

Children’s Wisconsin community health advocates support families in getting the supports they need

Community health advocates at Children’s Wisconsin are certified community health workers and trusted members of the neighborhoods where they work, including Amani/Franklin Heights, Clarke Square, Lindsay Heights, Metcalfe Park and the Near West Side. In 2022, they helped more than 450 families whose needs extended beyond health care, supporting those who face challenging and vulnerable situations, which most often include housing concerns. They focus on the whole person and the social determinants of health to support families with overall health and well-being.

Children’s community health advocates support families by encouraging self-sufficiency and independence. They help individuals best meet their personal needs by building trust, identifying their priorities and most urgent needs, and setting goals with a pathway to accomplish them. After three months of working with the community health advocates, 57 percent of participants improved their financial, employment and food security, and 50 percent reported improved social support.

Mrs. W., started working with Children’s community health advocates early on in her pregnancy. She really valued the team’s non-judgmental communication, reassurance and consistent follow-through. Mrs. W.’s goals included finding a job, identifying a better place to live and doing a weekly check-up with the Children’s team. Over 18 months, the advocates helped her with securing employment and Mrs. W. went from partially homeless to finding the right housing to meet her needs. Tragically during this time, Mrs. W.’s baby girl passed away. Children’s community health advocates were there to support her and advocate alongside her journey of loss and transformation. Mrs. W. regularly sees a counselor to support her mental health and well-being and now has become involved in helping others, connecting family members and acquaintances to Children’s when they need assistance. Mrs. W. shares that she “gathered a lot, gained a lot and learned a lot from working with Children’s”.

-Children’s Wisconsin-Milwaukee