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Contact: Meryl Smith, RD MA CLS

Email: msmith@dhd10.org

Phone: 231-316-8564

Local Food Advocate Receives National Award

Local Food Security Advocate, Gordie Moeller, of Grand Rapids, MI is the recipient of the 2017 National WIC Association (NWA) "Friend of WIC" Leadership Award. Gordie was nominated by District Health Department #10's Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program. NWA awards are presented in recognition of outstanding accomplishments and achievements in the areas of advocacy, leadership, management, and/or services to WIC participants. The "Friend of WIC" award extends an individual or organization that has demonstrated significant support for the WIC program and its mission.

"We have known Gordie for about 3 years starting we received the NWA Community Partnerships for Healthy Mothers and Children (CPHMC) grant in Oceana County. He is an active member of the Healthy Families of Oceana County (HFOC) coalition and most recently the Choosing Health in Lake County (CHIL) coalition", says Meryl Smith, MA RD CLS, WIC Supervisor. These coalitions were formed as part of the NWA CPHMC Federal Grant to reduce and prevent chronic disease by improving access to healthy food environments and improving access to prevention and disease management services for WIC families.

Gordie worked as a social worker for over 40 years; since retiring in 2006 he has voluntarily worked on food security issues all over West Michigan. He shared, "Since my wife and I never had children, our legacy would be addressing food security issues around where we live." Gordie's role as a Food Security Advocate began when he realized that there was millions of dollars in Bridge Card Food Stamp benefits available in West Michigan but only \$50,000 of it went to local retail farmers. His mission began by communicating to the local farmers and markets about business opportunities available to them, such as WIC, Senior Project Fresh, SNAP, Double Up Bucks, and other grant opportunities. He has facilitated 70 farm stands to apply, be approved for, and successfully implement the above programs.

"Gordie is a wealth of information and is able to make necessary contacts for local agencies regarding food programs. He is a champion for his dedication to the WIC program, hunger issues in West Michigan as well as his advocacy for those in need. I have seen Gordie go above and beyond and be very enthusiastic and dedicated about the work that he does," said Smith. "He truly deserves this recognition and award."

Gordie will accept his award in Philadelphia, PA, at the NWA Education Conference on April 4th, 2017. For more information about the NWA CPHMC, please visit www.greaterwithwic.org.



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