



COUNTY OF KENOSHA

John T. Jansen, Director
Department of Human Services

Ron Rogers, Director
Division of Children & Family Services
Job Center / Human Services Building
8600 Sheridan Road, Suite 200
Kenosha, WI 53143-6512
Phone: (262) 697-4500
Fax: (262) 605-6570

May 1, 2020

News release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jennie Tunkieicz
262-653-2831

Strong Family Awards presented to 2 Kenosha-area families

KENOSHA – Two local families were the recipients of this year’s Kenosha County Strong Family Awards, presented Thursday, April 30.

The honorees were Rachael Comstock and Megan Mercer and their respective families.

The Kenosha County Turn the Town Blue Committee presents these awards each April, as part of a series of events in recognition of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month.

Because this year’s award event was canceled due to the COVID-19 emergency, the 2020 awards were announced in a noontime Facebook Live stream from the Prevention Services Network Family Resource Center within the Kenosha County Job Center. The presenter was Alison Haas, protective factors project coordinator with the PSN Family Resource Center.

The awards honor local families that demonstrate the qualities of the five protective factors at the heart of the Strengthening Families Approach:

- Parent resiliency
- Knowledge of parenting and child development
- Social and emotional competence of children
- Social connections
- Concrete support in times of need

Comstock and her family were nominated by Maria Saenz-Estevez, a Service Coordinator in the PSN Family Resource Center.

In her nominating statement, Saenz-Estevez wrote that Comstock came to PSN seeking support for herself and her five children at a time when they were homeless.

“During their time of homelessness, Rachael showed determination to gain stability for her family,” Saenz-Estevez wrote, crediting Comstock for demonstrating all of the five protective factors.

“Rachael also demonstrates that she is a great role model for her children that while there may be challenges in life, but she kept her children as her main priority all while maintaining focus, consistency, nurturing and patience,” Saenz-Estevez added.

Mercer, a single parent of two children, was nominated by Jackie Tenuta, another Service Coordinator in the PSN Family Resource Center.

“Megan is a strong, resilient parent who always does her best to ensure her children are safe,” Tenuta wrote. “She is flexible when situations don't go as planned and makes the best of it.

Mercer, Tenuta noted, “attends meetings at her children's school, communicates with school staff to make certain her children are meeting their educational requirements and follows through with that at home. Megan encourages her children to be problem solvers and use their voices to express their emotions and feelings whenever they need.”

Services remain available:

While the April Turn the Town Blue events were canceled and many government and nonprofit organization offices are closed due to the COVID-19 emergency, child abuse and neglect prevention services remain available through the Kenosha County Division of Children and Family Services and other agencies.

Reports of child abuse and neglect may be made to the Division of Children and Family Services at 262-605-6582 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. weekdays, and to the Kenosha County Crisis hotline at 262-657-7188 after hours and on weekends and holidays.

The Prevention Services Network — a collaboration dedicated to strengthening families and helping to prevent abuse and neglect — is still taking referrals to work with families on a voluntary basis and offering virtual parenting classes. For more information, call 262-697-4651.

###