

## RMC DIRECTOR RECEIVES NATIONAL CHILDREN'S HEALTH AWARD

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PHOTO: Allyson Kelley, Rocky Mountain College director of Title III, receives the 2008 Children's Environmental Health Champion Award from Ruth McCully, Environmental Protection Agency director of Children's Health Protection and Environmental Education, in Washington, D.C.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BILLINGS –Allyson Kelley, Rocky Mountain College director of Title III, has been named a 2008 Children's Environmental Health Champion by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Kelley said she represented Rocky Mountain College, which was one of only 12 organizations across the country to be honored for its work to help protect children from environmental health hazards.

“I received the award, but I consider that it is for everyone who worked with me on the effort to eliminate toxic and hazardous materials from reservation schools and facilities,” she said. “I get the money and lead the effort, but it's more about teachers and kids who make it a success.”

Kelley was recognized for her work at a banquet at the Churchill Hotel in Washington, D.C. on Oct. 22, 2008.

“Allyson has demonstrated outstanding leadership in Tribal children's environmental health. She is the Director of the Montana Indian Country

Community Action for A Renewed Environment (CARE) Project and the Montana Environmental Justice Workgroup Coordinator,” said Ruth McCully, Director, Office of Children’s Health Protection and Environmental Education, in announcing the award.

Through her outstanding work, Kelley helped reduce Tribal children’s environmental health hazards. At the time she was RMC Native American Studies project director. She was instrumental in educating and training others in the Tribal community to increase capacity to protect kids from environmental hazards. She launched and managed a number of successful programs through Rocky Mountain College’s department of American Indian Affairs. These efforts resulted in improving environmental health conditions where Tribal children live, learn and play, stated McCully.

“We are immensely proud of Allyson’s commitment and devotion, her dedication and hard work,” said RMC President Michael Mace. “To be recognized by the EPA is an honor and a privilege for Rocky, but more importantly, it is acknowledgement of the problem and solution to Tribal children’s health and safety.”

Kelley has been directly responsible for removing 7,736 pounds of hazardous and dangerous chemicals from 16 schools Indian country schools. She has developed and taught environmental health courses for Rocky Mountain College’s tribal college partners. She is an advocate for children’s environmental health issues ranging from childhood asthma to poverty and overcrowding. Kelley has created networks to foster collaboration among schools, agencies and other organizations to promote initiatives to protect Tribal children's health and disseminate information that will better inform the public about environmental factors that affect children.

This was the fourth year for the Office of Children’s Health Protection and Environmental Education (OCHPEE) to hold the Children’s Environmental Health Champion Award program. EPA established the Children’s Health Program in May 1997 to make the protection of children’s health a fundamental goal of public health and environmental protection in the United States. OCHPEE supports and facilitates Agency efforts to protect children’s health from environmental threats. The awards program recognizes both individuals and organizations for their activities in outreach, education, and intervention that protect children from environmental health risks.

Earlier this year, Kelley was named a Healthy Kids Healthy Schools Hero, one of five people in the region to be honored this year. The annual award recognizes those who work to help protect students and teachers from chemical hazards in schools. It's given in conjunction with the anniversary of the March 18, 1937, gas explosion in a school in New London, Texas, that killed 319 students, teachers and visitors. (A story on the project and Kelley appeared in The Billings Gazette --

<http://billingsgazette.net/articles/2008/05/13/news/state/24-cleanup.txt>).

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