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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Laraway announces new Backpack Program Director**

Rich Smith, M.A., BCBA, has been hired as Director of the Backpack Program at Laraway Youth & Family Services in Johnson, Vermont. He brings extensive experience in educational and therapeutic settings.

Smith has, most recently, served as a Behavioral Consultant at Laraway. His professional background includes working for public school systems and mental health agencies. Smith spent over 22 years at Onion River Crossroads, a residential care program in Central Vermont, 16 of which as Executive Director.

“I am incredibly excited to assume the role of Backpack Director,” Smith said. “Our staff and community partners are a very dedicated and skilled group of people. I am extremely fortunate to be able to work with them to help the youth and families in our communities feel supported and successful.”

“Rich brings a wealth of compassion, experience and enthusiasm to the role of Backpack Director,” said Greg Stefanski, Laraway’s Executive Director. “We look forward to Rich leading and supporting the Backpack staff and working closely with our public school partners in helping our students and their families find success in school, at home and in the community.”

Smith succeeds Shari Ryan who has returned to private clinical practice.

Laraway’s Backpack Program provides comprehensive, strengths-based, individualized supports to children and youth, K-12, in the public school setting. For more information, please visit [www.laraway.org](http://www.laraway.org).

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