

HEALTH HEROES 2023



South Central
Public Health District

Prevent. Promote. Protect. phd5.idaho.gov



WHO ARE THE SOUTH CENTRAL IDAHO HEALTH HEROES?

For more than a decade, South Central Public Health District has asked residents to nominate neighbors who have gone above and beyond to improve the health of people in their community.

Winners have included students, doctors, emergency responders, educators, and everyday citizens who have responded to a need they found in their neighborhood.

We are grateful for the opportunity to honor the hard work, dedication, and self sacrifice these residents have shown as they find ways to improve their community.



Magic Valley
**SUICIDE
AWARENESS
& PREVENTION**

Logos of the local suicide prevention coalitions.

ORGANIZATION: MAGIC VALLEY SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION (MVSAP), 5B SUICIDE PREVENTION ALLIANCE, AND MINI-CASSIA PAUSE: SUICIDE AWARENESS PREVENTION AND SUPPORT.

In the last few years, the United States has seen an increase in suicides and mental distress. Our region of Idaho has shared in that increase, with many local families devastated by untimely deaths.

Volunteers and professionals across the region are dedicating time, energy, and resources to reverse this trend. Members of the three coalitions listed above are regularly seen in the community sharing resources and education with schools, emergency responders, and at local events. They also support loss survivors, hire motivational speakers, and host events to help break the stigma around suicide and educate the community about mental health.

The nominator wrote, "Everyone in the coalition donates their own time to help educate the community and bring hope to peoples lives."

We are grateful for the incredible work of these organizations in breaking down barriers and empowering residents to take action against suicide.



ADULT PROFESSIONALS: RANDY WASTRADOWSKI AND JOHN SPIERS

Seeing a critical need in the community, Randy and John took on leadership roles this winter to provide residents with shelter during blisteringly cold nights.

In it's pilot year, a warming center was started in Twin Falls to provide a warm and safe place for unsheltered people in our community. Ten different people were served by this shelter across 17 freezing days and nights. Many volunteers and professionals made this effort a success, but Randy and John went above and beyond in their efforts. They performed behind the scenes work to establish the center, became the main volunteers to support the center, and even took turns staying up all night so they could keep the shelter open despite their full-time day jobs.

We thank Randy and John for the enormous difference they made in starting and continuing a service that likely prevented many health issues for unsheltered residents.



ADULT VOLUNTEER: MACKENZIE RILEY

After fighting her own mental health crisis, Mackenzie realized there were not enough resources for vulnerable youth in her Lincoln County community. Mackenzie created a group for teens and young adults that offers a safe place to meet, identified supportive and empathetic adults in the community who work as allies, and spotlights the need for quality mental health and support. Mackenzie is now also working on a list of local organizations that are accepting and supporting vulnerable youth. Because of her work, the group is growing and has provided much needed resources and support in the area.

Thank you Mackenzie for the work you are doing to help people find a safe place and the support they need.



YOUTH VOLUNTEER: ALLISON NEWTON

Allison was first introduced to the Ronald McDonald House when her younger siblings had to stay in the hospital for special vision surgeries.

Seeing the mental and emotional strain children in the hospital face, Allison decided to assemble care kits to remind kids someone was, "in their corner and rooting for them."

Allison solicited donations and sold homemade slippers to purchase supplies, then created 75 pediatric kits she distributed to three different facilities supporting youth. These kits included toothbrushes, toothpaste, and a comfort toy - sometimes her homemade slippers.

"The children she has served will know that someone is caring and thinking about them as they face hard things," said her nominator. "Community members in Camas County have enjoyed being part of a caring project that helps children facing difficult situations."

Thank you Allison for taking the initiative to support and help our youngest residents while they take on serious health battles.



2022 HEALTH HEROES

Learn more about our 2022 health heroes by visiting phd5.idaho.gov/health-heroes or use the QR code below.





THANK YOU

Thank you for joining us as we celebrate the good work of great people in our community.

It is important to honor the heroes around us. South Central Public Health District is grateful for the chance to do so with you.