



News Release

(630) 221-7029

PLT Organizations

360 Youth Services
Advocate Health
Alliance Against Intoxicated Motorists
Breaking Free
Building Parent Connections
Carol Stream Police Department
College of DuPage
District 87 Schools
Downers Grove Township
DuPage County Health Department
DuPage County Juvenile Probation
DuPage Metropolitan Enforcement Group
DuPage Regional Office of Education
Glen Ellyn Police Department
Hanover Police Department
Heritage Health
Hinsdale Fire Department
Illinois State Police
Latino Treatment Center
Linden Oaks Behavioral Health
Lions Clubs International
Lisle Township
NAMI DuPage
National Guard
Northeast DuPage Family and Youth Services
Northwestern Medicine
On Balance Parenting
Parents and Teens Together
Robert Crown Center
Rosecrance
Samaritan Interfaith
Streamwood Behavioral Health
Teen Parent Connection
Village of Carol Stream
Warrenville Youth and Family Services
WeGo Together for Kids
YWCA

DuPage Recognizes Prevention Work with Annual Changemaker Award

The DuPage County Health Department (DCHD) and the Prevention Leadership Team (PLT) are proud to announce the 2022 Changemaker Awards. Cayleigh O’Hare, Rachel Decosola, Connor Hernandez, Reality Illinois, and the Village of Addison are recognized as the 2022 Changemakers for their dedication to youth substance use prevention.

The Changemaker Award recognizes individuals, communities, and organizations who are leading the way in prevention efforts and going above and beyond to protect youth in DuPage County.

There are four categories of the Changemaker Award. Teen, Adult, Organization, and Community.

Cayleigh O’Hare is the 2022 Teen Changemaker. Cayleigh is a Senior at Hinsdale Central High school. She has demonstrated her dedication to the health and well-being of her peers through her participation on Reality Illinois, a teen advisory panel to the DuPage County Prevention Leadership Team. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Cayleigh took the initiative to create and host a virtual mental health platform for students at the Illinois Mathematics & Science (IMSA)’s campus who were quarantined at home, as a way for them to stay connected and involved.

Rachel Decosola, Serenity House, and Connor Hernandez, NAMI DuPage, are the 2022 Adult Changemakers. Rachel and Connor are adult mentors for high school-aged teens who have been selected as Teen Ambassadors to promote substance use prevention and mental wellness at their schools. Both Rachel and Connor bonded very quickly with the teens and have quickly become trusted adults for teens to turn to when needed. They have gone above and beyond to ensure the teens are successful in their efforts by working overtime, participating in daily group chats with the teens, and donating their personal time to assist with projects.

The 2022 Organizational Changemaker is Reality Illinois, the teen advisory panel to the DuPage County Prevention Leadership Team. Reality is a long-standing teen coalition that is dedicated to advocating for prevention policies and enhancing the health of communities throughout DuPage County. Reality Illinois has been successful in advocating for Tobacco 21 and smoke-free parks policies and educating

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municipalities on youth marijuana prevention policies. Gilda Ross, Glenbard Student and Community Projects Coordinator and leader of Reality is the reason for the group's success. Her enthusiasm and energy keeps Reality running, and teens have voiced their affection for her by saying how she makes them feel so welcome and so motivated to make a difference. Reality is open to any high school-aged teen in DuPage County. For more information on Reality, you can visit www.dupageplt.org/reality.

The 2022 Community Changemaker is the Village of Addison, who is a recent recipient of the Robert Wood Johnson Culture of Health Prize. Addison has worked hard to establish networks of support throughout the Village, which assists its residents in getting connected with needed resources.

"DuPage is a better place to live, work and play because of these Changemakers", said Jordan Esser, Project Coordinator of the DuPage County Prevention Leadership Team. "We are fortunate to have these individuals and organizations in our community and the Prevention Leadership Team is honored to be able to recognize their amazing efforts."

If you know an individual, organization, or community that is committed to youth substance use prevention and would like to nominate them for the Changemaker Award, you can do so by visiting www.dupageplt.org/187/Changemaker-Award.

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