

Announcing the “2014 Missouri Rural Health Champion” Winner

CONGRATULATIONS to the Administrator of the Putnam County Health Department in Unionville, MO, **Ms. Ericka Klingner**, for being voted Missouri’s Rural Health Champion for 2014!

For the past seven years, Ms. Klingner has been the go to person for major changes which are benefiting the health and wellness of Putnam County; a small rural population of around 4,875 people.

Ericka’s honest approach and extraordinary ability in writing grants has greatly improved their community. She has brought in over \$790,000.00 in grant monies used to update their city parks and Putnam County R1 School’s track, trail and fitness facility. She has helped local daycare providers do match grants for new playground equipment and implemented nutrition education classes through the Putnam County Memorial Hospital, and the Senior Center Café and Resource Center. She has facilitated committees and coalitions to recruit the necessary planning networks that go into making all these projects successful.

Ericka has also pursued the ‘Livable Streets’ Campaign so that their school students can now walk or ride bicycles to school on safe sidewalks which were broken or nonexistent.

Ericka’s hard work is bringing people together and has encouraged them to think about their health and wellness and actually do something about it. Their parks are now a beautiful safe place for children to play and people to enjoy being outdoors, getting physical activity into their day to day lives.