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**Dr. Kenneth Adler, Fight Against Hunger Project and the late John Stedman Honored
as Healthy Communities Champions**

Eau Claire, WI – April 28th, 2017- Dr. Kenneth Adler and Fight Against Hunger Project were honored Thursday (April 27th) as *Healthy Communities Champions* for their efforts to make Eau Claire County a healthier place in which to live. The late John Stedman was given an *Award of Excellence* to honor his work as a community organizer. Eau Claire's Healthy Communities coalition announced the awards during its annual celebration held at Chippewa Valley Technical College.

Dr. Kenneth Adler was voted as the *Healthy Communities Champion* in the category for individuals.

Dr. Adler was the original driving force behind the Chippewa Valley Free clinic- the person who had the vision and desire to gather a group of like-minded community professionals to create of a safety net clinic for those who lacked the resources to access other healthcare options. Through the years, his leadership kept the clinic going, continuing to recruit more volunteer help, not only from other healthcare professionals, but also from supportive community members. Now, in 2017, as the Chippewa Valley Free Clinic approached its 20th anniversary, Dr. Adler can still be seen walking the halls with a stethoscope around his neck. He still volunteers his services as a family practice physician in a clinic that now includes not only a weekly walk-in clinic, but also regular hours for specialized clinics for diabetes, mental health, vision care, smoking cessation, dental care, as well as a medications dispensary. Maribeth Woodford, who nominated Adler states, "These last years of uncertainty and change in the healthcare landscape of this country have proved challenging for many individuals, as well as for the Chippewa Valley Free Clinic itself, but Dr. Adler's original vision is still with them, and we believe his example of leadership has probably helped drive the creation of similar free clinics in Chippewa falls and Menomonie, sharing his goal of making the Chippewa Valley a healthier community for all."

The Fight against Hunger Project was voted as the *Healthy Communities Champion* in the category for organizations.

The Fight against Hunger Project is recognized for their work promoting healthy living through their numerous nutrition projects at Prairie Ridge Early Learning School. Access to healthy food and good nutrition has been a priority for the group. Prairie Ridge provides an on-site food pantry for their preschool that currently gives families 2,000 lbs. of food each month and the need continues to grow. Transportation can be a barrier for many of their families. They remove this barrier with the Summer

Food Delivery Program where volunteers unload and sort the Feed My People food truck and deliver food once per month to families over the summer. Their crock pot project gives families a crock pot along with recipes and ingredients for meals so they can build cooking skills within families. Since 2013, they have distributed 165 crock pots and 365 recipes & ingredient bags. During the fall of 2016 the Hoop House was built by members of the Fight Against Hunger committee. This will give the school a longer growing season for students and families to garden. The garden will be used as an educational tool for the school as well as supplementing families' access to healthy foods.

The late John Stedman was awarded the *Healthy Communities Award of Excellence* for his work as a community organizer. Sandra McKinney, who nominated John stated, "John Stedman had a heart of gold but a passion for change that was as strong as steel. He was keenly focused and determined to make a difference by improving the lives of people he touched by working with them and not just for them." John was the "face" of JONAH – the grassroots advocacy organization focused creating real change for people in the Chippewa Valley. The focus of JONAH - Joining Our Neighbors, Advancing Hope - is "to bring people in the Chippewa Valley into relationship and empower one another to build a healthier and fairer community for us all." Eau Claire Healthy Communities directly benefited from John's skills and passion. He played a key role in Healthy Communities understanding about the importance of building relationships and hearing the real "stories" of those impacted by health disparities. He was able to give real skills to many in working with elected officials to build authentic relationships. The EC Healthy Communities Legislative Event, now in its third year, built success from what was learned from time spent with John. John trained many Healthy Communities members on1 on 1's and co-created the 1 on 1 training manual that EC Healthy Community uses. At every table within Healthy Communities he pressed everyone to think about how we are engaging and working with those impacted by the issue at hand—not just making decisions without or for them. He truly pushed people to think and work differently in order to create a healthier Eau Claire.

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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