



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Kent County Announces Excellence in Action Award Winners

GRAND RAPIDS – The Board of Commissioners is thrilled to announce the 2018 Excellence in Action Award winners. Award criteria is set through Performance Measures every department develops annually to promote a culture of excellence. The week of May 6-12, 2018, designated by Congress as Public Service Recognition Week (PSRW), gives the Kent County Board of Commissioners the perfect opportunity to say thank you to those programs that have gone above and beyond. Videos of the award winners can be found at accessKent.com/performancegmt. This year, the Board celebrated with five Excellence in Action Awards:

Excellence in Collaboration: Kent County Community Action (KCCA) (*formerly the Kent County Housing Commission*)

The United States Veterans Administration (VA) continued its partnership with the Kent County Housing Commission and provided 21 additional Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers, which helped continue the community goal of eliminating veterans' homelessness. The VA provides necessary case management services for the veteran, while the Housing Commission provides the Housing Choice Voucher and works with the veteran to secure housing. Our collaborative efforts have also been recognized nationally as a best practice model due to our recruitment strategies (beyond orientation), dual case management efforts, number of employed VASH clients and positive transitions from voucher recipient into self-sufficiency.

Excellence in Community Impact: Kent County Health Department

In April of 2017, the Kent County Health Department (KCHD) became aware of an investigation by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) regarding contaminated groundwater in the Belmont area. In the months that have followed, the wells of more than 1000 homes have been tested for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances or PFAS. The Kent County Health Department has been on the front lines of informing residents about their individual test results. Working in cooperation with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) KCHD has worked to advise residents about the known health consequences of PFAS and ways to limit exposure. KCHD has organized and conducted two town hall meetings, bringing MDHHS, MDEQ and Wolverine World Wide to the table to answer residents' questions. KCHD has established a website and a regular newsletter that is emailed to more than 1000 subscribers. KCHD and MDHHS are devising methodology to conduct the agency's largest-ever health impact survey in the area. KCHD's commitment to acting as an advocate for residents led the agency to seek federal help from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Excellence in Innovation: 17th Circuit Court

The 17th Circuit Court established a Girls' Court. In collaboration with Community Family Partnership and Wedgwood, the Court secured program funding and trauma therapy for the girls and their families. Girls' Court serves girl offenders by providing intensive treatment, incentives, community-based support while strengthening family relationships.

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Excellence in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (*new for 2018*): Kent County Prosecutor's Office

The Prosecutor's Office established a program with the Hispanic Center to send a victim witness advocate to the Hispanic Center once a month, to provide an open and non-threatening space to meet and discuss issues their clients may be having in the court system. The advocates meet with victims of domestic violence who may be afraid to file a report, witnesses who may be afraid to go to the courthouse, or any other person at the Hispanic Center who may have questions regarding anything pertaining to the criminal justice system.

The Chairman's Award: For Grit and Determination

This year The Chairman's Award recognized two teams: the A360 Implementation Team (staff from Fiscal Services, Human Resources and Information Technology) that worked diligently over the past three years to implement an integrated Financial Management System; and those who completed the Kent County Community Action (KCCA) merger (employees from KCCA, Information Technology, Fiscal Services, Human Resources and Facilities Management) to deliver more effective and efficient community services.

This is the second year of the Awards and Ceremony, which took place on Thursday, May 10, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. at the Board of Commissioners' meeting. "When people know that their leadership cares about them and supports them, they are more likely to take ownership of their actions and hold themselves accountable to achieve amazing results," said Wayman Britt, Kent County Administrator/Controller, who introduced the idea for the awards in 2017. "Achieving excellence is a hallmark of Kent County, our Board of Commissioners and our elected officials. The Excellence in Action Awards are an extension of the Board's vision that Kent County be the absolute best place to live and work. The awards are only a small reflection of the outstanding efforts that take place every day in the County to help make this possible."

Stay tuned to our social media pages for more about these awards and significant accomplishments: [facebook.com/KentCountyMI](https://www.facebook.com/KentCountyMI) and [twitter.com/KentCountyMI](https://www.twitter.com/KentCountyMI). PSRW has been celebrated since 1985 during the first full week in May. It is a time to honor those who serve our Nation as federal, state, county, and local government employees.

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