

SWIFFT Project Team

Medical College of Wisconsin Partners



Dr. David Nelson
Professor, Family and Community Medicine, Medical College of Wisconsin
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David Nelson, Ph.D., M.S., is a family and community medicine professor at the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee. As a community-engaged health researcher, he works on projects important to the community. Dr. Nelson has a background in education, and many of his projects connect to education, including health and wellness. He strives to support teachers, students, and family members. When not working as a faculty member, Dr. Nelson and his wife, Karen, have a family farm, growing fruits and vegetables for distribution to food centers in Milwaukee.



Dr. Courtney Barry
Assistant Professor, Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine, Medical College of Wisconsin
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Dr. Courtney Barry is a licensed clinical health psychologist and assistant professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine at the Medical College of Wisconsin. She is also a community-engaged researcher with expertise in trauma and trauma-informed care. Dr. Barry supports the team in considering the impact of youth trauma on teachers and provides trauma-informed strategies in helping teachers to cope with trauma.



Jordan Janusiak
Ph.D. Student, Public and Community Health Program, Medical College of Wisconsin
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Jordan Janusiak is a Ph.D. student in the Public and Community Health Program at the Medical College of Wisconsin. Mr. Janusiak supports the team by providing public health-driven insight and research assistance to the project's initiatives.



Carlos Rodriguez
Project Lead
Curriculum Specialist, Physical Education and Health, Milwaukee Public Schools
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Carlos Rodriguez is the curriculum specialist for physical education and health in Milwaukee Public Schools. Mr. Rodriguez was a physical education teacher for fifteen years in the district before taking on this new role in September 2022. Mr. Rodriguez has a passion for working with students and wants to be a voice for the teachers.



Dr. Leslie Ruffalo
Lead Academic Partner
Associate Professor, Family and Community Medicine, Medical College of Wisconsin
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Dr. Leslie Ruffalo is an associate professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine at the Medical College of Wisconsin. As a researcher, she is eager to investigate public health issues that impact groups of people. Dr. Ruffalo has worked on research projects with Milwaukee Public Schools for nearly fifteen years.