

SWIFFT Project Team

Marquette University Partner



Dr. Christopher Simenz

Clinical Professor, Exercise Science, Department of Physical Therapy, Marquette University
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Christopher J. Simenz, Ph.D., CSCS, is a clinical professor in programs in exercise science in the Department of Physical Therapy at Marquette University. He is a community-engaged researcher focused on supporting marginalized populations in wellness, food access and systems, healthcare access and navigation, joblessness, homelessness, incarceration, and addiction. Dr. Simenz's scholarship is focused on policy change in wellness with community partners such as Milwaukee Public Schools, Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee, and United Neighborhood Centers of Milwaukee. Additionally, he works on policy and systems change in wellness and physical activity to support health.



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 the 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.