



Dedicated to YOUR Wellbeing

KENDALL COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Dedicated to Her Community

Nearly 18 years ago, Kathy Braden joined the Community Action Advisory Board, helping to guide and advocate for services offered to Kendall and Grundy residents. After stepping down from the board, she kindly offered to share about her years on CAAB.

Kathy enjoyed being on the Community Action Advisory Board. She has worked at Caring Hands Thrift Shop, and found that being on the Community Action Advisory Board has informed her of all the programs that are available to the community—allowing her to help refer clients who come into the thrift shop to services and be confident in it.

Kathy noted that there has been an impact in the community from efforts made by the Health Department, Community Action Services, and CAAB. From larger scale impacts of improving the Morris high rise apartments and helping victims of flooding or tornadoes, to smaller, everyday efforts of offering LIHEAP and Weatherization, residents throughout Kendall and Grundy Counties felt the benefits.

Kathy’s favorite memories of the board were often from her time on the scholarship committee. “It was fun to interview students and then see them over the course of their eligibility, learn their goals and then their growth if they reapplied. There were a variety of interests and I enjoyed that we helped them work towards fulfilling their dreams and then give back to the community.”

While the Community Action Board hasn’t changed a lot over the years beyond board members, Kathy happily stated that “The mission and the goal to help the community remains the same.” While needs in the community have gotten greater, staff work hard to use funding wisely and she is “...always impressed with how they try to stretch the money as far as they can— they are wise stewards of the grants that they get.” Kathy encourages anyone interested in serving on an advisory board to do so, as it is fun to be knowledgeable in the things going on in the county and it is not a huge time commitment to be on the board.

Kendall County Health Department thanks Kathy for her many years on the Community Action Advisory Board and her dedication to the community.



*Kathy Braden, 2023
Scholarship Award Night*

Stigma and Mental Health

Stigma, which can be defined as a set of negative beliefs that a society or group of people have about something, is still common surrounding mental health and substance use. Stigma and a lack of understanding of mental health and substance use stems greatly from societal and cultural beliefs. The way in which mental health and substance use are viewed often gets passed down in families, societies, communities, and cultures. The way one receives help is also determined by these factors. Because we can each have our own biases and internalize messages about our own and others'



mental health, it can be beneficial to pay attention to what we are telling ourselves. One way to do this is to tune into our own thinking; and to do this you could do the following exercise: imagine what someone who has mental health issues looks like – what do they do? What do they look like? How do you feel when you envision this person? Diversity, equity, and inclusion are important ways in which we address services – all are welcome and deserve peace and happiness. We strive to continue to increase our cultural competence and are here for you just as you are.

Homeless Prevention Funding Increase

Our Homeless Prevention Program allows us to provide rent, mortgage, and utility bill assistance to persons who are in danger of eviction or foreclosure. This program has been largely underfunded to match the needs of Kendall County residents who have fallen behind with their housing costs. Due to new census data showing the increased need in Kendall County and the Home Illinois Anti-Homelessness Initiative we received a 305% increase in funds for program year 2024. For program year 2023 we prevented 12 families from becoming homeless,



but with this increase in funds we are estimating that we will be able to prevent 37 families from becoming homeless in program year 2024. To be eligible for this assistance, the household must of suffered from a temporary economic crisis beyond the households control and they must demonstrate an ability to meet financial obligations after the assistance has been granted. Payments are made to the landlord, mortgage company, or utility vendor directly. Applications are available by appointment by calling the Kendall County Health Department's Community Action Unit at 630-553-8051.

Radon Kits Shipped!

Since the start of our work in the Radon Program, we have sold short term radon test kits as an affordable way to determine if residents in a home were at risk from naturally occurring radon gas. Clients interested in testing would need to visit this building, during normal business hours to purchase a kit. With the introduction of new Geographic Information System (GIS) technology, we have the capability of utilizing online forms, associated payments, and data collection and assessment. Working with our GIS team, we created an online form with an associated QR code to allow the purchase of these test kits that will be shipped directly to the resident's home. The QR code will be promoted in different places (postcards, fliers, display boards) to promote this new service. Additionally, we've migrated our radon program database into this system so GIS dashboards can be used to track test kit forms and payments, shipping and ultimately, testing results throughout the county. We are hoping that this new system will not only increase test kit sales but will provide our Unit with better data to assess the risk to the public and ultimately, help us become more effective in informing and educating them about this truly preventable health concern.



Cold Weather Safety Tips

Winter preparedness is crucial for ensuring safety and well-being during the cold season. As temperatures drop and snow and ice form, taking proactive measures becomes paramount. Indoors, insulating windows and doors, checking heating systems, and creating emergency kits with essentials like blankets and non-perishable food are key steps. Dressing in layers, winterizing vehicles, and practicing safe snow removal are vital for outdoor activities. Staying informed through weather forecasts, heeding advisories, and planning activities around expected conditions help avoid unnecessary risks. Protecting pipes from freezing, stocking up on supplies, and having a well-

thought-out plan contribute to a secure winter experience. At the health department, we help the community prepare for natural and manmade disasters through education and awareness, distributing resources, and practicing effective communication methods. With these preparations, individuals and communities can navigate the challenges of winter with confidence, ensuring a cozy and hazard-free season for all. Be Safe, Stay Warm, Be Prepared. For more information, please go to kendallhealth.org.





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Have feedback or questions about the newsletter? Please call Arissa Hunt at (630)553-8056 or email her at awhunt@kendallcountyil.gov

BOARD OF HEALTH MEMBERS

Karen Kelly, President	Lynn Cullick	Brooke Shanley
Karin Gustafson, D.O.	Jay DeMarco	Andrea Mann
Gabriella Shanahan	John Gleason, M.D.	Jordan Gash
Bobby Richardson	Julie Conlin, D.D.S.	

Mission

The mission of the Kendall County Health Department is to promote physical health, mental health, environmental health, protect the community's health, prevent disease, and promote family economic self-sufficiency through both person-based services and population-based programs.

Vision

Partnering to build a thriving Kendall County where all people have equal opportunity for overall health and well-being.

Values

Integrity • Accountability • Commitment to Excellence • Inclusion • Compassion



Thank You for Years of Service and Support!

Throughout 2023, several members across our four Advisory Boards were honored for ten or more years of service. Their dedication to our community is so greatly appreciated!

