



The Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force is the voice of the community on issues related to the quality and responsiveness of mental health and substance abuse disorder services.

Date: October 1, 2020

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Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force Congratulates 2020 Award Recipients

The Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force (MHTF) is extremely gratified to congratulate the remarkable recipients of our 2020 awards recognizing outstanding leadership and mental health advocacy. The awards will be presented Tuesday afternoon October 13th at the 2020 Karen Avery Forum, "*Housing: Opportunities, Rights and Resources.*"

Karen Avery Award

Otis Winstead will be the seventh recipient of the *Karen Avery Award*.

The award was established to honor Karen Avery's legacy as an advocate, mentor, peer, and leader in advancing the rights of people with disabilities.



Otis Winstead, VPS, WCPS, NPS, Executive Director of Great Lakes Dryhooch has dedicated his career to serving as an advocate, peer mentor, and leader in his community, which makes him the perfect person to honor the values and legacy of Karen Avery. His heart can be found in walking alongside and providing support to other Veterans and peers in recovery. As a peer mentor, Otis uses his recovery as a way to connect with others and use his lived experience to spread the message of hope and resilience to the Veterans he mentors. Otis is a constant advocate for Veteran health. He teaches his community and academic partners from a first-hand perspective about the struggles of opioid recovery and the need to address personal life trauma, adversity, and mental health. A Vietnam Era Army Veteran, Otis is a leader among Veterans who leads by example and practices what he teaches.

The nomination noted that: "*Otis Winstead exemplifies what it means to be a community partner and a mental health advocate. He collaborates, he teaches, he questions, he advocates, and he always seeks to ensure the voice of the Veteran is included in the work we are doing. Strong leaders like Otis are essential to supporting peers and creating lasting community-academic partnerships that can develop innovative strategies to address complex problems. Wisconsin Veterans and Otis's academic and community partners are thankful for his dedication to serve.*"

Marie C. Perry Rising Leader Award

DeShanda Williams will be the 2nd recipient of the Marie C. Perry Rising Leader Award. Inspired by the dedication of our inaugural recipient, the Award honors Marie's memory and recognizes visionary leadership by an individual who is a rising and/or young leader in the Milwaukee area mental health community.



DeShanda Williams, MSCP is the Director of Runaway and Homeless Youth Services for Pathfinders in Milwaukee. She has spent 9 years with Pathfinders. DeShanda is a Licensed Professional Counselor in Training and holds a MS in Community Psychology from Alverno College and a BS in Social Work from the

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Her passion is in supporting and uplifting youth and young adults, especially those dealing with overlapping social identities. DeShanda has been a trailblazer in visioning non-traditional mental health services for Milwaukee youth, and has demonstrated a deep commitment to keeping young people's voices at the center of care.

The nomination noted that: *"The positive changes DeShanda has made within the organization and for individual young people are immeasurable. Her ability and desire to genuinely connect with a young person's mental health challenges make her an exceptional, trustworthy ally to Milwaukee's young people and the mental health community in Milwaukee."*

As the recipient of the Marie C. Perry award, DeShanda will receive a scholarship for conference registration, fees, and logistics or continuing education to further her professional development in the field of health and human services. This was generously endowed by Marie's family.

Congratulations to the 2020 award recipients and we thank them for their dedicated advocacy.

Please join the Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force on October 13th at 2:30 PM for the 2020 Karen Avery Forum, *Housing: Opportunities, Rights and Resources* and awards presentation. Pre-registration is required for this virtual event.

Many people who live with a mental illness struggle to find and maintain safe, accessible, affordable housing. Access to housing is key to maintaining recovery. This virtual forum will explore opportunities to expand access to housing, tenant rights including disability related accommodations, and resources to support consumers with maintaining housing.

Featured speakers are Andy McMahon, Vice President of Health and Human Services Policy at UnitedHealthcare Community & State, and Monica Murphy, Managing Attorney Disability Rights Wisconsin.

Additional information about the October 13th forum including online registration is available at:
<https://www.milwaukeeemhtf.org/2020/09/07/2020forum/>