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**DAWN COMTE AND EAU CLAIRE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE HONORED AS
*HEALTHY COMMUNITIES CHAMPIONS***

Eau Claire, WI – April 29th, 2016 Dawn Comte and the Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce were honored Thursday (April 28th) as *Healthy Communities Champions* for their efforts to make Eau Claire County a healthier place in which to live.



Eau Claire's Healthy Communities coalition announced the awards during its 20th Anniversary held at Chippewa Valley Technical College last night.

Dawn Comte, Superintendent of Recreation with the City of Eau Claire Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department, was voted as the *Healthy Communities Champion* in the category for individuals.

Dawn is recognized for her innovative work, pioneering new health and wellness opportunities, such as the work connecting the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department with healthcare providers. Under the banner of "A prescription to Live life Better!" she has sought to help people understand the healthy living value of the community's park system and programs

offered. One way has been through a well-designed, *Rx Parks Pages* that describe each City park in detail and calls out what health benefits are present; ranging from physical and nutritional to mental and social opportunities. She also helped devise a "Walk with a Doc" program last year and this year under the title "Healthy Trails", where doctors share health tips with participants during walking trips through the trails and parks. Ned Noel, who nominated Comte states, "Dawn has been a strong leader in the City's successful Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department, which not coincidentally won a Gold Medal Finalist award for excellence in park and recreation services last year."



The Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce was voted as the *Healthy Communities Champion* in the category for organizations.

The Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce is recognized for their dedication to improving health in the workplace through their Workplace Wellness Program, which has several components. The Chamber offers the Workplace Wellness Award, which recognizes member organizations who implement wellness programs following best practice. The Workplace Wellness Network is a new initiative that has gained momentum in the past eighteen months. As part of the Network, the Chamber began hosting educational and ideas sharing programs several times a year to local organizations who have wellness programs or are

interested in getting one started. They have organized the annual “Downtown Business Community Wellness Walk” each July to focus positive attention of business wellness efforts in an engaging activity. The Chamber has also had a representative serve on the Advisory Committee for the DHS rulemaking effort to implement the Healthy Jobs Act, which will provide grants to small employers (50 or fewer FTEs) to implement worksite wellness programs. Linda Bohacek, who nominated the Chamber of Commerce states, “The success of workplace wellness efforts can reduce chronic disease not only among employees, but also extends to their families and others in their spheres of influence.”

In previous years, the individual award was presented to Zach Halmstad, Co-founder of JAMF Software (2015) and Ned Noel, Associate City Planner for the City of Eau Claire (2014). Security Health Plan was the first recipient of the organization award in 2015.

For more information about Eau Claire Healthy Communities, visit www.echealthycommunities.org.

Eau Claire Healthy Communities is a broad-based coalition that promotes the health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities of Eau Claire County through collaborative and focused action.”

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