



Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance (WiRSA) 2014 Rural Community Partner of the Year Award Winner

Steven Ricks | [Lodi Community Action Team](#)



Steven Ricks of the Lodi Community Action Team was honored by the Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance (WiRSA), a non-profit organization that is dedicated to helping address challenges faced by rural school

districts, at the annual Rural Schools Conference on Nov. 13, 2014.

Based on a Youth Risk Behavior Survey, the community of Lodi showed higher alcohol use rates in high schoolers. In 2007, Columbia County Connects was looking for some Lodi community members to help organize a community coalition that was interested in working on reducing alcohol abuse. Steven came to the first meeting. As a volunteer firefighter at the time, he was concerned about the number of local youth who were using prescription drugs and the number overdosing on prescription drugs. He agreed to head up the local coalition and has been the chair of the coalition ever since. In 2010, when the opportunity came to apply for Drug Free Community grant funding, Steven was instrumental in providing community information, assisting in determining the Action Plan and creating a vision for Lodi Community Action Team. Steven has created two websites for LCAT and maintains those websites.

Steven has taken the discussion about creating positive connections for kids on our community a step further. He designed the LCAT Block Party Wagon that has all the needed materials necessary to host a neighborhood gathering. The



research is clear that being connected to the people in your neighborhood and community is great for kids and Steven has made this happen for the Lodi community.

In addition to his great work in LCAT, Steven lends his talents as a filmmaker to the district on occasion. When Lodi High School wanted to make a “Happy” video this past spring, Steven took off two days of work and many other partial days to film students and staff. He spent hours putting together a great video that not only highlights the Lodi District, but is something that Lodi could rally around at the start of this school year. Steven also donated his time and talents in creating a film to thank and show appreciation to the Lodi youth coaches.

Steven stays behind the scenes doing everything he can to help the youth of our community succeed. Not only is he an outstanding individual, he is an outstanding ally for students, and a great community partner for the Lodi school district.

The Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance was formed to help rural school districts address the unique issues that affect rural schools as they seek to achieve the highest quality education for every student. Members include a cross-section of administrators, educators, school board members, post-secondary representatives, rural community members, business leaders, and other concerned individuals who want a strong voice for rural education.