



2020 Maggie Marcopul Award Winner Katie Gassner

*Nominated by Tracy Auell
Submission Below*

MAGGIE MARCOPUL AWARD

First Name: Tracy
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Company Name: Mercer County Behavioral Health Commission, Inc.
Address 1: 8406 Sharon Mercer Road
City: Mercer
State/Province: Pennsylvania
Zip: 16137

Nominee First Name: Katie
Nominee Last Name: Gassner
Nominee Title: Tobacco Prevention Specialist
Nominee Company: Mercer County BHC Prevention Department
Nominee Address (street, city, state, zip): 8406 Sharon Mercer Road
Nominee Contact (email): katie.gassner@mcbhc.org
Nominee Contact (Phone):

Service: Katie exhibits the highest level of professionalism and innovation in her day to day service. Katie had the personal drive to seek out additional professional credentials and is a Nationally Certified Tobacco Treatment Specialist. She is committed to offering cutting edge prevention strategies across two counties - Mercer and Lawrence. Katie is a true collaborator, partner, innovator, educator and leader in the prevention field. Under Katie's guidance, The NWPA TCP for Mercer/Lawrence was recognized at the state level for the creation of the QUIT AND GET FIT in-person cessation program which was added to PA Best Practices website. Katie goes above and beyond the typical service delivery by personalizing each intervention. Thanks to Katie's guidance and positive 'can do' attitude, one example of such person-centered interaction led to one individual's successful startup of a local cessation support group.

Leadership: Under Katie's steadfast leadership, the Tobacco Prevention Workgroup has grown in participants and engagement. Katie is a creator and innovator. Both DOH and DDAP have shared documents statewide, created by Katie including

the Vaping Continuum of Services. Katie has successfully collaborated with rural health care facilities to increase access to Nicotine Replacement Therapies and referrals to the PA Free Quitline.

Advocacy:

Katie's advocacy efforts are a fabulous testament to how effective advocacy strategies promote ongoing support of tobacco cessation and prevention programs. She has been instrumental in orchestrating local events, ongoing visits and promotion of prevention initiatives with our local legislators. Katie models effective advocacy efforts with coalition members by providing the structure, resources and content for successful legislative visits. Under Katie's guidance, 250 local youth and community members mailed handwritten postcards to legislators promoting support of Tobacco 21. Each year, Katie orchestrates local efforts for TRU youth and Advisors to participate at the annual Day at The Capital event. Recently, due to the COVID19 limitations, Katie initiated a 'call to action' with our local representatives sending them each a personalized letter of invitation to participate in the Virtual Day at the Capital which also included dozens of thank you notes from the students who advocated for Tobacco 21.

Education:

Katie has tirelessly promoted education and awareness opportunities across two counties. During one academic year, Katie presented to 505 teachers Mercer county School District regarding current tobacco trends. In the same year, Katie assisted 27 stakeholders with creating, revising and/or strengthening tobacco policies; some of which include school districts, treatment providers, social clubs and a Managed Care Organization. Katie initiated the Catch My Breath program within our 14 school districts; motivating our prevention unit to infuse the four CMB lessons into our long standing summer educational program across six districts. Katie's level of passion and unconditional support for all partners regarding tobacco prevention, education and intervention opportunities is almost palpable- you can't help but get excited about prevention and recovery efforts when you talk with Katie. For this reason, along with the previously noted accomplishments and attributes, we enthusiastically nominate Katie Gassner!

What is the nominee's long-term impact of prevention efforts in their community, county, region or state (PA)? Limit of 1,024 characters and spaces.:

The positive, long term impact on prevention will be the result of Katie's premier advocacy efforts in the areas of environmental strategies/policy changes, (local and state), effective legislative visits and ongoing efforts to educate our youth. Katie's unwavering leadership skills continue to promote the education and training of our youth and as a result of these efforts, our community will reap the benefits for years to come with the growth of future prevention leaders!

Any other information you'd like to share on why the nominee is deserving? Limit of 1,024 characters and spaces. :

Katie's passion and unconditional support for all stakeholders regarding tobacco prevention, education, intervention and Recovery - is almost palpable – you can't help but be excited for tobacco prevention and recovery efforts when you talk to Katie. Her positive prevention energy is contagious!