2019-2020 KPHA Award Winners
The Administrative Support Staff position is crucial because it touches everything in an agency. The position demands efficiency, organization, interpersonal skills, leadership abilities, coordination, support, navigation skills, patience and the list go on. This year’s recipient encompasses all the necessary skills to be dynamite in this role. She is described as being adept at completing tasks quickly, creating work products on very short notice and has become the go-to support staff person when the team is on a deadline. After seeing her incredibly detailed minutes, several meeting facilitators have asked her to support their meetings. She has also been enlisted in helping with project management, interviewing prospective administrative employees, and contributing to research projects because of her exceptional organizational skills and valuable insights.

Originally hired as her Public Health Director’s Executive Assistant, she now supports the entire Senior Directors Team to varying degrees. She has volunteered to participate in additional trainings, which have increased her ability to contribute to the organization. Most importantly, she believes in the mission and vision of LMPHW to achieve health equity and it shines through in everything she does.

This year, the Administrative Support Staff Award recipient is Amanda Clark, Administrative Coordinator for Louisville Metro Public Health and Wellness.
This year’s recipient received two nominations and several support letters from within his local health department but also from other health departments across Kentucky. This is due to his leadership at both the local and state level in environmental health. He has been a dedicated public health employee in both the environmental health and public health preparedness for many years. His approachability combined with his experience and reliability leads to his sound advice being sought by his peers and public health leadership. These attributes make him not only an asset to his local health department but to public health. While he may not have been formally assigned to the position of mentor, he has happily assisted many in the environmental profession in his role as attested in the many letters of support.

He has actively participated in the Kentucky Environmental Leadership Group, assisted with the review of Kentucky’s environmental health regulations, and has been integral in local and state policy development around environmental health issues. Most recently, he led an effort to increase efficiencies and decrease barriers for obtaining Person in Charge (PIC) Food Safety Training. Kentucky adopted the 2013 Federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Food Code in July of 2019. Many local health departments had required PIC training prior to the 2013 Code adoption to improve sanitation and safety practices of those working in the food service industry. Such training and certification are designed to improve health and safety, improve the scores of local food establishments, decrease liabilities of those establishments, and decrease the number of follow up inspections performed for non-compliance. With the passing of the 2013 FDA Food Code, training became required for all food service managers across Kentucky. Also, during this same period, local health departments (LHDs) were actively evaluating staffing needs and in many cases downsizing to align with public health transformation as well as to deal with increased pension costs. He led an effort to design an online option for LHDs across Kentucky for both Food Manager level training as well as food handler training. The Lake Cumberland District Health Department built capacity to provide the administration and management of these courses and then he began meeting with local health department directors and leadership in their environmental health programs to offer their assistance. He also presented this option at the Kentucky Health Departments Association (KHDA) to ensure he made this available to each and every local health department throughout Kentucky.

Another important contribution to local health departments and the environmental health programs made by our recipient was his participation on a KHDA subcommittee that was tasked with assessing the cost of providing environmental services. This is crucial to local health departments and sustainment of the environmental health
programs. This work was requested by the sponsor of House Bill 129, the Public Health Transformation Bill, Representative Kimberly Moser. As a result of this work, local health departments providing these services are assured the necessary funding to continue to assure safety and sanitation throughout their local communities.

His contributions have the potential to positively affect all local health departments through increased efficiencies, funding, and sustainability. His passion and dedication to public health is to be admired and noted as he receives the Bill Patton Environmental Service Award.

Congratulations to this year’s Bill Patton Environmental Service Award, Lake Cumberland District HD’s Environmental Director, Stuart Spillman.
ELBERT “AL” AUSTIN, JR. CAREER ACHIEVEMENT

Honors a person who remains humble among peers yet towers above in achievements

He is described to be “articulate and always having a smile on his face. With his Southern charm and aura of authority; he has the ability to put everyone in the room at ease.” One of his peers commented that he “embodies the criteria for this award “humble among peers while towering above the rest in achievements” and “demonstrating loyalty and persevering in working to improve the public health for all Kentuckians.” “A true “Southern Gentleman”.

Over his 24-year career in public health, this recipient has increased his responsibility from front line staff to supervisor to Deputy Director and Director of Operations – the highest non-physician role in the department. His career started in environmental health and has thrived as he has held virtually every responsibility from sanitarian to lead inspector to Hazmat technician to site assessor.

As a food safety inspector, he developed Louisville’s “ABC” food inspection placarding system. He assisted with Louisville Metro Department of Public Health and Wellness’s public health transformation in 2017 and assisted Kentucky Health Department Association with policy work advocating for Kentucky’s Public Health Transformation in 2018 and 2019. He served on the State Public Health Commissioner’s Advisory Committee which created public health policy recommendations to state legislators. This work was critical to the creation of HB129 and HB171.

As Director of Operations, he has administrative oversight for the department including human resources and administration, fiscal management, communication, and technology integrations. He also oversees the department’s environmental health and regulatory enforcement responsibilities as well as emergency public health preparedness. In addition to the Kentucky Public Health Association, he is active in other state and national professional associations including the Kentucky Environmental Health Association (KYEHA) and the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA).

He has made an impression on many public health professionals. He has shown himself to truly be dedicated and hard-working public health professional. Throughout his career, he has demonstrated remarkable leadership, and a desire to constantly improve his professional skills by earning certification in multiple different specialty areas. He obtained his
Master of Public Health degree in 2018 and he is a Registered Sanitarian, a Certified Lead Inspector, and a Certified Hazmat Technician, among others.

In 2009, he served as Incident Commander for the local H1N1 response. He collaborated with numerous community partners to create a walk-in and drive-through clinic to administer H1N1 vaccinations, setting a world record of 22,000 vaccinations in a day and a half!

He served as Deputy Incident Commander for the Hepatitis A outbreak in 2017-2018. The response in the community under his direction arrested the outbreak in under 12 months and was repeatedly call the “Gold Standard” by many, including officials from the Center for Disease Control.

One public health director noted that “He is the definition of “work hard, play hard”. He takes his work seriously but is also a joy to be around. He has the institutional knowledge and understanding of policies and processes to help navigate through the public health system that I have relied on him for his expertise and diplomatic approach to situations many times.”

Another public health director wrote, “I have always found this recipient to have extensive knowledge and is renowned as a statewide environmental health subject matter expert who has the practical application experience to lead effectively in this area. His character is defined as trustworthy, dependable, knowledgeable, practical, and considerate with a servant’s heart.”

“Our recipient consistently reinforced the purpose of our work and our responsibility as public health professionals. The coworker added “This motto of his “as public health professionals” set the tone and focus for what we do day in and day out. We were here to protect the public, and we set our standards high, as professionals. This is a simple but profound mantra of his, that guides my work today and reminds us all to respect ourselves, respect our colleagues, and respect our work, and deliver the quality of work our community deserves.” His wisdom is relied on in various quarters and his leadership will be sorely missed when he retires in July.

Matt Rhodes, Director of Operations for Louisville Metro Public Health & Wellness, is this year’s recipient of the Elbert Al Austin Career Achievement Award.
She is said to be truly gifted at bringing together people and organizations passionate about maternal and child health to create collective impact. She was instrumental in the development of Healthy Babies Louisville, a collaborative which has over 25 partner organizations, working to develop, adopt and improve policies and practices shown to improve equity in birth outcomes. Healthy Babies Louisville is working to reduce preterm birth, low birth weight and infant death.

She leads the LMPHW Early Childhood Root Cause Team, which provides technical assistance and resources to organizations such as Jefferson County Public Schools. She has a leadership role in the organization, representing not only LMPHW, but the health care sector, on Ready for Kindergarten Guiding Team.

Following an extensive process of listening to the community, conducting a Community Health Needs Assessment, and working with partners to create a Community Health Improvement Plan, LMPHW developed the Healthy Louisville 2025 plan. She has embraced the call of Public Health 3.0 to create partnerships for collective impact and has provided a model for how to create and maintain successful and productive partnerships across all sectors of the community. For all these reasons, Leanne French has shown her tireless dedication to the women and children in Kentucky.

We are excited to award Leanne French, Community Health Administrator in the Center for Health Equity at Louisville Metro Public Health & Wellness with the 2020 Helen B. Fraser Award.
In 2019, three organizations came together to fund, create, and distribute a great video on two very important subjects: Safe Sleep Practices and Pediatric Abusive Head Trauma Prevention.

According to the CDC, pediatric abusive head trauma, commonly called shaken baby syndrome, is a leading cause of physical child abuse deaths in children under 5 years of age in the U.S. Additionally, there are about 3,500 sleep-related deaths among US babies each year with 2 in 5 mothers reporting using soft bedding, which is not recommended. Thus, it is critical to inform new parents how to keep their babies safe and learn how to reach out when support is needed.

Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky created an educational video for new parents about safe sleep practices and pediatric abusive head trauma. It includes the personal testimony of a parent whose little boy suffered from PAHT at the hands of a caregiver when he was an infant. The Kentucky Hospital Association distributed the film to all birthing centers in Kentucky, who are in a unique position to provide immediate support to parents. WellCare sponsored this film, which enabled more than 50,000 new parents to view it in over 100 hospitals across the Commonwealth. With approximately 54,000 babies born each year in Kentucky, this is quite the impact!

KPHA commends you for your collaborative work to prevent death and disability, to strengthen families, and to improve the health of our communities.

This year’s KPHA Group Award is awarded to the three organizations that made this possible: Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky, WellCare Health Plans & the Kentucky Hospital Association!
This year’s nominee for Outstanding Public Health Nurse Award demonstrates a true dedication to public health through her tenure of service. During her time in the field, she has served in many different capacities: HANDS manager, nurse administrator, accreditation coordinator and interim director.

During the Hepatitis A outbreak, the nominee and her local epidemiologist received a prestigious promising practice award for their contributions to contact investigation and administration of hepatitis A vaccine to inmates at their county correctional facility. Her work with the county jailer helped to improve the health of incarcerated individuals and mitigate illness within the facility.

Supporters of our nominee state “she is always available to lend a hand, lead others with confidence, provide structure when it’s needed, and is always there to find the next solution. She is a valuable resource to her direct staff and provides additional support to others throughout the health department when needed”.

Congratulations to Marci Flechler, Nurse Administrator with the Bullitt Co HD.
This year’s nominee for Outstanding Epidemiologist of the Year has shown relentless dedication to the improvement of maternal and child health (MCH) epidemiology in Kentucky. Her years of service to the state and countless contributions to MCH surveillance systems all provide overwhelming evidence of just how “outstanding” one individual can be.

Our nominee has truly outdone herself, generously serving in many roles within the Kentucky Department for Public Health (KDPH) and in many different programs, oftentimes serving as program manager. Programs that have benefited from her expertise include the diabetes program (chronic disease branch), WIC, HANDS, First Steps and Child Fatality Review. This year’s nominee was also instrumental in writing the grant application for Kentucky to become a state participant in the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS).

Our nominee has also shown great support of others within the workplace. One letter of support states, “When we struggle, she provides encouragement, and when we succeed, she provides recognition”. Another states she is a perfect display of integrity, thoughtfulness and kindness.

One of her colleagues states, “Few mothers and children know the impact that her work has had on their lives. She does not seek praise or recognition, but that does not mean she is not deserving of such”.

It is with great pleasure we present the Outstanding Epidemiologist Award to Tracey Jewell, Epidemiologist in the Division of Maternal & Child Health with the KY Dept for Public Health.
Generosity, compassion, radiates joy, personable individual, and truly wants to help other agencies and organizations succeed in their efforts to reach vulnerable populations, these are just some of the characteristics that this year’s recipient exemplifies. She seeks out new and inventive ways to assist the indigent and uninsured, homeless and downtrodden.

Over a span of almost ten years, this recipient has worked in multiple capacities; Clinical Director, Maternal Child Health Coordinator, Health Promotion Manager, and Public Health Information Officer. In each of these roles she has been instrumental in advocating for vulnerable populations and building non-traditional partnerships to strengthen our ability to reach those in most need. For example, she identified an impoverished neighborhood in the city of Elizabethtown, Kentucky. She connected key stakeholders and implemented a grant to build a community garden and walking trail. She mobilized residents to help with construction of both the garden and trail and the residents now have a community pavilion and hold monthly neighborhood gatherings. She participates in Feeding America distribution events, expungement projects, and hepatitis A immunization clinics for illicit drug users and homeless populations, Safe Sleep Campaign, and she collaborated with HANDs to start the Cribs for Kids program. These two-initiative resulted in awards from the March of Dimes and the Kentucky Department for Public Health Maternal Child Health Program. She also identified two minority community minority churches to begin a program that would encourage health healthy behaviors and implemented polices for church social events. This project was highlighted at KPHA, NACCHO and the Mid-South Transdisciplinary Collaborative Center for Health Disparities Research.

She currently advocates for Harm Reduction Syringe Service Program. She has been named to the City of Elizabethtown’s Housing Committee, the Lincoln Trail Area Development District Removing Obstacles Committee, and the Lincoln Trail District Health Department Equity Team. Through these venues, she continues to influence policy makers to ensure that those less fortunate are considered when decisions are made.
A community partner wrote, “she is a persevering advocate for people in the community with drug addiction, she has worked countless hours in educating the elected and appointed officials about the importance of the needle exchange programs. I have personally been with her when she had spent hours collecting drug overdose data to help locate the specific areas in the community that are being most affected by this problem. It is obvious that she has the leadership and commitment to improve the overall health of the community”

As a board member of the local soup kitchen, Warm Blessings, she identified that transportation was a barrier to many of the participants being able to maintain a steady job. She succeeded in securing several grants and implementing a project known as Ride to Independence, which was a collaboration between the health department and the local soup kitchen that worked to provide transportation to and from work in order for participants to maintain employment until they were able to purchase their own vehicles. The goal was to gain financial independence through job preservation. This program has been highlighted statewide as a model program. Her work with Warm Blessings and the impoverished population continues not only on a professional level, but in her personal life too. She delivers senior meals, donates resources and crusades for the less fortunate.

One coworker wrote, “When you are in her presence you cannot help but be uplifted by her kindness, humility, and faith. Her deep faith in God and humanity is immediately evident in the way she lives, works, and gives. She has been an inspiration to me and our staff. We even have a term for when we fall into her grips of going the extra mile to serve, “you’ve been Burganed.” She inspires those around her to be better human beings.”

Perhaps the quote from Mother Theresa best quantifies this recipient’s achievements: *I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.*

Congratulations to this year’s Paul Mason Memorial Award recipient, Terrie Burgan, Health Promotion Manager & Public Information Officer with the Lincoln Trail District Health Department.
Robin Gillespie has been with LMPHW WIC program for 19 years. She is said to be a dynamic and effective leader and integral to forging productive relationships in the breastfeeding advocacy community. Robin was recently voted President of Louisville's breastfeeding coalition, Kentuckiana Lactation Improvement Coalition (KLIC), which provides professional education, networking, communication, and mutual support among Lactation Consultants and other health professionals concerned with breastfeeding in Kentucky and Southeast Indiana.

For the past 1.5 years, Robin has been Acting WIC manager, in addition to her duties as our Lactation Supervisor. Her exceptional organizational skills and leadership have enabled her to be effective in both roles and even take on new projects. Recently she worked to reopen our WIC site in the South Jefferson Neighborhood Place to increase participation in that area. We anticipate that we will see an increase of 400 participants at the new site. She truly goes above and beyond to provide excellent quality services to participants in her program.

Over the past year, Robin has been able to build a collaborative environment for her team by incorporating all WIC staff into strategic planning and goal development. She has worked with each member of her team to develop individual goals and has set an example for staff by setting ambitious goals for herself, such as obtaining her International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners (IBLCE) Certification. She is an excellent supervisor. For all these reasons, she is most deserving of this award.

It is with great pleasure that we present the 2020 Peggy S. Kidd Nutrition award to Robin Gillespie, WIC Breastfeeding Promotion Supervisor & Regional Breastfeeding Coordinator at Louisville Metro Public Health & Wellness.
RUSSELL E. TEAGUE AWARD

To honor and recognize exceptional & meritorious achievement in public health

In the words of a colleague, “she has inspired many to improve public health and all who have worked with her call it an honor, joy and even a blessing. Her innovative approaches, meritorious achievement and far reaching contributions to public health improvement make her deserving of the recognition of this award.”

This individual has been an asset across many Kentucky communities due in part to her expertise in the concentrations of quality improvement, performance management, strategic planning, accreditation, community health assessment and community health improvement planning and facilitation. It is said that her commitment to Kentucky’s health is unparalleled.

Our awardee has also been a light for others when working through accreditation. As an active leader in the Kentucky Accreditation Coordinators Workgroup, she has been able to guide peers through the process and make what can be a tedious job a fun and exciting new challenge. She also became one of the first accreditation coordinators to lead her health department to national reaccreditation.

“She never settles for the status quo and her brain is always in QI mode, looking to continually improve the way public health operates…She truly is an asset to our Kentucky Public Health Workforce”.

This year’s 2020 Russell E. Teague Award goes to Brittany Parker, Deputy Director at the Franklin Co HD.
SARA C. STICE AWARD

Honors an individual who has made an outstanding contribution in the field of health education in Kentucky

Nearly 26 years ago this year’s awardee began working at her local health department as an intern, was hired as a health educator following that internship and has been with her local health department for over 25 years now. Early in her career she was promoted to the Health Education Director (now Health Policy and Promotion).

During her career, a few of her accomplishments include the establishment of smoking cessation programs in all the district’s counties, leading 69% of the district’s schools to become tobacco-free campuses (work prior to HB11 in 2019), establishing and/or expanding health coalitions in every county in the district; procuring over 2.5 million grant dollars for innovative ideas around teen health issues.

Additionally, she established a partnership with the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky and the Bounce Coalition to provide training and education district-wide on Adverse Childhood Experiences and trauma-informed approaches. She also has the desire to improve health education beyond her district and serves on the Kentucky Preventive Health Block Grant Committee and serves on the KPHA Board of Directors.

These accomplishments, and many others, were recorded in numerous letters of support, which came not only from public health colleagues, but also from others she has worked on various initiatives with…..a mayor, school superintendent, the Kentucky Department of Education, and a licensed psychologist.

In her current capacity she is responsible for direct and indirect reports and nearly $700,000 of the annual budget. Her director stated, “She excels at capacity development….is composed under pressure and welcomes new opportunities to improve health.” She is often heard saying, ‘Change is good.’
When asked her greatest career achievement, she responds that she thrives on changing community norms through coalition work. She has created multiple opportunities for community partners to work together on environmental and policy changes.

This year’s Sara C. Stice award recipient is Tracy Aaron, Director of Health Education, Lake Cumberland District HD.
Described as having a big heart and a kind soul, this year’s recipient is loved and respected by her staff and the families she serves. While managing a program and staff, she leads by example by carrying her own caseload, performing weekly home visits, and covering visits for her staff when needed. Others describe her as hard-working, dependable and selfless. One of her staff members says, and I quote, “I think the thing that sets her apart from other supervisors is that she would never ask or expect you to do something that she would not do herself.” She also runs a financially stable HANDS program…..making money and not requiring any local tax dollars.

She serves on her agency’s accreditation team, and although her program documentation could not be used in the accreditation process, she jumped right on board into a domain which she had no knowledge of, relentlessly tracked down documentation, coordinated with other staff and consistently met with the Accreditation Coordinator to address her assigned domain. She is a champion for quality improvement and performance management.

A co-worker said, “She is one of the nicest people you could ever meet, kind and sensitive to the needs of others and once, gave away a pair of her own shoes sitting in her office to someone in need.” Her nomination and numerous letters of support talked about how she goes above and beyond what is expected, her leadership, and dedication.

Congratulations to Lisa Lawson-Bono, our 2020 Virginia Dodd Rice Award recipient. Lisa is the HANDS Program Manager at the Montgomery County Health Department.
The KPHA Student Engagement Award for Excellence is presented to the student chapter/group that has demonstrated excellence during the preceding calendar year. The criteria for selecting the winning chapter includes the following: chapter/group viability, on & off-campus outreach, and partnerships & scholarly pursuits.

The work reported in this submission is as close to a gold standard of what a campus chapter can or should do. Dr. Richard Wilson (who is KPHA’s University Chair and works at the University of Louisville) and Louise Kent (2019-2020 KPHA Vice President) stated that the report itself was excellent work, reflecting a very well organized, committed and motivated group. On behalf of KPHA, Dr. Wilson and Louise Kent are excited to present KPHA’s 2020 Student Engagement Award to Western Kentucky University and its KPHA Student Chapter! Congratulations!
KPHA INDUSTRY AWARD

Honors an industry who has demonstrated exemplary leadership for the Commonwealth’s health

They have been sponsoring several events to help employers understand substance use disorders and how to help them, their families and the business. They are involved with the KY Can Heal grant, the largest grant UK has ever been funded! Vocal in their support of bans on smoking and vaping products. They also work a lot with the Tourism department and help promote a lot of outdoor and family friendly activities too.
KPHA President, Janie Cambron said about this year’s recipient:

When I thought about the president’s award, I struggled to just name one person because if you are at all involved with KPHA, it’s kind of an all-in type of family. There are late nights, which are unpaid, there are lots of emails and planning calls, too many Zooms lately to count and sometimes it’s just plain hard. But there is so much behind the scenes even more than that, including looking at spreadsheets for days, trying to be fiscally responsible, supporting other board members and one person kept coming to mind. This person is always willing to help, prefers to be behind the scenes, always put needs of others before her own and is an amazingly dedicated public health professional. This person has checked in on me regularly as well as other board members during the last year, making sure everyone is ok. This year’s 2020 KPHA President’s Award goes to Lisa Pollock.