

## **Honorary Emeritus Award**

*Miriam Link-Mullison*

Miriam Link-Mullison retired in June of 2017 after 20 years as the Director of Jackson County Health Department. During her career she also served as the President of both IPHA and IAPHA and was active in collaborations in her community and statewide. She is continuing her public health life as a consultant for IPHA and part-time instructor for the MPH program at SIUC. Miriam has played an integral over the years in advocating for a strong public health system in Illinois and continues to provide leadership as an active member of IPHA in her retirement.

## **Social Justice Award**

*Gina Lathan*

*Gina Lathan has purposefully served underserved and disadvantage populations and communities throughout her adult life. She recognizes that in order to effectively improve conditions that encompass social justice, the approach must be comprehensive. Gina lead the local chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Nu Omicron Omega, in partnership with Springfield School District 186, Lanphier High School, and Alderman Doris Turner in implementing a United Nations project that simulated United Nations issues, human rights, child labor, global poverty and economic growth and women's rights. The project engaged over 150 youth, many of which were female, minority, and low income. The primary objective was to address social justice by engage a new generation of ambassadors to begin training in increase knowledge of the vital work of the United Nations. Ms. Lathan developed a comprehensive workshop on health and racism that explores the collective health of the United States population, illustrating why it is imperative to ensure quality and optimal health for all and the correlation between race and racism. On a local community level, Gina annually organizes friends and family to provide academic scholarships and financial support to low income and predominately first generation college bound students, also providing back to school supplies to students to assist in contributing to resource equity among students. Gina also developed a breast cancer education and screening program targeted to formerly incarcerated women. The program linked the women to medical homes, assisted them in communications and disputes with insurance providers, provided transportation and supportive services to ensure that they women received mammograms and follow-up services.*

*\*Gina was nominated for this award by three colleagues.*

## **Distinguished Public Health Employee Award**

*Rhonda Andrews*

*Rhonda Andrews has worked tirelessly over the last year to raise awareness about the importance of colon cancer screening. After losing her husband to colon cancer, Rhonda has met with Federal and State legislators to advocate closing a costly insurance loophole of diagnostic billing for polyps found during*

*screening colonoscopies. Rhonda has utilized her local public health platform to educate colleagues and community health stakeholders on the importance of introducing affordable options for individuals to access routine screening for colorectal cancer using Fecal Immunochemical Test kits. She arranged Train-the-Trainer sessions in Tazewell and Fayette Counties at the end of August for public health staff to attend and receive a certificate, FIT kit, booklets, and jump drives with all documents, protocols, and messaging needed to launch the program immediately. Her diligence has resulted in the reality of over 30 Illinois local health departments planning to implement a FIT Kit Campaign during 2017 annual flu shot activities. Rhonda's contribution in this effort will literally save lives and impact the power of prevention programs that make public health the valuable resource that IPHA strives to articulate.*

### **Distinguished Public Health Student Award**

*Kate Kornfeind*

*During her tenure in the MPH program, Ms. Katelin Kornfeind has contributed both substantively and significantly to the program and to the larger community. During the 2016-2017 academic year, Ms. Kornfeind took on the leadership position of Vice-President for the MPH Student Advisory Panel and helped oversee 25 different events, which ranged from career development presentations to poverty simulations held in collaboration with the Northern Illinois Food Bank to service projects that helped to feed hungry children. In addition, Kate oversaw a team of students that planned and implemented five different activities for National Public Health Week. Thanks to her oversight, an informational table using the "Rethink Your Drink" campaign materials was placed on campus. Infographics and emails were also created and were sent to the University community each day of the week on topics that ranged from fracking to the safety of vaccines.*

*Additionally, Ms. Kornfeind is an outstanding student with a commitment to excellence. After her Research Methods course, she chose to build upon her work in the class by preparing her paper for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. This paper sought to examine the impact of maternity leave length on subsequent depressive symptoms among mothers working full-time. She has also volunteered her time to collaborate with multiple other research projects with a faculty member in the Department of Public Health at Benedictine University, Dr. Heather Sipsma. This series of projects seeks to examine the impact of hospital practices on breastfeeding success. Ms. Kornfeind initiated an additional project, using secondary data from the National Survey of Family Growth to examine the impact of parental education on safe sex practices among youth in the United States.*

### **IPHA Member Award of Merit**

*Sophie Naji*

*Sophie Naji has been working in the public health arena for over 15 years. As part of the MidAmerica Public Health Training Center, she was integral in bringing public health professionals much needed training and development opportunities in Illinois and throughout the Midwest. The highlight of her career was developing and executing the Rural Public Health Institute for 10 years. Housed at the University of Illinois at Chicago, she helped to bring trainings to southern health departments that were*

*often not afforded the training opportunities as those in the Chicagoland area and north of Springfield. To ensure that Rural Public Health was truly being addressed, a planning committee of locals was convened. Through multiple meetings managed and conducted by Sophie annually, 10 years of RPHI, brought national level speakers, opportunities for shared learning and the creation of a community of practice in southern Illinois. Taking the experiences she learned from bringing this diverse group of stakeholders together, she continues to shine through the latest version of the HRSA funded grant, the Regional Public Health Training Centers. Sophie is currently the Program Manager of the HRSA funded Region V Great Lakes Public Health Training Collaborative at the University of Illinois, School of Public Health. Her collaborative nature serves not only Illinois and the Midwest, but she has brought together nationally the Program Managers for each of the 10 regional projects. Supporting learning and growth for these individuals through knowledge sharing but also providing support and acknowledgement for the effort it takes for executing grants at the national and local levels.*

*Her nominator said, "at the MidAmerica Center for Public Health Practice, Sophie is our beacon of light. Through all that we do together, she brings her positivity and cheerful nature everywhere. The world of public health faces many challenges in today's climate. Beyond the lack of funding, understanding and valuing all that public health professionals do, is missing. As many of us struggle to remember why this work is important, Sophie reminds us daily that though we may not see the impacts today, the work we do is so important and will have a lasting impact on our children and their children's futures. As a full time worker, a mother of three beautiful children, a wife, a daughter, niece, aunt, and everything else, Sophie has spent the last few years focusing on finishing her Master in Public Health. Her dedication to the work she believes in shows every day in her spirit and smile she brings to work, in her work with those in Illinois, the Midwest and in the Nation."*

### **IPHA Affiliate Award of Merit**

*Susan G. Komen Memorial*

*Susan G Komen Memorial Affiliate, under the leadership of Linda Miracle has focused on venturing in innovative culturally and linguistically competent models to reach immigrant women of diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds who settle in Central Illinois. Furthermore, Susan G Komen advocacy staff has pursued numerous strategies to secure funding to serve uninsured women and open a path for treatment and care to those who, as a consequence of distance, economic, and health literacy challenges, traditionally were diagnosed at late stages of cancer. Susan G. Komen has been a partner, a guidance, and a support to numerous public health initiatives that close the health disparities gaps for women in Illinois. Komen has always been an outspoken leader about women's health needs in a changing healthcare system that often has excluded rural, immigrant and economically disadvantaged women.*

### **Everett I. Hageman Volunteerism Award**

*Christiana DeVoney*

*Christiana DeVoney has served as the IPHA AmeriCorps Member at Lee County Health Department for 2 full-time terms of service, meaning she has dedicated nearly 2 years of her life to volunteering on a full-time basis while receiving very modest financial benefits in return. As an AmeriCorps Member, she was dedicated to serving her local community in a volunteer capacity, while helping Lee County Health Department meet their public health needs. Her Site Supervisor, Tim Trader, describes her service as "nothing short of impressive." One of her duties at the health department included organizing and leading the Lee County Volunteer Corps. In this leadership role, she streamlined and improved communication with volunteers. She developed trainings that furthered the goals of the program, as well as the goal of further fulfillment of the volunteers. Christiana also coordinated a 16 hour Ground Search and Rescue training in Dixon. She brought together multiple agencies including the Lee County Sheriff's Department, Lee County EMA, Lee County Health Department, Lee County Volunteer Corps, Dixon Park District, American Red Cross and Illinois Search and Rescue. She worked tirelessly to make sure this training went well and was beneficial to all involved.*

*Christiana is a true example of the meaning of the word 'volunteer'. She completes tasks and helps others without hesitation and without expecting anything in return. Her passion for helping individuals and organizations has been witnessed multiple times during her 2 years as an IPHA AmeriCorps Member. She is always the first one to arrive to trainings and projects, lends a hand without being asked, and asks if help is needed with anything. When volunteering with fellow members during service projects, she steps up as a leader without being asked and 'Gets Things Done' without complaints, even if the tasks aren't glamorous.*

## **Public Health Collaboration Award**

### *Illinois Medical Cannabis Pilot Program*

*Illinois is one of 30 states with a legal medical cannabis program. The Governor's Office, Department of Financial and Professional Regulation, Department of Agriculture, Department of Public Health, and the Illinois State Police have shown unprecedented cross-agency collaboration over the last year to fully implement the Illinois Medical Cannabis Pilot Program and to provide exemplary service to the more than 23,000 patients participating in the program. All too often, collaboration between state agencies is a cumbersome process, however through the leadership of Bridget, Conny, Jeff, Jake, and Jack and their respective program teams, the Medical Cannabis Pilot Program implementation has been cohesive and consistent. The patient's served by this program have debilitating conditions and some of them have less than 6 months to live. Coordinating everything from the application and enrollment process to regulating cultivation centers where medical cannabis is grown to licensing dispensaries where medical cannabis is sold is critical to ensure the best health outcomes for patients. This team meets weekly to address cross-agency issues; participates in product safety recall tabletop exercises; and coordinates multi-agency procurement efforts. The team works diligently to navigate policy issues; promote patient safety; and prevent diversion into the community.*

*The MCPP team is made up of a group of individuals who think creatively and are mindful of shared goals for the program. They communicate effectively and take a whole-program view to ensuring that enrolled*

*patient needs are met, while being mindful that the public's health is protected. It is rare to see cross-agency collaboration work as smoothly as it has for this program. Illinois' Medical Cannabis Pilot Program has become a leader in medical cannabis program implementation and this team is contacted routinely by other states seeking to establish their own program.*