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2024 Kansas Health Champions Announced

TOPEKA – The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) and the Governor's Council on Wellness (GCOW) presented the 2024 Kansas Health Champion Awards during the Community Health Promotion Summit today, Thursday, January 11.

The Health Champion Award was developed by the Governor's Council on Wellness to recognize and promote exemplary contributions to wellness in Kansas. Those recognized include an individual and organization, as well as honorable mentions in each category.

- Individual Health Champions: Vicki Gieber and Pat Brehm, Abilene
- Organizational Health Champion: The City of Arma, Crawford County
- Individual Honorable Mention: Lauren Wolf, Overland Park
- Organizational Honorable Mention: Stormont Vail Health Mobile Clinic Team, Topeka

“Congratulations to this year's Health Champions.” Said Janet Stanek, KDHE Secretary. “We appreciate your dedication to improving the health and livelihoods of the people of Kansas.”

Health Champions

Vicki Gieber and Pat Brehm are dedicated members of the Quality-of-Life Coalition in Dickinson County and have played a crucial role in the Pathways to a Healthy Kansas grant since 2020. Their

Protect and Improve the Health and Environment of all Kansans

focus on addressing social determinants of health has resulted in several positive developments, including the implementation of commercial tobacco-free policies in several areas throughout their community. They also partnered with a long-term care center to establish a resident-led garden and were instrumental in constructing a walking path at a hospital in Abilene.

The City of Arma has diligently worked to enhance the overall health and well-being of its residents. Through collaboration with Live Well Crawford County, the city established a community garden at the Arma Public Library, which has provided fresh produce to Arma residents and nearby communities at no cost. They have also recently implemented policies to designate their city parks and a sidewalk in McDonald Park as tobacco/vape free areas.

Honorable Mentions

Lauren Wolf is an enthusiastic health and wellness advocate who organized a walkathon for over 500 students while serving as President of her children's elementary school Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). As a registered nurse, she volunteered to administer COVID vaccines for vulnerable populations. Lauren also dedicated her time as a "meal maker" for the Ronald McDonald House and provided over 150 sandwiches for SilverBackks, Inc., a nonprofit organization that ensures children receive a meal every weeknight at local community centers.

The Stormont Vail Health Mobile Clinic Team has been serving Shawnee County since February 2022, bringing healthcare to neighborhoods in need by addressing transportation needs and assisting uninsured patients with Medicaid applications and local donated care. The team also collaborates with the Mobile Access Partnership to serve people experiencing homelessness by providing services such as showers, food, clothing, cell phones and even vet care for pets.