

## MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR RELEASE April 3, 2023

### **Pierce County Public Health Announces 2023 Public Health Heroes**

As part of National Public Health Week (April 3-9), Pierce County Public Health (PCPH) has selected five Public Health Heroes for their work in promoting, protecting, and improving the health of individuals and communities in Pierce County. Local public health departments must rely on partnerships in other sectors to influence the conditions that impact people's health. PCPH is proud to celebrate our partnerships with these remarkable individuals and organizations. If you or an organization you work with is interested in getting involved with public health efforts in our communities, consider joining Healthier Together, a community coalition working to create and maintain healthy communities. Visit <https://www.healthiertogetherpiercestcroix.org/> for more information.

#### **Alyson Sauter**

Alyson Sauter has been serving the St. Croix Valley region for over a decade in several non-profit leadership roles. Alyson currently serves as the Community Impact Director for United Way St. Croix Valley. In this role, Alyson focuses much of her attention on mobilizing community partners throughout St. Croix, Pierce, Polk, and Burnett counties to address a wide range of barriers to accessing community resources, including transportation, mental health services, and access to healthy and affordable housing. Alyson also serves on numerous public health coalitions and workgroups, including Healthier Together Pierce and St. Croix Counties, and is a Mental Health First Aid facilitator. Alyson was chosen as a Public Health Hero for being a steadfast partner to PCPH and for her dedication as a skilled connector, facilitator, and community advocate.



#### **Dianne H-Robinson**

Dianne worked as a Public Health Nurse for Pierce County Public Health for over 30 years. She retired in January of 2022 but knew she wouldn't stay retired for long. In May 2022, Dianne started contracting with Pierce and Trempealeau County Health Departments. She enjoys getting back to public health nursing and working with the Birth to 3 program. When not working, she does a variety of different crafts and walks, and when the weather allows, she loves to bike. Dianne's favorite activity is babysitting her grandson. Dianne was selected as a Public Health Hero for her public health leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic and her support and dedication to public health even in retirement.



### **Mercedes Falk**

Mercedes is a Spanish English interpreter in the agricultural and rural communities of west central Wisconsin and southeast Minnesota. She works with farmers, farmworkers, and many individuals in our rural communities who want to understand one another more deeply. She lives on a small farm and has a deep appreciation for everyone that works hard to put food on our tables. As the Director of Puentes/Bridges, a small non-profit that works to increase cultural understanding, she loves seeing the transformation that takes place when individuals take the time to see life from someone else's perspective. Mercedes was selected as a Public Health Hero for her work as an interpreter with the Pierce-Pepin WIC program. She is a voice for our Spanish-speaking families as we strive to make our program more culturally and linguistically welcoming.



### **Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services**

Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services (PPCS) is an energy services cooperative in Ellsworth, Wisconsin, offering electric utility services to over 7,044 homes and businesses. As a Touchstone Energy Cooperative, PPCS is committed to excellence, innovation, and integrity and is dedicated to helping its communities Live Better®. PPCS was chosen as a Public Health Hero for their support of PCPH throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, including going above and beyond to provide a home for the first roll-out of COVID-19 drive-thru vaccination clinics to serve our community members.



### **UW-River Falls Student Health and Counseling Services**

UW-River Falls Student Health and Counseling Services promotes and supports physical and mental health wellness for students in the UWRF community. Their team provides on-campus professional mental health counseling and consultation services and collaborative clinical health services through M Health Fairview Clinic – River Falls and Pierce County Reproductive Health. In addition, holistic educational and preventative initiatives and programming are provided. Examples of current programming include Art Therapy, Meditation Group, Wellness Fair, Yoga for Mental Wellness, Cookies/Creativity/Community, and Intercultural Development Inventory. The Student Health and Counseling office also provides violence prevention services through the UWRF violence prevention coordinator and Turningpoint campus victim advocate. UWRF Student Health and Counseling Services was chosen as a Public Health Hero for their clinical and health services and educational opportunities available for students. They also went above and beyond during the pandemic to work with PCPH to ensure students and staff had access to COVID-19 vaccines and testing.

