

**CALLING  
ALL HEALTH  
HEROES!**



**HEALTH  
HEROES  
AWARDS**

 South Central  
Public Health District  
*Prevent. Promote. Protect.*

**2025 HEALTH HEROES**



# ***WHO ARE HEALTH HEROES?***

## ***A YEARLY CELEBRATION OF LOCAL EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC HEALTH***

Every year, South Central Public Health District asks local residents to nominate neighbors that go above and beyond to improve the health of people in their community.

Past winners include students, doctors, emergency responders, educators, and everyday citizens who responded to needs they found in their neighborhoods.

We are grateful for the opportunity to honor the hard work, dedication, and self-sacrifice these residents show as they find ways to improve their communities, and are proud to present the 2025 Health Heroes winners in the following pages.



# HIATUS RANCH

## HEALTH HEROES 2025 WINNER ORGANIZATION

Located in Shoshone, Idaho, Hiatus Ranch is a non-profit organization dedicated to free suicide prevention and rehabilitation services for veterans, active duty service members, and first responders.

Suicide is now the second leading cause of death for post-9/11 veterans. Hiatus Ranch was founded by a veteran and suicide attempt survivor to help fill the gap in suicide prevention services for these vulnerable populations.

The ranch offers retreats to these individuals that need time in their lives to regroup, re-energize, and reset. This is done through equine-assisted therapy, service animal training, recreational activities, and handicrafts. Participants get an understanding of what it's like to work on a ranch through chores and field trips. A licensed psychiatrist is also directly involved, offering talk therapy while participating in ranch chores. The program is goal-centered and offers check-ins after retreat completion.



# BONNIE STEFFENS

## HEALTH HEROES 2025 WINNER ADULT PROFESSIONAL

Bonnie Steffens is a skilled nurse practitioner and migraine specialist known for her exceptional dedication and compassionate care. Her medical practice at St. Luke's Neurology has an impressive 437 five-star reviews for medical excellence and patient care that goes above and beyond.

Bonnie is also known for her medical volunteer work outside of St. Luke's. She dedicates part of her time to providing care free of charge at the Wellness Tree Clinic in Twin Falls, Idaho.

In that capacity, she talks with patients about illness prevention, promoting good habits, and advising patients to protect their health through good nutrition, sleep, and self-care. Her dedication to empowering patients with the knowledge and tools they need to live healthier lives is inspiring. Every day, she shows a deep commitment to improving the overall well-being of the community.

One of her chronic migraine patients states that Bonnie is a "constant source of support." The patient also said that, "Bonnie not only provided physical relief, but also took the time to expand my health education. She makes me feel as if I am her only special patient, but I know others feel the same way."

# RITA RUHTER

## HEALTH HEROES 2025 WINNER ADULT VOLUNTEER

Rita Ruhter is an advocate for suicide prevention through the mental health awareness organization Jake Ducks.

The organization was founded to honor her son Jake and promote small and intentional acts of kindness that can make a difference in the lives of others.

Since 2022, Rita has given out over 2000 Jake Ducks as a way to raise awareness for suicide prevention.

So far, Jake Ducks have visited 19 U.S. states and 15 countries. People are encouraged to take the rubber ducks, write a message of hope on the bottom, and give them to friends, family, and others in need of a bright spot to their day. Rita is a frequent presence at events throughout the Magic Valley, helping high school students, and setting up the Jake Ducks booth at high school sporting events. Through the Jake Ducks Instagram page, people post pictures of the ducks on their travels, on their quest to spread messages of hope.



# JONATHAN HARRIS

## **HEALTH HEROES 2025 WINNER YOUTH VOLUNTEER**

Jonathan Harris chose to promote mental health for his senior project and showcased leadership skills through organizing a pickleball tournament called Project A.C.E., which stands for ask, care, and encourage.

The pickleball tournament, held in September during National Suicide Prevention Month, consisted of multiple events over a two day span. This included a young adult tournament and a larger main event with over 60 pickleball players. During the events, mental health booths were set up to educate the community on mental health resources available in the region.

Jonathan showed incredible courage by sharing his own mental health journey in front of the large crowds at the tournament. His senior project also raised money for the Optimal Brain Cancer Critical Impact Foundation, which provides free microcurrent neurotherapy services for people ages 12 to 24. This type of therapy can help individuals struggling with anxiety, ADHD, and PTSD, among other conditions.

Jonathan's passion to promote mental health awareness continues beyond his senior project. His nominator, Tennille Kober, states, "I am extremely proud of Jonathan. Over the summer and his school year, I have seen an immense amount of confidence emerge from him."

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## **HONORABLE MENTIONS**

### **HEALTH HEROES 2025 NOMINATIONS LIST**

Every year, South Central Public Health District receives nominations for Health Heroes all over our health district.

Thank you to all of the members of the community that took the time to nominate their Health Heroes, and thank you to these Heroes that go above and beyond to improve public health in their communities:

**Cecille Griffith**

Nominated for service to the community and operating/managing East End Providers food pantry

**Heather Lambson**

Nominated for providing access to care through transportation

**Heather Wesley**

Nominated for exemplary service to the community

**Henry Muñoz**

Nominated for extensive community service and firefighting

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## **HONORABLE MENTIONS**

### **HEALTH HEROES 2025 NOMINATIONS LIST**

**Jae's Place**

**Nominated for raising awareness and offering resources  
for mental health and suicide prevention**

**Jennifer Gould**

**Nominated for suicide prevention and excellence in nursing**

**Justin James Jensen**

**Nominated for extensive community involvement and work as a  
firefighter and EMT**

**MEP Meals**

**Nominated for serving the community through nutrition services**

**Suzette Baker**

**Nominated for exemplary work at a health organization**

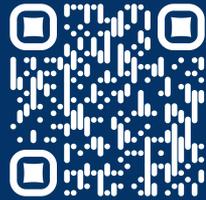
**Tod Gunter**

**Nominated for excellence in suicide prevention and social services**

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For more information, visit:



[phd5.idaho.gov/health-heroes](https://phd5.idaho.gov/health-heroes)



**THANK  
YOU!**

Thank you for joining us as we celebrate the good work of great people in our community. It is so important to honor the heroes around us. SCPHD is grateful for the chance to do so with you.



## **ABOUT SCPHD**

### ***SOUTH CENTRAL PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT PREVENT. PROMOTE. PROTECT.***

Public health efforts began in South Central Idaho in 1928. Twin Falls County was fighting a meningitis epidemic. Hundreds of cases and many deaths resulted in a quarantine of the entire city of Twin Falls. The county commissioners developed the first area health unit consisting of three public health nurses and a sanitary inspector. Today, South Central Public Health District employs nearly 100 professionally trained nurses, dietitians, epidemiologists, dental hygienists, health educators, and environmental specialists.

South Central Public Health District is a leader in the multi-county concept of providing public health services. We have offices in Bellevue, Gooding, Heyburn, Jerome, and Twin Falls. With part-time clinics in Shoshone and Fairfield as well, we serve all eight counties of South Central Idaho and are part of a statewide system of seven public health districts.

SCPHD's mission is to prevent disease, promote healthy lifestyles, and to protect and prepare the public against health threats.

# SCPHD OFFICES



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**SEE YOU NEXT YEAR!**