



## **2023 Public Health Award Winners**

### **Cheney Mansion staff, Community award winner**

During the COVID 19 Pandemic, the Park District of Oak Park's Cheney Mansion staff opened the facility to the public for vaccine clinics, even before and after regular business hours. Year round the Cheney staff works hard to put on many community events for all ages, such as cooking classes, camps and holiday events that benefit the social wellbeing of our community. They did not hesitate to open their doors with care and compassion to aid the Health Department in providing for our community when asked. The Cheney Mansion staff had clinics set up when Health Department staff arrived and helped clean up after each clinic. They even took time to learn all about the vaccines and who is eligible so they were able to answer questions when people called them instead of the Health Department for clinic information.

### **Collaboration for Early Childhood, Community award winner**

In Fall 2021, during a monthly Collaboration Director's Roundtable consisting of Directors from multiple Oak Park early childhood programs, it was shared that we were struggling to maintain a healthy learning environment for children, families and teachers by understanding and implementing COVID-19 guidelines for school. The Collaboration for Early Childhood contacted the Oak Park Health Department and coordinated to host a weekly check-in meeting with Dr. Theresa Chapple where directors could receive up-to-date COVID-19 guidance from the Health Department, have our questions answered and provide insight to our current needs and concerns with Dr Chapple. Weekly notes were shared following the meeting, ensuring all Oak Park early childhood programs had access to the information. As a member of the early childhood community, this resource was invaluable to successful mitigation of COVID-19 during the height of reopening in our schools.

### **Live4Lali, Community award winner**

Live4Lali works in the Chicago suburbs "to reduce stigma and prevent substance use disorder among individuals, families, and communities, and minimize the overall health, legal, and social harms associated with substance use." Over the past year, the presence of Live4Lali in the Oak Park community has increased greatly. The Live4Lali team's dedication and concern for the residents in Oak Park experiencing substance use disorder is apparent in the extension of its programming into the community and the strength and number of collaborative relationships Live4Lali has formed with Oak Park community organizations. They also regularly provide outreach in Oak Park, both from their mobile van and on foot through, through which they have formed relationships with the community of unhoused people in the Village.

**Oak Park River Forest Chamber of Commerce, Leadership award winner**

The Chamber of Commerce and its leadership has consistently demonstrated an unwavering commitment to the well-being of our community. The vision and proactive approach in addressing public health challenges have garnered widespread admiration and respect. The Chamber has organized numerous events focused on the health of our community. These events have not only educated the community, but have also provided an invaluable platform for health professionals to share their expertise and engage with the public. By fostering such collaborations, the Chamber has facilitated the dissemination of vital health information and created a sense of unity in our community.

**Alicia Chastain, Community award winner**

Alicia embodies the best of community public health in Oak Park. In order to protect students and improve their learning, Alicia has spent the past year volunteering her time advocating for cleaner air in schools and sharing freely available public health resources with community members and leaders. At a time when the community was becoming divided about pandemic protections, Alicia remained laser-focused on what universally popular public health changes could improve our community's school learning environments. Alicia's work began locally, meeting with and educating local school district leaders and community members, and now has statewide impact. Alicia is part of the leadership team of Illinois Stakeholders for Air Quality in Schools. Alicia has spent countless hours meeting and organizing with community members across the state. This work culminated in the introduction of a statewide bill (HB3713) to improve clean air in all schools across Illinois. To date, the bill has passed the Illinois House.

**Kelly O'Connor, Community award winner**

Kelly actively works to build community around the public health issues affecting youth in Oak Park. She recruits and maintains the Oak Park Township's Positive Youth Development (+PYD) taskforces of individuals and community organizations with the aim of educating each other on their work and the current issues faced, sharing experiences, and collaborating on building programs. This work ensures that everyone working on these issues can network and work together in building their programming, which results in less overlap of services and stronger programming overall. Her knowledge, positive attitude, and accepting philosophy make her a strong leader and contribute to the effectiveness of the collaborations formed through the +PYD taskforces. She is very aware of the underlying social determinants of the public health issues in which she works, which helps to create an equitable approach to her work.