

Extra Mile Award → The Rainbow Project

The Rainbow Project's 2021 Extra Mile Award

Sarah McKenzie

The Rainbow Project is pleased to present Sarah McKenzie with this year's Extra Mile Award for her outstanding work in the role of Lead Ongoing Social Worker with the Dane County Department of Human Services.

Sarah graduated with a Bachelor's of Art in Psychology in 2005, a Master's of Science in Family Studies & Human Development in 2010 and Certification in Social Work in 2012. Upon earning her certification, Sarah worked as a social worker in a skilled nursing facility that provided rehabilitation, long-term care and palliative care in Wisconsin before transitioning into her current role as a Lead Ongoing Social Worker with the Department of Human Services.

Sarah has a long history of supporting children and families even prior to earning her Master's Degree and Certification. In 2001, she began co-facilitating anger management and domestic violence support groups for children ages one to sixteen and monitoring exchanges of children between separated parents at the Family Support Center in Chippewa Falls. That role provided her with an avenue to then become a domestic violence victim advocate intern at the Family Support Center. As a victim advocate intern, Sarah taught domestic violence education to adults and children, provided one-on-one adult counseling in crisis situations and assisted victims with bond modifications and restraining orders. From there, she continued to expand her knowledge and experience with children and families through such roles as an advanced line therapist with Wisconsin Early Autism Project, an after-school site coordinator with the Chippewa Falls school district, a mentor in the Chippewa County juvenile justice system and a clinical case manager with Anu Family Services, which provides treatment in foster care. All these experiences helped shape her into the dedicated, caring and well-rounded social worker she is today.

The Rainbow Project staff have seen the breadth and depth of Sarah's knowledge firsthand through their work with her on the Mental Health Service Provider Subcommittee that is part of the Child Abuse & Neglect Coordinated Community Response. In addition to improving the lives of children through her work as an Ongoing Social Worker, she is also working to improve the child protection system overall through her work on this subcommittee. Sarah understands that all families are complex and come to the Department of Human Services from many walks of life. Her compassion and understanding of trauma allow her to connect with families and bring about meaningful change. Her ability to critically examine systems is unique and paramount for true success of families involved in those systems.

Please join us in thanking Sarah McKenzie for her indelible work and dedication to children and families in Dane County and Wisconsin. We could not think of a more deserving individual to receive an Extra Mile Award this year. Congratulations, Sarah!

