Health Equity and Awareness Award

Award criteria: The recipient selected in this category offers exemplary community outreach and educational programs that serve an underserved population in the state. These services increase the accessibility of health care for the under-served while providing a high quality of customer service.

Whitney Gherman
Marion

An Educator for Ohio State – Marion County Extension, social worker and scholar-activist Whitney Gherman works in the Marion community to initiate meaningful dialogue about racial justice issues, food access, affordable housing, and mind-body wellness.

Gherman’s nominator noted that she has gone above and beyond to mobilize the resources of her role as a Marion County Extension Educator to “build innovative programming, workshops, and services to not only address, but transform, structural determinants of health in Marion County.”

She also has become a collaborator of dozens of racial justice organizations across Marion County, helping to bring racism to the forefront as a public health issue, and working to build community-led programming on food insecurity, racial and housing justice, and facilitating land-based projects with Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color.

Some of her community projects include supporting a community garden at Mayes Community Temple, facilitating land transfer efforts, and hosting anti-racism workshops as well as leading research to address food access, healthy eating, and physical activity.

Gherman’s work “is deeply aligned with Dr. King’s commitment to rooting structural inequality through a visionary imagination of new social services and programs tackling issues like wealth, housing, and poverty,” added her nominator.

“Whitney Gherman is a model of what dedicating one’s life to healing racism and building a more just world – starting with the body – might look like. While her visionary organizing doesn’t always make headlines, Marion County is so much better for her advocacy.”