President’s Community Engagement Awards

June 11, 2021
The Office of Community Engagement: Building Healthier Communities

The Medical College of Wisconsin’s community engagement mission focuses on building productive partnerships with communities in Wisconsin and beyond. Through these partnerships and the relationships that sustain them, MCW and its community collaborators work together to make a greater impact on addressing Wisconsin’s critical health needs.

The MCW Office of Community Engagement (OCE) has been widely recognized with honors and awards, most recently in 2020 with the Campus Compact Richard Guarasci Award for Institutional Transformation, noting that MCW demonstrates a deep strategic commitment to community and is embracing its responsibility as a place-based institution to address diverse health needs throughout Wisconsin.

The OCE provides a broad range of programs, services, and tools to further develop MCW’s capacity to partner with communities. As a primary resource and catalyst for community engagement projects for MCW and community partners, the OCE effectively impacts how MCW addresses health equity and social disparities across Wisconsin.

2021 President’s Community Engagement Award

The President’s Community Engagement Award recognizes the exemplary community-academic partnership, community engaged research, and community outreach activities of faculty, staff, students, and community partners of MCW. Since 2015, the award has been sponsored by the President’s Office and administered by the OCE. We are grateful for the generosity and support of MCW President and CEO John R. Raymond, Sr., MD, and his leadership and recognition of those who carry out the valuable work of the community engagement mission.

Carnegie Foundation
Elected Community Engagement Classification

The Medical College of Wisconsin has been recognized by the Carnegie Foundation as a Community Engaged Institution since January 2015.
Community Partners

Azure’De Williams
Executive Director,
Milwaukee Area Health Education Center

Otis Winstead, Jr.
Community Health Worker,
Creative Health Collective

Cecilia Garcia
Community Health Worker,
Creative Health Collective

Wade Fernandez
Community Health Worker,
Creative Health Collective

Tou Fong Lee
Community Health Worker,
Creative Health Collective

MCW Student

Suma Samudrala
MD/PhD Candidate

Justin Laridaen
Medical Student Class of 2022

MCW Staff

Shayvon McCullum
Sr. Administrative Assistant,
Department of Orthopaedic Surgery

Christina Hoppe, MS
Education Coordinator,
Department of Pediatrics

MCW Faculty

Alonzo Walker, MD
Professor Emeritus,
Department of Surgery

Amy Prunuske, PhD
Associate Professor,
MCW-Central Wisconsin

Kajua Lor, PharmD, BCACP
Associate Professor,
School of Pharmacy

Corina Norrbom, MD
Assistant Professor
MCW-Central Wisconsin

MCW Faculty / Staff Team Special Recognition

Kristin Busse, PharmD, BCPS
Assistant Professor,
School of Pharmacy

Lisa Henk, MHR
Chief Administrator,
Office of Research

Karen MacKinnon, BPharm, RPh
Assistant Professor,
School of Pharmacy

Pam Jung
Events and Communications Operations Manager,
Communications and Brand Strategy
Staci Young, PhD

Dr. Staci Young is the new interim Senior Associate Dean for Community Engagement at MCW and interim Director of the Office of Community Engagement. She is also an Associate Professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine and the Director of the Center for Healthy Communities and Research. She teaches graduate courses and mentors students for MCW’s PhD program in Public and Community Health and serves as a Faculty Advisor for the student-run Saturday Clinic for the Uninsured. As a medical sociologist, her work demonstrates a deep commitment to examining structural barriers and conditions that contribute to health disparities.

Gregory M. Wesley, JD

Gregory Wesley is the Senior Vice President of Strategic Alliances and Business Development at MCW. In addition to his leadership role at MCW, Mr. Wesley currently serves on the Board of Directors for MHS Health Wisconsin, Milwaukee World Festival, Inc., the Greater Milwaukee Committee, the YMCA of Metropolitan Milwaukee, Teach for America Milwaukee, Versiti, Inc., among others. He is a trustee of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation and the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee, and a Milwaukee County supplemental court commissioner, and serves on additional local advisory boards.
Azure’De (DeDe) Williams

Executive Director, Milwaukee Area Health Education Center

“DeDe is dedicated to improving access to health care in underserved communities by advancing the diversity of health professionals in Milwaukee and southeast Wisconsin through strategic community partnerships.”

– John Meurer, MD, MBA, Professor and Director, Institute for Health & Equity, MCW-Milwaukee

Azure'De Williams has more than 25 years of experience working in the non-profit sector identifying two areas she feels most impact quality of life - Health and Education. She uses her skills in program development, civic engagement and program evaluation to support efforts in addressing health disparities and achievement gaps. In her role as the Executive Director for the Milwaukee Area Health Education Center, she has the responsibility for recruiting and mobilizing a diverse pipeline of healthcare professionals; identifying, cultivating and securing prospective sponsors and strategic alliances; partnering with advocacy groups to increase engagement within local health care clinics and systems; serving as liaison to governmental agencies focused on diversity and health disparities and managing the execution of MAHEC training programs. Azure'De Williams has four children - ages 18, 15, 12 and 8 who are often seen accompanying her on volunteer-related and community service projects.
Otis Winstead, Jr.

Executive Director, Dryhootch,
Community Health Worker, Community
Service Leader

"Otis epitomizes the ideal of Community
Engagement, continuously advocating for
veterans, for the African American community,
and serving as an important thought partner for
a number of our faculty."

– Zeno Franco, PhD, Associate Professor,
Family and Community Medicine,
MCW-Milwaukee

Otis Winstead, Jr. is the Executive Director of Great Lakes Dryhootch a Veteran non-profit organization based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Otis is Vietnam-era Veteran who has dedicated his life to serving the community. His heart can be found walking alongside other Veterans and providing peer support. Over the past several years, Otis has served in multiple leadership roles in the community, including serving as an essential partner with the Medical College of Wisconsin.
Wade Fernandez
Community Health Worker, Community Service Leader

“Each member of the team made significant contributions to meeting the needs of their community, but also demonstrated the power of what’s possible when institutions and community leaders work together.”

– Michael Stevenson, MPH, former Director of Health Strategy, City of Milwaukee Health Department

Wade Fernandez / Wiciwen Apis-Mahwaew (Walks With the Black Wolf) was born and raised in the ancient forests of the Menominee Indian Reservation in Wisconsin. Carrying a deep connection to the land and ancestors, he shares from concert stages to classrooms around the world (over 60 international tours). Fernandez is a multi-international award winner being recognized with awards including Male Artist Of The Year from the NAMMYs, Community Spirit Award from First Peoples Fund, Storyteller Of The Year from Wordcraft Warriors, and a Medal Of Honor from his tribal nation. During the recent pandemic Wade was instrumental in delivering COVID-19 messaging and care to underserved communities through film, music, and livestreaming while also delivering basic needs on the ground with Creative Health Collective. Whether social justice, environmental justice, community health, music or education, Wade will continue to serve, share & honor the gifts from his Creator, ancestors, and relatives.
Cecilia García is of Mexican nationality and has lived in the city of Milwaukee for 17 years. She is a community health worker and has worked for the Latino community for more than 8 years, seeking basic resources and direct connection with organizations that can provide services to low-income families. Serving her community has always been her passion. When the pandemic started, she and her family faced uncertainty and many difficulties while collecting and distributing food and other essential items for many families. Cecilia had to ask family and friends for donations, but, as Cecilia says, “Then God opened the opportunity to work in this program which was a relief to have access to more resources.” Masks that were distributed were a great support since many did not have access at the time due to the high demand. The flyers that were distributed provided important information, and contributions of food and diapers along with support for small businesses in the south were a great relief. Access to health service was also crucial and is still a necessity. "Something that makes me feel happy is that more and more people are starting to trust the vaccine. On behalf of my entire community, thank you very much!"
Tou Fong Lee

Disease Intervention Specialist, City of Milwaukee Health Department

“These Community Health Workers in effect became the eyes and ears of the City’s response to COVID-19 in communities of color, offering critical insights about how and where to direct services.”

– Michael Stevenson, MPH, former Director of Health Strategy, City of Milwaukee Health Department

Tou Fong Lee is a first-generation student. He is a proud UWM Alumni and currently completing his M.Ed. His passions are in public service and studying race and gender dynamics. Currently, Tou serves as a Disease Intervention Specialist with City of Milwaukee Health Department. He and his life partner Xee Tong are the founder and owners of Outkast Alterations, Wisconsin’s first Out & Proud Hmong LGBTQIA+ owned business. Identifying as a queer person of color, Tou relentlessly seeks to support communities of color in accessing education equity and creating safe spaces for LGBTQIA+ youth. Previously, Tou served as the Southeast Asian Specialist for victims/survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. He was also part of a stellar team called the Creative Health Collective in which their efforts were to provide immediate response and relief to families of color in Milwaukee who have been directly impacted by COVID-19.
From the onset, Suma and Justin have worked with various organizations at MCW and the Zablocki VA to achieve a deep-rooted partnership among all stakeholders including the Military Medical Student Association, Zablocki VA Volunteer services, and all medical departments...”

– Bertrand D. Berger, PhD, Assistant Professor, Psychiatry Department, MCW-Milwaukee, Zablocki VA Medical Center

Suma Samudrala is a Wisconsin native who graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She is currently completing her graduate school training as part of the dual-degree Medical Scientist Training Program (MD/PhD). Suma is passionate about engaging with local and diverse communities. She founded and currently chairs the My Life My Story program, an initiative that directly relays Veterans' life stories to health care teams at the Milwaukee VA Medical Center. Her community endeavors include supporting curriculum development for middle school, high school, and undergraduate pre-medical students as part of the Student Health Initiative for Pipeline Programs. She has also been actively involved in the Saturday Clinic for the Uninsured (SCU) where she first served as the 2017 Director of Policy and Finance and secured funding for essential healthcare supplies. She also chairs the Food as Medicine committee, which seeks to address food insecurity in the underserved Greater Milwaukee patient population.
Justin Laridaen was born and raised in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, and graduated from nearby UW-Madison. His passion for community service began as early as middle school, when he started volunteering at his hometown’s local food pantry. This sparked a passion for service that has endured ever since. Shortly after starting medical school at MCW, he joined the My Life, My Story program as Vice Chair, where he has worked closely with Suma Samudrala to advocate for Veteran health through a platform centered on storytelling. His other community endeavors include serving as Co-President for the MCW-Council on AIDS whose focus is delivering up-to-date, discussion-based presentations on safer sexual practices to area high school students. As he nears the completion of his medical school training, Justin is excited to pursue new community service opportunities and collaborations during his residency.
Shayvon McCullum
Sr. Administrative Assistant, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery

“Shayvon has dedicated herself to our students by engaging with them on how to keep themselves, as well as other community members, safe and sound. Shayvon’s commitment and support for the community is awe inspiring...”

– Morgyn Gathings, Club Manager, Bay View High School Boys and Girls Club

Shayvon McCullum was raised in Milwaukee and has lived in many neighborhoods within the 53206 zip code. Overcoming many obstacles, she graduated from Riverside University High School. Her life mission is to become someone who helps youth in a way that she herself had desperately needed. Working in the foster care system in 2017 opened her eyes to what she could do for the community and led to her founding Secure Bridges in 2019. The need to educate and inform youth and their families on prevention and awareness of youth sex trafficking is critical for the City of Milwaukee. Shayvon has spoken to and invested time in engaging with over 600 Milwaukee youth. Currently, Shayvon serves as Co-Chair on a Milwaukee Healthcare Collaborative Against Sex Trafficking subcommittee which provides resources for continuation of care for sex trafficked and exploited individuals. Secure Bridges joined in a partnership with West Care Milwaukee and Shayvon joined the Drug Free Community Board as a Co-Chair on two sub-committees.
Christina Hoppe, MS

Education Coordinator, Department of Pediatrics

“Christina’s dedication, passion, and ability to cultivate authentic community engagement has strengthened our community-academic partnerships and medical education training.”

– Constance Gundacker, MD, MPH, Assistant Professor, General and Community Pediatrics, MCW-Milwaukee

Christina Hoppe is an Education Program Coordinator in the Department of Pediatrics with the Medical Education team at the Medical College of Wisconsin. She supports the day-to-day coordination and outreach activities of the community-based pediatric residency training program and multiple departmental pediatric fellowship programs. Since joining the team in 2018, she has helped strengthen existing community partnerships and expand outreach in the community with additional partnerships. She values the opportunity to collaborate and share information and resources. She is most proud of the relationships developed with community partners, MCW faculty, her team, learners, and most importantly the amazing parent participants involved in the Community Pediatrics Training Initiative. Christina has a passion for education and learning. She participates on committees relevant to the advancement of the residency training program and community engagement through the Resident Advocacy Committee, Children's Health Literacy task force, and Best Babies Zones Westlawn.
Alonzo Walker, MD

Professor Emeritus, Department of Surgery

“For me, a leader in community engagement isn’t about just being seen in the community, it’s about people in the community seeing that individual as a valued and trusted partner in their community. It’s giving energy and passion to be a part of the community. That is Dr. Walker.”

– Beth Brunner, Partnership Manager, Wisconsin Cancer Collaborative

Alonzo Walker, MD joined the Department of Surgery at the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) in 1983. His clinical responsibilities and research focused on clinical trials in breast cancer with a specific interest in reducing barriers to breast health screening within African American women in Southeastern Wisconsin. Dr. Walker helped to establish and lead the Froedtert & MCW Breast Care Clinic and served as Medical Director for 10 years. Dr. Walker also spearheaded MCW’s first formal diversity and inclusion efforts, including the creation of the Spring Festival of Cultures and the President’s Diversity and Inclusion Awards. Currently, Dr. Alonzo Walker is Professor Emeritus of Surgery at MCW and serves as Co-Leader of the Cancer Center Community Advisory Board whose goal is to address cancer disparities in Southeastern Wisconsin through community engagement and research in cancer prevention, screening, diagnosis, treatment, and survivorship. Dr. Walker’s goal is to support the aims of the MCW Cancer Center in bringing the best cancer care to Southeast Wisconsin with a particular focus on minority communities.
Corina Norrbom, MD

Assistant Professor, MCW-Central WI, Co-Director, Physician in the Community Scholarly Pathway

“Drs. Prunuske and Norrbom represent the best of MCW’s commitment to improving our communities and training the next generation of physicians to follow in their footsteps as change agents for the betterment of health.”

– Lisa Grill Dodson, MD, Dean, MCW-Central WI

Corina Norrbom is Assistant Professor at MCW-Central WI and co-directs the Physician in the Community Pathway. She is a Health Policy Fellow with the Wisconsin Institute for Public Policy and Service. She is passionate about addressing social determinants of health and engages medical students in community collaborative efforts. She organized the Hmong and Hispanic Communication Network at onset of the COVID-19 pandemic to address disparities faced by immigrant communities. She co-chaired the Health Equity Track for the inaugural Toward One Wisconsin statewide inclusivity conference. She brought LENA Start to Marathon County, a parent education program which focuses on increasing parent-child talk before age 3. She currently serves on the DC Everest School Board and Marathon County Board of Health. Dr. Norrbom has practiced rural family medicine in Antigo, WI, and in New Zealand. She graduated from Washington University School of Medicine in 1994 and completed a Family Medicine residency in Duluth, MN.
Amy Prunuske, PhD

Associate Professor, MCW-Central WI

“Drs. Prunuske and Norrbom exemplify the community-academic partnerships honored by the MCW President’s Community Engagement Award. They represent the best of MCW’s commitment to improving our communities and training the next generation of physicians to follow in their footsteps as change agents for the betterment of health.”

– Lisa Grill Dodson, MD, Dean, MCW-Central WI

Amy Prunuske is an Associate Professor and founding faculty member at the Medical College of Wisconsin-Central WI. She first became engaged in community-based science through the establishment of a Lyme Disease outreach program, delivering interactive presentations to over 300 middle and high school students, and participated in the MCW Community Engaged Scholars mentoring program. With Dr. Corrie Norrbom, she has advised over 100 medical students in community-engaged research projects as part of the Physician in the Community Pathway. The collaboration has led to numerous partnerships and projects that have garnered grant funding and continue to impact the greater Wausau area including Providers and Teens Communicating for Health, D.C. Everest Mental Wellness Day, and the Advocates in Medicine pipeline Program. She serves as a Wisconsin Institute for Public Policy and Service Fellow working on issues related to equity and inclusion, early childhood education, and mental health.
Kajua Lor, PharmD, BCACP
Associate Professor, School of Pharmacy, Founding Chair, Clinical Sciences

“Dr. Lor has displayed strong leadership, commitment, and dedication to serving and caring for Hmong immigrants and refugees. She has a tireless commitment to promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion with “invisible identities” and truly embodies MCW’s Community Engagement mission.”

– Bill Wong, Medical Student, Class of 2022, MCW-Milwaukee

Kajua Lor, PharmD, BCACP is an Associate Professor and Founding Chair of the Clinical Sciences Department at the Medical College of Wisconsin School of Pharmacy in Milwaukee, WI. Dr. Lor earned her Doctorate of Pharmacy from the University of Wisconsin - Madison in 2013, after which she completed an ambulatory care residency at the University of Minnesota. She is a board-certified ambulatory care pharmacist. Dr. Lor was the first Hmong pharmacist to obtain a pharmacy academia position in the nation. Dr. Lor spent over 6 years implementing clinical pharmacy services at OLE Health a safety net clinic in Napa, CA which serves migrant workers. She is a native Hmong speaker with proficiency in Spanish. Dr. Lor was a fellow of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Clinical Scholars Program, collaborating with leaders to create healthier, more equitable communities.
Kristin Busse, PharmD, BCPS
Assistant Professor, School of Pharmacy

“The team made the community members feel welcomed and valued. Expressions of deep gratitude were conveyed to me by many, particularly when access to the vaccine was not readily available.”

– Gregory M. Wesley, JD, Senior Vice President, Strategic Alliances and Business Development, MCW-Milwaukee

Kristin Busse, PharmD, is an Assistant Professor in the School of Pharmacy and Director of the Early-Stage Research Regulatory Oversight Program in the Office of Research. With a background in storage, handling, and distribution of investigational agents, Kristin was able to help lead the operational effort behind the MCW COVID-19 vaccination clinic. She recognized from the beginning that standing up a clinic would require a multi-disciplinary effort with a huge time commitment from many individuals invested in making the clinic run smoothly and safely. On many accounts, the vaccination campaign has been one of the most significant highlights in her career impacting several thousand individuals at MCW and the surrounding community. It truly has been a pleasure to meet so many individuals and serve the community by hosting this clinic.
2021 PRESIDENT’S COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Karen MacKinnon,
BPharm, RPh

Assistant Professor, School of Pharmacy

"The team has intentionally supported MCW community partners and, in doing so, over half of all vaccinations were to a diverse population of community members."

– Jennifer S. Bultman, PMP, Chief of Staff, Office of the President

Karen J. MacKinnon received her Bachelor of Science, Pharmacy (BPharm) from UW Madison School of Pharmacy. She completed her post-graduate clinical pharmacy internship at Meriter Hospital in Madison, Wisconsin. She has over 30 years of experience in teaching and practice. She assisted in the establishment of three previous academic pharmacy programs having served in the roles of Director of Professional Laboratories and Director of Experiential Education. She has practiced pharmacy in institutional and community practice settings. In her role at MCW, Professor MacKinnon is the Director of Outreach, School of Pharmacy where she is responsible for developing corporate partnerships, activities and services that support the creation of new pharmacy practice models. She is actively involved in advocating pharmacist's implementation and delivery of patient care within the community. She is currently engaged with local and state immunization grants to support pharmacists' role in optimizing and expanding immunization access in Wisconsin.
Lisa Henk, MHR
Chief Administrator, Office of Research

“The team demonstrated notable effort to make the hub vaccination clinic accessible to community members based on understanding the importance of the equitable distribution of the vaccine to reduce disparities.”

– Gregory M. Wesley, JD, Senior Vice President, Strategic Alliances and Business Development, MCW-Milwaukee

Lisa Henk, originally from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, has served MCW since 2008 growing in responsibility and leadership in the research mission. Community Engagement is something she's been passionate about in her years with MCW leading the Milwaukee Academy of Science school supply drive for several years, holding a professional clothing drive for the Bottomless Closet and partnering with the United Way. The COVID-19 vaccine clinic was an extremely meaningful way to serve MCW and our community and she supported smooth operations of the effort including clinic logistics and the unique storage requirements of the vaccine.
Pam Jung

Events and Communications Operations Manager, Communications and Brand Strategy

“These women completed the vaccination program on top of their regular work. What a herculean effort it must have been to do this for so many months. I cannot think of a better example of community partnership!”

– Christine Pharr, PhD, President, Mount Mary University

Pam Jung worked at the Medical College of Wisconsin from November 2008 to June 2021 in the Office of Communications and Brand Strategy (formerly Public Affairs), with her latest role being the Events and Communications Operations Manager. As part of her role, she developed the vision, strategy, and standards for approximately 60 internal and external events per year that supported MCW's university, fundraising and engagement strategies. In Spring of 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Pam’s role expanded to meet the needs of MCW's COVID-19 response plan, and she provided project management support to both MCW's COVID-19 response as well as the Milwaukee County Unified Emergency Operations Center (UEOC). When MCW’s COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic expanded to accommodate community-based vaccinations, Pam joined the MCW vaccination clinic team to coordinate the community members, including managing a community-based scheduling system, communications, tracking registrations and recruiting additional volunteers to ensure a positive customer experience.
THANK YOU TO THE PRESIDENT’S COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AWARD 2021 COMMITTEE MEMBERS!

Melissa Denomie
Allison DeVan, PhD
Sabina Diehr, MD
Lisa Dodson, MD
Mark Flower
Tiffany Frazer
Brett Fuller, MAE
Kathy Kuhn
Michael Levas, MD, MS
John Meurer, MD, MBA
Sharon Neu Young
Jessica Olson, PhD