executive Director for the [National Alliance on Mental Illness in Racine](#) (NAMI), and Michael Boticki, NAMI's new Executive Director.

"We are pleased to launch this new profile series and shine the spotlight on Debby and Michael as our first two *Heroes for Health*," said Ashley Staeck, Community Program Associate at The Johnson Foundation. "They are two of the many partners and individuals who are leading the charge to help alleviate and prevent unnecessary child suffering due to unaddressed mental health needs."

Ganaway served as Executive Director of NAMI-Racine from 2004 to 2013. Prior to joining NAMI-Racine, she chaired a committee that established a rehabilitative project for persons with mental illness and served on a task force that established the county's first homeless shelter for women and children. As the NAMI Executive Director, she also served on the task force to bring the Drug Treatment Court to Racine and was a member of the Partnership for Access to Care and Treatment for persons with mental illness. She was a member of the United Way Task Force to create the Homeless Assistance Leadership Organization (HALO) for homeless individuals and their children.

"I am grateful to have had the opportunity to spend my career working on an issue that I am passionate about and am delighted to be featured in *Heroes for Health*," said Ganaway. "National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day serves to remind us all that children's mental health is fundamental to the well-being of individuals, families and communities."

Ganaway's successor, Boticki, is a Wisconsin native and received his doctorate in counseling psychology at Marquette University. His expertise in children's mental health issues extends to work with the HOPES Center, Advancing Family Assets, SAFE Haven of Racine, and Children's Service Society of Wisconsin. Boticki was also instrumental in the development and opening of the Racine County Child Advocacy Center.

"It is a real honor to be recognized as a *Hero for Health*," said Boticki. "I hope the work of the Collaborative and this profile series help demonstrate the diverse group of individuals and caregivers throughout Greater Racine who are dedicated to reducing barriers to mental health care in order to help our children lead vibrant and healthy lives."

National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day was created to raise awareness around children's mental health by the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#), a branch of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Awareness Day is traditionally celebrated during

the first full week in May and creates an opportunity to promote positive youth development across the country.

*"Heroes for Health* is an opportunity to highlight and recognize the diverse individuals, services and resources available to our community," Staeck explained. "The Collaborative for Children's Mental Health is committed to forging connections and establishing new approaches to strengthen the social and emotional development of our children. Each member of the Collaborative is integral to these efforts, and we're delighted to highlight their meaningful contributions."

The Collaborative for Children's Mental Health is made up of a broad spectrum of community leaders and individuals focused on improving the mental health of children in Racine. The Collaborative was convened in September 2012 and has been making strides in creating awareness and solutions around children's mental health issues.

For more information on the Collaborative for Children's Mental Health and a complete list of participating organizations, visit [www.johnsonfdn.org/aboutus/community/ChildrensMentalHealth](http://www.johnsonfdn.org/aboutus/community/ChildrensMentalHealth).

# # #

The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread is dedicated to serving as a catalyst for change by bringing together leading thinkers and inspiring new solutions on major environmental and regional issues. For additional information or to learn more about The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread, please visit [www.johnsonfdn.org](http://www.johnsonfdn.org).