



**Office for
the Aging**



Senior Day
Tuesday 5.10.16
Hart Lounge - The Egg
Albany, NY

Senior Day 2016

The Hart Lounge @ The Egg
Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY

“We make a living by what we get,
but we make a life by what we give.”
—WINSTON CHURCHILL

Thank you for attending!

NYSOFA Staff





STATE OF NEW YORK
EXECUTIVE CHAMBER
ALBANY 12224

ANDREW M. CUOMO
GOVERNOR

May 10, 2016

Dear Friends:

It is a pleasure to send greetings to everyone gathered for the New York State Office for the Aging's "Senior Day" Celebration.

Our senior population is a cherished and special generation from which we can all learn and improve ourselves. As we observe Older Americans Month, I want to commend and congratulate all of the nominees who are being recognized for the contributions they have made to our communities and our fellow citizens.

This year's Older Americans Month theme, "Blaze a Trail," gives us the opportunity to recognize the enormous impact made by older New Yorkers. Your ongoing advocacy, volunteer work, and civic engagement make our state a better place for us all and help strengthen us as a family of New Yorkers.

At the end of the day, we are one New York and your shared acts and contributions truly exemplify the phrase "E Pluribus Unum," – "Out of Many, One." It is the lasting promise of the beliefs we inherited from our parents, and the enduring foundation for a bright future that we pass on to our children.

Warmest regards and best wishes for a memorable celebration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Andrew M. Cuomo". The signature is stylized and fluid.

ANDREW M. CUOMO



Office for the Aging

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

GREG OLSEN
Acting Director

May 10, 2016

Dear Friends:

May is recognized in New York State and across the country as Older Americans Month. This important designation provides us with an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the significant contributions older Americans have made and continue to make each day in their communities. The 2016 Older Americans Month theme "Blaze a Trail" emphasizes the ways older adults are reinventing themselves through new work and new passions, engaging their communities, and blazing a trail of positive impact on the lives of people of all ages. Older adults are a growing and increasingly vital part of our country. The contributions they make to our communities are varied, deeply rooted, and include influential roles in the economy, politics, and the arts.

New York State is home to almost 3.7 million people over the age of 60, ranking fourth in the nation; and it is anticipated that New York's older population will grow to almost 5 million by the year 2020. Older adults need to be valued and honored for their life achievements and recognized for the role they play through contributions of experience, knowledge, wisdom, and accomplishments.

Many older New Yorkers are active community members involved in volunteering, mentorship, arts and culture, and civic engagement. Additionally, they provide many services that are important to their communities such as transportation, home delivered meals, health insurance counseling and assistance, and quality of care oversight in skilled nursing facilities. In New York State there are approximately 700,000 individuals over the age of 60 who contribute almost 120 million hours of service at an economic value of more than \$3.3 billion annually.

The State of New York recognizes and appreciates the contributions of all older residents and we encourage and support the ongoing engagement of older adults in community life.

New York State celebrates this year's awardees, who, through their contributions, remind us all that when we give of ourselves, we all thrive. We thank you for your selfless service, and today we pay tribute to you and the hundreds of thousands of other volunteers who contribute to our great state.

Sincerely,

Greg Olsen
Acting Director

CHAIR
AGING
COMMITTEE MEMBER
CHILDREN & FAMILIES
CULTURAL AFFAIRS, TOURISM, PARKS
AND RECREATION
EDUCATION
HIGHER EDUCATION
JUDICIARY
MENTAL HEALTH &
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK



SUSAN SERINO
Senator, 41ST District

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1ST FLOOR
PUTNAM VALLEY, NEW YORK 10579

May 2016

Dear Friends:

It is my incredible honor as Chair of the Senate's Aging Committee to join with you today in celebration of your volunteerism and community service. As we recognize Older Americans' Month this May, today's awardees, and nominees, are shining examples of what makes New York so great.

I am in awe of the varied accomplishments listed in today's program. You have spent your lives shaping the state we know and love today and I thank you for using your unique and extensive knowledge to continue to improve it. Through your service you have touched the lives of countless individuals and inspired citizens of all ages to play an active role in bettering our communities.

On behalf of the New York State Senate, I thank each and every one of you for your commitment to making our communities better for the benefit of all New Yorkers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sue Serino".

Sue Serino
NYS Senator
41ST District



THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

CHAIRMAN
Committee on Aging

COMMITTEES
Codes
Environmental Conservation
Health
Insurance

STEVEN H. CYMBROWITZ
Assemblyman 45th District
Kings County

May 2016

Dear Friends,

Today we recognize dedicated seniors from across New York State for their outstanding service to their community. We honor those who help others and make their communities better for citizens of all ages.

For all they have achieved throughout life and for all they continue to accomplish, we owe older citizens our thanks and a heartfelt salute. We can best demonstrate our gratitude by making sure that our communities are good places in which to mature and age in place.

On behalf of the New York State Assembly, I thank each and every one of our dedicated volunteers for all their hours of service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven Cymbrowitz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped "S" and "C".

Steven Cymbrowitz
Member of Assembly



Our mission is to help older New Yorkers be as independent as possible for as long as possible through advocacy, development, and the delivery of person-centered, consumer-oriented, and cost-effective policies, programs, and services that support and empower older adults and their families, in partnership with the network of public and private organizations that serve them.

The following pages contain the 2016 Senior Day awardees for the counties that we serve. We salute them for their contributions.

The following awardees were submitted by area agency on aging (AAA) directors as an expression of their gratitude for the service of their volunteers.

NYSOFA thanks the AAA directors for providing us with such thoughtful submissions and allowing us to share them in this commemorative booklet.



AWARDEE:

John Kearny **Albany County**



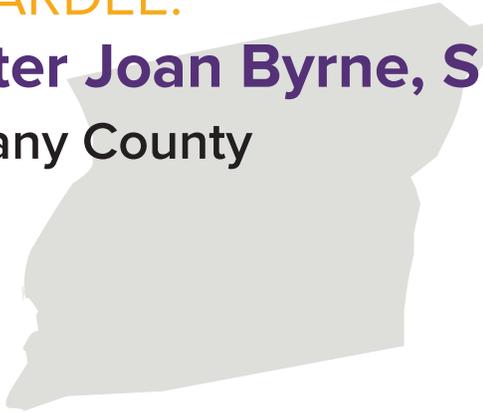
John Kearny credits the Boys and Girls Club of Albany for having a tremendous positive influence on his life. In fact, John was the first member of the club's Delaware Avenue location. He is currently a board member and serves on their governance committee. When the club experienced significant challenges, he was there to make the contacts necessary to raise the resources to keep the club going. John is former chair of the United Way of the Greater Capital Region's board of directors. He continues to serve on United Way's board and is a member of the governance, finance, and resource development committees.

John was born and raised in Albany's South End. He is a graduate of Cardinal McCloskey High School. He and his wife Linda reside in Albany and enjoy their daughter and three grandchildren. John was the business agent of Teamsters Local 294, retiring 15 years ago.

John's motto is "If you want to feel good about yourself, do something to make others feel good about themselves."

AWARDEE:

Sister Joan Byrne, SNJM
Albany County



Sister Joan Byrne works tirelessly for older adults by encouraging the development and preservation of affordable senior housing. As a member of the DePaul Housing Management Corporation board of directors, she provides countless hours of service and has been a key part of DePaul’s growth to become a place where thousands of older New Yorkers find affordable, high quality housing. Sister Joan has always encouraged DePaul Housing to focus on its housing mission while exploring new ways to help its older residents live as well as possible. She has served as a board officer and is an active member of the strategic planning committees, most recently a committee focusing on DePaul Housing’s potential to be a “housing with services” provider.

Sister Joan was born in Washington, DC. As a young woman she worked for the FBI before receiving the call to religious life. She has lived faithfully as a Sister of the Holy Names for 60 years. At St. Vincent’s Parish in Albany she collaborated with the city and business community to address the need for senior housing. This collaboration led to the re-opening of the Vincentian Institute as St. Vincent’s Apartments. Since 1979, Sister Joan has been part of the development of 15 senior communities sponsored by the Catholic Diocese of Albany.

Sister Joan has keen insights into the needs and wants of older adults and shares her talents and experience to help them have a quality place to call home, recognizing that it is essential for stability, independence, and active engagement in the community.



AWARDEE:

Carrie L. Robinson

Bronx County

Carrie Robinson has been making a difference for more than 30 years, wearing many hats in her community. In 2006, Senator Ruth Hassell Thompson presented Carrie with a Grandma's recognition award. In 2014, Carrie volunteered at the Williams Bridge Club of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women, and was responsible for community activities and advertising. She served as public relations officer for the Grandparents Empowerment Movement from 2000 to 2016.

Carrie is a member of Mount Herman Baptist Church, serving as an usher's assistant and coordinator for the celebration of Grandparents Day. And since 1999 she has been responsible for recruiting volunteers at the Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce Harlem Week Festival. She is also a member of the Harlem Week Senior Citizens Day Elder's Jubilee Committee. Carrie previously volunteered with Mid Bronx Senior Citizens Council, and was responsible for trips and arts and crafts programs. From 2011 to 2014, she served as outreach coordinator for the Grandparents Around the World and in 2015 worked as a membership advocate.

Carrie Robinson was born in 1947 in the Bronx. She is the daughter of Mamzell Conner and the eldest of two sisters and one brother. She received her early education in NYC and was raised to be a strong, independent, God-fearing, proud mother of two, grandmother of seven, and great grandmother of two, with many dedicated friends. Carrie began her employment career in the 70s working for New York State Tax and Finance Department. She later moved on to work with the NYC Transit Authority and then continued to help others while working for the NYC Board of Education.

Carrie says "To volunteer, you are doing something for others that will make a difference in their lives. Volunteering provides you with an opportunity to share your talents and give back to society and the youth and elderly in the community. Also, there is always a need for volunteers at the Harlem Week Festival."



AWARDEE:

Betty Simmons

Bronx County

When Betty Simmons joined the Love Gospel Assembly Church, she began working in the care services program food pantry. She then volunteered in the clothing ministry for 11 years, helping those in need find appropriate clothing in the right size. Their gratitude gave her joy and a sense of purpose. Betty also began to foster children who needed guidance, a stable home, and a safe environment. Her involvement in their education led to her serving on the school boards of PS 91 and MS 15, as well as many other organizations, for which she has received numerous awards. Betty helped children develop social skills, taught them how to get along with their peers, and prepared them to face difficult challenges.

She also helped to increase their comprehension abilities by storytelling, teaching songs, and crafting and conducting learning and developmental activities that concentrated on the physical needs of the children. She is currently employed as an AARP home health aide, and is a volunteer with Grandparents Around the World. She also served as a polling coordinator for the board of elections for 25 years.

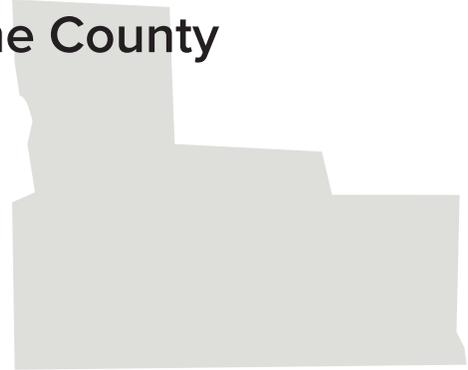
Betty Simmons was born in Sumpter, South Carolina and relocated to New York City when she was a baby. She attended public school 84 in Harlem, and then attended the Charles Evans Hughes Textile High School in Manhattan. After years of working as a homemaker and raising her three children, Betty felt a need to do more. She went on to work for the New York Telephone Company as a long distance operator for five years. In her 70s, she initiated a career change and began working for a social service agency for the handicapped and the blind. This led to a lifelong desire to serve others.

Betty says “By volunteering, you are doing community service that takes one outside of yourself, and by demonstrating your commitment, you are making a substantial impact in other people’s lives.”



AWARDEE:

Lois Root **Broome County**



Lois Root is a vital volunteer for the Northern Broome Senior Center in Whitney Point, New York. Lois is typically the first person who greets people as they come into the building. She is always quick to smile and provide people with the information they need for the day. She is extremely organized and passionate about her responsibilities. Lois answers every telephone call with a kind and pleasant greeting and is always patient and courteous. She is dependable and can be counted on to represent the center professionally.

Lois has taken on many leadership roles for the center including site council president and assisting in the organization of center fundraisers. She is also the center's volunteer "librarian," setting up book displays and keeping track of what books the center has for loan. Simply put, Lois consistently gives 100%. Much of the senior center's success is a result of Lois's commitment and dedication.

Lois Root, one of 13 children, grew up in Center Lisle on a dairy farm near Whitney Point. She was married for 38 years before her husband passed. Lois worked at IBM for 28 years, and also worked at Transformers Inc. and Binghamton Laundry. She loves reading and has been a long time book enthusiast.

Lois advises others "not to be afraid of stepping in to help and giving volunteering a try!" She adds "Keep a positive attitude and smile!"

AWARDEE:

Shirley Marks

Broome County



Shirley Marks has been an outstanding volunteer for the Northern Broome Senior Center for the past 18 years. Shirley's leadership in successful advocacy and fundraising efforts were instrumental in the 2003 opening and furnishing of the new Northern Broome Senior Center in Whitney Point, New York. Without leaders like Shirley, the new center may have never happened. Shirley continues to help the center in various ways almost every day. She assists with Meals on Wheels, helps in the kitchen, and facilitates special programs, among many other activities. Shirley is active as a volunteer with her church and also with a community project called "Dresses for Haiti-Angels of Mercy."

Shirley grew up in Lisle, New York, where she and her husband raised their six children (three boys and three girls). She retired from Cornell University after 20 years. Shirley has also worked for 50 years on the local board of elections. Shirley cherishes close ties and special memories with her large family. In addition to her children, she has 12 grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren. She also enjoys fun and laughter with her Monday bowling league buddies. Her travels have brought her to such exciting places as Australia, Guam, and Hawaii.

Shirley really enjoys volunteering because she likes being with people, and she has made some wonderful friends. She encourages others to volunteer because it is good to learn new things and meet new people.



AWARDEES:
**Fred and Betty
Hackett**
Cattaraugus County

Fred and Betty Hackett are considered the “dynamic duo.” Although Fred is 90 and Betty is 85, they continue to deliver Meals on Wheels to frail shut-ins, including many folks who are younger than them. At local nursing homes, they provided square dancing entertainment and enjoyed serving folks so much that Betty became a certified nursing aide at one of the facilities at the age of 65—because she felt she needed something else to do!

Fred and Betty truly believe that you can’t let life pass you by—at any age. They began working at D and F Travel to feed the need to live life to the fullest. In doing this, they’ve arranged trips to places like Nova Scotia; Branson; Nashville; Washington, DC; Atlantic City; the Grand Canyon; Hoover Dam; and Las Vegas, among others. They organized about 20 trips a year and kept a schedule that many younger folks couldn’t keep up with. Their goal was simple: encourage others to live life and never give up.

Fred and Betty have lived a colorful life for “little rural farm folk.” Even with all their jobs, volunteer activities, and traveling, Fred finds time to grow prize dahlias, which he enjoys giving to others. Betty writes a weekly column for a local newspaper and has written a book, with plans to one day write a book about her own life adventures. Fred and Betty are especially inspiring, as Fred is a cancer survivor and is legally blind. Betty has been in and out of the hospital several times this past year. Betty says that their health issues and disabilities do not stop them. She says, “We got knocked down several times, but we keep getting up. We don’t give up, and we’re not done yet. There’s a reason we are still here.”

When asked why they still volunteer after all these years, they said: “Doing something for somebody else is a wonderful thing. It makes you stronger. It keeps you from having so much stress worrying about yourself all the time. Delivering Meals on Wheels isn’t just something we want to do—it’s a necessity. It keeps us young by giving us a reason to get up and moving in the morning, and it helps to keep other seniors in their homes where they want to be.”

AWARDEE:

Louise Long **Chautauqua County**



Louise Long has had a tremendous impact on her community and the country through her volunteer work with Jamestown General Hospital transporting patients, as well as the American Red Cross. She has been a volunteer with the American Red Cross since 1986, where her gentle manner and empathy have soothed those who were dealing with the loss of loved ones, home, and property during times of disaster. Most recently, she has been a welcoming face for those donating blood. Louise and her husband participate in local parades by driving the Red Cross van. She instills community service and volunteerism in her young grandchildren as they walk alongside her in parades handing out candy. In the past she was a disaster action team member, providing emergency assistance to countless victims displaced by house fires and has deployed nationally to assist during major disasters.

Louise has mentored young women and still hears from some who were part of the Junior Miss program. Louise is the type of volunteer every organization would like to have, with a sunny nature and willingness to tackle any job put before her.

Louise Long has lived in Chautauqua County her entire life. She was born in her grandmother's house, in Kennedy, and met her husband at Midway State Park skating rink. After marrying, they settled in Panama, where they raised two daughters. Despite juggling work, a family business, and raising children, Louise always found time to give back to the community through volunteering. She officially retired from paid work four years ago, but continues to be an active volunteer for the Red Cross and the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program. She speaks proudly about her children and seven grandchildren and has been a great influence on them.

Louise advises others to "Just do it! It will make you feel so good. And take all volunteer opportunities that come along; don't lock yourself into doing just one thing with one organization."



AWARDEE:
Charles Evans
Chemung County

Charles “Dick” Evans has long been an active volunteer in his community. Dick serves on several community boards, including the Westside United Methodist Church and Friends of Woodlawn Cemetery in Elmira, NY. He is an active member of the Elmira AARP Chapter 276 board, where he serves in numerous capacities and advocates for legislative matters. He uses his handyman skills in many ways including installing personal emergency response systems for the Chemung County Department of Aging, restoring items for the Eldridge Park, and helping friends and neighbors by shoveling driveways, hooking up generators after a tornado, installing assistive devices for the frail, and doing errands for the homebound. He is an active volunteer for Cornell University Cooperative Extension Chemung County’s energy steward program and the household hazardous waste collection program. Every Friday night during the summer you will find Dick driving the miniature train at Eldridge Park. He also volunteers for the Compeer miniature golf fundraiser and at the Mark Twain study. Dick also enjoys volunteering at the Corning Museum of Glass.

Dick is well known for being dependable, industrious, and friendly. He rarely says no to any opportunity to help a friend, neighbor, family member, or anyone else in need. Dick attributes his sense of community pride and involvement to his grandmother. She was one of 13 ladies who founded the Westside United Methodist Church many years ago. Dick and his wife are still active members of the church and feel that their sense of civic duty comes from the example that his grandmother set.

Dick Evans was born and raised in Elmira, NY. He and his wife Nancy live in and raised their two children in the house that Dick’s parents owned. He takes great pride in using his handyman skills to make his own home repairs.

Dick says that one of the greatest pleasures he gets from volunteering is that he gets to share it all with his wife. He added that he is happy to help his community and that he simply gets joy from helping those in need.

AWARDEE:
Nancy Evans
Chemung County



Nancy Evans has volunteered in her community for the past 16 years. After retiring, she walked into the Chemung Volunteer Action Corps (formerly the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program) with a plan. Not ones to stay idle and not willing to give up their social connections, she and her husband Dick decided that they would do whatever they could to help others, and they would do it as a team. In the past six years, Nancy and Dick have contributed more than 2,500 volunteer hours. Nancy's volunteer activities include baking and delivering cookies to homebound friends and family members, serving on the Elmira Free Academy High School class reunion committee, volunteering as an ambassador at the Corning Museum of Glass, serving as director on the Elmira AARP Chapter 276 board, where she and her husband are involved in helping at the Southern Tier Food Bank, the annual tax clinic, and serving as advocates for legislative affairs. Nancy also volunteers for the Eldridge Park Preservation Society every Friday night during the summer and the annual Compeer miniature golf fundraiser.

According to Nancy's neighbors, friends, and fellow volunteers, she is always cheerful and eager to help others. When asked why she volunteers, she didn't hesitate to talk about how much she has gained from her experiences. She states that volunteering is very gratifying and that it is an opportunity to give back to her community and be a goodwill ambassador.

Nancy Evans was born and raised in Elmira, NY. She has been married to her high school sweetheart, Dick Evans, for 58 years. This past year they helped to organize their 60th high school class reunion. They have two adult sons and four grandchildren.

Nancy advises that "Volunteering is a very rewarding experience. It opens your eyes and your heart by doing something for others. It is also a fun way to meet others and to stay connected to your community."



AWARDEE:

Jeff Constable

Chenango County



Jeff Constable has been an active volunteer in Chenango County for more than 20 years. In addition to delivering meals for the Chenango County Office for Aging, Jeff also volunteers at a local food pantry. He enjoys being active in the Boys Scouts of America, and volunteering with Hospice, where he assists with their fundraising efforts.

A retired middle school science teacher, Jeff is a native of Unadilla/Sidney, New York. He and his wife, Betty have lived in Norwich, New York, since 1975. They have two adult children, Gregg and Betsy.

When asked what advice he would give to others about volunteering, Jeff said “Everyone needs to give back to their communities.”

AWARDEE:
Cynthia Lacki
Clinton County



Cynthia Lacki is well known and loved in her community. Through teaching, her work with ARC, and managing her husband’s medical practice for 20 years, she is a recognizable figure to many people. Cynthia is a very caring individual who always thinks about what it is to walk in another’s shoes and does not pass judgment. She has more than 20 years of volunteering experience with organizations such as the Boy Scouts of America, the Bailey-Oak School Board, the Mental Health Association Board, the Partners in Cross-Cultural Learning at Plattsburgh State, and the SPCA. She is also a Plattsburgh State University Museum docent and a NYSARC representative for Clinton County.

Cynthia Lacki was born and raised in Clinton County. She received her education degree from Plattsburgh State University, and taught at Assumption of Mary in Redford, NY, for several years before becoming the principal there. Cynthia served as the intake coordinator for the sheltered workshop program at ARC from 1981 to 1987. She also worked with individuals coming out of institutions and with families whose children with disabilities were living at home. In 1987, Cynthia gave birth to their son Elliot, and transitioned to managing her husband’s medical practice. She is the current Clinton County representative for NYSARC, which provides support, information, direction, and services for people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities. Cynthia has been the guardian since 1994 for an ARC member whose parents have passed. She advocates for this individual and has included him as a family member in the many social events that take place in her family.

When asked to give advice about volunteering, Cynthia says “Volunteering is a rewarding pursuit, and working with people is an honor and a pleasure.”



AWARDEE:
Donna Trombley
Clinton County

Donna Trombley participates in all local celebrations and is a true presence in downtown Plattsburgh. Stopping to visit at the Press, Campus Corner, JCEO, the Office for the Aging, and the county clerk’s office, among others, Donna spreads cheer throughout in the community. She volunteers for the Clinton County Office for the Aging, the Senior Citizens Council of Clinton County, the Joint Council for Economic Opportunity, the Veterans Services, and the Plattsburgh City Police Department.

Her frequent letters to the editor are always in praise of elected officials, candidates for office, law enforcement, and human services agencies. Donna has knitted and donated hundreds of afghans for nursing home residents and hats for underprivileged kids. She has a running porch sale with proceeds donated to local nonprofits.

Despite experiencing difficulty throughout most of her life, Donna retains a sunny optimism and friendly spirit. A friend who has known her for many years says that Donna’s picture should be in the dictionary next to the word “survivor.”

And yet she is far more than a survivor. Donna creates community through the lives she touches every day.



AWARDEE:

Marilyn Burch Columbia County

Marilyn Burch's volunteerism has not only had an impact on the town of Stuyvesant, but on all of Columbia County. She helped organize a knitting club that meets on a monthly basis and knits items for Warm Up America; these items are often distributed to various human service agencies in and around Columbia County. Since 1999, Marilyn has been the town's Meals on Wheels volunteer coordinator, where she has recruited drivers, organized routes, and filled in whenever needed. Her civic involvement includes serving on the Stuyvesant Planning Board, where she works diligently to ensure that Stuyvesant's comprehensive planning goals and ideals are observed. Marilyn is also a committed advocate for the environment, as evidenced by her and her family's annual commitment to shoreline clean-ups since 1991. She's also a member of the Stuyvesant Depot Restoration Committee and the Stuyvesant Garden Club. The community of Stuyvesant would not be the same without Marilyn Burch.

Marilyn and her husband, Cal, have made Stuyvesant their home since the early 1970s, where they raised their two sons, Eric and Mark. Marilyn is retired from UPS, where she spent 19 years as a driver. She holds the distinction of being the company's first and only female driver in Columbia County. Upon her retirement from UPS in 1997, Marilyn began devoting much of her time to volunteerism, and has continued doing so ever since.

AWARDEE:

Ida Leiser
Columbia County



The following adjectives have been used when describing Ida Leiser: kind, honest, generous, helpful, hardworking, no-nonsense, energetic. She is a retired nurse who fortunately does not know what retirement means. She recently celebrated her 22nd birthday (Ida is a leap year baby), and is like the energizer bunny. Ida remembers her first time volunteering, when in third grade she volunteered to help first graders with their reading. She has been volunteering ever since.

Ida has more than 60 years of volunteering experience with organizations such as Meals on Wheels, St. John's Lutheran Church, Kinderhook Elks Lodge, the Marion Stegman Fund Drive, and Columbia County Office for the Aging's Advisory Council. She is a member and auxiliary member of the Stuyvesant Fire Company and honorary member of the Stuyvesant Falls Fire Company, chaplain of the Stuyvesant-Stockport Senior Citizens Club, and vice president of the Tri Village Senior Citizens.

Not only does she volunteer her time for the organizations previously mentioned, she also finds the time to help those who are homebound by grocery shopping, running errands, preparing meals, and even providing some respite. Ida loves to knit and has made over 3,000 sets of mittens for the Marion Stegman Fund Drive. She also knits Christmas pins, Valentine pins, and St. Patrick's Day pins, which have been distributed throughout the Stuyvesant area.

Ida Leiser has been a resident of Columbia County for more than 65 years, and was a member of the first graduating class from Ravena Coeyman High School. Ida was also a member of the last graduating class of registered nurses from the Hudson City Hospital. She worked in the nursing field for many years, retiring from Albany Memorial Hospital with more than 30 years of service. Ida and her late husband Walter were married for 60 years, during which they traveled all over the world, even Antarctica. Ida certainly has a lot to be proud of, but one of the things she most takes great pride in is her induction into the Columbia-Greene Bowling Association Hall of Fame.

AWARDEE:

Vivian Groat
Delaware County



Vivian Groat is known for her unselfish willingness to assist anyone who needs her help. She is currently in her 12th year as the Franklin/Treadwell Senior Club president. She is part of the Washington Readers Club, which is the oldest reading club in the United States. She has served as president and vice president for the Delaware County Senior Council, and treasurer of the Franklin Methodist Church.

She oversees the Inner Church Thanksgiving dinner that serves 80-90 meals each year, has served on the board of elections for 30 years, and is an honorary member of the Franklin Rotary Club. Six years ago, Vivian was honored as a Paul Harris Fellow.

Vivian was born in Westford, New York, in 1925 to the late Edward and Sylvia Skellie. Vivian had six siblings. Her dad was the board of education president at the Westford Union School. Vivian stated that once a month she was treated as “queen of the Westford school” as she carried the teacher’s paychecks from her dad to give to the teachers. Vivian has resided in the town of Franklin for more than 75 years. In 1943, immediately following high school graduation, Vivian became employed as a bookkeeper with Grange League Federation, also known as Agway, for 10 years. In 1953, Vivian was offered a job as chief clerk for the United States Department of Agriculture.

Vivian Groat puts her heart and soul into doing what is best for all involved and never expects thanks or recognition. About volunteering, Vivian says, “It is rewarding helping those less fortunate.” She adds, “We’re all put on this earth to do a job.”



AWARDEE:

Antoinette Vessey Delaware County

Antoinette Vessey joined the Colchester Community United Methodist Church and is a certified lay servant in the United Methodist Church. Antoinette teaches women's bible study, is active on the church council, edits the monthly church newsletter, and is a delegate to the New York annual conference. She assists with church service communion, ushering, heads the prayer chain and vacation bible school, and assists with community fundraisers, among many other activities. In 2014, Antoinette was the grand marshal of the Downsville Christmas Parade. She has been a past president and trip coordinator for the Colchester Senior Citizens and is now their current treasurer. She is secretary for the Western Catskills parish council and an elected Catskill Hudson district co-lay leader. She also co-chairs the 2015/2016 district committee on ministry. She is an active member of the Downsville Women's Club, and is also the town of Colchester tax collector.

Antoinette helped to establish a Colchester community food bank by assisting in writing grants for funding necessary to cover the initial costs of turning the cloak room of the Colchester Community United Methodist Church into the food bank.

Antoinette Vessey was born in Peckville, Pennsylvania, in 1949 and grew up in Starrucca, Pennsylvania. In 2003, she moved to Downsville, New York, to join her husband Philip, a longtime resident and the engineer and on-air personality for WDLA before his retirement. She has lived in Colchester for more than 12 years.

When asked about what she enjoys about volunteering, Antoinette says "I started to volunteer as a way to learn more about the community and to meet people. My greatest reward through volunteering is the establishment of friendships and the ability to do unto others as we would have them do unto us." She adds, "Volunteering takes you out of yourself and gives you the ability to help others. Even the smallest act of kindness can touch someone's life in ways we may never know."

AWARDEE:

R. Murray Suggitt
Dutchess County



Since his retirement from Texaco 21 years ago, R. Murray Suggitt has been the unpaid director of the Fishkill food pantry. Under his tutelage, the pantry has grown from a small operation in a basement to its present location in its own building with a staff of 40. Murray is present daily, pitching in to do whatever is needed, from community outreach to manual labor. At 90, he has decided to pass the directorship on to others who have been inspired by his humble, dedicated example.

Murray Suggitt has been married for 56 years and raised three successful children. He attends the Fishkill Reformed Church and has served in the choir and on the investment committee for many years.



AWARDEE:

Elizabeth Triggs Erie County



Elizabeth Triggs is part community activist, part entrepreneur, and a visionary. She formed a block club to get things done in her neighborhood. “City Hall wouldn’t talk to me, but they recognize block clubs, so we became a block club.” Their first project was to fix up a rundown park for all the neighbors, including her own five children, to use. Elizabeth and several other women worked together with some others who’d been using it for outdoor parties. “Volunteering, we learn about people, their culture, their attitudes. We learn that other people’s situations are just like ours. If we get sick or hurt, we can be just like them in a second.”

Today, after 25 years, Elizabeth has built an organization of passionate volunteers—many are students recruited from local colleges, and many more are residents from neighborhoods across the city. She’s determined not to take the credit for all the work. “I just get the ideas,” she said, “The volunteers do the work. Teamwork makes the dream work.” Over the years the block club has grown, shaped in large part by Elizabeth’s vision and business acumen. They are now less about just one neighborhood and more about outreach to the wider community. They apply for grants as a 501(c)(3), set annual fundraising goals, and plan strategically. There are ongoing projects in housing rehab, the community garden, GED classes, summer youth employment, after school programs, drug abuse programs, food donations, and heating assistance. This past year more than 1,000 turkey dinners were served in four separate locations across the city at Thanksgiving and Christmas.

A lifelong Buffalo resident and Buffalo State College graduate, Elizabeth Triggs has also nurtured her own five children, 18 grandchildren, and 13 great-grandchildren to be part of the community.

Going forward, it seems there’s no reach too wide for Elizabeth or for the organization. “When we do service, we meet people, find out what their needs are, and how we can help them. But not just them—we help our community and our city.”

AWARDEE:

Chris Kasprzak
Erie County

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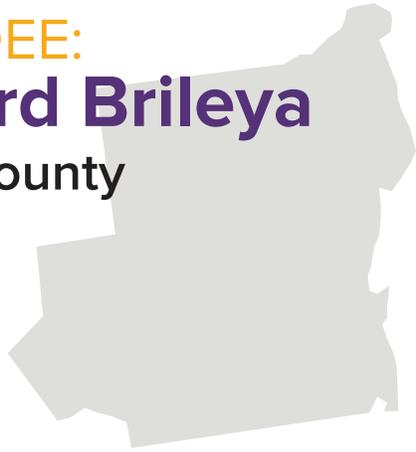
Through Chris Kasprzak’s lively spirit and sense of humor, she makes everyone immediately feel welcome and included at the Cheektowaga Senior Center. Her nominators say she works hard to make everyone feel like family when they come to the lunch program.

Chris is a vibrant part of the town of Cheektowaga’s senior center. She is often known as the “energizer bunny” of the center. Chris works at the center to organize the congregate dining site, but continues her work even after the meal has been served. It has often been said that Chris never stops thinking about her seniors. She is always filling in where there is a need, never needing to be asked to help. She is a cheerleader and advocate for her seniors, believing that participants and volunteers need to feel welcome and important. Chris has been involved with the Cheektowaga senior center for more than five years, and in that time the center has not been the same (for the better). She is a vibrant example of an older adult, and someone who lives by the idea that to stay young you have to stay active and be involved. She tries to encourage her seniors to live by the same thought by encouraging participation and fun through her vivacious personality and sense of humor.

Chris Kasprzak is a proud mother of one son and grandmother to two grandchildren. When Chris was forced to retire early from the United States Postal service due to an injury, she wasn’t sure what was next until she became involved in the center. She believes that it has helped her even more than she has helped there. She believes in making the senior center a place where participants are welcomed and treated like family.

About volunteering, Chris says “Find something you love. It takes stamina, but it’s worth it.”

AWARDEE:
Richard Brileya
Essex County



Richard Brileya helps the older adults in Essex County by providing transportation to and from their medical appointments. Many weeks, Richard provides transportation Monday through Friday. He has made a major difference in his community by donating his time to help Essex County Office for the Aging clients in need. If a client calls with a same day appointment, Richard is always there to help. He continuously works with clients and staff to help organize group trips. Richard is a great asset to the county.

Richard Brileya has lived in New York for 16 years. He currently resides in Moriah, NY. Prior to moving in New York, Richard was a press operator for Standard Register in Middlebury, Vermont. He has four children, 13 grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

Richard shared this about the importance of volunteering: “Volunteering needs to be done. We have multiple people in our community who cannot get around and desperately need our help. It is a necessity.”



AWARDEE:

Mary Ellen Keith **Franklin County**

Mary Ellen Keith, along with her husband Patrick, founded the St. Paul's Assumption Food Pantry in Vermontville. Mary Ellen had been tireless in her pursuit of addressing the hunger needs of the community, and has been vital in the success of the local food pantry. She was the first female elected official in Franklin County, and was town supervisor for eight years during the 1980s. She then served another term from 1997 until 2009. Mary Ellen was vital in securing a new town garage, and purchased land for a recreational park. She also started the summer food program, utilizing the recreational park to ensure that children were fed. Mary Ellen and Patrick also ran an adult proprietary home for the elderly for over 15 years to ensure that seniors that did not meet nursing home criteria had a home to live in. She also volunteered for the 4-H program, where she was a leader for area children. Mary Ellen still remains extremely active in her community. She is a member of the Brighton 55 Club, the Senior Singers, where she plays portable organ at the local nursing homes, and she also continues to act as the coordinator of the food pantry she created.

Mary Ellen Keith was born in 1929 in Vermontville. She is the eldest of 12 siblings. She has lived in Vermontville her entire life, where she married and had eight children, adopted a ninth, and fostered numerous children. She and Patrick have 21 grandchildren and 34 great-grandchildren. When Mary Ellen's children were still in school, she traveled 50 miles each way to nursing school, where she obtained her LPN. She worked at the local hospital, mainly in the maternity ward, due to her love of children. She then ran a local adult home for senior citizens. She is proud to host her family for Easter and Thanksgiving. She also has a yearly "grandma's day" where she entertains her grandchildren and great grandchildren with a no rules, all fun, junk food filled day of festivities.

Mary Ellen tells everyone that volunteering "keeps you young." She is passionate about volunteering, and is very humble. She has never looked for accolades for her work, and mainly supports from behind the scenes.

AWARDEE:

Patricia Buell

Fulton County



When it was time for Patricia Buell to retire, she carefully planned to include volunteer activities, as she is fully committed to giving back to the community. Pat formerly served as an administrative coordinator at Johnstown Hospital, administrative assistant to the director of psychiatry at Ellis Hospital, and as a nutrition coordinator for the Congregational Church.

Pat is a lifelong Fulton County resident, graduating from Perth High School and Fulton Montgomery Community College. Since 2009, she has served on the board of directors at the James A. Brennan Humane Society, where she also cares for and feeds the animals on a weekly basis and on holidays. In 2013, she was appointed to the Fulton County Office for Aging advisory council and in 2015 she began volunteering in the office one morning a week. She always has a smile on her face and is willing to jump in and help out wherever she is needed.

Pat is an avid reader and walker who loves animals and has several pets of her own. She is a dedicated, hardworking individual with a very strong work ethic, and the Fulton County Office for Aging considers themselves to be very fortunate to have her on board as part of their team of volunteers.

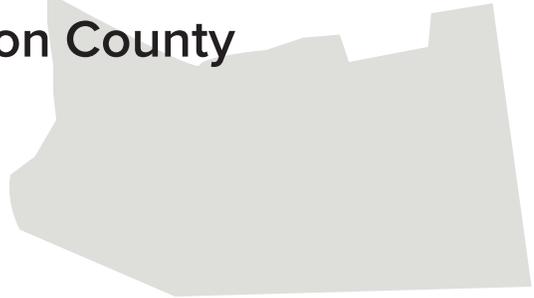
When asked what advice she may have for other older New Yorkers, Pat said “Volunteer so you can remain active and feel useful!”



AWARDEE:

Irene Hauser

Fulton County



Irene Hauser's exceptional contributions as a volunteer make her community a better place to live. Since her retirement from teaching, Irene has volunteered for many organizations.

She is the Johnstown 55+ Senior Citizens Club historian and helps to organize events such as the bazaar and rummage sale, holiday events, and scheduling speakers, among others. She is a volunteer substitute driver for the Fulton County Office for Aging meals program and a volunteer driver for the American Cancer Society, taking people to their appointments in Amsterdam. She volunteers with the NOAH Community Meal Program, helping to serve meals on Sundays and at the Gloversville Public Library story hour. She also volunteers at the outpatient desk signing people in for procedures at the Nathan Littauer Hospital Auxiliary. She is the chairperson of church finances committee, a member of the consistory as a deacon, and volunteers for their many activities, including teaching at the vacation bible school. Irene volunteers at the Red Cross blood drives, is a regent for the Daughters of the American Revolution and is in charge of the Good Citizenship Award, which goes to a high school senior. She's the president of the Fulton County Chapter of the NYS Retired Teachers Association and treasurer of the Senior Council. As a member of the Eastern Star Quilters, Irene helps with the Grace Lutheran Church's mission to send quilts to poor countries around the world, and she makes quilts to donate to various fundraisers in the community. She also has volunteered at the information booth on Main St. in Johnstown.

Irene Hauser is a lifelong Fulton County resident, a well-loved elementary school teacher, and very busy volunteer around the community. She is supportive of the Office for Aging and other services that help people of all ages.



AWARDEE:

Doris Jenkins Greene County

Doris Jenkins has long been a standout Greene County resident. She and her late husband, Dr. DuBois Jenkins, could be found volunteering at numerous activities. She delivered meals to the homebound and freely gave her time as a member and officer of the Greene County Aging Services Foundation. In addition to helping seniors, she serves as an active member of her church and other community organizations.

Doris was the first woman on the Catskill school board. She is dedicated to helping others, and an excellent role model for anyone considering becoming a volunteer. Doris has served the Greene County community continuously for more than 65 years, sharing her experience and wisdom to enrich her community.

A native New Yorker, Doris Jenkins was born and raised on a vegetable farm in Albany. She graduated from the Milne School in 1940 and from Cornell University in 1944. She married DuBois Jenkins in September 1944. He returned to military duty while Doris moved to Rome, NY and worked as a dietician. In 1946, DuBois joined Dr. L. Parker's veterinary practice and they moved to Catskill, NY. Their children were born in 1947, 1949, and 1951. Doris proudly attended games, concerts, and musicals for all her children and grandchildren, with Catskill High School wrestling matches still being one of her favorite outings.

Doris says "Volunteering is very satisfying. You get back much more than you give. It's not hard to start volunteering. All you need to do is act interested. Someone will notice, invite you to help and expect you to accept."

AWARDEE:
Dorothy True
Greene County



Dorothy True has always been very community minded and has volunteered on various committees. She was one of the forces that helped build the library in Cairo, NY. She enjoys quilting with her quilting group and has donated several to worthy causes. Dorothy has volunteered for the Cairo Library Board, is a literacy volunteer, and has also volunteered on the Road Improvement Committee, the Ladies Auxillary Senior Counsel, and the volunteer advisory council to the Greene County Department for the Aging.

Dorothy is a native New Yorker. She currently resides in Round Top, NY and was married to George True Jr. for 49 years before he passed away in 2004. She has three children and two grandchildren. She loves golf and quilting, and at 81 years old is still very active.

Dorothy has always encouraged people to get involved with community activities, as they are both rewarding and beneficial to the community. Dorothy says “One person can make a difference.”



AWARDEE:
Regina Dunn
Hamilton County



Regina Dunn is a regular driver for the local home delivered meals program in Hamilton County. In addition to delivering meals, she is always available to drive seniors to medical and other appointments. She also assists with the local food pantry and community holiday baskets. Regina coordinates bereavement assistance to families to help them in their time of need. She also does fundraising as a Catholic Daughter. Without hesitation, Regina is always available to help those in need.

Regina Dunn was born and grew up in Brooklyn, NY. She began a career in sales before opening her own travel agency. She began vacationing in Long Lake in 1972 and relocated to that community in 2001.

Regina says “Volunteering makes you feel better about yourself, and a great way to become part of your community is to help others.”

AWARDEE:

M. Catherine Simons
Hamilton County



M. Catherine Simons has volunteered for the ambulance corps for 20 years and became an EMT in 1997. She is the treasurer and is actively involved in both the medical and social facets of the organization. She has been the treasurer of the fire department for 17 years and is a very valuable fundraiser. Cathy is on the board of trustees and the pastor parish committee of the Wells United Methodist Church and helps with all of the monthly fundraising dinners. She also volunteers with the Wells Historical Society and has been an officer of the Eastern Star many times during her 40-year membership.

Cathy Simons was born in Schenectady, NY and moved to Wells when she was seven months old. She has lived in Wells ever since.

Cathy enjoys helping people in any way she can; her father instilled in her a strong sense of civic responsibility. She feels that if you are going to be a member of an organization, be an active one.



AWARDEE:
Patricia Sullivan
Herkimer County



Patricia Sullivan is a past exalted ruler of the Herkimer Elks, twice recognized as officer of the year and in 2012 honored as Elk of the Year. She is currently serving as the lodge's grant director, and over the past few years has helped the lodge receive grants totaling \$24,000 from the Elks National Foundation.

Pat is very involved in her community. Through her work at the Elks, she ensured that each food pantry in Herkimer county received \$1,200. She also helped organize a veterans dinner, and helped ensure project supplies were delivered to the Syracuse Veterans Hospital. Her fundraising has also supported a bicycle rodeo, where all local kids got a new bicycle, a Polar Express ride, and children's Christmas party at the lodge (including a visit from Santa with presents for all). She was also involved with organizing an event at Sylvan Beach, with a free bus ride and food and games for local kids. Her fundraising has purchased equipment for ARC, and established a free dictionary program for all third graders in Herkimer, Mohawk, St. Francis, and Richfield Springs schools.

Pat also co-chaired a bell ringing challenge to benefit the Salvation Army during the holiday season, and this year they raised more than \$1,200 in one day for the Salvation Army. Additionally, Pat and her husband, Charlie, often volunteer at the Ilion food pantry.

Pat Sullivan has lived in Ilion, New York for most of her life. She has been married to her husband, Charles, for 39 years, and they have four girls and one boy. Patricia worked in the financial industry for most of her life. In April 2014, she was honored by Syracuse television station WSYR as one of nine women in New York State "who make a difference." She has done all of this while undergoing cancer treatment and surgeries.

Of volunteering, Pat says: "It gives you a good feeling to bring smiles to people of all ages. Get out there and do it, volunteers are needed."

AWARDEE:

Esther Austin
Herkimer County



Esther Austin has always made time to volunteer in her community, including volunteering for the Eastern Star for over 50 years. She worked on the village planning board committee for 10 years and the Republican Committee for 20 years. When she was 15 years old, Esther was one of the founding members of the East Canada Valley Vision, and still supports the organization today. Esther has volunteered for the Festival of Trees, hoedowns, historical walking tours, pie baking frenzies, and trips to her beloved Yankees games; she has brought a village together through these many fundraisers. The fundraisers assist the Violet Festival Committee fund the entertainment programs that Esther has orchestrated, including Shumaker baseball game, balloon rides, coaster car races, carriage rides, and various other entertainments. She is behind the scenes making hundreds of the lavender and lilac bows, and organizing the Violet Festival banners that beautify the village for the festival. Her favorite responsibility each year has been being the editor-in-chief of the Violet Festival booklets. Her gardening skills have won her the Violet Festival Garden Club Award for several years. With her husband, Larry, they earned the Lyndon Lyon community Award in 2013. In recent years, Esther has entertained during the Christmas holidays at various nursing homes, including Alpine Home and the Country Manor, by playing her accordion, which she only learned to play a few short years ago.

As a lifelong resident of Dolgeville, New York, Esther Austin was married for 39 years to her husband Larry, who passed away. They had eight children between them, 16 grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren. Esther is a retired business owner.

About volunteering, Esther says “It gives me great satisfaction to give back to the community and the state. It makes you feel good to do something for others even if it is in a small way.



AWARDEE:

Deanna Getman

Jefferson County



Deanna Getman started her years of retirement volunteering by becoming involved with her three granddaughters' school activities and field trips. She spent six years as a volunteer at the New York State Zoo at Thompson Park, helping out in the office, the Christmas and Halloween parties, and at the 4th of July concert in the park. In 2012, Deanna started volunteering at the Jefferson County Office for the Aging and has been spreading the word about aging services to people in the community ever since.

“Volunteering is a way of giving back to one’s community; it’s a commitment to be actively engaged in helping people when they need assistance,” Deanna says “I have been fortunate in my lifetime; I’ve traveled all over, lead a rewarding life, have a beautiful family, and find volunteering an interesting and worthwhile activity.”

Deanna Getman is a lifelong resident of Jefferson County. She grew up in LaFargeville, met her future husband Joel in a 7th grade choral and dance production, graduated, and married in 1962. Deanna and Joel took over the ownership and operation of the Getman family 600 acre dairy and “ponderosa” beef farms. Deanna helped out in all phases of the business while raising two children, growing and canning her own vegetables, teaching sewing for 4-H, showing and winning blue ribbons with her horse Lady, and volunteering with luncheons at the local Methodist church. Deanna attended college and worked for F.K. Gailey Co. as an office manager for 27 years, where she directed customers in need to the department of social services, community churches, or organizations for assistance.

When Deanna thinks about volunteering, President John F. Kennedy’s 1961 inaugural address speech urging Americans to become involved in public service comes to mind: “Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.” Deanna thinks “giving a little of your time to help others is something anyone can do.”

AWARDEE:

Karen Norton

Jefferson County



Karen Norton says “there are three factors that influence my interest in volunteering. The first is simply the fun of interacting with my fellow human beings. The others are a drive to learn new things and a moral obligation to respond the needs of those in my community.”

Karen has worked closely with Literacy Volunteers of Northern NY, where she trained as a literacy tutor and worked with Spanish speaking farm workers in their homes, also helping with transportation and recreational opportunities. She became interested in how to make wider social change. She decided political action would be a promising avenue to explore, so she enrolled in political science courses at SUNY Jefferson (JCC). While at JCC, she joined the local AARP chapter and began serving as advocacy chair. In that capacity she keeps chapter members informed of legislation that affects them, organizes letter writing campaigns, and visits state and federal representatives to discuss the needs of older adults and legislative initiatives that can improve their lives.

Karen also organized a local chapter of Move to Amend, a national organization that seeks to control the influence of corporate wealth on the electoral process. She was also involved in an effort to organize a local congregation to work with state and municipal agencies to reverse a change in on-street parking that created a safety hazard for elderly parishioners and children who had to cross a busy highway to attend church. She is also engaged in efforts with SAGE Upstate, an organization that assists the LGBT community. Having recently joined the board of Matthew’s Place, a food pantry and thrift store in Boonville, Karen works on strategic planning issues, as well as volunteering regularly.

Karen Norton grew up in rural Iowa and studied religion and literature at institutions of higher education in Minnesota, New Jersey, and New York. She has lived in Central New York since 1969, currently within sight the northern flank of the Tug Hill. Her careers in libraries and literacy work helped fulfill her desire to be a life-long learner. In her spare time Karen enjoys travel, her cabin in the woods near Boonville, reading, and writing.

AWARDEE:

Barbara A. Taylor
Kings County



Barbara Taylor served as the chairperson for the board of directors for Irving Place Child Development Center, where she was responsible for approving annual budgets, auditing reports, and planning, presiding over, and facilitating board and committee meetings. As the president of the block association, Barbara presides over all formal meetings and oversees major initiatives related to the association. She also oversees the block association’s fundraising efforts and the procurement of grant money.

Presently, Barbara serves as the secretary of the missionary board as well as secretary of the Sunday school department at Mt. Sinai Baptist Church. Through her love of writing and learning, Barbara is the creator and instructor of Breakfast for the Brain, a weekly class designed to keep the seniors at Grant Square sharp.

Barbara Taylor was born in Mount Holly, New Jersey and raised in Burlington, New Jersey. In 1958, she moved to Brooklyn, where she still resides. In 1970, she met and married her husband David Bonaparte, who has since passed. Barbara’s career started at Carlton Nursing Home, and then on to Greenpoint Hospital once she received her nursing degree from Staten Island Community College. Eventually, Barbara returned to Carlton Nursing Home, where she retired after 25 years of service. Barbara is the devoted mother of two daughters, grandmother to three grandchildren (one deceased) and great-grandmother to four great-grandchildren.

Barbara says “Volunteering helps keep me young! It provides me with social and physical activities and makes me feel a sense of purpose. When you give without looking to get something, your blessings overflow. Find a cause that is important to you and go for it!”



AWARDEE:

Jorge A. Tait **Kings County**

Jorge Tait has made a difference in his community since 1985, when he started volunteering with the 67th Precinct civilian radio patrol in Brooklyn. For many years he directed the 67th Precinct annual Christmas party for more than 300 children. He then became civilian coordinator for the Progressive Youth Council, where he organized the Peer Mediation Workshop, Stop the Violence forums, and weekly mentoring for youth. Jorge volunteered for 28 years at Community Board 17 Youth Happening Day. He also became a Big Brother to several young men. More recently, he lobbied his pastor and found a new home for the displaced Remsen and Fort Greene senior action centers, enabling them to merge and find a new home at Clarendon Road Church. In addition, Jorge volunteers at the new Remsen Neighborhood Senior Center as a technology instructor.

Jorge was born in Cuba. At the age of 13, he migrated with his family to Brooklyn. He attended Lefferts Junior High School, Tilden High School, and completed his education at Hunter College in business management and political science. Soon after graduating, he married Donna, his wife of 38 years. For the past 33 years, they have resided in East Flatbush, where they proudly raised two daughters, Cara and Jennifer, who are now married with daughters of their own, Nia and Mariana. Jorge worked at New York Life Insurance as systems director until he retired in 2011. He now dedicates most of his time to community volunteering.

Jorge's advice about volunteering is to do it from the heart. "There is no better reward than knowing that you made a positive difference in someone's life."



AWARDEE:
Joan Davis
Lewis County

Joan Davis is a Copenhagen, NY native who has lived in Lewis County her entire life. She is a mother of four, stepmother of six, a grandmother and step-grandmother of roughly 25 grandchildren, and a great-grandmother of four. She and her husband were owners of a well-known local diner called Lloyd's of Lowville for many years. After the sale of the diner, they opened Lance's Appliance and Repair Shop.

Most of her career was spent working at Lowville Academy and Central School, from where she retired. After learning of her husband's illness, she decided to return to work at Lowville Academy and Central School as the lunch monitor, better known as "Grandma."

Joanie is the chair for funeral dinners held at the Lowville VFW by the auxiliary. She holds the position of "conductress" at the VFW, and chairs their local dances. She has served as chair for more than 10 years on the Cancer Aid and Research Committee and three years as president for the Lowville Legion Auxiliary, as well as helping out with their Friday night dinners. Independently, she has raised over \$1,000 from pull tabs she's collected through the VFW and Legion. All of this money was then donated to the dialysis unit at Lewis County General Hospital. She has made more than 100 lap robes, which she's donated to the Lewis County Nursing Home and to the children of Lewis County Head Start. She never stops caring, never stops giving, and her heart never stops growing. In fact, during her granddaughter's last home soccer game, she not only bought her granddaughter a bouquet of flowers—she bought all the seniors on the team a bouquet.

Joanie says "Don't be afraid to volunteer! Do not be scared to reach out, listen to what people have to say, and take the time to care."

AWARDEE:

Linda Weaver

Livingston County



For the past 12 years, Linda has provided 40+ hours per week of volunteer service to the Geneseo Parish Outreach Center, Inc. Her commitment to this organization has resulted in connecting hundreds of low income, uninsured or underinsured Livingston County residents to free direct physical and mental health care, dental services, health screenings, and referral services. She continues to work tirelessly to secure public support for the organization, as well as donations of food, gas cards, and retail store gift cards to assist individuals and families in need. She provides countless volunteer hours of information and referral services to clients and is a strong advocate for those most at risk.

Linda was born in Hornell, NY before moving to Livingston County in 1966. She served her country in the Army Reserve as an E-3 psychiatric specialist. In 1983, Linda and her children were in college at the same time, where she completed her degree in nursing. Having achieved her RN, Linda retired from the Army Reserve with the rank of lieutenant colonel. Her career path lead her to Craig Developmental Center in Sonyea, New York, and later to Rochester Psychiatric Center, retiring in 2002 in the position of nurse administrator.

Volunteering for community service is the most rewarding way to give back. In her own words: "The Lord has been good to me and blessed me with all that I ever needed. I am grateful for the opportunity to give back to others in need."



AWARDEE:

Joseph Carrozzi

Monroe County



Joseph Carrozzi has been giving back to his community since he began his service with the Marines, and he continued his commitment as a city of Rochester firefighter. He has worked with various groups supporting law enforcement, local churches, and children, and serves as chair of the Ontario Beach Park Program Committee, which sponsors events in the beach and port area of Rochester. These events provide family entertainment and help to promote the area. Joe has received awards including the Mayor's Renaissance Award, the Kiwanis Man of the Year Award, the Rochester Police Rosewood Club Distinguished Service Award, and the Charles Settlement House Outstanding Alumni Award.

Joe Carrozzi is a lifelong resident of Rochester. He and his wife Jean have been married for 60 years. They enjoy spending time with their four children and seven grandchildren. Joe enjoys volunteering in the community promoting family activities, crime prevention, and community involvement. He has dedicated his life to serving the community he grew up in and is proud to call home. And because of Joe, Monroe County is an even greater place to live.

AWARDEE:

Jean Carrozzi
Monroe County



Jean Carrozzi's dedication and commitment have a great impact on the quality of life that Monroe County residents enjoy. Her work with the Ontario Beach Park Program Committee has brought residents from across the county out to spend time with their friends and family in this great park. Jean has many received awards for her service to the community including the Mayor's Renaissance Award, the ACT-1 Appreciation Award, the New York State Lifetime PTA Member Award, the RCSD Volunteer of the Month Award, and the Rochester Police Rosewood Club Distinguished Service Award.

Jean is a lifelong resident of Rochester. She and her husband Joe have been married for 60 years, and they love spending time with their four children and seven grandchildren. She enjoys volunteering in youth and family activities and crime prevention. Jean works with Joe on the events put on by the Ontario Beach Park Program Committee, which provide family entertainment and help promote the area. She is a great leader in the community and a positive role model for others.



AWARDEE:

Karen Sylvia **Montgomery County**

Karen Sylvia is a long-time active volunteer in the community. Currently with the Montgomery County Office for Aging, she sits on the advisory council, is a friendly visitor, and is a clerical volunteer. She is also a preschool teacher at the Princetown Church and a committee member at Liberty Enterprises. Karen's volunteer resume includes being a Compeer, Inc. volunteer, an usher at Proctors, a Sunday school teacher and leading the vacation bible school for her church. She has also chaired various committees with the Festival of Trees and the Liberty Team for the Walk for Babies/March of Dimes.

Friends have asked her over the years why she doesn't just relax and take it easy. She responds with "While I can do it, I like to keep busy and active." Karen worked for Liberty Enterprises for 32 years as the admissions coordinator, retiring in January 2013.

During her time at Liberty, Karen was known for her professionalism, thoroughness, and friendly personality. She is dedicated to her family and friends, and former co-workers have stated that her name is "synonymous with quality and excellence. She has always had time to listen, support, and advocate for everyone. She has a big heart and sincerely wants to help people." They have much respect for her both as a friend and a professional.

Karen Sylvia enjoys working at a number of additional jobs, including being a certified respite provider through Family Care, working at Brooklyn's as a hostess, and serving as assessor for the town of Florida.



AWARDEE:

Patricia O'Brien **Nassau County**

Patricia O'Brien has dedicated herself to improving her community. She regularly visits the homebound to provide them with a link to their faith. She has also been the foundation of several veteran projects, including raising funds for veterans returning home, sending packages to troops in Afghanistan, and transporting veterans to and from their homes in Nassau County to the Northport VA Medical Center. Patricia ensures that the next generation understands, supports, and continues to uphold the value of service. Her teaching background offers the patience, knowledge, and kindness that's essential when encouraging children to engage. Community members have been inspired by her selfless dedication. Promoting youth involvement with veteran collections promotes patriotism, teaches service, supports, and strengthens the community. She is selfless and humble. Patricia never seeks praise; she always highlights community members instead.

Patricia O'Brien was born in the Bronx and raised in New Rochelle. She received her bachelor's degree from Mount St. Vincent College and her master's degree from Long Island University. She has lived in Manhasset since her marriage to her husband Donald in 1973. She taught math for 13 years, then worked for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority until her retirement in 2002. Her family is her greatest joy. Patricia dedicates her weekdays to her grandchildren and volunteering. She has received many awards (too many to list!) for all her outstanding work with veterans.

About volunteering, Patricia says "Just do it! Each of us has been blessed with gifts and talents that should be shared. There is nothing more rewarding than knowing lives have been improved by something you have done." She adds, "The power of a single positive individual can be tremendous, but when you join with others who are like-minded, the results can be far reaching. Find a worthwhile cause that you can be passionate about and jump into it."



AWARDEE:

Christine Allen New York County

In 2010, Christine Allen joined the Carter Burden/Leonard Covello Senior Program, where she is the president of the advisory council. She advises the program director on the center's operations and programs and conveys concerns of seniors to the director and executive director. Chris also volunteers her time as a kitchen aid during lunch service, putting her culinary experience to work serving food for program participants. Chris started volunteering at the senior program because she loves to assist others, and does so with affection and passion. She enjoys making a difference in people's lives.

Christine Allen was born in Newark, New Jersey and raised in New York, East Harlem. She is an only child, has never been married, and has no children of her own. She has dedicated her life to working and helping others. Chris worked for the Northern Manhattan Perinatal Partnership and retired in 2005. She began volunteering at the Mount Calvary Business and Professional Ministry, assisting and training those interested in attending college or furthering their career goals. She helped hundreds of individuals of all ages through tools such as business directories, workshops, job posting, and job referrals. In addition, Chris was involved in developing fundraising events to help the organization provide financial support to its participants.

Not only does Chris' volunteerism benefit the organization and the people she assists, but it also gives her great satisfaction helping people improve their quality of life.

AWARDEE:

Cora Gilmore
New York County



In 1998, Cora Gilmore was appointed member of the Manhattan Community Board No. 9. She is currently a member of the board's Senior Issues Committee; New York Department of Police 30th Precinct community council; St. James Baptist Church; and the Licensed Practitioners Nurses Association/1199 Health Care Workers Union. At the Senior Issues Committee meetings, Cora is always engaging with members and presenters. She also attends 1199 Health Care Workers Union meetings for retirees, where she continuously advocates for better services such as housing, health, postal services, and transportation for the elderly and those with disabilities. In 2015, she attended the NYC Department for the Aging's public hearing on the annual plan summary, and testified on behalf of the seniors in District 9. Cora annually participates in the planning of NYPD 30th precinct annual seniors and children's Christmas parties.

Cora Gilmore has been a resident of New York for the past 73 years. She currently lives in Hamilton Heights (Harlem). She was born in Sanford, North Carolina. Her mother passed away when she was five years old and she was partially raised by her great-aunt and later by her father. Her older brother and sister are deceased; she has one younger sister, and a niece and nephew who are very dear to her heart. Cora started her career as a nurse's aide under the New York City Department of Hospital, now known as NYC Health and Hospital Cooperation. She later advanced her career as a licensed practitioner nurse and worked for the City of New York Department of Health and Hospitals Cooperation for 34 years.

The advice Cora gives about volunteering is simply to be involved in the community—to give your time, educate, and help solve problems, as well as learn from others. She says "Volunteering gives you a chance to meet new people and provides great personal satisfaction."

AWARDEE:

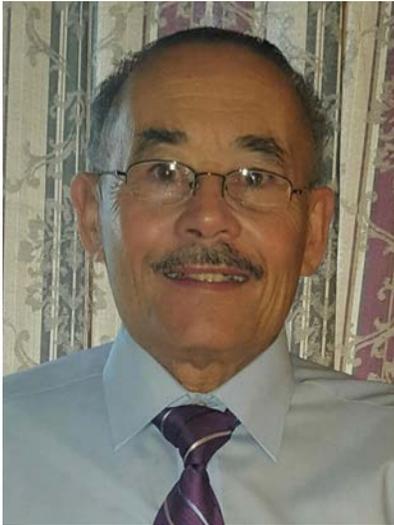
Jane Schroeder
Niagara County



After reading an article in the local newspaper, Jane Schroeder spearheaded a local “Socks for Seniors” campaign in November/December, publicized the project, and collected more than 400 pairs, which she distributed to local nursing homes and agencies that work with seniors. Jane also pitches in each year to hand out garbage bags to volunteers for the annual city-wide clean-up day. This year Jane co-chaired a project to collect and transport quilts made by members of local Lutheran churches for distribution through Lutheran World Relief.

For Jane Schroeder, volunteering is a way of life, and the Niagara community is all the better for it. Jane was born in Niagara Falls, NY, one of 13 children. She lived in Indiana from 1970-1984 and worked as a lab technician for Carborundum. After moving back to Niagara Falls in 1984, Jane began volunteering at Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center in 1986. Thirty years later, she continues to be one of the most active members of its dedicated corps, contributing more than 300 hours annually. Now at age 71, Jane brings her considerable skills and infectious enthusiasm to everything she tackles. Her reason for volunteering is simple: “It keeps me off the streets and keeps my mind occupied.” Jane is tireless in her efforts to make Niagara County a better place.

Jane acknowledges there is a tremendous need for volunteers and volunteering provides an opportunity to meet new friends.



AWARDEE:

Wilfredo Rosario

Oneida County

After his retirement, Wilfredo Rosario became heavily involved as a volunteer with the Rome Rescue Mission. He is a longtime volunteer at the mission and whether preparing meals, assisting with clean up duties or spending time in fellowship with the clients, he has a tremendous impact on everyone he meets. Wilfredo's energy and willingness to help others has been the cornerstone of his success at the rescue mission and the community, and serves as a continuous reminder of what spiritual, social, and physical health looks like at any age. As a volunteer at the Maranatha Church in Rome, whenever there is a need for volunteer work at the church, his hand is always the first one up. He has been helping others in his community by doing chores for elderly neighbors such as mowing lawns and shoveling snow as a favor to those in need. Wilfredo's character, work ethic, and compassion exemplify the "Blaze a Trail" theme of this year's award.

Wilfredo Rosario originated from Puerto Rico. He resided in Brooklyn in 1970 and worked as a truck driver for Iberia products until 1983 when he relocated to Puerto Rico to work until 1988. From there he went to Pennsylvania and worked as a truck driver delivering for Santi & Son until 1994. Wilfredo has resided in Rome since 1994 and is retired from ConMed. He and his wife Aurea have nine children, 15 grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren.

Wilfredo believes that it doesn't matter the age, you can help anyone in need, and there is always a way to help in your community.

AWARDEE:
Vinh Dang
Onondaga County



Vinh Dang served as a neighborhood advisor for almost seven years. When he retired, he took the volunteer position as advisor for the community executive committee, where he continues to work to better the community. He is instrumental in working on an annual book that provides information that brings old friends together and assists in sharing valuable resources to those who are in need. Vinh worked with the city of Syracuse and Onondaga County to grant a proclamation to recognize the former South Vietnamese flag as a symbol of freedom. Thanks to his advocacy, people from the Vietnamese community come together at City Hall to have an annual flag rising ceremony. He is also a founding member of the Vietnamese Senior Association. Now Vietnamese seniors can come together every Saturday morning to enjoy socialization, yoga, entertainment, and a nutritious meal.

Vinh Dang was an officer in the Army of the Republic of Vietnam, fighting against communism alongside Americans for more than 10 years. After the fall of Saigon, he spent seven and a half years in a communist re-education concentration camp because of his association with the United States during the war. After he was released from prison, he and his wife and children came to Syracuse in June 1996 through humanitarian organization efforts.

He continues his quest to improve his life and the lives of all he encounters in the community. He has learned English and helps others who are struggling with the language. He paints, writes, and translates books, poetry, and Haiku, and does calligraphy. He is now 86 years old, and is a caregiver to his frail wife of 50 years, Phuong Nguyen. He still gets out daily to assist wherever he can.

According to Vinh, helping others in the community is a civic duty. His credo is "For others first, then for own." He lives this each and every day.



AWARDEE:
Robert Luongo
Onondaga County



Bob Luongo, also known as Bob Barker, has long been a fixture in the Syracuse community. He started Bob Barker's Famous Hot Dogs and Coney's in 1981. He is a smiling, friendly face who is kind and generous to everyone, treating them with dignity and respect. He is a visible member of the community at events and city, town, and village parades. Before he enjoys Christmas with his family, Bob visits local nursing homes to make sure the residents have a visitor that day. He feeds the homeless and those who are hungry and unable to afford a meal. In February 2014, an apartment complex in Syracuse lost power and the residents were unable to return to their homes for hours. When Bob heard about this, he packed up his hot dog cart and set up outside of the housing complex. He made sure that everyone who lived there had a hot meal that night. He donated his time, service, resources, food, drinks, and snacks. He is a hot dog vendor by trade, but his first concern is for those in need who live in our community.

Bob Luongo was born in 1939 and grew up on the north side of Syracuse. At age 17, Bob was the 1957 New York State Dance Champion. He built a hot dog cart by hand and took to the Syracuse street corners in 1981. He had multiple hot dog carts throughout Syracuse and two indoor restaurants that he operated with his wife, Jan, and daughters. Jan passed away in 2011. He has five daughters, five sons-in-law, 13 grandchildren, and one great-grandchild due in July. Bob continues to participate in local community events, parades, and visiting nursing home residents—all while battling stage 4 colon cancer.

“Giving of ourselves and back to the community is essential for those who benefit today, as well as those who will benefit in the future. Volunteering your time is one of the free things we have in this life, and it can come full circle for some people. Someone may have helped them and now they are able to volunteer their time to give back. Helping one another is not only the right thing to do, but the human thing to do.”

AWARDEE:

Bessie Kolodziejski

Orange County



The staff at the Orange County Office for Aging often forget that Bessie Kolodziejski is a volunteer, as she works as much as a full time employee. They say the only difference is that Bessie never complains! She is a true “glass half full” person. Bessie is an inspiration with her caring manner and contagious laugh. She is a staple at the Cornwall Senior Center and greets everyone and makes them feel welcome and at home. Often when someone new comes to the senior center, there is trepidation and insecurity.

Bessie makes it her job to embrace and engage the ‘newbies’ and make them feel at home. Her volunteerism, whether it be at the senior center, hospital or recreation department, has made a community that people love to live in and call home.

Bessie is 95 years old and has been volunteering at the Cornwall Senior Dining Program for 33 years. A native New Yorker, she is a mother of three, has several grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Bessie worked for the Monroe-Woodbury School District and also for her husband’s construction company.

Bessie not only volunteered at the dining program for 33 years but also volunteered at the Cornwall Hospital for 17 years. She is also an active member of the Golden Age club at Munger Cottage in Cornwall. Bessie first came to the Cornwall senior dining site by invitation from her brother after her husband Johnny retired. Bessie started volunteering shortly thereafter, packing desserts, wrapping breads, setting the tables for lunch, packing the dessert bags for the home delivered clients, and serving meals to the seniors. Later on in her volunteering years Bessie took over doing all the congregate attendance, greeting the seniors as they came for lunch and still continued to wrap breads and silverware. Bessie enjoys volunteering so that she can help others, and is a great friend to many.

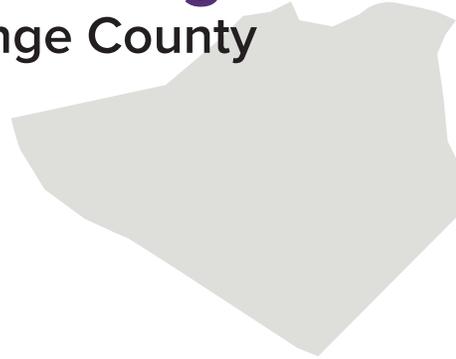
Bessie states that volunteering all of these years has been very good therapy. “Volunteering is what keeps you going, keeps you young and active.” The best thing I did all of these years was keep busy!”



AWARDEE:

Peter Rogers

Orange County



Pete Rogers has lived in Orange County for only three years, but his impact has been impressive. He is an active EMT and takes calls at all hours of the day and night—regardless of the weather. Perhaps the most valuable attribute that Pete possesses is his humble, unassuming, caring manner. He genuinely likes people and doesn't think his work is anything special or important. He truly believes everyone should give back to the community. Orange County is fortunate to have Pete Rogers call it home.

Pete has been volunteering at the Cornwall Senior Dining Program for three years. Every day, Pete helps at the dining site for approximately three hours, setting up the tables, wrapping silverware, scooping desserts, plating bread, and serving the seniors their meals. He also delivers meals to home bound seniors once a week.

Before coming to Orange County, Pete lived in Sullivan County, where he also volunteered with the ambulance corps as an EMT for two years and another 17 years volunteering for the Office of the Aging, transporting seniors to their medical appointments.

Pete Rogers and his wife Josephine moved to Cornwall in 2013. Together Pete and Josephine have five children and nine grandchildren, with two more on the way. Pete loves volunteering his time helping others in need; he is a true people person. In addition to the time and attention he gives to volunteering, he gives a positive attitude, kindness, jokes, smiles, and an overall good feeling. He makes people feel wanted and needed. People look forward to seeing him.

Pete feels that everyone should volunteer at some point in their lives. He states “If you love what you do, you'll never feel like you're working. Always help others—it makes a difference in their lives and it makes you feel good, too!”



AWARDEE:

Geary Shenck Orleans County

Geary Shenck is always willing to lend a helping hand. He assists in outreach efforts, and advocates for the needs of his neighbors. Geary has a sense of humor and a kind heart, but also has the ability to get the job done with his wisdom and knowledge for what is truly needed in the community. His service on advisory boards has assisted in the growth of services to better support families and individuals in need. Geary is often the voice for those who cannot find the words. He also volunteers his time to provide transportation to soup kitchen services. This allows individuals the opportunity to eat a healthy meal, socialize, and gain access to needed resources. The impact of this single act is tremendous.

Geary Shenck moved to NY when he was four, and has been here for 80 years. He currently lives in Clarendon with his wife Margie, of 56 years. Geary has been a farmer his entire life. He was employed as the Orleans County dog warden for 19 years, milk delivery personnel for 11 years, and Clarendon town supervisor for 10 years. Geary has been a member of St. Mary's Church in Holley for 53 years and has contributed to the *Clarendon Gazette* "Tid Bits" column for 30 years. His volunteer efforts seem impossible for such a busy man, but somehow he finds a way to give back.

Geary says "Don't be afraid to volunteer! There is always something you can do to help. Volunteering gives you a good feeling in your heart; it is such a beautiful feeling to help others. Always have faith to help guide you in your volunteer work, and life. With a good team and support system, volunteering can be the most rewarding thing you can do."

AWARDEE:

Wayne Litchfield

Orleans County



It's impossible to quantify Wayne Litchfield's impact on Orleans County. A voice of calm in crisis for nearly three decades as an emergency dispatcher, he has a heart of gold for those in need—in need of a hot meal, a listening ear, or an “IT guy,” among others.

Echoing the career he completed two years ago, Wayne continues “scanning” the community for ways to help alleviate pain or distress. He shows up, works hard, and solves problems creatively, compassionately, and persistently. If a problem can't be addressed by his considerable connections to community resources, or his sophisticated understanding of a variety of subjects—from sound tech to gardening to the bible to rhythm and blues—Wayne still offers a warm hug and a promise of prayers.

Wayne Litchfield has lived in Orleans County his whole life; he currently lives in Medina. During his working years and now in his retirement, he has demonstrated a remarkable level of dedication and excellence in service to his community. He loves people and it shows. Many people love and appreciate Wayne. Wayne amassed a thorough knowledge of Orleans' resources during his 28-year career as a public safety dispatcher. Now he puts the knowledge to work for a variety of the organizations that were once referral sites for his callers.

Wayne is a man of faith who simply says: “God has given me many talents and I will use them to his glory.” He hopes his recognition helps promote volunteerism among community members of all ages, but especially older adults.

AWARDEE:

Georgia Davis Oswego County



Georgia Davis is currently in her third year of serving with Oswego AmeriCorps, a national service program. She is centered in the Mexico Elementary School, and mentors students to help them improve their school performance. She is enthusiastic and loves what she is doing everyday. She works one-on-one or in small groups in several classrooms. She also supports teachers and staff. This school year Georgia and another AmeriCorps member have organized two donation drives. One collected clothing for the nurse's office and the other school supplies.

Georgia is a native New Yorker and is 71 years old. She lived in the Syracuse area for much of her life and has lived in Mexico and Pulaski for the last 20 years with her husband of 51 years. They have three children: a daughter who lives in Mexico, NY and two sons who live in Arizona. Her past careers included being a cosmetologist for seven years and then a nursing/physical therapy aide for more than 32 years at a nursing and rehabilitation facility until she retired. Her volunteering started after high school with the Girl Scouts. Later when her children participated, she was a Girl Scout leader and Cub Scout pack leader. She is still serving at her church as a Sunday school teacher.

Georgia says "You need to be willing to make it a job—that you are there when needed, not just when you want to be. I enjoy working with young children and helping them put the right foot forward in the early days of their education and life. It is so great to see a child grow and have self esteem. When I am helping others, it is personally rewarding for me."

AWARDEE:

Carol Kiehn Kirkey
Otsego County



Carol Kiehn Kirkey has selflessly devoted her time and talents as an advocate for those in need of long term supports and services, providing assistance in coping with the effects of Alzheimer’s Disease, as well as sharing her experiences as a caregiver to assist others. She is caring, compassionate, and exudes a positive attitude that aides in her ability to advocate for others and provides insight into the joys and stresses of being a caregiver.

Carol donates her time to a number of causes, including the Alzheimer’s Association of Northeastern NY Leatherstocking Branch, Dollars for Scholars, and the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program. She also helps a neighbor by checking on her frequently, and visits residents in a nursing home other than where she is assigned as an ombudsman.

Carol is a native New Yorker who was born and raised in the Bronx. She came to Otsego County as a freshman at SUNY Oneonta (SUCO) and has lived here ever since. Carol taught math for 33 years and was an adjunct at SUCO for five years after her retirement. Carol was a dedicated caregiver to her husband, Terry, who suffered from Alzheimer’s disease. Their experiences with residents, staff, caregivers, the Alzheimer’s Association, and hospice are what motivated her to volunteer.

Carol says “It’s an honor and privilege to attempt to ‘pay back’ a debt that can never be repaid. The benefits of volunteering far outweigh the time commitment to be involved.”



AWARDEE:

Jean Finch

Otsego County



Jean Finch is a giving person who doesn't hesitate to help others. She has volunteered at the local hospital since 2004 and took on the leadership of an Office for Aging sponsored exercise program the same year. She continues with both activities.

She is frequently called on by her church to provide a meal or a ride for someone in need. She provides rides to MD appointments and exercise classes to friends and neighbors. She advocates for local causes and can be found alongside her husband John volunteering at fundraisers for local historical associations. She and John can also be seen picking up litter on their morning walks. She is an extremely positive person who likes to help others.

Jean Finch is a native New Yorker and has lived in many regions of the state. She moved to the Cooperstown area in 1971. Jean studied to be an X-ray technician when it was a hospital-based program. She worked in various hospitals throughout the state and spent the last 30 years of her career at Bassett Health Care in Cooperstown. She and John share some volunteer activities and take advantage of visiting their five children and nine grandchildren in different parts of the country.

Jean says "Helping others offers a high level of satisfaction and makes me feel good."

AWARDEE:

George D'Alessandro Putnam County



George D'Alessandro is presently a senior fitness volunteer instructor at two of the Putnam County Office for Senior Resources' friendship centers. Ed and Sally Enright are two of the many people who attend his class. Sally writes: "My husband Ed and I participate in George's exercise classes three times a week. He does this as a volunteer. His classes are always full. He has a great sense of humor, a calm demeanor, and keeps us engaged in the exercises. My husband has Parkinson's and his doctor encourages him to keep up his exercises with George. He feels the exercise benefits him and he is doing well." She adds, "George is friendly and encourages my husband and others in the group. He has a personal touch with people. We truly feel he makes a difference in our lives and we look forward to taking his classes every week." As a senior fitness volunteer instructor, George helps many people improve themselves physically and has shown seniors that exercise can be fun. Also, when George volunteered as a little league coach and after school coach, he was like a big brother and sometimes a father figure to several players, and he is still in contact with many of them.

George D'Alessandro was born in 1929 in Bronx, New York. In 1931, his family moved to Mt. Vernon, NY and they lived there until they moved to Putnam County in 1945. He was married to his wife, Marilyn, for over 50 years before her passing. They had two children, George and Karen. George has three grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. After serving his country in the Korean War, George was a civil engineer for Putnam County. In 1958, he became a sports writer and continues to write a sports column for the local newspapers. In 1985, he became a parochial school gym teacher and remained in that position until 2010.

George's advice to others is to volunteer for an activity that you enjoy and have fun doing it. George's helpful tip: be sure to be knowledgeable in the chosen volunteer area.



AWARDEE:

Gloria Troy **Putnam County**

Gloria Troy has volunteered for many organizations. Presently, she volunteers at the William Koehler Senior Center in Mahopac. She is the activity leader for the RSVP sewing group, a group that sews cancer pads for patients. At the senior center, she calls bingo, keeping the game lively for the participants. Gloria volunteers her time at the Mahopac Library, continuing her knitting for babies and wheelchair patients. As an RSVP wellness ambassador, she visits nursing homes. Gloria has been a bell ringer to help raise funds for the Salvation Army. She has also volunteered her time at the Eagle Eye II Thrift Store, cataloging and selling items to raise funds for the Putnam Hospital. Gloria has walked the RSVP Golden Mile to raise funds for the March of Dimes. She is also very compassionate toward her neighbors and keeps an eye out for them. People say that Gloria is a person who works selflessly to help her community.

Gloria Troy was born and raised in Yonkers, NY, and married and raised five children. While raising her children, Gloria was involved with her children's Girl Scout and Cub Scout troops. In 1996, the family moved to Mahopac, NY. Gloria worked for Reader's Digest for 15 years before retiring in December of 1991. Immediately following that, she joined the senior center to learn quilting and got hooked on volunteering. She is still going strong and enjoying every minute.

Gloria says "Don't hesitate to volunteer; you will receive more than you give."

AWARDEE:

Crawford L. Hinson Queens County



Crawford L. Hinson has made a difference by enlightening diverse communities and building relationships between the church and the secular world. He has served as pastor of Friendship Baptist Church of Long Island City, NY for the past 19 years, making a distinct difference in the neighborhood. He works closely with youth and seniors. He has joined with four other community churches to become more effective. In doing so, he helps to benefit and enhance the lives of residents within the community. He is a member of Urban Upbound, a nonprofit organization working to transform and improve New York City public housing neighborhoods. He has also been involved in the “Black Lives Matter” peaceful protests with members of the NAACP and the Queensbridge Housing Complex. He is also a community chaplain working with the inner city youth in the borough of Queens.

Crawford Hinson, a resident of New York for 54 years, resides in Jamaica, Queens. He was born in Lancaster, South Carolina to a very large family of 16 siblings. He is the father of one daughter, an adopted son, two grandchildren, and one great-granddaughter. He was married to the love of his life, Peggy, for 46 years before she passed. He has always put his family first. He retired from the New York City Department of Sanitation after 21 years of service. He received his bachelor’s degree in religious education in 2009, his master’s degree in 2012, and his doctorate degree of divinity in 2014 from the Burroughs Divinity Bible School of Mount Vernon, NY.

Crawford encourages others to volunteer and help one another because people have so many needs. Older members in the neighborhood who have time, wisdom, patience, and knowledge are great contributors to serve humanity within the community.



AWARDEE:

Rosalyn Reitknecht

Queens County

Rosalyn Reitknecht has been a member of Selfhelp Austin Street Senior Center for over 25 years and has been a friendly and familiar face at the center. She has volunteered in several capacities including leader of the Staywell exercise class, lunch secretary, past policy advisory council president, and a present member-at-large. As a nonagenarian, Roz still attends the Selfhelp Senior Center, where she continues to volunteer at the front desk with registration and also help with lunch two to three times per week. Roz has a warm and friendly personality, and other members enjoy working with her.

Roz Reitknecht is a 93-year old native New Yorker, born in Brooklyn. She moved to Queens when she married and has lived there ever since. Roz met her husband while they were both studying at New York University, where she majored in commercial teaching. She owned and operated a ladies' apparel store in Jackson Heights until it closed in 1985. Still eager to work, she then found employment at a high-end ladies boutique where she was the most valued salesperson. Roz has one daughter, an accomplished heart surgeon who lives in Pennsylvania, and an 18-year old granddaughter.

About volunteering, Roz says “Always remain pleasant and friendly with the people you serve—service with a smile. New Yorkers need to realize how essential volunteering is to ensure that our community services run smoothly and improve our neighbors’ lives.”



AWARDEE:

Linda Arezzo **Richmond County**

Linda Arezzo makes many contributions at the Center for Life-Long Development (CLLD) for the Jewish Community Center's Innovative Senior Center, including registering seniors, as well as facilitating classes. Linda is a member of CLLD's computer and technology and arts and culture committees, and serves on the advisory council. In addition, she teaches computer classes for SeniorNet and is a member of their publicity committee. Linda served for 40 years in almost every capacity at the St. Athanasius Theatre Guild/the Strivelli Players, where she was the president for more than 30 years. She participated both on and off stage, including ushering, ticket sales, set and lighting design, writing, acting, producing, and directing. While the group folded in 2015, Linda is still in close contact with her theater colleagues, who she calls her "family of choice."

Linda Arezzo has lived and worked in Brooklyn for most of her life, moving to Staten Island in 2007. She earned her bachelor's degree from St. Joseph's College, two master's degrees, from Brooklyn College and Long Island University, and received a 30-credit graduate certificate in educational administration and supervision. Linda taught both early childhood and special education classes at the elementary level in Bedford Stuyvesant for most of her 41 year career, before becoming assistant principal at the Brooklyn International High School. After she retired in 2013, she was recruited by Long Island University to serve as a mentor for graduate students enrolled in a specialized fellowship program for beginning science teachers.

As a volunteer, Linda feels she is still exerting a positive influence on the lives of others and is still useful to her community. She says "It is a deeply rewarding way to spend your time and the alarm clock need not ring at 5 a.m. anymore to feel fulfilled!"

AWARDEE:

William Sorensen, Jr. Richmond County



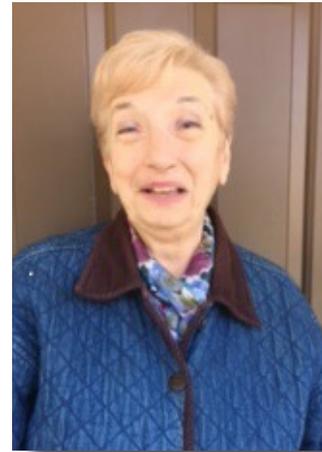
William Sorensen has worked and volunteered for most of his life. He volunteered during Superstorm Sandy, where he cleaned homes in the Sandy devastated areas and delivered food from City Harvest to various sites. He also delivers medical appliances to patients with Alzheimer’s disease and assists at the Ascension Episcopal Church in its kitchen. At age 84, William delivers food to food pantries, loading and unloading his truck in all types of weather. He served in his church as a vestryman and as a warden, as a trustee of the Beacon Light Lodge – Richmond Forest Tall Cedars of Lebanon. For his dedication and volunteer efforts, William has received many awards, including the New York State Executive Chamber Award, Governor Andrew Cuomo Recognition, Staten Island Borough President Award, Staten Island Inter-Agency Council for Aging Senior Star Award, and Celebrating the Dream Martin Luther King Award.

William Sorensen and his wife, Beverly, were both born on Staten Island over 80 years ago, have been married more than 60 years, and have resided in Staten Island for more than 50 years. They are the proud parents of three children and have six grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. While in grammar school, William worked as a stagehand for many school plays, including operating the lighting. He sang in the choir and was a member of the Episcopal youth group. He was raised a free and accepted mason, and later learned that his grandfather had been raised in the same lodge. He attended NYU School of Engineering and Wagner College.

William says he knows of no other way to live his life—knowing that he might have helped a little bit makes him feel very lucky.

AWARDEE:

Frances Nardi
Rockland County



As founder of the West Haverstraw Senior Citizen Club, Frances Nardi has secured annual funding; and the club maintains an active calendar for the members. Frances is the co-founder and past president of the North Rockland Soccer Association. The program started with roughly 250 children from the North Rockland community. Through her dedication and hard work, she was able to secure land from New York State, and with diligent fundraising efforts, she and her husband developed the land, which now includes seven soccer fields. She also initiated a program to help children with disabilities play at the soccer complex.

Frances Nardi is originally from the Bronx and is now a Rockland County resident. She is presently a trustee for the village of West Haverstraw and a member of the zoning board of appeals. She has two children and five grandchildren.



AWARDEE:

Dorina Maragliano Rockland County

Dorina Maragliano was born in Rockland, where she currently resides. She is a staff representative to the New York State Head Start Association Region II, which covers New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

Dorina was instrumental in the formation of the Upper Nyack Seniors Club, which has more than 120 members. She is a member of numerous community organizations, such as the Statewide Senior Action Council, the American Cancer Society, Food Pantry, Helping Hands, and the Disability Advisory Council. She is also a Eucharistic minister.

She has also been involved in the Ladies' Auxiliary of Orangetown Fire Engine Polar Plunge. Dorina has two children and one grandchild. Her nominator said "Dorina has shown an outstanding commitment to the community in which she lives. She is a member of numerous organizations that serve the public."

Dorina believes that volunteering keeps you young and keeps your mind going—you do not just sit around the house.



AWARDEE:
John Hayes
Saratoga County



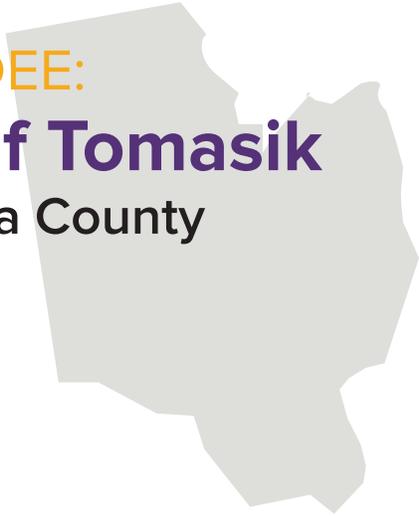
John Hayes is a lifelong resident of Schuylerville, New York and resides across the road from the house where he grew up. He cared for his parents in their older years so they could remain in their own home. John graduated from Schuylerville school in 1962. He and his wife Karen were married in 1966 and raised their two children, Julie and Tim, in Schuylerville. John has three grandchildren and one great-grandchild. John's career included being a bus driver for the Schuylerville school district for 13 years; he also owned and raced horses in the 80s and 90s at the Saratoga Harness Track. John spent 39 years with the postal service in Schuylerville as a mailman, and earned the National Safety Council's Million Mile award for his safe driving record with the postal service.

John Hayes has been delivering meals to homebound seniors for the Office for the Aging for nearly 10 years—twice a week and sometimes more, if needed. John also is a member of the Saratoga County Office for the Aging advisory group representing Schuylerville. He is an advocate for the Office for the Aging and helps connect seniors in his community with services and programs available. John assists with annual ticket sales for the senior luncheon/picnic events and at the information booth at the county fair. John also helps with volunteer outreach recruitment. He has been the president of the Prospect Hills Cemetery in Schuylerville since 2005, where he is also the caretaker of the 13-acre property. John also gives his time to caring for his elderly Aunt Marie; he looks in on her daily and takes care of her needs.

Over the years John has helped many in his community by mowing lawns or plowing driveways of those in need; shoveling out mailboxes for sick people; picking up groceries for others; or giving people rides as needed. John is a good man and a good neighbor—a man that makes serving the public a practice of his life.

AWARDEE:

Rudolf Tomasik
Saratoga County



Rudolf Tomasik has been involved with Saratoga County’s Office for the Aging Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) since 2008. He has volunteered with RSVP in many capacities, including Rebuild Together Saratoga County, as an AARP tax helper, and an office assistant to the Office for the Aging, among others. Rudy is also the volunteer secretary and “ground pounder” for Northeast Mobile Search and Rescue. One of Rudy’s most gratifying assignments was through Rebuild Together Saratoga County. He and his fellow weekend warriors built a ramp for a wheelchair bound senior. This individual had not left their home in more than seven months, and upon completion of the ramp, through tears of joy, they emphatically thanked all the volunteers. This heartfelt thanks was worth every minute Rudy had volunteered to help build this much needed ramp.

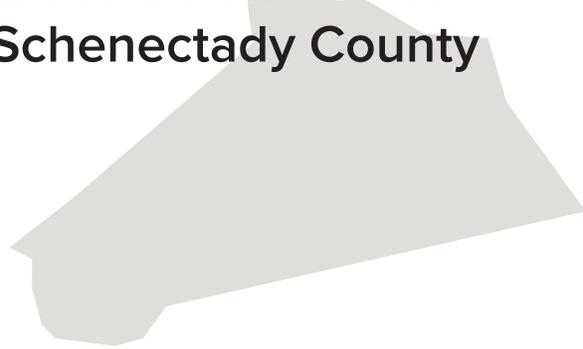
Rudy Tomasik was born in Germany. His parents, who were slave laborers under Nazi Germany, immigrated to the United States after the war ended. He has resided in New York since 1951. Rudy and his beloved wife of 42 years, Kathy, lived in Clay, New York, where Rudy worked as a compliance engineer for Crouse-Hinds until his retirement in 2006. Rudy and Kathy then decided to relocate to Ballston Spa, New York to be closer to their daughter Rebecca and son-in-law, Robert.

Rudy’s advice to anyone looking to volunteer was given in the words of Mahatma Gandhi: “The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”



AWARDEE:

Lois Atkinson Schenectady County



Lois Atkinson has volunteered for more than 40 years with numerous community programs and organizations such as City Mission and the Home Furnishing Program, ensuring that needy families receive high quality, donated household furnishings, and have basic needs including food and shelter. She also volunteers at Hamilton and Yates Elementary School, the Community Breakfast Program, and the First United Methodist Church.

Lois was born in Illinois. She received her bachelor's of science degree from Augustana University and her PHD in biology from the University of Illinois. She is a retired biology professor, and taught at Schenectady County Community College. She has three children and three grandchildren.

Lois Atkinson receives satisfaction from knowing that she has helped people with their basic needs: helping children learn to read and to know that they are cared about; supplying families with necessities for a home after a crisis; and helping people through emotional crises through the Stephen Ministry.

AWARDEE:
Shirley Readdean
Schenectady County



Shirley Readdean has volunteered for the YWCA and other nonprofit organizations, as well as the First United Methodist Church to eliminate racism, promote women’s issues such as gender equality, and combat domestic violence. Shirley was the first African-American woman to serve on the Schenectady City School Board, and serve as their president.

Shirley Readdean was born Schenectady, NY in 1930. She graduated from Long Island University’s labor studies program. Shirley worked at Ellis Hospital from 1950 to the 1960s, and is retired from the New York State Education Department, through BOCES. She has two children.

Shirley appreciates that relationships and friendships have been forged across the country and the world through her volunteer activities.



AWARDEE:

Rick Conner
Schoharie County

Rick Conner is a tireless volunteer in his community. He worked as a fundraiser and trip co-leader for the Leatherstocking Honor Flight. He says “It was an honor to provide these trips to veterans. These men and women deserve so much.” In the aftermath of the flooding from Irene and Lee, he worked with Our Lady of the Valley (OLV) to provide meals and supplies every day for three months to individuals and families throughout the Schoharie Valley. These meals continued for the next two years, feeding volunteers returning to assist the valley. Rick is still working with OLV to provide monthly dinners throughout the winter months with other Middleburgh churches in a program called Neighbors Eating Together.

For the past two years he has worked with his wife Karen to coordinate a successful summer backpack program run by the Joshua Project and funded by the United Way. This program helps feed less fortunate children who may not have enough to eat without the meals they receive during the school year. Rick is involved in many other Joshua Project programs, including assisting the Office for Aging with their home delivered meals to clients in the Village of Middleburgh.

Rick is also involved in the Joshua Project’s furniture program. They collect donated furniture and redistribute it to families that need a dresser, table and chairs, couch, etc. Many families displaced by the floods of 2011 are still in need of assistance with these items, among others. He has also worked as a Schoharie County veteran service officer, and is a member of the Knights of Columbus Council 4475 in Middleburgh.

In 2014, Rick and his wife were honored to represent the Joshua Project when they received the Community Impact Award from the Greater Capital Region United Way for the summer backpack program.

AWARDEE:

Karen Conner
Schoharie County



Karen Conner first started volunteering for Leatherstocking Honor Flight in the fall of 2009. She worked as treasurer, booked airline tickets, and arranged for the tour bus in Washington, D.C. She very much enjoyed working with the World War II veterans.

Immediately following the flooding caused by hurricanes Irene and Lee in 2011, Karen worked with many volunteers from Our Lady of the Valley (OLV) church in Middleburgh. She helped form the OLV “café,” serving lunch every day and dinner every other day for three months. As families moved back into their homes, there was no longer a need to provide daily meals. As volunteers from other areas came to town to help repair homes, Karen and her husband Rick would provide lunch, and often dinner, as needed. Their café group continues in conjunction with the other churches in Middleburgh to provide a free Neighbors Eating Together dinner weekly throughout the winter.

Karen is also a treasurer for the Joshua Project, a nonprofit group of faith-based volunteers working with families throughout the county. She and Rick have coordinated a summer backpack program for the past two years. With the help of many other volunteers, once a week they sort, pack food, and deliver “backpacks.” These backpacks contained five days of breakfast and lunch for each child. Last year they delivered to 80 families (243 children). They are looking forward to continuing the program again this summer.

Karen also assists the Office for Aging, delivering home delivered meals to clients in the Village of Middleburgh. In addition to being one of several drivers, she coordinates the monthly schedule.

Karen says “I started volunteering following the floods that devastated our valley. I work with a wonderful group of volunteers. When you see the difference that can be made, it’s hard to stop. I think my greatest reward is spending time with other volunteers and knowing that our efforts are making a difference.”



AWARDEE:
Thomas McGarry
Schuyler County

Thomas McGarry has been an active community member since moving to Schuyler County. He volunteers with the American Red Cross, where he serves on the Schuyler County Disaster Assistance Team. Tom has been a faithful member of the Watkins - Montour Lions Club, where he has served as president and visitation chair in addition to other committee activities. He can always be counted on to assist with or coordinate fundraisers and activities to serve the community—from serving breakfast or dinner to selling Christmas trees to helping with highway cleanup. Another volunteer commitment involves his position as chair on the village planning board. In addition, he is a familiar face at the Watkins Glen Public Library, where he volunteers his time. Tom also worked with the ARC of Schuyler to develop the ARC Grand Prix Fun Run and has continued on as a committee member. He also volunteers as a grant writer.

Tom McGarry was born and raised in Buffalo, NY. He attended the University of Buffalo, where he obtained his bachelor's in political science. He later enrolled in graduate courses in public administration and education at Northern Illinois University and obtained a master's degree in liberal studies from Mary Washington University in Fredericksburg, VA. Aside from his two years as a Peace Corps volunteer, two years in the Army, and an 11 year career in Virginia, where he worked for the Cooperative Extension, he has spent his life in upstate New York.

In retirement, Tom has been working as a home delivered meals driver (currently on-call). In his free time, he enjoys amateur radio, genealogy, gardening, and running. Tom and his wife Marge and son Matt live in Montour Falls. Tom's son, Danny, although no longer here in person, lives on in their hearts. Tom and Marge have been full-time caregivers for Matt, who has Muscular Dystrophy. Danny also had the diagnosis and received full-time care from his parents.

Tom finds a great deal of satisfaction in giving to others. He sees this as two-way: he gets to help the people around him and in return, he has the satisfaction of making a difference.

AWARDEE:

Roberta Beckhorn

Schuyler County



Roberta Beckhorn first became involved in volunteering as a child in her school library and by assisting the gym teacher with younger students. Her parents and grandparents were also volunteers in her community. She has volunteered throughout her life in many capacities: school committees, churches, 4-H, US Pony Clubs, Finger Lakes Kennel Club, and more. Volunteering has been a part of her entire life, and she hopes to be able to continue for many years to come. Roberta has volunteered at the Hector library for almost 40 years, and for the last 38 years, has coordinated the biggest annual library fundraiser, the Hector Fair Book Tent. She does grant writing as well as runs a dog obedience class, from which the proceeds of both activities are donated to the library fund. This is to help accomplish an expansion from a reading center into a full scale library for the rural community of Hector. It is anticipated that the groundbreaking for this project will take place in spring 2016.

Roberta Beckhorn attended Cornell University in Ithaca, NY and then worked at the Cornell School of Hotel Administration. Following her time there, she worked as an elementary school teacher at South Seneca in Ovid, NY, a career which spanned 28 years. Roberta has lived in Hector, NY for well over 30 years. She and her husband, Dave, have raised five children and now have five grandchildren. They own a horse farm not far from the library that Roberta dearly loves. She enjoys quilting and her volunteer work for the Hector library. Roberta actively volunteers and gives to her community.

Roberta's advice about volunteering for those people who have even a few minutes a week is to find something they are passionate about and then jump in and volunteer. Don't do it halfheartedly, but with all your heart and soul.

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AWARDEE:
Allen Covert
Seneca County

Allen Covert embodies the principles and ideals that make us proud to be Americans. He is a Vietnam veteran who served four years in the United States Navy. He continues to honor and support his country and fellow veterans by volunteering his time and services to both the American Legion and the VFW. On Fridays nights he puts his culinary skills to good use cooking meals at the VFW in Waterloo. He is also active in assisting with various fundraising efforts throughout the year.

In addition, Allen is also an active member of the Legion Riders. The Legion Riders are a group that rides their motorcycles in support of our country's veterans and their families. The Legion Riders are often on hand to welcome home returning troops and can be seen riding en masse at parades such as the Memorial Day Parade held each year in Waterloo. This group also organizes fundraisers to raise funds and awareness for such worthwhile causes as children's hospitals, scholarships, and wounded veterans and their families.

The American poet Edwin Markham once said, "We have committed the Golden Rule to memory: let us now commit it to life." Allen Covert has committed the Golden Rule to life. He has devoted his life to helping, senior citizens, veterans, their families, and anyone in else in need of a helping hand or a kind word.



AWARDEES:

**Beverly and Louis
Thornton**

St. Lawrence County

Beverly and Louis Thornton have devoted over 30 years of volunteer service to their local food pantry and church. Together, they spend many hours organizing and stocking shelves, preparing meals on a weekly basis, and traveling all over the tri-county area to pick up produce and bread for the food pantry. Every Wednesday, they spend their day prepping for the free community meal at their local parish. After dinner is served, they will stay to clean up the kitchen and wash dishes. Beverly and Louis will also donate a good portion of the produce they grow in their garden to those who are in need of food.

Beverly was born in raised in St. Lawrence County. Louis was born in Yorkshire, NY. He lived there until his family moved to Star Lake when he was a senior in high school.

Beverly and Louis have reached their golden anniversary of 50 years of marriage, and have made their home in Star Lake, where they have raised their two sons. They have spent their retirement years giving back to their community by running the local food pantry.

Beverly and Louis find volunteering a rewarding act that has shown them how truly grateful others can be.

AWARDEE:

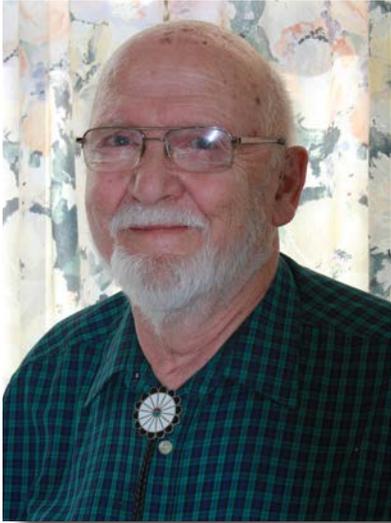
Dianna MacKay
St. Lawrence County



Dianna MacKay is not only a volunteer with the Clifton Fine Senior Citizens Club, but is a dedicated, long-time volunteer with her local nursing home, where she volunteers three times a week. She enjoys spending her time with the residents, doing various activities with them, including playing bingo. Dianna donates many of her crafts not only to local senior charities, but to youth groups, as well, to help raise money. Recently, she donated one of her homemade rugs to raffle off for the youth hockey team to raise funds for their organization. For many years, Dianna raised money for the Clifton Fine Hospital Auxiliary. She would volunteer at the annual craft fair by organizing and running her famous “fish pond” game for the children to play. Every child walked away a winner. Each December, Dianna decorates a local establishment with Christmas decorations to help promote holiday cheer in the community.

Dianna MacKay was born in Canada. She has been married to her husband, Pat, for 48 years. They have two sons, and one daughter, and nine wonderful grandchildren. Dianna began her career as an RN at the Clifton Fine Hospital until 1977, when she moved to Pennsylvania. She put her nursing career on hold to work at a vineyard until her family moved to Maryland in 1988. Dianna worked as a medical-surgical nurse for almost 16 years. In 2004, she moved back to Star Lake, and retired from nursing in 2007. Dianna is a proud mother and grandmother who spends a great deal of her retirement giving back to those in need. She is an avid crafter who enjoys knitting, rug braiding, and hooking rugs.

Dianna says “be a doer and a giver! It is such a pleasure and is rewarding to give back to the community.”



AWARDEE:

Donald Snyder
Steuben County



Donald “Doc” Snyder is one of those individuals who truly enjoys life and finds personal satisfaction from serving others. As a former teacher, his passion has always been working with children and he especially enjoyed his youth leadership roles at his church and his volunteer mission experiences in developing countries. His life experiences and his own aging have encouraged him to be a pioneer in the area of aging in Steuben County. He and his wife selflessly deliver meals to homebound seniors several times a week and provide transportation and grocery delivery to those in need. He also introduced the Office for Aging to new ideas for aging in place that are currently being implemented to allow older adults to successfully remain in their own homes.

Doc Snyder was born in 1929. He received a BS and M.Ed from Penn State as well as an MS from Alfred University. He married Grace Burt in 1952 and they raised six children together. Doc is most proud for serving on mission teams to Cuba, Uruguay, and Bosnia, calling those his “mountain top” experiences. Currently, he is continuing his volunteer service delivering meals to seniors and assisting in transportation/grocery shopping for Project Care. He counts each day as a blessing since undergoing life-threatening aorta replacement in 2014.

Don says “There is no doubt—it’s more blessed to give than receive. However, you receive far more in personal satisfaction. I sincerely believe I’m healthy and active at 86 years of age because of volunteering.”

AWARDEE:

Patricia Finnerty
Steuben County



Patricia Finnerty has been a dynamic community leader for most of her life. She brings common sense and extreme compassion to any project. Her insights are creative and cost-conscious, especially when it comes to solving problems that often seem to have no good answers. Patricia's experience in the business world, the world of academia, and her personal life experiences make her a volunteer in high demand! The community is richer because of her many gifts that she shares so willingly.

Pat has volunteered for the Steuben Senior Services Fund for more than 10 years. She has served as the chair and vice chair of the solicitation planning committee. She volunteers on the Full Circle America implementation committee and Southern Tier Library System board of trustees. Additionally, she is a leader of the Bone Builders class.

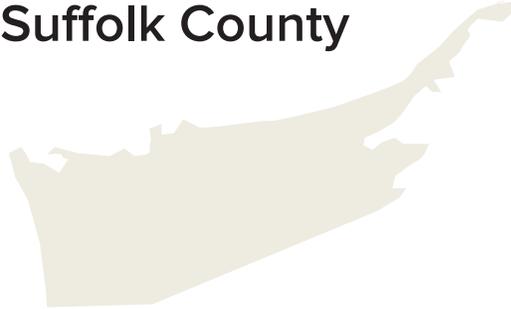
Pat Finnerty was born and raised in Elmira, New York and graduated from Elmira College. She taught at junior-senior high schools in the Albany area, Homer, and Bath, and taught at Corning Community College. She retired from Corning, Inc. Information Technology. Pat has two children, Susan and Daniel. Her late husband John was a Steuben County district attorney and Steuben County judge.

About volunteering, Pat says "It is in giving that we receive. If you want to have a better life, give to others."



AWARDEE:

Irene Grzegorzcyk **Suffolk County**



After retirement, Irene Grzegorzcyk joined the Retired Senior and Volunteer Program as a volunteer with the Community Computer Connections Program, which was in the early stages of development. The program refurbishes donated computers and distributes them to low-income older residents and families in the community. Irene has been instrumental in developing and implementing a system for intake and review of applications. She also developed a tracking system for the distribution of computers and assists in keeping statistics for the program. Irene's hard work has resulted in assisting more than 4,000 families receive a donated computer.

Irene Grzegorzcyk is a native New Yorker and a lifelong resident of New York State. She currently lives in Brentwood with her daughter, two cats, and a dog. She also has two sons and two grandchildren. Before retiring, Irene enjoyed a full career as an executive secretary.

When asked about volunteering, Irene says "Just jump in... don't be afraid to get involved. Through volunteerism I have met and socialized with dozens of people my age. I feel like I'm making a difference to others in the community."

AWARDEE:

Marie Biedinger

Sullivan County



Marie Biedinger was born a Lutheran then raised Catholic by her father’s family, and is now a devout Lutheran. Religion has always been a very important part of her life. She is a certified chaplain and deacon at her church in Ellenville, New York. She believes that her personal relationship with God and her faith have guided her in her life and given her the strength and wisdom to help others. Marie coordinated a program called “Faith In Action” for five years, bringing a community touchstone to homebound individuals; she will help anyone if it is within her ability. She also is a volunteer medical transport driver and volunteers for the Retired Senior and Volunteer Program. Marie has had both hips and a knee replaced. Even though she walks with a walker, she calls herself the “Bionic Woman.”

Marie was born in Elmont, NY. Her mother died when she was three and she was sent to live with her father’s family in Massachusetts, returning to New York when her father remarried. She and her husband (deceased) John, have two sons. They loved to travel and after winning a camping trip to Sullivan County, they decided to move there permanently.

Marie Biedinger is a spiritual woman who considers herself very blessed. According to her, giving back is thanks for all the blessings she believes that she has received in her life. Marie says by volunteering, she still feels she gets more than she gives because she enjoys it so much!



AWARDEE:

Lillian Goldberg **Sullivan County**

Lillian Goldberg loves to help people, putting countless hours into her volunteering. She makes latkes for holiday luncheons for all at the senior center, bakes for fundraisers to purchase holiday gifts for the homebound, and knows the value of simply calling someone that needs a friend to talk to. One of her biggest accomplishments is founding the Sullivan County Senior Games, along with her late husband. After participating in the Senior Games in a nearby town, they knew they wanted to start one in Monticello, where Senior Games will be celebrating its 25th year!

Lillian Goldberg has lived in New York her entire life. She lived with her husband and two children in the Bronx, and worked as a salesperson for Klein's department store for 14 years. After her husband retired, they relocated to Sullivan County with their two children, Alan and Cheryl. They loved to bowl, so when they found a suitable bowling alley, they decided to stay in Monticello, New York. There, their family grew and she now has two beautiful grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

About volunteering, Lillian says "Giving back to make others happy is truly one of life's rewards."

AWARDEE:
Nancy Istock
Tompkins County



When volunteering at the Cancer Resource Center, Nancy Istock takes charge of her assignments and always gives 110%. A few years ago she noticed people were having difficulty donating new or gently used medical equipment. She organized a system to accept the supplies and to find new “homes” for them, which benefited many others, not just in the Ithaca community, but all over the country. Nancy also provides rides to out of county medical appointments. She sees a need and then strives to fulfill it. Nancy’s passion for helping others and her attention to detail led her to volunteer at the Alternatives Federal CU Tax Preparation Program. She helped many seniors and working families gain access to tax credits, putting well-earned money into their pockets. Nancy also has served on the Tompkins County Democratic Committee. She spent many years working at the polls, gathering signatures for various petitions, serving as treasurer on a legislative candidate’s campaign, and performing any other tasks that came her way.

A fellow committee member said Nancy is the type of person who does everything, and then always does more. Nancy says she volunteers because she likes people and likes to be useful.

Nancy Istock was born in Missouri, got married in Michigan, raised two daughters in Rochester, followed her husband reluctantly to Arizona, then moved to Ithaca as soon as retirement was possible for both of them. Nancy has lived in Ithaca since 1996. She fell in love with Ithaca when her husband was on sabbatical there in 1991. Nancy has one daughter who lives in Arizona and another who lives in Corning. She has three lovely granddaughters and a couple of fine sons-in-law. Nancy has been a teacher, a research technician in biology, and a tax preparer.



AWARDEE:
Lucy Brown
Tompkins County



Lucy Brown is the heartbeat of Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services (INHS). As a lifelong resident of downtown Ithaca, she has worked tirelessly to help INHS create affordable housing opportunities in the community. She has asked the hard questions when needed, stood up for INHS when questioned, and gone door to door when INHS needed introductions and access. Her vision and commitment have made INHS successful in its attempts to navigate challenges.

Lucy Brown was born in Ithaca and has lived her entire adult life there. She worked for Cornell University's administration for 30 years. Lucy has four children, four grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

Lucy has a simple philosophy: Take care of yourself and be healthy so you can give your spare time to others.

AWARDEE:

Barbara Sarah **Ulster County**



Barbara Sarah is a co-founder of Circle of Friends for the Dying, a not-for-profit organization in Kingston that creates a home for people at the end of life. She organized 38 death cafes, educating the community through conversations about end-of-life issues. In 2014, Barbara became an initial member of the national Conscious Elders Network (CEN), and contributed significantly to the development of the CEN website. Barbara is respected and loved by many people in Ulster County who have benefited from her knowledge, skill, generosity, and warm-hearted compassion. It's impossible to sit somewhere with Barbara or walk with her along Kingston's streets without running into someone who considers her a friend.

Barbara Sarah, Brooklyn born and a lifetime New Yorker, received her HS, BA, and MSW degrees in New York City. She raised her three daughters on Long Island, where she was a school social worker for 20 years. A breast cancer survivor since 1992, she began her second career as an oncology social worker at the Health Alliance Hospital in Kingston. From her extensive research, she organized and created the first breast cancer support group. From 2000 to 2005, as a nationally recognized expert, she served as a consultant to the U.S. Department of Defense evaluating proposals for funding innovative breast cancer treatments. In 2004, Barbara won the New York State Governor's Award for Innovation in Breast Cancer Research and Education. In 2007, she received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the New York Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers.

Barbara's guiding principles were learned in her mother's kitchen where a framed quotation hung: "I shall pass through this world but once. Therefore any good I can do, or any kindness I can show to any human being, let me do it now....let me not defer nor neglect it...for I shall not pass this way again." Her study and practice of Japanese psychology taught her to "know my purpose, do what needs doing and appreciate what's given...give and give until you wave goodbye." She practices what the Torah teaches: "Justice, justice you shall pursue."



AWARDEE:

James Gregston Greer V

Ulster County

James Gregston (Greg) Greer V's civic involvement begins with the Walker Valley Fire Company, where he's volunteered since his 18th birthday. In addition to serving as chief of the department for 13 years, Greg has been cited as a top 10 responder for many of the 57 years he has served the department. Even at 74 years old, Greg attends more than 100 calls a year. Whether it is fire calls, car accidents, medical calls, or rescues, he is out the door and often the first one at the firehouse. But it's not easy. Greg is so affected by the many lives he has seen lost from auto accidents over the past 50 years that he recently put up a white cross on the side of the road at every site where the department attended to a call and a death occurred. He did this in hope that people would see them and slow down and there would be fewer deaths. Greg has served on the Ulster County Fire Advisory Board for 12 years. He has volunteered his time organizing and participating in valley-wide road clean-ups and he sat on the committee that planned and built Verkeerderkill Park. He has served for many years on Walker Valley's Old Fashioned Day committee, as well.

Greg Greer has lived in Walker Valley his entire life. Travel is his passion, and he has traveled extensively around the world. Fifteen years ago, he retired from the NYS Department of Corrections, where he worked as a vocational supervisor for 30 years. He has also been a New York State Fire Instructor for 44 years and Shawangunk town building inspector for three years. Greg is married and has five children living. His first daughter died before her first birthday. He has eight grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

When you ask Greg about his greatest reward from volunteering, he says: "Helping others is a goal that I try to achieve. Being part of a community and helping others is a goal we should all instill in our children, to foster community spirit."

AWARDEE:

Eugene Hughes Warren County



Eugene Hughes is a faithful volunteer at the Lake Luzerne nutrition site, always pitching in and willing to do whatever needs to be done. He delivers meals on a regular basis and always goes above and beyond to visit with the meal recipients; even bringing treats for their dogs. In addition, he is an active member of St. Mary's Episcopal Church, where he assists with their fundraising efforts. When Gene sees a need in the community he doesn't wait for someone else to do something; he steps up and tries to assist in any way he can. Years ago, he heard that some of his neighbors and fellow parishioners at church were having a hard time keeping up with the demand for the wood they used to heat their homes. Gene immediately pitched in and now he cuts and delivers wood to members of the community who need it.

Gene is a lifelong resident of Hadley. His wife Pauline worked at the Luzerne senior nutrition site and that is how Gene got involved in delivering meals. He is a favorite among the meal recipients, as he always takes the extra time to have a friendly visit with clients, some of whom don't get many visitors. He worked for International Paper for 43 years.

Gene Hughes was nominated for this award by the Lake Luzerne Senior Center and the nutrition site. They state that "Gene is an incredible volunteer, and more than that, an incredible person. People like him are the reason that small towns like ours are such a great place to live!"

About volunteering, Gene says "Volunteering makes our communities better places to live."



AWARDEE:

Millard Bennett

Warren County



Millard Bennett is an outstanding volunteer who is always willing to lend a helping hand at the Warren Center (formerly Westmount). The Warren Center states that Millard “is an outstanding volunteer and goes above and beyond by helping provide residents with assistance in engaging in daily activities. He has made many donations to provide entertainment and daily activities, and he continues to show compassion and unconditional love for every resident. The Warren Center feels that Mr. Bennett is a valuable part of our community and entirely deserving of this award.”

Millard Bennett was born and raised in Fort Edward, NY. After graduating from Fort Edward High School in 1959, he enlisted in the Navy and served for five years. While in the Navy, he graduated from Naval Weather Service School in Lakehurst, New Jersey. He served aboard the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Shangri-La (CVA-38) (Tokyo Express) based in Mayport, Florida, outside Jacksonville, from 1960-1963 as an Aerographer’s Mate Second Class (AG2) in the Naval Weather Service. After leaving the Naval Weather Service, he attended Adirondack Community College. He received a BA in biology with minors in geology and psychology from SUNY Potsdam, followed by graduate work at SUNY Plattsburgh. His first job was teaching 8th grade math in St. Regis Falls, NY, and he went on to teach 8th grade physical science and earth science at Queensbury Middle School for 26 years. He has one child and three grandchildren.

Millard volunteers in honor of his late wife of 43 years, Sarah. He feels volunteering helps him give something back and shows his appreciation to the wonderful staff at the Warren Center, who took excellent care of Sarah for one and a half years before her passing in March 2015.

AWARDEE:

Donald Brooks
Washington County



Don Brooks' most extensive involvement with volunteerism has been with Greenwich Interfaith Fellowship, Inc. In 2004, they contacted Hannaford Markets to see if transportation could be arranged for seniors to do shopping. The transportation program grew to include rides for medical reasons. With donations necessary to cover expenses, it became clear that they needed to become a tax exempt organization. As vice president and then president, Don guided the organization through the process to become a 501(c)(3). He then started a golf tournament fundraiser and coordinated it for the next 10 years, an event that raises enough money to finance all of Greenwich Interfaith's needs. During that same 10 year span, Don also taught the safe driving class for AARP.

Don Brooks was born in Malone, New York in 1932, before moving to Ellenburg Center. He graduated from Oswego State in 1954, and was then drafted for the Korean conflict, where he served his country for two years. When he came home, he began teaching industrial arts at Greenwich Central in 1956. After marrying Marcella "Teddy" Johnson, he received his master's degree in guidance and moved to Fallsburgh Central in Sullivan County to take a job as a guidance counselor. On the GI bill, he studied toward a professional diploma at Columbia University, then after three years and two daughters, moved back to Greenwich as a counselor. Don retired in 1987 after two more daughters and the death of Teddy in 1981 from lupus. He then became a part time admissions interviewer for Skidmore College, where he worked for another 21 years. He married Mary Anne Brown in 1990 and gained two stepchildren. They recently celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary.

Don says "Volunteering is infectious. Once a person has been involved, even in a small way, the person feels the benefit of helping someone else in need. You can't buy that type of satisfaction."



AWARDEE:
Ruth Scribner
Washington County



While in the Whitehall Rescue squad, Ruth Scribner taught classes in CPR and EMT training, and served as chair of the board of directors. As an EMT, she spent several weeks in Louisiana following Hurricane Katrina and served in New York City following 9/11. In 2007, Ruth was voted EMT of the Year for a five-county region in the Northeast. In 2014, she and her husband were honored by the Whitehall Elks Lodge #1490 as Man and Woman of the year. Ruth presently serves on the board of directors for Skene Manor, a historical preservation site in Whitehall. Since January 2014, she has served as director of the Whitehall Emergency Food Pantry. During her time as director, the food pantry has completed the paperwork to become a 501C3 and is in the process of joining the Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York.

Ruth Scribner was raised in Granville, NY. Her father was killed in an auto accident when she was three. Ruth's mother supported her three children by housekeeping, baking, and sewing. Ruth learned to be sufficient at a young age and to appreciate the value of hard work. She married a second generation dairy farmer and they reside in Whitehall, where they operate a maple syrup business following their retirement from farming. They have four children, four grandchildren, and one great-granddaughter.

Additionally, Ruth and her husband cared for six foster children in their home. Following a period of home health care, Ruth joined the Whitehall Rescue Squad as a driver, since she had a commercial driver's license. Shortly after, she began training and spent 20 years as an EMT, retiring from the squad in 2013.

Ruth believes "Everyone should volunteer for something to help their community."

AWARDEE:

Mary Lou Lockwood

Wayne County



Through Mary Lou Lockwood's dedication, the Wolcott Presbyterian Church's youth group has exhibited Christian values through a number of volunteer efforts: Make a Difference Day, Heart Association fundraising, serving in soup kitchen, and Salvation Army Red Kettle projects. They are planning a trip to work in a New York City soup kitchen. Church is important to Mary Lou. If there is a church volunteer project, she is at the head of the line. At Christmas, she coordinates Toys for Kids and holiday food baskets distribution. As the food pantry director, Mary Lou goes beyond food distribution, leading training and grant writing. She tells the story of delivering baby formula to a mother during a blinding snow storm. The job sometimes requires that she advocate for someone's special needs. Mary Lou will often ask people she recognizes if they have enough food. No one goes hungry on her watch.

Mary Lou Lockwood has lived for 66 years in the Wolcott area. She has 10 siblings. Family is very important to Mary Lou. As many as possible gather weekly to have fun. Mary Lou tells of the reading time shared with her grandchildren. Mary Lou and her husband, Bob, have been married 47 years.

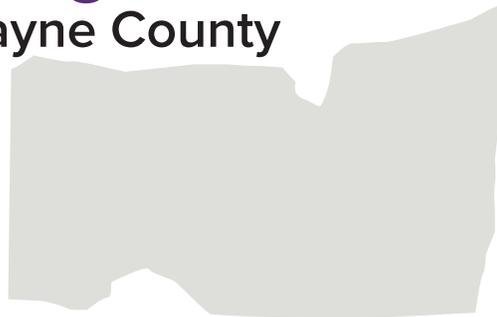
Mary Lou believes in the importance of family connectivity, and taking care of others because she says that is what she was taught to do. No one does a better job with heartfelt generosity and love of faith.



AWARDEE:

Margaret Colasurdo

Wayne County



Margaret Colasurdo is 99 years old and has been running the St. John's food pantry for more than 40 years. Although she volunteers with other organizations, this has been her primary activity. She has successfully partnered with Foodlink and secured donations of shelving to transform the pantry to look just like a store. She was operating the pantry as a "client's choice" before that was even a common practice. She has helped hundreds of families over the years and is a fixture in the community.

Margaret Colasurdo was born in Clyde and has lived there her entire life. She and her husband were married in 1933 and had three boys. She has eight grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. She is very proud of her family. Margaret has always been very active in her church and enjoys running the food pantry. She lives by herself and still drives. Some of her family is local and checks in on her, but she is very independent. She used to enjoy taking bus tours, and has been to Canada, DC, NYC, Chicago, and Detroit, among other places.

Margaret says that volunteering keeps you sharp and gives you something to do. She likes that it gets you out and around other people.

AWARDEE:

Joseph Delfino Westchester County



Mayor Joseph Delfino is credited with spearheading the transformation of White Plains from a city that went to sleep at 5pm to a vibrant hub of activity. Joseph never forgot his roots, as evidenced by the support, respect, and services he gave to the city's immigrant population. He has been a champion for diversity. As mayor, he was tireless in his involvement in city life, schools, hospitals, nonprofits, and was a source of encouragement and support to countless individuals.

A native and lifelong White Plains resident, Joe Delfino served our country in the United States Air Force. He spent 30 years in local government, including 10 years on the White Plains Common Council, county board of legislators, and most notably as mayor of White Plains for 12 years. A sought after international speaker on redevelopment initiatives, Mayor Delfino had served as president of the New York State Conference of Mayors.

He has been recognized by numerous organizations for his outstanding public service leadership and achievements. His simple secret to life: "If I put my head down on my pillow at night and know that I have helped someone, it was a great day. Together we can accomplish anything."



AWARDEE:

Pearl Quarles **Westchester County**

Pearl Quarles believes in community. There are literally thousands of instances, unrecorded, where she has made an impact. She calls on neighbors who live alone, delivers food to families in need, advocates for quality health care for the elderly, and is a strong voice against injustice.

Pearl has lived in New Rochelle since she was a child. She served as a Westchester County legislator until 2002 and as comptroller/office manager for a major private company for 19 years. She also worked for Westchester County as a specialist in job development and employee training. Pearl served as president of the New Rochelle Board of Education and has volunteered at numerous organizations. She currently serves on the board of directors at United Hebrew. Pearl has spent a lifetime serving the New Rochelle community and beyond. She is an active participant in her community who works diligently to increase understanding of public policy issues while advocating for the needs of New Rochelle residents and families. Throughout her career, Pearl has been recognized by both regional and national organizations for her community service and public outreach. It is rare to find a person with the vision and strength it takes to make real change in this world. Pearl Quarles is “one in a million.”

Pearl says: “My life would not have been as rich had it not been for volunteering to help others in need. Volunteering is a rewarding experience; it makes your journey here on this earth one of worth.”



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