

2008 Hometown Health Heroes

Michigan Public Health Week

Drusilla Allen – Wayne County

Drusilla Allen, an employee of the Wayne County Department of Public Health, has worked tirelessly as a volunteer member of the Sumpter Township Parks and Recreation Commission where she has served for 8 years. As a member of the Sumpter Township Parks Commission, Ms. Allen has been influential in helping to create a positive healthy recreational setting in the community. Some of her activities include: cleaning up the horse trails and walking trails by picking up and removing trash, downed trees and other debris in parks; bringing in sand to create a beach and swimming area; removing algae and putting algaecide in the water; repairing the fishing dock; stocking the pond with various fish species; putting together a playground kit, which contained swings, slides, and a climbing wall; and erecting two steel pavilion kits, manmade grills and picnic tables. This year, Ms. Allen and the Commission will be working on projects at another park which will include erecting a playground and pavilion kit, redoing the horseshoe pits with new sand and timbers, removing and pouring a new concrete basketball court and installing new hoops. Thank you, Drusilla, for all that you have done to provide a safe and healthy environment for Sumpter Township residents

Alliance for Immunization in Michigan (AIM) Coalition - Statewide

The Alliance for Immunization in Michigan (AIM) Coalition, a partnership of public and private sector organizations, focuses on improving immunization services in Michigan. For more than 13 years, the AIM Coalition has strived to protect Michigan's vulnerable residents from influenza and pneumococcal disease. AIM urges all immunization providers to utilize the AIM Provider Toolkit, a nationally recognized resource kit which serves as a valuable resource for providers. The kit contains current immunization schedules, news, and information on child, adolescent and adult immunization practices, as well as information on talking to and educating families, and current vaccine storage practices and resources. More importantly, the AIM Coalition continues to work toward the goal of assuring that all of Michigan's citizens are protected from all vaccine-preventable diseases. Air pollution can trigger events related to respiratory diseases, particularly in vulnerable populations such as children, the elderly, and those with chronic diseases. Thank you, AIM Coalition. Your work to protect these susceptible populations is admirable.

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Thomas Buss - Traverse City

Thomas Buss, of Traverse City, has spent a significant amount of his own time working to protect the residents of his community by spearheading an initiative to keep the waters of Grand Traverse Bay clean. Tom's work has focused on reducing E. coli levels by collaborating with local governments to pass ordinances to protect the watershed, conducting sanitary surveys of the watershed to identify contamination sources, and developing a beach model that can predict times of higher E. coli levels. Further, Tom has done a great deal to educate the public about this matter, by bringing together subject matter experts for a community forum. Thank you, Tom, for your efforts to protect the residents and environment of Traverse City.

Jerome Chandler - Detroit

Jerome Chandler is a case manager working with the chronically homeless population in Detroit. He has worked tirelessly with this rapidly growing population to make sure they receive the necessary mental health and substance abuse treatment they need, and to help keep them from freezing during Michigan's cold winter nights. From coaxing people out from under bridges to conducting six daily sweeps throughout the central business district, Jerome's cheerful disposition and dedication to his work have helped link many clients to shelter and housing, substance abuse and mental health, in addition to other necessary services. Thank you, Jerome, for your work to protect this vulnerable population from the effects of a changing climate.

Janet Kiley & Angela Glew (joint award) - MDCH Injury & Violence Prevention and Tobacco Prevention and Control Sections - Lansing

Janet Kiley and Angela Glew have inspired an entire floor of Community Health employees to start recycling Styrofoam and PET #1 Water Bottles. Both women continue to educate about the benefits of recycling and how an individual's small steps can make a big impact on reducing the effects of climate change. Every two weeks, Ms. Kiley takes a floor's worth of used Styrofoam to be recycled into useful products like baseboard and crown molding. And as needed, Ms. Glew takes the water bottles to a common location where they are gathered and taken to eventually be recycled into items like carpet, clothes, or even new bottles. Every bottle and piece of Styrofoam these inspired women keep out of Michigan landfills adds further to greenhouse gas savings. Thank you, Janet and Angela, for your efforts to "green up" your workplace.

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Packard Community Clinic - Ann Arbor

The Packard Community Clinic (PCC), a private non-profit family medicine practice, has been a champion of the medically underserved in Washtenaw County for over 35 years. The clinic's mission is to provide access to top quality primary health care to those for whom cost would otherwise be a barrier. Seeing anyone, regardless of ability to pay, and subsidizing over half the visits to the clinic, Packard has provided care to many who would not have otherwise received care. Further, the clinic has prepared a full time mental health clinician and a part-time psychiatrist, delivering "curbside" consultations, case management, and treatment services. Thank you, Packard Community Clinic, for serving vulnerable populations that are often times most affected by climate change, and for integrating primary care and mental health services.

Kathryn Savoie - Dearborn

Dr. Savoie is a recognized leader in environmental health in Michigan. In her role with ACCESS, Dr. Savoie directs a department that promotes awareness among Arab Americans of environmental concerns and their impact on health. As a leader in environmental justice initiatives, both in Detroit and throughout Michigan, she is a founding member of Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice and serves on the Board of the Michigan Environmental Council and the Wayne County Global Warming Task Force. Dr. Savoie was also part of an environmental equity panel at last year's Premier Public Health Conference. Notably, she was one of the original 50 individuals trained by Al Gore's Climate Project and has made over 60 presentations to a variety of community groups, including grassroots organizations, neighborhood groups, health professional organizations, elected officials, schools, businesses, and retiree organizations. Her presentation specifically speaks to the impacts of climate change in Michigan, including public health, economic, and ecologic impacts and has been adapted for younger audiences. Thank you, Kathryn, for your leading efforts to protect the public's health by lessening the impacts of global warming through education.

Mel Visser - Portage (accomplishment done in Upper Peninsula)

Mel Visser has done an impressive amount of citizen advocacy work to rid the world's water and fish supplies of Toxaphene and other POPs. After retirement, Mel pursued his Upper Peninsula love of Lake Superior and fishing. He found out that toxaphene (a highly persistent organic pesticide) levels were still increasing even though those levels disappeared from the fishing guide information in Michigan and other states and provinces. Mr. Visser joined with others exploring the island ice floes of the Arctic where they confirmed high levels of POPs in the

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water and the people. These POPs were not used in the area, but appeared in concentrations greater than where they were used. Thank you, Mel, for your efforts to make Michigan's water and fish supply healthy.

Washtenaw Biking and Walking Coalition - Ann Arbor

Since its inception in 1999, the Washtenaw Bicycling and Walking Coalition (WBWC) has been a strong voice in the promotion of transportation options that make sense for sustainable and livable communities. Monthly membership meetings at the Ecology Center in Ann Arbor create a space for diverse stakeholders to join together to advance non-motorized transportation enhancement projects, policies, and education initiatives. The coalition recognizes that emissions caused by our culture's over-reliance on cars are a significant contributor to climate change and other significant public health threats such as obesity, and they are working hard to promote walking and biking as valid transportation alternatives. The Coalition has a strong presence at community events, educating the public about the air quality, physical and mental health, and economic benefits of sustainable transportation, as well as how cyclists and car drivers can safely co-exist on our roads. Thanks, Washtenaw Biking and Walking Coalition, for your dedication to human-powered transportation – your work is vital to cutting emissions, improving air quality, and preventing the escalation of climate change!

Judy Weber, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator - Mid-Michigan District Health Department – Stanton (NOT PRESENT)

Judy Weber, from the Mid-Michigan District Health Department, has enabled a three-county area in central Michigan to plan and prepare for both local and more wide-scale emergencies. This has been implemented through collaboration and, according to her peers, diplomacy and persistence since the program's inception in 2002. In the case of a disaster in Clinton, Gratiot, or Montcalm counties, they've set up a coordinated and rapid response, expedited through a network that includes local social/health service agencies to provide assessment, communication, emergency care, and refuge. Ms. Weber has been recognized by her peers, and in 2007 received the EARN (Employee Achieving Recognized Notability) award for her continued commitment to the agency, community, and co-workers. Thank you, Judy, for your work to bring together a very diverse group of stakeholders, in order to form a cohesive response network that is ready to take action in the event of a natural disaster or other public health emergency. Judy received her award at the Great Lakes Homeland Security Training Conference and Expo in Grand Rapids last night.