

## ***AmeriCorps Member of the Year***

### **Summer Schwartz, Wisconsin Association for Homeless and Runaway Services at Boys & Girls Clubs of the Fox Valley - Home Base – Appleton, WI**

Bringing a motivation to serve at-risk youth and make a difference for her community through her AmeriCorps service, Summer Schwartz has been instrumental to Home Base expanding the breadth of services it offers to youth experiencing housing insecurity and transience.

Summer was instrumental in revising the Home Base street outreach approach which dramatically increased the number of youth reached from hundreds the year prior, to thousands during her term of service.

Seeking to expand the support provided to at-risk youth, she helped to create and deliver Wellness Group sessions to help the youth improve their physical, emotional, and social wellness and increase their independent living skills.

She was the driving force in reviving and facilitating their Lighthouse support group for LGGBTQ+ youth. Summer played a critical role in delivering Appleton's first "Youth on the Move" event last November to bring awareness to National Runaway and Homeless Youth Prevention Month. She connected with local officials and helped secure media coverage.

Recognizing that needs would likely increase and access to support services would be imperative as schools and agencies closed due to COVID-19, Summer helped translate the Home Base's service to a digital platform, delivering pre-recorded sessions on topics including how to apply for Badgercare/Foodshare services, conducting live Zoom support sessions, and moving Lighthouse to a weekly virtual program.

As part of her continued desire to serve, Summer started her second AmeriCorps term this fall and has shifted her graduate education focus to social work to allow her a greater opportunity to serve community and people in need in the future.