Senior Citizens' Day 2014

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

"It is one of the beautiful compensations of life that no man can sincerely help another without helping himself."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Thank you for attending!

NYSOFA Staff

New York State
Office for the Aging

Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor
Corinda Crossdale, Acting Director

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

On the following pages are the 2014 Senior Citizens' Day nominees for the counties that we serve. We salute them for their contributions.

The following nominations were submitted by Area Agency on Aging (AAA) Directors as an expression of their gratitude for the service of their volunteers.

NYSOFA would like to thank the AAA Directors for providing us with such thoughtful submissions and allowing us to share them in this commemorative booklet.

NOMINEE: Reverend Robert C. Lamar

Albany County

Reverend Robert C. Lamar was born in Utah and raised in Colorado and Kansas. As a graduate of Yale College and the Yale Divinity School, he served several congregations in Connecticut before moving to Albany in 1958 to serve as Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, where he served for 34 years, retiring as Pastor Emeritus in 1992. He also served as Executive Director of the Capital Area Council of Churches until 200l.

Dr. Robert Lamar has dedicated his life to service in the Capital Region. Since moving to Albany he has continuously served in the church and community. His volunteer service includes membership and board of directorship with more than 20 local organizations. Dr. Lamar has spent countless hours and worked tirelessly on social issues in the region. Groups and organizations include General Assembly Special Committee on Segregated Synods and Presbyteries, North American Area Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, Joint Committee on Presbyterian Union, Jewish-Christian Dialogue Committee-RCDA, Capital Region Ecumenical Organization, Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless, South Mall Towers, Albany Rotary Club, Albany-Tula Alliance, Urban League of Albany, Interfaith Better Homes Development Corporation, Blue Cross of NENY, Colonie Senior Service Centers, Inc., Christians United in Mission, Abba House of Prayer, Jewish-Christian Institute, Siena College, Equinox, Chapel House at SUNY, and Sidney Albert Lecture Series of the College of St. Rose.

Dr. Lamar began volunteering with Colonie Senior Service Centers (CSSC) because "It is important that seniors be aware of the programs and services available to them. Our culture tends to stereotype seniors and define who they are and how they are expected to act. We need to advocate for their needs and work together to reach out to more seniors so they can remain healthy and keep their independence."

According to Dr. Lamar, one of the most rewarding aspects of his work with CSSC is the Osteoporosis Wellness Program started by his wife Marion. "It is a marvelous program that serves as a model for others. So many participants in the classes are feeling better about themselves and staying active."

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NOMINEE:
Mary Sherman
Albany County

A lifelong resident of New York State, Mary was born and raised in Buffalo's rural area, before she moved to Albany's rural area in 1969. She worked as a Medical Lab Technician at Roswell Park Cancer Institute before electing to stay at home to parent her three children and help on their family farm. She also worked at the NYS Department of Taxation, the Altamont Enterprise as graphic arts designer and typesetter, Price Chopper as a deli clerk, and the US Postal Service as a Postmaster Replacement.

Mary has been volunteering for more than 40 years with various organizations and people. She makes care packages every three months for service men and woman of the Hill Towns that are overseas. During Christmas time, in addition to food and goodie packages, she makes sure each service person receives a small artificial decorated Christmas tree. She still volunteers with the Knox Fire Company Auxiliary (she started in 1973).

She is also a volunteer caregiver to a 92-year-old senior who is all alone. Mary schedules and takes the woman to doctors' appointments, bi-monthly blood transfusion appointments, and weekly grocery shopping trips as well as for weekly enjoyable social outings.

Mary started volunteering because her son's cub scout den needed a leader. She soon became very involved with the boys and at one time had 22 scouts in her den. She soon discovered how much she really enjoyed helping others and passing on some of her knowledge and also learning from others.

Mary says that her greatest reward from volunteering has been bringing her family closer together. They all now volunteer regularly for one project or another; which has made them all respect each other and those that they are helping. It brings joy to her life helping those less fortunate.

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NOMINEE:
Eva Wincek
Broome County

Eva Wincek has made outstanding volunteer contributions to the Broome County Community for the last several years. Eva is a 13-year member of the First Ward Senior Center in Binghamton where she is currently the Senior Center Board President and Acting Treasurer. Single-handedly, she runs rummage and jewelry sales at this center several times a year. With Eva's leadership, these events raise significant funds to offset the costs of diverse activities enjoyed by the membership at large. In addition to her work at the senior center, she is the Secretary of the Broome County Office for Aging's Senior Center Steering Committee. Eva's leadership on this committee has been critical as she brings her enthusiasm for senior centers to every meeting, and she has been involved in caring for the sick in her neighborhood when the need arises.

Also, Eva is the secretary for a local Tops group and is a regular blood donor for the American Red Cross. She is truly an example of how one individual can make a big difference in the community! She embodies the art of volunteerism without any need for self-recognition.

Volunteering has been a way of life for Eva and she found a new locale at the First Ward Senior Center after retirement. Eva derives much satisfaction from keeping busy. She is tireless in her effort to support and advocate for senior centers and does not shy away from new challenges. She enjoys problem solving and can be objective in finding solutions.

Her greatest reward for her service is just getting to meet new people and giving them a hand.

Eva was born in New Jersey and moved to New York State shortly after marrying in 1966. She attended and graduated from Glassboro State College (now known as Rowan College) in New Jersey where she received a BS in Elementary Education. Later, she took more college courses at Broome Community College, and she worked as a Nurse's Aide at Rivermede Nursing Home in Binghamton for 25 years. There, she used her enthusiasm for her work and great organizational skills to enrich the lives of the older residents of the facility.

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NOMINEES:
Gene Wincek
Broome County

Gene Wincek has been a dependable and dedicated volunteer at the First Ward Senior Center since 2001, where he has been very generous with his time and talent. He started his volunteer work by teaching older adults at the center how to use computers. Now he also takes photographs and videotapes various center programs, and creates posters and signs to help with the promotion of the center to the public. In fact, Gene assists with all things technical at the center. "If Gene can't fix it, no one can" is the motto at the First Ward Center. He helps put together puzzles, frames them, and then sells the completed framed puzzles, donating the money back to the center. Gene also is on the Office for Aging's Senior Center Steering Committee, where he shares concerns and ideas to the group to enrich the quality of programs and services offered at senior centers throughout the county.

Gene shares a love of the First Ward Senior Center with his wife, Eva. He is truly Eva's partner in crime as they work like a team with varied talents that blend together to create a tremendous positive impact at the First Ward Senior Center. Gene expects nothing in return except to make the senior center a better place to visit.

He claims his greatest reward for volunteering is marrying Eva! Gene is respected and admired by all who get to know him because of his generosity and concern for others.

Gene was born in Pennsylvania and moved to New York at the age of five. Over the years his family moved in and out of New York and New Jersey. As a young man, he joined the Navy and served this country as an Electrician 3rd Class. This experience led him to major in Electronics and Mechanical Engineering at REI in Philadelphia where he received an Associate's Degree in Electronics and Mechanical Engineering. Later, while working at Universal Instruments in Binghamton for 21 years, he had the experience of working globally, taking him to many interesting and far away countries. His vast travels enabled him to meet many people from all over the world, where he made many lasting friendships especially in India. Gene and Eva opened their home to two Indian exchange students while they attended Broome Community College and Binghamton University. He opened his doors and heart to make them feel welcome in a foreign land. Gene and Eva have two children and seven grandchildren.

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NOMINEE:
Betty Jean Greene
Cattaraugus County

Betty Jean Greene started volunteering for the Cattaraugus County Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) on Janauray 1, 1994. Since that time, she has contributed over 2,700 volunteer hours to the Cattaraugus County Health Department, Olean General Hospital and the American Red Cross.

Currently, she volunteers at the Health Department contributing clerical support to the visiting nurses. When interviewing the staff at the Health Department they said “We all look forward to Thursdays when we can see her smiling face of eagerness to help and to experience her great attitude.”

Betty Jean has volunteered for 20 years. When asked why she started volunteering, she said “I’ve always felt the need to help others.” In response to the question of what she gets from volunteering, her reply was “The gift of enjoying people.”

When asked what has been her greatest reward from her volunteer experience, she shared “By helping them, they help me twice as much.”

Betty Jean is 91 years young and has lived in Portville, NY all her life. During her working years she was employed as a clerk at several local retail stores. Also, she worked as a home care helper assisting people in their homes to remain independent. Betty Jean has four children, nine grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

New York State
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NOMINEE:
Mary Martello
Cattaraugus County

Mary Martello started volunteering for the Cattaraugus County Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) on January 11, 2002. Since that time, she has contributed 2,903 hours to the Olean Senior Nutrition Program, Olean General Hospital, The Pines Machias and Olean, Eden Heights, Underwood Manor, Salamanca Absolut Nursing Facility and is currently assisting with the Cattaraugus County Veterans Van Service scheduling medical appointments.

Mary has been volunteering for 12 years. When asked why she started volunteering, she said, "After I retired I needed something to do" and she noted that her current volunteer position with the Veterans' Van Service was motivated by wanting to give back to the veterans.

When asked what has been her greatest reward from her volunteer experience, Mary said "Knowing that the veterans are getting to their medical appointment and getting the care they need."

Mary, age 89, has lived in the Olean, NY area all her life. During her 28 years career, she was employed at the Olean Tile Plant as a mount assembler. Mary is a proud mother of four children and has four grandchildren.

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NOMINEE:
Donna Barto
Chemung County

Donna Barto has been active in church activities for many years, including teaching Sunday School and serving as Worship Assistant, Church Council President, Lector, Greeter and Usher. She is a Parish Health Nurse, writes church newsletter articles to encourage health and wellness, assesses the health needs of church members, and drives members to church and medical appointments, and for prescriptions and groceries. Donna served as President of Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America for many years, and she is a member of the Upstate New York Synod Lutheran Disaster Response Team, where she helped to develop the handbook for emergencies in NYS.

Donna was the first woman to be a member and serve as president of the Big Flats Lions Club; she also served on the District Governor's Cabinet and as liaison to the Lionesses Clubs of New York. Donna participates in Volunteer Organizations Assisting in Disaster and Chemung Volunteer Action Corps., and she volunteers at Red Cross blood drives and a local food pantry. She conducts preschool eye screenings and has volunteered as a camp nurse for church and Lions Club camps. The work she finds most rewarding is serving the visually impaired. Donna has volunteered as a vision care nurse for a Low Vision Center since 1991, teaching the visually impaired how to use adaptive devises.

Donna says she has volunteered for more than 30 years, "to be able to help someone in some way to make this world a better place, that so many of us take for granted." She also feels that "by giving to others and asking nothing in return is what volunteerism is all about."

In 2013 Donna was co-winner of the Chemung County Senior Citizen of the Year Award. She has three children, three grandchildren and has lived in New York State for more than 50 years. She is a retired registered nurse.

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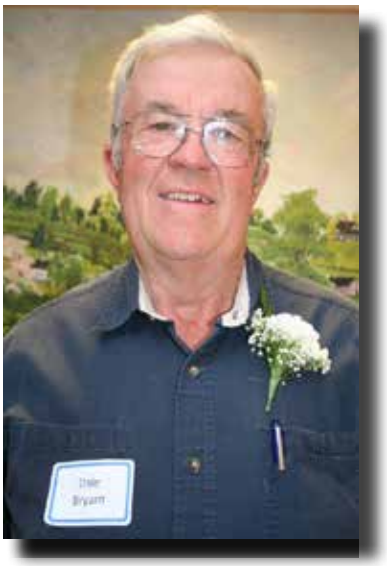
NOMINEE:
Dale Bryant
Chemung County



Dale Bryant is a member of the Popcorn Truck Preservation Society, and he helped build, repair and maintain both the truck and truck building, which are Elmira Historical Treasures. He is a volunteer for the Friends of Woodlawn Cemetery, where he is on the Board of Directors, co-chairs the Cemetery Signage Committee and volunteers for the annual Ghost Walk tours. As a member of the Eldridge Park Preservation Society, he was the main engineer in finding and restoring the Jasper Boat. He is also the captain, and coordinates new trainings and boater safety classes. He helped purchase, and headed all the work to set up and run the flying scooter ride. He helped restore the new kiddie pony cart ride and has been instrumental in working on a new eatery and park museum. Dale is President of the Chemung County Farm Museum, where he is in charge of the farm museum at Old McDonald's Farm Days. Dale also co-founded the Finger Lakes Region Vintage Chevrolet Club of America.

When asked why he started volunteering, he replied "It's just what I like to do, help others." Responding to a question about what he most enjoys about volunteering, Dale shared "I like to fix things knowing that the end results will give others pleasure."

In 2013, Dale was co-winner of the Chemung County Senior Citizen of the Year Award. He and his wife Nancy have been married for 49 years. They have three children and eight grandchildren, and have lived in New York State for 71 years. Dale is a retired school guidance counselor.

New York State
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NOMINEE:
Joy Perry
Chemung County

Joy Perry has volunteered for the Arnot Medical Center in Elmira, where she started as a "candy-striper," and was later recruited to help with special projects and writing/editing the volunteer newsletter. She served as an Arnot Auxiliary Board member, Patient Advocate, and as a volunteer for "No One Dies Alone" (providing support to patients during their final hours when family cannot be present). Joy also volunteers as a "Caring Angel" (providing personal support to cancer patients), and serves on the Foundation Board and Children's Miracle Network. Joy volunteers for her church, where she is Clerk of the Vestry, a Eucharistic Minister, and is a member of the Ecumenical Fellowship Team, Pastoral Care Committee, and Fellowship Committee.

Also, she has coordinated the purchase of automatic external defibrillators for the church. Joy has played the piano at Bethany Nursing Facility, and she is a member of the Orchestra of the Southern Finger Lakes, ARTS Council of the Southern Finger Lakes, Thursday Morning Musicales, Wednesday Morning Club and Fund for Women.

As mentioned, Joy first started her volunteer involvement as a "candy-striper" which evolved into a passion for helping others over the last 20 years. She says the most rewarding aspect is "just knowing that you might be making a difference in someone else's life."

In 2013, Joy won the Chemung County Mildred Parfitt Award. She is a graduate of University of Wisconsin-Madison and graduated Cum Laude, with a premed/biology major. Joy is presently working as a Freelance Medical Editor. Joy and her husband Matthew have lived in Elmira, NY since 1985. She has been married for 29 years and has four children and seven grandchildren.

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NOMINEE:
Barbara Martin
Clinton County

Barbara Martin has volunteered for the Clinton County Office for Aging for just one year but has accomplished so much. She approached the office asking to volunteer and started coming one day a week. Since then, she has devoted herself to at least five activities, has developed two activities herself, and is now spearheading a fundraiser for the Senior Council at the Champlain Mall this summer.

Barbara came to the Senior Council in hopes of filling some hours in her day. Now she volunteers four to five days a week. Her main goal, to interact with people, has developed into many friendships outside of our operational hours. Barbara is a very giving person and enjoys giving her time for others. Her generosity is enormous.

Barbara has lived in Clinton County her whole life with the exception of one year living in New Jersey. Family is very important to Barbara and she resides with them at her home.

New York State
Office for the Aging
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NOMINEE:
Gladys Benjamin
Chenango County

Gladys Benjamin was born in the small town of Columbus, NY and she and her husband Russell worked the farm where she was raised. As a "domestic engineer" and farmer's wife she had to be a "jack of all trades." Gladys has four children, nine grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. After her husband's unexpected death in 1986, Gladys moved into an apartment in the neighboring Village of New Berlin. Her hobbies include crocheting, knitting and making crafts which she has put to great use in various volunteer opportunities.

The move into town was to an apartment complex across the street from the Chase Memorial Nursing Home. The nursing home needed help and Gladys needed something to do. Since the start of her volunteer experience 27 years ago Gladys has served the residents of Chase in a variety of ways including reading mail, playing games with residents, running a "Talking Book" program, delivering menus and activities calendars, assisting the hairdressers, making deliveries to nurses and residents, acting as evening receptionist, and helping residents with access to community special events. Gladys crochets mittens for community children which are donated through Chase, has made lap robes for residents at the NYS Veterans' Home in Oxford and makes and donates crafts for fundraising activities for various organizations. She volunteers two days each week at the New Berlin Senior Center/Meal Site and is a member of RSVP and the American Legion Auxiliary.

Although she has held the distinction of giving the highest number of hours of service of all volunteers at Chase, that isn't the motivation behind the service. It comes from knowing that she has made a difference, no matter how small, in the life of someone who needed a friend, a companion, and a helper.

Gladys says "I am happiest when I am keeping busy and being useful. I consider myself very fortunate to live in an area that affords me the opportunity to do what I love best...[to] help others. I will continue to do so as long as I am able."

New York State
Office for the Aging

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NOMINEE:
Linda Clark
Chenango County

As a native of Bainbridge, NY, Linda Clark has lived all but six months of her life in Chenango County. The day after her high school graduation she started working at NBT Bank and later worked for Blueox Corporation, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, the NYS Veteran's Home in Oxford, Chenango County Mental Health and for 30 years was a Tupperware Sales Consultant.

Linda was married for 44 years to her husband Jim, after meeting on a blind date following his return from military service. Linda grew up with two brothers and one sister and has a son, a daughter, and two grandchildren. She is an avid country & western dancer and Pickleball player and she loves to volunteer.

Linda started volunteering at Hospice after receiving support from that organization during her husband's illness. She knows first-hand the value of support and she wanted to give back to someone else in need. Thus, she became a Hospice volunteer in 2005 serving in both the administrative office answering phones and in the homes of patients.

Since 2009, she has been a volunteer with American Red Cross Blood Drives, serving at an average of six events each month.

Linda also works with RSVP on a committee that organizes a Senior Day celebration at the county fair. She has volunteered at three different community lunch programs, answered phones for the Area Agency on Aging, and since 2010 has been the friendly face, with meal in hand, at the door of countless home delivered meal recipients.

Volunteering fills her time and her life. Her reward is knowing that what she's doing helps others. And in Linda's words, "You can't give love and support without receiving the same back. By helping others it helps me!"

New York State
Office for the Aging

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NOMINEE:
Louise McCord
Columbia County

Louise McCord is known throughout Columbia County for the wonderful work she does with her therapy dogs visiting and working with children, veterans, retired firefighters, and nursing home and hospital patients. Her car license plate holder says, “Louise and her therapy dogs,” and she drives to therapy appointments nearly every day of the week. She trains dogs and their handlers to become certified through Therapy Dog International (TDI) and judges TDI testing. With the latest of a long line of certified Golden Retriever therapy dogs, Tansy and Cookie, she visits Taconic Hills Elementary School for the “Tail Waggin Tutors” reading to dogs program and the Roe-Jan Library for “Dogs Love Books Too.” Tansy, who should earn “Senior Dog of the Year,” uses a wheelchair due to spinal cancer but still makes visits which encourage people to keep going.

Louise said she started volunteering because “It was something to do that’s worthwhile.”

She really enjoys seeing the difference her efforts make in people’s lives – and particularly mentioned one young boy with brain cancer. She says “When he met Tansy, who has spinal cancer yet keeps on going, his reaction inspired me to volunteer and reach out to people.”

Louise McCord has lived in Ancram, NY long enough to be considered a “local.”

Louise taught second grade for more than 30 years at Taconic Hills Elementary School.

Active involvement with the community has always been an integral part of her life.

New York State
Office for the Aging

Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor
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NOMINEE:
Raeph Sanderson
Columbia County

Raeph Sanderson serves as an elder on his church council, is a member of the mission committee, and fills numerous other volunteer roles. He is an active member and volunteer at the Won Dharma Center, volunteers at the Ghent Food Pantry, as well as a local therapeutic riding program, and delivers meals on wheels. An energetic and indomitable spirit, Raeph also volunteers for the Austerlitz Historical Society, Columbia-Greene Hospice, and has served as a therapeutic foster parent.

When asked why he decided to start volunteering, Raeph said he was finding it hard to keep to keep busy when health concerns slowed him down. At the same time, a close friend was in hospice, and Raeph decided to become a hospice volunteer as a way of learning how to be with people at that stage of life.

He says he appreciates the spiritual awareness of the possibilities of being present - regardless of the circumstances – that volunteering has provided him.

Raeph was born in New York City and lived in N.J. before returning to NYS where he earned a bachelor's degree in American Intellectual History from Hobart College and a Master of Fine Arts in Design from Alfred University. While maintaining a design and restoration business and art studio, Raeph taught at both the high school and college levels.

An active artist in retirement, Raeph creates three-dimensional pieces such as pottery and jewelry, is active in family and community life, and participates in a wide range of volunteer efforts.

New York State
Office for the Aging
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NOMINEE:
Sister Kathleen Heffron
Cortland County

Sister Kathleen Heffron moved to Schenectady from Pennsylvania with her family in 1947. She took her vows as a Sister of St. Joseph in 1961 and worked as a teacher, principal and later served as a Director of Religious Education in a Broome County Parish until 1987. Sister Kathleen is dearly loved by the communities she serves and is recognized as a woman who will stop at nothing to help someone in need.

Sister Kathleen is the 2013 Senior Citizen of the Year for Cortland County. She is one of three nuns who founded the Cortland-Chenango Rural Services in Cincinnatus, NY in 1987. Sister Kathleen brings programs and resources to people of all ages that are challenged with barriers to services such as transportation, disability and poverty. Rural Services is a place where people have access to assistance with clothing and food needs, medical costs and transportation, mobile mammography, family counseling, the Farmer's Market, and much more. Sister Kathleen's work goes far beyond Rural Services hours of operation. She is a tireless volunteer whose dedication to others has benefited the community of Cincinnatus and surrounding areas for over 25 years.

Sister Kathleen and her compatriots sensed a void in the availability of religious education and outreach in rural areas. They all shared a strong desire to help people living in rural communities. Together they exceeded early expectations of this type of outreach and succesfully applied for grant funding, implemented programs, and built Rural Services into the invaluable resource it is today for both Cortland and Chenango counties.

Sister Kathleen states that seeing the 100 plus volunteers who are actively involved and provide a supportive environment has been the greatest reward of her experience. In her words "It is a family."

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Office for the Aging
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NOMINEE:
Frank Bachler
Delaware County

In 1987 Frank Bachler made one of the hardest farming decisions he'd ever made and decided to sell his dairy herd.

Since then, Frank has been actively involved in different community activities. He has been an active member of the St. Peters Roman Catholic Church of Delhi for the past 53 years. Frank is also involved with the Office for the Aging Advisory Board, Delaware Opportunities Board of Directors, the President of the Meredith Senior Club, Board Member of the Pin Grove Cemetery in Meridale, Chairman of the Farmland Protection Board and Director for the Soil and Water Board. He also was the Town of Meridale Supervisor for 20 years and a past Board member of Delaware County Cooperative Extension for 20 years.

Frank has always had a lot of interest in politics, which led to serving as Town Committeeman in the Town of Meredith, working to help elect local Town candidates and some Congressional candidates. This interest led Frank to successfully run for the office of Meredith Town Supervisor. Serving as Town and County Supervisor opened up a whole new world in how Town and County government worked! Frank had much to learn and served on a number of important boards and committees.

In 1941, Frank was born to Austrian parents in Queens, NY. He graduated from SUNY Farmingdale in 1960. Following graduation he went into partnership with his mom and stepfather and purchased the Hans and Mueller farm, known as the "Sky High Farm," located in Delaware County.

In 1965 he and his wife Gretel were married. Frank has been farming on the "Sky High Farm" for 53 years with Gretel working by his side as his help mate for the last 48 years. They have two children and four grandchildren. In his spare time, Frank enjoys gardening, baking apple pies and traveling-and going out west elk hunting.

New York State
Office for the Aging

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NOMINEE:
Peg Shafer
Delaware County

Peg Shafer has volunteered on the East Fishkill Rescue Squad, is a lifetime member of the VFW in Poughkeepsie, and served as Brownie Scout leader, and has supported school activities for her entire life.

Peg stated "I never really had many close friends or felt a part of the community until she attended the social adult day center, 'Our Place' in 2012." Since attending 'Our Place' she has made several good friends. These friends have encouraged her to be actively involved in the community.

She now attends the New Hope Community Church where she became a member and was baptized in July of 2013. She actively volunteers at several of the Church functions such as the "Soup Kitchen," the Pancake Tent at the Delaware County Fair, and is involved in a Bible Study group known as "Life Group."

Peg had no real hope of "getting" anything from volunteering except she wanted to help others and to improve her community. Her reward from volunteering is that she enjoys seeing the "smiling faces" of older adults and knowing that she has made someone else's life easier.

Peg was born in Conway, Arkansas, in 1938. She had the opportunity to travel and live in several parts of the United States as her parents moved frequently to seek employment,. She attended Rhinebeck High School.

In 1956 she married Raymond Shook. In 1999, Peg moved to Delaware County in order to be closer to her children. She has six daughters and one son. Peg also has twelve grandchildren and four great-grandchildren and she is very proud of them all.

Peg enjoys crocheting, crossword and jigsaw puzzles.

New York State
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NOMINEES:
Rudy & Sina Macak
Dutchess County

Rudy and Sina Macak have a combined 50 years of volunteer service. Rudy is a lifetime member of the LaGrange Volunteer Fire Company, a member of the LaGrange Lions Club, and an active member of St. Paul's Episcopal Church. He is also a district leader for the Dutchess County Republican Party and a strong proponent of people exercising their right to vote in every election no matter their party affiliation.

Sina is a well-liked volunteer in the LaGrange Middle School library. Together they are the heart and soul of the Overlook Estates Neighborhood Association where they have held every office. For more than 20 years they have hosted the annual neighborhood picnic at their home.

Rudy and Sina say volunteering is just something they have done all their lives. They enjoy helping others, agreeing that their greatest reward from volunteering has been all of the friends they have made over the years.

Rudy and Sina were high school sweethearts in New Jersey. Once Rudy finished his Navy service and Sina graduated from college, they moved to New York, where Rudy took a job with IBM and Sina was a school teacher. They are the proud parents of three children and seven grandchildren.

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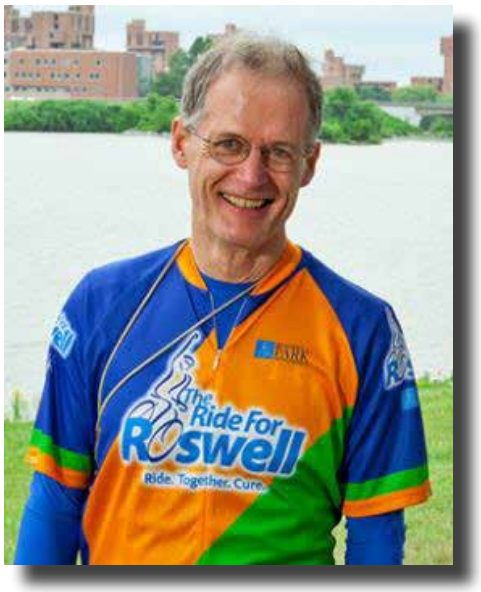

NOMINEE:
Mitch Flynn
Erie County

The Ride for Roswell is an annual fundraising event in Buffalo for cancer research at Roswell Park Cancer Institute. Mitch Flynn started the event in 1996, when a friend and neighbor with three children died following a long battle with cancer. Since its inception, The Ride has raised more than $20 million for cancer research. In 2013 alone, 8,000 riders raised $4,000,000. Mitch is currently second in total individual fundraising, personally raising more than $175,000.

Mr. Flynn has also given time to other volunteer activities in addition to The Ride for Roswell. He currently sits on the board of GoBike Buffalo, has served on two boards at the University of Buffalo Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership, participated in Leadership Buffalo, and the Georgetown University Alumni Admissions Program.

When asked about the rewards of volunteering, Mitch shared "I have been volunteering for more than 35 years. I thought volunteering would be a good way to meet people, better understand myself, contribute to the community, and have some fun. What I've found most rewarding is that volunteering provides a context in which both community good and personal best are mutually attainable."

Mitch Flynn is a life-long Buffalonian, attending Canisus High School and Georgetown University. Today, at 64, he is an advertising executive, neighborhood block club leader, avid cyclist, and family man. He has been married for more than 30 years to Ellen Goldstein.

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Office for the Aging

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NOMINEE:
Ruth Cromp
Franklin County

photo unavailable

Ruth Cromp has volunteered for more than 30 years in the Burke Fire Department as an Auxiliary Member. She has also served her community as a Burke Town Council Member and currently volunteers for the Burke Adult Center with the Meals on Wheels program. Ruth says she feels "it gives me an opportunity to give something back to the community," and adds that she "truly loves working with senior citizens."

Ruth is an amazing gift and asset to her community. Seniors and staff both look forward to seeing Ruth's smiling face at the center. She has a big heart and always wants to know what else she can do to be helpful. Ruth says, "I enjoy going to the center for good food, laughter, and friendship. My greatest reward for volunteering is seeing my service help people and organizations."

Ruth was born in 1939 in New York State and has lived here all her life. She has two grown sons, four grandchildren, and six great grandchildren. In 1985 she bought a 25 acre hobby farm and raised heifers for several years. She worked as a shift supervisor at Alcoa in Massena, and was laid off due to a strike, then went to work for New York State as a corrections officer for almost 22 years.

Ruth retired in 2009.

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NOMINEE:
Rebecca Shields
Greene County

Rebecca Shields has devoted more than a decade of service to her community.

She is a senior companion, a member of the Community Action of Greene County Senior Advisory Board and the Catskill Mountain Housing Community Advisory Board, and she volunteers for the Community Hospice. Additionally, she is an active member of the of Second Baptist Church where she enjoys singing in the choir. A talented crafter, she participates as a Catskill Crafter where she makes home-made items for those in need.

Rebecca says she got started volunteering because she really wanted to help those around her that were struggling with serious illnesses, and has really enjoyed meeting new people and working with Hospice. She says: "It does not matter what the religion or skin color is of the person whose hand I hold; what matters is reaching out a hand to others."

Rebecca is a native New Yorker, born, raised and currently residing in Catskill. A former bank employee, she now enjoys spending her time volunteering and with her family – three children, six grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren!

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NOMINEE:
Stephen Tuomey
Greene County

Stephen Tuomey has spent his life in service to his community. He currently serves the spiritual needs of his community as a parish council member for the Church of the Immaculate Conception.

He is President of the Senior Bowling League where he encourages other seniors to be physically active, and enjoy their recreational life. A member of the Mountain Golden Agers senior club, he serves as Treasurer, and also coordinates monthly theater trips, excursions, and vacations.

Additionally, he has coordinated area annual flu shot clinics for seniors, and he participates in the AARP Driver Safety Program.

Stephen began volunteering with polio patients after high school, to be of-service to patients and to explore the field of physical therapy. He shared that he appreciates the personal satisfaction of being of service to my fellow citizens. Stephen has spent nearly his entire life in service to the physical, recreational, and spiritual life of others.

Stephen retired from the Department of Transportation. He has three surviving children. Stephen lost a son, who at age 21, while serving in the US Air Force, gave the ultimate sacrifice for his country. He has three grandchildren.

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NOMINEE:
Rose Simons
Hamilton County

Rose and her husband have been active members of the Wells Volunteer Fire Company for 52 years. Rose has served as an EMT, ambulance driver and has taken on other duties crucial to the operation of the corps. She and her husband are an integral part of the annual "Old Home Days" fundraiser for the fire company.

In addition to manning the booth, Rose plans the food and sees that there are plenty of other cooks and staff to cover the two day event. She` is also the "sunshine girl," she ensures that get well cards, fruit baskets, flowers, etc. are sent to members when appropriate.

In his nomination letter for Rose, Wells Volunteer Fire Company Chief Vince Lauria stated "It would be next to impossible to count the number of hours this couple has volunteered in service to the Town of Wells and those passing through who find themselves in need."

In addition to her work with the fire company Rose is very involved with her church and is an organist and keyboard player. She is also a member of the Christian musical group "Arrows of the Word" which performs for groups that include nursing homes and senior groups. Rose can always be counted on to lend a hand and is a true asset to the community!

Rose is a life- long resident of the Town of Wells. After graduating from Wells Central School she went on to graduate from Albany Business College with highest honors. She and her husband Pete, who is this year's Hamilton County Senior of the Year, raised five children, and have 14 grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren.

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NOMINEE:
Pete Simons
Hamilton County

Pete Simon and his wife have been active members of the Wells Volunteer Fire Company for 52 years. Like his wife Rose, he has served as an EMT, ambulance driver, and performed jobs crucial to the operation of the corps. He has served as secretary/treasurer for the fire commissioners for 23 of those years and is currently a fire police officer and the secretary. Pete works with his wife at the fireman's booth for the two-day "Old Home Days" celebration every August.

In addition to his work with the fire company Pete is very involved with his church and is a licensed lay speaker, leader and former church treasurer. He and Rose also lend a hand to sort bottles and cans at the redemption center. In his nomination letter Wells Volunteer Fire Company Chief Vince Lauria stated "It would be next to impossible to count the number of hours this couple has volunteered in service to the Town of Wells and those passing through who find themselves in need."

Pete is a life- long resident of the Town of Wells. After graduating as valedictorian from Wells Central School he went on to attend Adirondack Community College and Castleton State College. He and his wife Rose, who is this year's Hamilton County Outstanding Contributing Senior, raised five children, and have 14 grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren.

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NOMINEE:
Laura Davis
Jefferson County

Laura Davis is 61 and lives in Carthage with her husband, Ben. Their blended family consists of five children and four grandchildren. Laura spent 33 years teaching French and Spanish to middle and high school students. She has been included in *Who's Who Among American Teachers* and is a Fellow of the Rockefeller Foundation. She also received a Quebec Scholarship to advance the teaching of French in New York State.

Her retirement in 2008 brought her to volunteer for the Jefferson County Office for the Aging where she could to do something different that would also benefit the community. She also serves on the Community Board for the Carthage Area Hospital, representing the Office for the Aging, and she was an informal interpreter for the Olympics in Lake Placid.

She volunteers for *Parent to Parent of Northern New York*, sharing her experiences and giving advice about raising a child with special needs, and she is a member of the Trisomy 21 Foundation of Northern New York, which promotes understanding of Down Syndrome. Additionally, she volunteers for AARP, teaches quilting, and substitutes for her former colleagues at Carthage Central School.

Laura is a current member and former board member of the North Country Quilting Guild as well as a member of Tug Hill Quilters and Asbury Quilting. Through these organizations, she makes quilts for the Children's Home, Victims Assistance, newborns at Lewis County Hospital and senior citizens who are hospitalized or homebound. In addition, she is an avid handbell ringer and belongs to the Asbury Ringers, Watertown Festival Ringers, and River Ringers.

She says the Office for the Aging has been a great place to volunteer and has been educational and meaningful. What she loves most about it is that often she is the first person people talk to when they stop in or call the office for help. She is able to put them on the right path to solving their problems. "It's so rewarding when a senior or their family member calls for assistance and I can say, 'Yes, I can help you.'"

New York State
Office for the Aging

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NOMINEE:
Florence Martino
Jefferson County

Since Florence Martino retired from Jefferson County Department of Social Services, where she had worked for nearly 31 years, she has volunteered for over a decade for various community organizations. They include the Jefferson County Office for Aging as a HIICAP volunteer.

During her tenure at the Jefferson County Department of Social Services she began as a clerk-typist, and was promoted to a Social Welfare Examiner in 1978 then promoted again to a Principal Social Welfare Examiner in 1991 in Medicaid Eligibility, overseeing both community and chronic care caseloads. She retired in 2003.

Florence is passionate about her family, but also loves to cook, travel, listen to music, dance, and do some gardening. Her appreciation of other cultures has taken her to multiple countries, spanning four continents, and has been able to continue speaking her second language-Italian.

Through HIICAP, she is also a Certified Health Insurance Counselor, and during the annual Medicare re-enrollment period, she is employed by the local Office for Aging to assist seniors in making important health insurance decisions. Florence is a resource for the county as she is employed periodically on an as-needed basis in various positions.

Volunteering gives Florence a great deal of internal satisfaction because she enjoys helping people, and wants to give back to the community. She says it also helps her keep active, and keeps her mind sharp.

Florence is a life long resident of Watertown. She has three children and two grandchildren.

New York State
Office for the Aging

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NOMINEES:
Patricia & Eugene Pomerville
Lewis County

Patricia and Eugene Pomerville are incredibly active participants in their community. Eugene was one of the first volunteers to join the Lowville Search and Rescue team, and assisted with the inception of the local ambulance service. He is a life member of the Lowville Fire Department, volunteers as a crossing guard at the local school, and donates his time to the Lewis County Office for Aging, where he transports seniors to the local dining site. Gene is also the head of the Buildings and Grounds Department for the Lewis County Agriculture Society, and a member of the pastoral Council at St. Peter's Church in Lowville.

Patricia is a Eucharist minister for St. Peter's Catholic Church in Lowville and volunteers to take communion to seniors who are homebound. Also, she volunteers many hours at the Lowville Library as well as the Turin Library, and even volunteered for their "Kiss a Pig for Literacy" contest. Pat is an active member/volunteer for the Lowville Food Pantry and also volunteers her time to the local Office for the Aging as part of the case review for the Nutrition Program. Some of Pat's interests include gardening and in that role she volunteers to care for a butterfly garden at the Department of Environmental Conservation. It is no wonder Pat was awarded the Lowville Elk's "Citizen of the Year" award in 2011.

In 2013, Pat and Gene were awarded "The Randy Streeter Senior Citizen of the Year" by Lewis County to honor their combined 40 years of volunteer service to the community. Pat takes particular pride in her work at the Food Pantry, feeling gratified, knowing that she's providing food for the less fortunate. For Eugene, he feels his time with the Search and Rescue has been the most rewarding experience, knowing he is assisting in saving lives.

Patricia and Eugene live in the Village of Lowville, where they have been happily married for 28 years. Before retiring, Patricia was a nurse for the Lewis County Public Health Department, and Eugene was a Water Supervisor for the Village of Lowville. Both Patricia and Eugene are veterans of the US Army. They have seven children, six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

New York State
Office for the Aging

Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor
Corinda Crossdale, Acting Director

NOMINEE:
Dale Sells
Livingston County

Dale was the first female to graduate from Monroe Community College with a degree in Police Science. Her career accomplishments include being a New York State Jail Inspector for 13 counties, she was the first Director of Prevention for the Livingston County Council on Alcoholism, she implemented the first JOBS Unit for the Livingston County Department of Social Services, and as the Caregiver Resource Center Coordinator for Noyes Hospital, Dale created one of the most robust Caregiver programs in NYS.

Dale's outstanding community service includes serving on the Board of Directors for Big Brothers/ Big Sisters, initiating a volunteer tutor program for youth at risk, Co-leader for the annual Livingston County Alzheimer's Walk fundraiser, certified Alzheimer's Support Group Facilitator, organizer for the successful Annual Caregiver event, created the Brunch Bunch Caregiver support group, attained her certification as a Matter of Balance Instructor, and Powerful Tools for Caregiver Trainer. She is an active volunteer for Alzheimer's Advocacy.

She designed and initiated the creation of the Geneseo Doggie Park, volunteers for the Military K-9's fundraisers, and regularly visits home bound seniors in need of care and support.

Dales's passion for doing a job well, and with integrity, fuels all her efforts. Her sincere love for seniors, children and furry critters touches her heart with a desire to give others hope through extending to them her time, energy and endless gentle support.

Dale enjoys giving support to those in need, regardless of age. She finds it most important to give a voice to caregivers dealing with the devastation of Alzheimer's Disease through her advocacy efforts on the local, state and federal levels.

She lives in Geneseo with her husband. They have a family of four children, six grandchildren, two doggies and three grand-doggies.

New York State Office for the Aging

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NOMINEE: Betty Perkins-Carpenter
Monroe County

Ms. Perkins-Carpenter is being honored for her accomplishments in her community and across New York State. She founded of Fit by Five, the only pre-school in America that taught academics through sports. She is the owner/operator of Perkins Swim Club, and has been a well-recognized and accomplished swimming and diving coach in the Monroe County community to youth, adults and Olympians for many years.

At 75, Ms. Perkins-Carpenter went back to school to get her doctorate. She taught for several years at the University of Rochester and St. John Fisher College. She is an accomplished author of two award-winning books on falls prevention, a professional speaker, and is now President of Senior Fitness Inc. She is also a former consultant for Medicare Excellus Blue Cross Blue Shield, where she taught falls prevention and injury reduction to seniors and medical professionals. She has founded three New York State Corporations, and is an Olympic Diving Coach.

In her "free" time, Ms. Perkins-Carpenter is actively engaged as a board member of the Veterans' Advisory Board for Monroe County, the Korean War Veterans Association, and the Retired Professional's Society.

Ms. Perkins-Carpenter is also being recognized as a Korean War Veteran and for participating in the Honor Flight to Washington, DC in June.

She started volunteering in 1959 when she learned there weren't opportunities for water ballet in New York State. As a teacher at the YWCA, she volunteered to start a team. She said "There are no words to express the joy that I have experienced from volunteering. Speaking to older adults who now have hope and to help them realize that they can do more than they ever thought they could…is true happiness for the volunteer."

Betty has lived in New York State all of her life and currently resides in Penfield. She is a widow of a Coast Guard Commander.

She has two children, two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

New York State Office for the Aging

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NOMINEE:
Ron Travado
Monroe County

photo unavailable

Ron Travado served in the US Army from 1968 until 1971 and completed two tours in Vietnam. He worked at the Monroe County probation department for 23 years, with 15 years in the warrant division, which was a multi-agency warrant task force where he retired in 2010. Since that time, he has done extensive volunteering in the veteran community.

For nearly 30 years, Ron has been volunteering by serving as chairman of the New York State Incarcerated Veterans Program (administered by NYS Department of Corrections & Community Supervision). This Program is designed to address the readjustment and reentry needs of Veterans returning to society following a period of time in military service. Ron is a founding member of Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 20 and serves on the Executive Board, and for four years he served on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Board. He also served as a Hospice lifetime care volunteer for veterans for two years.

Ron also volunteers at the Browncroft Community Church to lead a men's group twice a week called "Celebrate Recovery."

He said "I find it incredibly rewarding to serve the veteran community, helping and watching people heal, recover and regain their freedom from hurts, habits and hang-ups, while opening up their lives to Christ."

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NOMINEE:
Gary Dickerson
Montgomery County

Gary Dickerson has volunteered for numerous organizations in his community. Some of his volunteering activities include: Centro Civico Red Ribbon, Inman Senior Center, Faith Soup Kitchen, Block Captain for the Neighborhood Watch Program, American Legion Post 701, National Night Out, and Amsterdam's Spring Fling. Gary has been a Hospice volunteer since 2011 and Montgomery County Office for Aging, Inc. friendly visitor since 2010.

He and his wife have also helped with bringing food to the homeless shelter in Amsterdam, and share fresh vegetables from his garden. He also makes sure his neighborhood is free of any debris or litter.

When asked why he volunteers, Gary said that he feels he has "been blessed and wants to pass on what God has blessed him with."

Gary is a native New Yorker and he was born in Elizabethtown. He and his wife have been married 31 years. They moved back to New York approximately 13 years ago from Nevada where he also volunteered.

A former truck driver, and veteran of the U.S. Army, Gary has four children, seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

New York State
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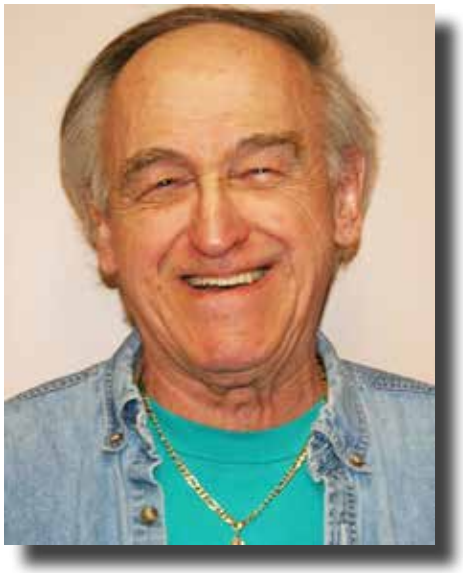
Corinda Crossdale, Acting Director

NOMINEE:
Joseph "Joe" Gavel
Montgomery County



Joseph Gavel began volunteering at the Faith Soup Kitchen when it opened in the summer of 2009. He does all the shopping. He painstakingly goes through all the weekly fliers and coupons to get the best deal on the limited budget they have to work with. The soup kitchen averages 300 meals a day, twice a week. Through Joe's dedicated shopping the average food cost per month is a little over $500 – or just $1.66 per meal!

When the soup kitchen is not operating, Joe goes to a local supermarket and picks up baked goods that would otherwise be discarded. He hands these items out to individuals in need at other soup kitchens. When a fellow parishioner of his church could no longer drive, Joe began to take her to church, the doctor, grocery shopping and banking. Joe starts each day by attending 6:45 a.m. mass, showing up early to see if he can be assistance before mass starts. Family and friends feel very blessed to have Joe in their corner and know they can always count on him.

Joe feels that satisfaction of helping others is his greatest reward. He began volunteering after his wife passed away. He had been her caregiver for more than 10 years.

A native New Yorker, Joe was born in Broadalbin. He worked for Mohawk Carpets during World War II while attending high school, taking courses to learn to be an electrician.

Befor retiring, Joe worked as an electrician for General Electric, and Electric Boat in Groton, CT.

He currently resides in Amsterdam.

New York State
Office for the Aging

Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor
Corinda Crossdale, Acting Director

NOMINEE:
Claire Millman
Nassau County

Claire Millman had a major role in initiating and strengthening tobacco control legislation in Nassau County, Suffolk County, New York City, and across New York State. She proposed and helped formulate legislation, worked with Legislators, testified at hearings, chaired seminars, lectured at schools, participated in press conferences, and was frequently quoted in the media. Her successful efforts earned her Town of Oyster Bay Woman of Distinction in 2003, she was named an Honoree in the NYS Council of the Aging in 2001, and she received commendations from Long Island and New York City officials and mayors. She received the Lifetime Achievement Award from her Alma Mater, Brooklyn College, and the Association of Generational Experts for Seniors.

As an activist, she advocates for smoke free air in all public and work places. She works to educate officials and the public about the hazards of smoking and the benefits of establishing laws for the health protection of all. Claire believes smokefree air is now the "norm," which has produced a decrease in heart and lung diseases, deaths, and keeps youth from starting smoking. All of her efforts have helped to create a "Healthier Society."

Claire has lived in Plainview, NY for more than 54 years. For more than 40 years she's been an Activist for the Pioneer Smokefree Environment Organization and is called "Guardian Angel for a Smokefree Environment." She is also a Spanish translator.

Claire volunteers for the NY Senior America Officer/Performer, where she has been a Board Member and President and co-produced the website. In 1995 she was a Pageant Finalist. She also volunteers as a performer for nursing homes, veteran hospitals, senior groups, and at patriotic events.

As a performer, she wants to project a positive image of aging to young and old. She brings joy to the disabled and handicapped.

New York State
Office for the Aging

Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor
Corinda Crossdale, Acting Director

NOMINEE:
Wai Nam Chow
New York City

Mr. Wai Nam Chow has been an outstanding volunteer for City Hall Senior Center since 2002, and has been an elected member of its Senior Advisory Council (also known as the "Golden Age Club") since 2005. Not many willingly step up to this job.

"For such a large Center as we are, and serving over 300 people daily, we must get along with many personalities and so I try my best. I try to stay active."

Elected President twice by his peers, he arrives by 7 a.m. every weekday and he greets everyone who comes into the center before serving breakfast and lunch to members. As an effective spokesperson for seniors, he is an effective mediator who helps resolve disputes. Most importantly, he has handled emergencies involving members who fall ill and need immediate attention, and is a positive role model and leader of City Hall Senior Center members.

When Mr. Chow retired, he was not sure of what he should do next. After a lifetime of working, he began attending the City Hall Senior Center. The then-President of the Advisory Council observed his desire to help others, his outgoing personality, and his even tempered nature. He encouraged Mr. Chow to become more involved as a volunteer and to run for the Advisory Council. Mr. Chow took his advice.

Mr. Chows says that his greatest reward as a volunteer is being able to help others who are less fortunate and frailer. He feels good knowing that he can make a difference to others.

New York State
Office for the Aging

Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor
Corinda Crossdale, Acting Director

NOMINEE:
Irene D'Alessio
New York City

Irene D'Alessio demonstrates the meaning of self-reliance in civic involvement. She has been working with the Self Reliance Association of American Ukrainians since 1996. Before that, she worked for the Department of Social Services as a Social Worker and in the Welfare department of the Human Resources Administration for 26 years.

Also, she has been active with the New York City Department for the Aging to help facilitate the necessary resources for the community, using her grant writing skills. Irene has also been active with the Ukrainian Museum and the St. George Parish Ukrainian Church.

Volunteering, she says, is about "...making the difference that will impact someone's life."

She believes that to make a difference, you have to be willing to listen, build trust and problem solve so people can access resources and move forward.

Irene has lived in Queens all her life. She met her husband, an engineer, 45 years ago at a dance. Irene has a sister -and nieces and nephews- that she and her husband visit whenever their busy schedule allows them to.

New York State
Office for the Aging
Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor
Corinda Crossdale, Acting Director

NOMINEE:
Doris Harper
New York City

Doris Harper has been a volunteer member of the Department for the Aging's Keep On Track Blood Pressure Monitoring Program at the Marble Hill Senior Center in the Bronx for 12 years. She has been the team leader since 2006, when she stepped in after the team's founder was unable to continue. It is no exaggeration to say that the team's continued existence is due to Doris' leadership. She organizes the sessions and recruits new team members. In addition to her work with Keep On Track, Doris serves on the center's birthday committee and is a member of her church choir. Her quick, sharp wit makes her pleasant company.

Doris sought out volunteering due to her desire to "pay back." No matter what activity Doris is involved with, she wants to be sure to "do it right." The reception that she receives from her friends at Marble Hill is her greatest reward.

Doris was born 91 years ago and has lived in New York City all of her life. For 61 of those years, Doris has been a resident of the Bronx. Doris worked for the U.S. Government for 32 years, and finished her career with the IRS.

New York State
Office for the Aging
Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor
Corinda Crossdale, Acting Director

NOMINEE:
Virginia Grady
New York City

Virginia Grady began attending the West Brighton Senior Center at age 55, where she is now the President of the Advisory Board. A part of her civic engagement is to ensure her fellow seniors are being well cared for by advocating in Albany or Washington through rallies, on their behalf, for topics ranging from healthcare to affordable senior housing.

She began volunteering after visiting someone in the hospital in 2002, where she noticed that newborns were being discharged from the hospital in inappropriate clothing. After this experience, she shared her idea for a program called West Brighton Senior Center Baby Shower with the other seniors and they embraced the idea. The purpose of the program is to ensure that young parents at the hospitals of Staten Island are being cared for. Through her leadership, backpacks with baby items such as baby bottles, pacifiers, clothing, handmade blankets, and toys were donated to the children. Mrs. Grady's work with the young mothers resulted in some joining the nursing profession.

Another project that keeps her busy is organizing the donation of yarn, handmade knit or crocheted blankets for babies, and lap blankets for kids with cancer. During the year, Mrs. Grady sells items she makes at craft fairs to raise money for her West Brighton Senior Center Baby Shower.

Mrs. Grady finds it incredibly rewarding to work with young parents and to help guide them toward a positive future.

Virginia was born in Roanoke, Alabama and has been a resident of Staten Island for more than 60 years. She was married to Joseph Grady, with whom she had three children, three grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. Mrs. Grady has an Associates and a Bachelor Degree in Nursing from the Colleges of Staten Island and Medger Evers in Brooklyn, respectively. She is a member of Stapelton UAME Church.

New York State
Office for the Aging

Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor
Corinda Crossdale, Acting Director

NOMINEE:
Mary Lowry
New York City

Many New Yorkers leave the City to retire elsewhere. Mary Lowry reversed this trend by retiring to New York City in 1992 and settling in the Morningside Gardens complex in Manhattan. Of course, with four children and numerous grandchildren residing across the country, Mary has plenty of opportunity to travel outside of the City.

Mary took a two-track approach to retirement. The Department for the Aging's Keep On Track Blood Pressure Monitoring Program at Morningside Gardens needed members and so Mary signed on. When looking for additional volunteer opportunities, she wanted something challenging that would offer her the chance to learn something, and she found just such an opportunity at the Museum of Natural History, as a volunteer tour guide. Every time the museum adds an exhibit, Mary learns something new.

Mary's volunteer jobs leave her fulfilled. One allows her to give back, while the other allows her to learn.

Mary worked for years as registered nurse and health educator.

She has four children and many grandchildren.

New York State
Office for the Aging

Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor
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NOMINEE:
Myrtle Muir
New York City

After retiring, Myrtle Muir felt the need to do more. Her love for children led her to join the Foster Grandparent program. Her neighbor, Jannette Hall, who has been involved in the program, encouraged her to participate.

Ms. Muir became a Foster Grandparent at the Staten Island Silver Lake Head Start in 2012, where she is currently assigned to work with children who are age five. She assists in the classroom and works on a one-to-one basis with two children who have special needs, helping them emotionally and socially. She teaches them how to problem solve and encourages them to participate in group situations.

In addition, she is famous for her punctuality and reliability. She co-Chairs in her church, and conducts Bible Studies with new members.

The greatest reward for Ms. Muir is learning from the children. The children teach her about their different cultures.She loves their curiosity and how they compliment what she wears and is amazed at how the children are aware of such things. She has fun with them. The love the children give her serves as her motivation to be there every day. She feels saddened now that the five-year-olds are moving on to Kindergarten and she will no longer see them. Yet, she is proud that they are growing up and that she was part of their Head Start experience. She says she “will never forget them.”

Ms. Muir lives with her daughter and her four-year-old granddaughter.

New York State
Office for the Aging
Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor
Corinda Crossdale, Acting Director

NOMINEE:
Shurny Parker
New York City

Shurny Parker is a member of First Baptist Church of Crown Heights HIV-AIDS Ministry where she provides education, advocacy and information to seniors. She is currently the President of the Grace Harewood Neighborhood Senior Center in Brooklyn. Shurny is also an advocate for fitness for seniors.

She began volunteering to serve other people, valuing the positive benefits from helping others and learning something new. One of the greatest rewards she receives from volunteering is meeting new and interesting people of all ages.

Shurny was born in Norfolk, Virginia, and she moved to NYC at age 15. She has resided in Kings County for nearly 40 years. She is a member of the First Baptist Church of Crown Heights, and the only surviving sibling of six. She attended PACE University and New York University, and worked at AT&T for 36 years in various staff and management positions, and she was the first black manager, in 1963, at the AT& T subsidiary Western Electric.

She is a self-taught jewelry maker and a writer and actress in the Drama Club at Grace Harewood Neighborhood Senior Center.

New York State
Office for the Aging
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NOMINEE:
Delores Peterkin
New York City

Delores Peterkin demonstrates what volunteering means through her acts of altruism and humanity which shows she has a great interest in making a difference in the lives of others.

It means a lot to her and to give back to the community in giving a helping hand to those who need it. She says, “helping others is also helping myself, it brings joy and contentment to me.” She says “A smile that comes from a person’s face is the greatest reward.”

Delores was born in the Gamboa Canal Zone in Panama City, Panama. In 1966, she migrated to the United States and has lived in New York since then. She currently resides in Brooklyn.

Delores retired from Merrill Lynch after 26 years of service as a Data Entry Supervisor, then ended her career at Goldman Sachs after five years as a receptionist. She has one son.

New York State
Office for the Aging
Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor
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NOMINEE:
Robert Shively
Niagara County

Robert Shively is extremely active in his community. He's been a valued member of the Town of Niagara Lions Club since 1989, as both past president and current treasurer. Robert served as a District Governor, overseeing the activities of 56 Lions Clubs. Also, he is a current member and past president of the Hooker/Occidental Retirees Club and current President of the Council for Older Adults of Niagara County. As current Director of the New York State & Bermuda Lions "SEE" (Screening Eyes Early) Program, Robert visits local Head Start Programs and takes picture of young children's eyes with a special camera, then sends them to the University at Buffalo for ophthalmologist review and possible treatment. He has personally screened over 8,000 children's eyes.

Robert is involved in countless other programs and fundraisers benefiting children, seniors, veterans and families throughout Niagara County. He is a tireless, generous and caring individual - an asset to his community and a great representative of Niagara County.

Robert began volunteering when he was asked by his supervisor to attend a Lions club meeting and got involved from there. He enjoys having the opportunity to give back to others in his community.

As deserving as he is, Robert doesn't do it for the praise. It gives Robert a good feeling to do something positive for someone else. If one child's eye problems are detected and treated, it's all worth it to him.

Robert was born in Pennsylvania and moved to New York in 1950. After graduating high school, he worked for Hooker/Occidental Chemical for over 36 years, retiring in 1996.

He works part-time at Niagara Falls Country Club. He and his wife Joan have five children, 12 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

They reside in the Town of Lewiston.

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NOMINEE:
Rebecca Ferris
Oneida County

Rebecca Ferris has served as a Hospice Palliative Care volunteer for 12 years, four years as Development Council President and member of the Hospice Palliative Care Board of Directors. In her role as Council President, she led a dedicated group who were devoted to raising funds to support Hospice's mission, historically raising $250,000 a year.

In addition, she has cared for dying patients in their homes and supported their bereaved. In addition to her volunteer work at Hospice & Palliative Care, she volunteers at the Hope House food pantry, served on the Board of the Foothills Rural Community Ministry and Food Pantry, and Herkimer BOCES. Alos, she is past President of the Board of the Unity Hall Foundation and is currently President of the Barneveld Free Library.

When asked why she started volunteering, Becky said she "hoped to fulfill her parents' mandate to give back." She has found an abiding sense of fulfillment in assisting others. Becky feels that her service is its own reward, and she experiences a deep sense of belonging to her community and contentment within herself. Becky's passion for and commitment to volunteering is lifelong.

Becky has lived in New York State since 1969, residing in Remsen. Becky is a retired school teacher, mother of six children and six grandchildren. She is a dedicated community volunteer.

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NOMINEE:
Catherine Spies
Onondaga County

Catherine "Kate" Spies was born at Crouse Irving Hospital and has been a Syracuse resident all her life, living at her current address for 56 years. She retired from the Syracuse City School District where she worked as a guidance secretary. She is a widow with three grown children, six grandchildren and one great-granddaughter.

Kate has volunteered at Hospice of Central New York (Hospice of CNY) since 2007. After the death of her husband, Kate went to the Grief Center there for guidance. She attended support groups and connected with others in grief. Her concern around that time was, "What will I do with my life now?" The Grief Counselor suggested that she volunteer in the office at Hospice. Now, she contributes about 3-4 hours a week for Hospice and is a self-starter known for her competence.

According to Hospice staff, Kate requires little supervision and performs her assigned administrative tasks with a smile. They describe Kate as "a joy" to have in their office and they depend on her to show up each week-which she does without fail. Hospice staff said: "Kate is a wonderful example of what a true 'volunteering spirit' is and there is no one we would recommend more highly for Senior Citizen of the Year in Onondaga County."

In Kate's words: "…see, it all worked out beautifully."

She also volunteers at Beaver Lake Nature Center (and has logged over 2,000 hours there in 20 years) and volunteers through RSVP Onondaga County.

"Kate's life choices of dedication, loyalty, expertise, competence, and a generous spirit are an example to all of us here at Hospice of CNY. We are better people because of her presence. Those at Hospice look forward to seeing her each week and depend on her," said Hospice staff.

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Office for the Aging

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NOMINEE:
Alice McConnell
Ontario County

Alice McConnell has volunteered almost all her adult life. She started when her children were young, volunteering with the Fresh Air Fund for 25 years. She was local chairman for five years.

She started volunteering at Thompson Hospital when her mother was in the nursing home. Now, she works in the gift shop and transports patients around the hospital. Also, she helps out at Thompson's continuing care facility, taking people grocery shopping.

In addition, Alice has been a home-delivered meals volunteer with the Ontario County Office for the Aging for the past eight years. Alice started delivering meals with her husband, continuing on her own after his passing last year. Alice said her husband loved delivering meals. She is also on the Ontario County Office for the Aging Advisory Council, volunteers for her church, and is President of the East Bloomfield Senior Citizens group.

She started volunteering because she simply enjoys it, loving to see the expression of joy and appreciation on the faces of the people she helps. She also loves to "gab" with them when she brings them a meal or transports them.

Alice is 77 years old and a native New Yorker. She was born and raised in Pittsford but moved to Bloomfield in Ontario County in 1946, where she worked for the school district in the cafeteria for 24 years, and as a bus driver for 18 years.

Alice had three children; her daughter Linda, her son Larry and her son Lloyd who passed away in 2009. She has four grandchildren.

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NOMINEE:
Marianne Case Gallagher
Ontario County

Marianne Case Gallagher is incredibly busy and has been involved in many committees in her community for more than 40 years. Organizations such as the Ontario Yates Funds for Women, Sonnenberg Gardens, Ontario County Historical Society, the Professional Women of Florida, and the Canandaigua Antique Committee have all benefitted from her time and attention.

When asked how she got started volunteering, Marianne says, "I was born into volunteer mode; my father was the founding President of the Kiwanis Club of Canandaigua before I was ever born."

She shares, "I love helping children and the community. I was the founder of a free clinic in Illinois when I lived there, and I also started an HIV/AIDS Clinic."

Marianne is a native New Yorker who is living in the same house that she grew up in (she is the 4th generation to live there). She moved back from Chicago in 2007. She has four children and four great-grandchildren.

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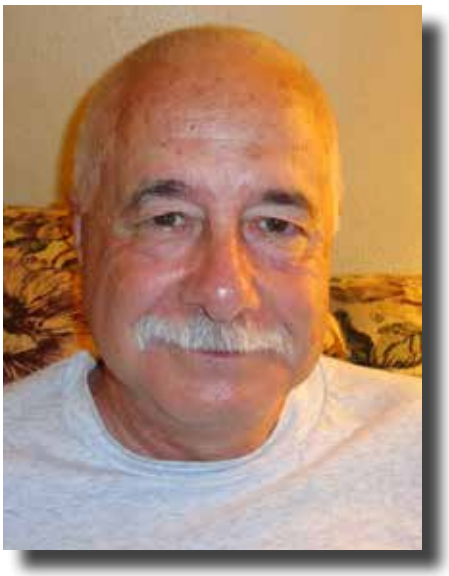

NOMINEE:
Stanley Farone
Orleans County

Stanley Farone has lived in the Orleans County area all of his life. He has been married to his wife Shirley for almost 35 years. He served in the Navy for 40 years, followed by six years in the Army Reserve. Stan then worked for Kodak for 33 years until he retired. Stan co-founded the Central Orleans Volunteer Ambulance (COVA) which began in 1979. Today he sits on the board of directors and continues to volunteer there.

Stan's volunteer work began as a teenager and he has never stopped. He started with the local fire department and continues today to volunteer for the Albion Fire Department (20+years). Stan has volunteered to be on the Suicide Prevention Coalition and is working hard to break the stigma of suicide. He is chairing the Marketing/Promotion Committee and already making contacts in the county to share information about the Coalition.

Stan recently ran for Trustee for the Village of Albion and won the election - taking office on April 1, 2014.

Stan has been involved in the community for many years, he has a heart for those who are being challenged and wants to help make life a little better. He is a hard worker, has a nice sense of humor, and is very kind.

Stan started as a volunteer with the Holley Fire Department as a teenager, because it sounded like an interesting opportunity. He really enjoys working with people. He says that working with Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is satisfying.

"I have helped save lives, and I have helped bring lives into the world. It is very rewarding."

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NOMINEE:
Frank Pillegi
Orange County

Frank Pileggi of Chester is a fund-raising phenomenon and a colossus of collection whose tireless work benefits veterans (many of whom are seniors), children, and the hungry throughout the county for whom he regularly conducts food and toy drives. This past Christmas, he organized and promoted the collection of toys for 150 local children and for 174 military families. He publicized the program and coordinated pick-up and distribution of the toys.

In 2013, Frank coordinated the collection of more than 12,500 pounds of food for the Disabled Veterans of Orange County. He has raised over $5,000 to help sustain the Monroe Council of the Knights of Columbus, which enabled them to make charitable grants to multiple agencies.

His tireless efforts to help the neediest make him, as his nominator says, “the model candidate for the Outstanding Contribution by a Senior award.”

Frank began volunteering with the United Way and blood drives at work, and then he began organizing musical entertainment and toy drives for needy children. For more than 20 years he volunteered with the Ambulance Corps, and has volunteered for the Fire Department for more than 50 years!

“I really enjoy doing it all,” says Frank. “It is a great joy to see the children of the disabled vets and the migrant workers enjoy all the toys I collect for them.”

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NOMINEE:
Norbury "Skip" Chambers
Orange County

Norbury "Skip" Chambers embodies the civic pride of his hometown through his work on the General Montgomery Day Committee, the Village Bicentennial Committee, the Montgomery Fire Department Bicentennial Committee, Memorial Day Float Parades and the St. Patrick's Day Ramble. Skip also makes equipment and vehicles available from his tractor dealership for many charitable and civic events.

In addition to his celebratory volunteerism, Skip has been an active member of the Montgomery Fire Department for 63 years, and a founder of the Orange County Farmers Museum and is active in both the VFW and the American Legion. Extending his assistance outside Montgomery, Skip is a huge supporter and organizer of the Onion Harvest Festival. His nominator is pleased to honor "this man who has given endlessly to so many causes." Skip's extraordinary commitment to the quality of life in his community absolutely qualifies him as the Senior Citizen of the Year.

When asked how he got started volunteering, Skip shared "That's what you did in those days. As soon as you got out of school, you joined the Fire Company."

Skip is a native of Montgomery and lived his whole life there. He is a veteran of the U.S. Army, has one child and one grandchild. With his typical humor, he says "Longevity!" has been the greatest reward of his selfless volunteerism.

New York State
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NOMINEE:
Rachel Brooks
Oswego County

Rachel Brooks, lifetime educator, has taught preschool through grad school, “math, science and all subjects.” She taught homebound special needs children, home-schooled her son while living in Nigeria, and ended her career as the elementary supervisor in Baldwinsville, NY.

She resides with Dennis “DH” Brooks in Mexico and has been in New York for 23 years.

“Six Steps to Better Balance” exists in Oswego County due to the determination and passion of one person, Rachel Brooks. Mrs. Brooks took on falls, the leading cause of fatal and non-fatal injuries to older people in the U.S., and decided to use her lifelong passion for teaching to do something about it. In Rachel’s words, Six Steps to Better Blance is “...an innovative program. I can tell you it is exciting, fun and often times amusing! My goal is to teach, provide guidance and make sure you have fun doing it!”

Rachel joined RSVP in 2008 as an AARP Driver Safety Instructor, became an Osteo Bone Builders instructor in 2009, and a Better Balance instructor in 2012. Today she teaches all three.

She started volunteering because she “wanted to keep teaching” and said it allowed her to focus on what she liked best about teaching and to set her own terms – location, time of day and amount of time spent; and avoid what she liked least, “no giving grades or grading tests.”

She says her biggest rewards are “my evaluations and thank you’s following driver safety classes, my faithful osteo group, and seeing Better Balance make a difference in participant’s lives.”

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NOMINEE:
Daniel Matthews
Oswego County

Daniel Matthews has been a home-delivered volunteer for Meals on Wheels since 2003. During his 11 years, he has worked more than 6,000 hours. Dan drives five days a week, delivering meals on three routes in the Central Square, West Monroe and Constantia areas. When a sub is needed for any route, Dan is the first one to say "I will do it." This winter has been a rough winter for Oswego County and not once did Dan call and say he couldn't drive because of the weather – and he doesn't even have a SUV!

He is always worried about his seniors and wants to make sure that they have food. If, for some reason, he has to take a day off (which might be one day a year!) he will call the Volunteer Coordinator and ask if he can double up on his meals the day before to ensure the seniors receive their meals.

Dan got started in 2003, when he and his wife, Mary, lost one of their daughters. Their neighbor, Director of Oswego County Opportunities Nutrition Services, asked them if they were interested in delivering meals one day a week - to get them out of the house. Dan said, "We will try it, it has to be better than walking at the Mall." The rest is history, and 11 years later Dan is going strong. He says delivering meals makes him feel good and provides a reason to get up in the morning - he looks forward to seeing his seniors every day.

Dan worked many years as the controller and retired from Reymore Chevrolet in Central Square. Dan was with the 138th NY Air National Guard, and he fought in the Korean War.

Dan has lived in West Monroe since 1964, and has lived in New York State all of his life. Dan, and his wife, Mary have been married for 62 years. They have two children, four grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

New York State
Office for the Aging

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NOMINEE:
Ellen St. John
Otsego County

In 1977, Ellen St. John and several friends learned of a neighbor with no food in the house. They went home and took food from their own cupboards to deliver to the neighbor - and the Cooperstown Food Pantry was born. Ellen became the founding Director, moving the organization from a closet in the local library to the basement of the Presbyterian Church in 1992. Ellen has been instrumental in the continued growth and funding of the pantry. She was joined by a Co-Director in 2007, and stepped down from her leadership role in 2013, but continues to volunteer several days a month. Today, the Cooperstown Food Pantry is an all volunteer, non-profit organization with 85 active volunteers serving 600 – 700 people every month.

In addition to her activities with the food pantry, she is also active with the social justice committee of her church working towards hunger relief, increase in the minimum wage, and other social justice concerns.

Ellen got started volunteering when a need had been identified and Ellen and others worked to develop a means to fill that need. According to Ellen, she has gained much more than she has given through both getting to know and helping those in need, and working with all the wonderful volunteers.

Ellen was born in China and spent her first 14 years there, living in an international university community. She then moved to NYC finishing her education and becoming an RN at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital. She moved to Cooperstown in 1948 when an affiliation was developed between Columbia Presbyterian and Bassett Hospital.

She has been married to her husband, Fredrick, for 65 years. With the birth of her four children, she became a full time mother. She has ten grandchildren.

New York State
Office for the Aging

Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor
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NOMINEE:
Kenneth Dreis
Otsego County

Ken has spent many hours over the years volunteering in different ways. He's worked with the CROP Walk, his church, wored on blood drives, the annual Senior Citizens' Dinner through Rotary, helped with transportation to doctors visits through Leatherstocking Caregivers, and served with Executive Service Corp of Otsego County where he also served on the Board.

His driving ambition has been the Richfield Area Food Bank. As Coordinator, Ken, oversees the total operation of the grant free food bank relying on the generosity of churches, businesses, individuals and organizations. He oversees volunteers, orders food, and seeks donations from grocery stores and bakeries. Not only does Ken work tirelessly to keep the pantry stocked and accessible to those in need, but he also has toys for children at Christmas and helps with other needs as possible.

Ken got started in volunteering when the need to upgrade the food bank and other community needs were identified, "someone needed to do it" - so Ken stepped up. When asked about what he likes most about volunteering, he said "Being able to help those in need and meeting many wonderful people."

Ken is a native New Yorker. He grew up in Colonie and lived in the town of Rotterdam before moving to Richfield Springs 43 years ago. He spent his career in management of Suburban Propane while also working as a professional photographer as time allowed - he has photographed many weddings in the Capital District and surrounding area.

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NOMINEE:
George Baum
Putnam County

George Baum has lived in Kent, NY since 1994, and he has become an active volunteer in the conservation community. He has volunteered with many community organizations including the Kent Recycle Center, Kent Fiscal Watch, the Carmel School District Committee to Rescue the Bond, The Putnam County Environmental Management Council, Putnam County RSVP Program, Town of Kent Committee to Review the DEP Croton Plan, The Town of Kent Conservation Advisory Committee, The Putnam County Groundwater Protection and Utilization Committee, the Putnam Energy Committee, and the Restoration of the Fire Tower.

One of the most personally significant moments in George's volunteerism is found in this quote: "Their voices call to us, do not forget that we once lived like you. In comfortable homes with our families, belonged to synagogues, worked, loved, had friends, and had a future. All this was taken from us because we were Jews. Do not forget us and never let it happen again…to anyone." George delivered this speech on April 18, 2004 at the Holocaust Remembrance, which he organized in Putnam Valley, and is another example of his overall commitment to everyone's "well-being and safety" and this year's theme *Safe Today, Healthy Tomorrow.*

He is a retired scientist with a number of important patents. George and his wife are avid cycling, hiking and canoeing enthusiasts, and are prime examples of Older New Yorkers who demonstrate the power of making a difference through civic engagement and volunteerism.

George has been a resident of New York State since 1966 and currently resides in the Town of Kent, with his wife of 32 years, Katherine. Their blended family consists of eight children and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

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NOMINEE:
Anita Mooney
Putnam County

Anita has been a volunteer for over 45 years. She has been a Senior RSVP volunteer for many years and is an active supporter of the Mahopac-Carmel Senior Drop-In Center. For ten years she has been an active member acting as kitchen supervisor, and shopper for supplies.

For four years, Anita has participated in the Heart Walk at Brewster High School and also the March of Dimes.

Her charisma has made her a top winner in the sale of Community Action Program chance sales, which she has participated in for more than six years.

Anita has also volunteered for more than five years at the 4-H Club, the Salvation Army, the Mahopac Chamber of Commerce, the Hospital Fair and at Breakfast with Santa.

When asked what she hopes to get from volunteering Anita will tell you "I like to keep active and make new friends."

Anita says that her greatest reward has been the opportunity to volunteer for many different organizations and "see how much they appreciate your help."

New York State
Office for the Aging
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NOMINEE:
James Finn
Rockland County

James is a native New Yorker who shares his West Nyack residence with his wife, Jerry. They have been married for 58 years. Together they have three children, six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Jim's distinguished professional career includes serving in the US Navy, he is a retired NYPD Detective, a past private investigator for the New York State, and Manager of Security for Dominican College.

His contributions include: President West Nyack Seniors Club; Vice President of TRIAD and provides Rockland County senior citizens information on the dangers and many frauds that criminals attempt. He has served as a Trustee for Knights of Columbus McCloskey Council; as Past President of Rockland County Shields; Past Grand Exalted Ruler for the Pearl River Elks and served in the same capacity for the Southern District for the State of New York. He is a Founding member of "Seniors for Rockland;" Involved with and supportive of the "Silver Alert" notification program for persons suffering with dementia or Alzheimer's Disease; and was Instrumental in getting the Medical Alert Program (bumper sticker alerting First Responders that vital medical information is located in the glove box) in Rockland County.

Jim has been volunteering more than 20 years across a variety of agencies and services.

What did he hope to get from volunteering? "A sense of contribution to improving the quality of life and services available to senior citizens and to facilitate their own abilities and sense of well-being; safety and security, which are vital to all seniors."

Jim is very humble in his efforts and believes the greatest reward he gets from volunteering is the many individual "thanks" he receives from those he serves.

New York State
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NOMINEE:
Lilly Klaver
Rockland County

Lilly Klaver has been a long time community volunteer. For the past 20 years, she has donated her time, working on mailings for her local Meals on Wheels program. She also volunteers for the homeless assistance program, *Helping Hands*, where she chaperones the homeless that spend the night in the shelter. In addition to volunteering for the Interfaith Program soup kitchen she is also actively involved with two church Guilds. Lilly also spends one week each year, at her own expense, to work in a Jamaican orphanage.

Lilly believes that if you are good to others, then God will be good to you. “It is very rewarding to do good work, and it gives you good feelings about yourself.” She says the greatest rewards from volunteering are from assisting the poor through *Helping Hands* and serving at the soup kitchen.

“It gives you good feelings by helping the neediest,” she said.

Lilly was born in the Netherlands, and came to the great state of New York 55 years ago. She cared for patients as a nurse at Letchworth Village and Northern Manor for 37 years. She has one child, three grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

New York State
Office for the Aging
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NOMINEE:
Bella Shore
Rockland County

Bella Shore has lived in Rockland County for 51 years and just celebrated her 90th birthday. She is a Holocaust survivor who was able to find refuge in Denmark, where she lived for some years.

After her arrival in the U.S., she became a microbiologist at Lederle Laboratories; she also developed a small catering business.

Bella has been an active volunteer for 28 years with the Mental Health Association of Rockland. She works on fund-raising activities, programming, membership, outreach to the community and has also been a member of the board of directors. A longtime volunteer at the Holocaust Museum, she also speaks at public events about her experiences in the Holocaust.

Also, she is an active volunteer at the Tappan Zee Thrift Shop, an organization that donates their income to various non-profits in the community.

Bella's greatest reward for volunteering is seeing the well-fed, happy people who enjoy life as a result of her work.

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NOMINEE:
Rita Alonzo
Saratoga County

Rita Alonzo has always used her free time to volunteer to help seniors through her church by visiting, playing cards, or taking them for a drive. Rita's main career has been as a professional school bus driver. She worked her way up to becoming a bus driver trainer before retiring and moving back to Saratoga Springs in 2001. She also had a second job working in AIM (an organization that helps people with developmental disabilities) taking care of seniors on weekends.

Since she has retired, her main interest has been in making the lives of seniors in Saratoga Springs better. She volunteers five days per week at the Senior Center. Rita is an osteo teacher and teaches two classes each week, and fills in wherever needed at the center. She enjoys helping with all of the dinners.

After Rita moved into senior housing, she noticed that at times seniors were being sent home from the hospital without anyone to assist them, sometimes at night. She brought this to the attention of the Saratoga Springs Mayor's Advisory Board, where she is a member. The board worked with Saratoga Hospital to address this problem. She also organized a meeting in her building to raise awareness of this problem that was occurring through out the community. There is now a current program in her building to ensure that every resident there has "File of Life" information visible in case of emergency.

Rita said that she will volunteer to help people as long as she feels healthy and strong. Her greatest reward is that "by doing this I do not feel old. I volunteer because I am a people person. My travels across the United States have allowed me to meet many people whom I share with or helped in some capacity."

Rita is a native of Saratoga Springs, NY, where she was born at home on Ash Street in 1934. She has also lived in Georgia and Arizona.

Rita has three children and two grandchildren.

New York State
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NOMINEE:
Helen Glen
Saratoga County

When Helen was younger, she had the traumatic experience of witnessing a car hitting and killing her mother. She felt helpless because there was nothing she could do. In 1990, Helen saw an EMT ad looking for help.

Shortly after she saw the ad, she started volunteering as an EMT for the Moreau Emergency Squad in Saratoga County. She has also served as their secretary for over 20 years.

According to Andre Delvaux, the Chief Operating Officer of the Moreau Emergency Squad, Helen continues to ride in the ambulance. She is greatly appreciated for the empathy, kindness and calming spirit she shares with those who are in trauma. She has dedicated over 23 years to the service of her community, especially for older adults with higher risk of injury and even death. She feels rewarded by helping others.

Helen has been an advocate for the squad, and often attends the South Glens Falls Middle School Community "Fun Days" and other community events to promote awareness of the squad and their services. She also donates her time and skill conducting a blood pressure clinic at a local senior citizen apartment complex.

The Moreau Community Center offers a "Backpack Program" which provides food for the weekend for children at local elementary schools to take home. Helen has been there every week since this program began four years ago, packing the backpacks with food. She volunteers for other programs at the Moreau Community Center, as well, including the monthly newsletter mailings.

New York State
Office for the Aging
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NOMINEE: Richard Dickershaid

Schenectady County

Richard "Dick" Dickershaid's passion includes baseball programs for children and adults with developmental disabilities. For more than 22 years Dick has devoted his time, energy, heart and soul to organize and sustain a youth baseball program in Schenectady County.

Rising from unofficial sandlot games to organized games with team uniforms, equipment, umpires and cheering family and friends, Dick followed one path - to find a permanent home for the new league - the Challengers' Baseball League. Years of hard work and devotion was realized in 2010 when Woestina Park, Rotterdam Junction, became the "field of dreams" for the Rotterdam Challengers'.

Unfortunately, in 2011, Hurricane Irene severely damaged the interior of the clubhouse and its contents. Undaunted, Dick had the club house ready for the 2012 opening day ceremonies.

At age two, Dick, battled tuberculosis. Challenged with life threatening surgeries and rehabilitation, a determined Dick developed a strong character rising above his disability. His passion led him to become a camp counselor, little-league and baseball coach, and an umpire and ultimately to developing the Challengers' League mentioned above.

Dick's greatest reward is knowing that he accomplished his dream of creating a baseball league for all persons with disabilities; he is a true humanitarian!

New York State
Office for the Aging

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NOMINEE:
Lou Grasso
Schenectady County

Lou Grasso has been civically engaged in the community for much of his life. His involvement has been broad and far-reaching. Lou is currently an active leader in the Woodlawn community, serving as vice president and now co-president of the Woodlawn Neighborhood Association. Also he serves on St. Paul the Epostle's Finance Committee, chairs its Parish Council, and heads its Men of St. Paul council (Lou advocated for addition of women to group as well).

Lou's work in the community is evident with his involvement on the Woodlawn Park Redevelopment Committee and Friends of the Woodlawn Preserve committees - he's served to improve the neighborhood's park lands, environment, and access to healthy living. He organizes several bus trips each year for seniors to various events in and out of New York State.

He is affectionately referred to as the "Mayor of Woodlawn."

Lou started to volunteer because it felt good giving back to the community. He values the impact a small community can have on its citizens. Always striving to help those around, Lou lights up inside when he sees the community actively engaged in service. Giving back fosters a better environment for all and improves the quality of life.

The greatest reward for Lou is seeing the community momentum that volunteering can foster. This is most evident through his leadership and counsel to both the Woodlawn Park Redevelopment Committee and Friends of the Woodlawn Preserve group, which have made significant strides to bettering the city of Schenectady.

New York State
Office for the Aging
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Corinda Crossdale, Acting Director

NOMINEE:
Deanna Urrey
Schoharie County

Deanna Urrey began her volunteer work with a simple commitment to be a friend to those in need, such as her volunteer efforts to assist special needs children through NYSARC. For many years, she has contributed and supported organizations that help the needs of those in crisis. Deanna also is a volunteer with Social Justice and Advocacy for Animals and Nature, Inc., where she helps provide transportation and maintenance needs for the animals at the facility in Summit, NY. This agency will eventually provide an assistance program to older adults with the care of their animals while they are hospitalized.

Deanna is actively involved in volunteer work at Fusion Community Church in Cobleskill where she helps with administrative and other preparations for Sunday morning gatherings. She makes herself available for other Fusion outreach events as well.

Deanna also works with the Office for the Aging. She finds driving the older adults in her area not only fulfilling the physical needs of transportation, but also fulfilling a deeper need for friendship and emotional support. This unforeseen blessing has brought incredible joy and a sense of fulfillment to her. She is thankful for her retirement, which allows her to provide for others and grants her the opportunity to meet such wonderful people.

New York State
Office for the Aging
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NOMINEE:
Edwin Guntert
Schoharie County

Edwin Guntert, along with his wife Jackie, have received numerous awards for their 35 year commitment to Emergency Medical Services - and assisting in training of others to become EMS providers as instructors of CPR and First Aid. They also volunteer at Our Lady of the Valley RC Church CAFÉ, which serves volunteers who came to help their town recover after Irene, and the Bereavement Luncheon Program.

Ed was a village trustee for six years and has served in other ways. He has added volunteering for the AARP Tax Aide program during tax season. Ed and Jackie also visit an elderly couple and provide transportation for an aging woman who is to unable drive.

Their main reason for volunteering was that "we felt a need to give something back to our community which has been very supportive of us." When asked about the greatest reward from volunteering, Ed said "seeing that we are helping people and organizations. Working with an ambulance crew was especially rewarding when our patient would say things like 'We are so happy that you are here,' and you could see them relax because they knew we could help them. Doing taxes is also rewarding because you are helping many people who are afraid of the IRS. They go away feeling that they have done the right thing."

Ed and his wife Jackie are lifelong residents of New York State. Ed was born in Stamford and grew up in Jefferson. He went to Hartwick College where he met Jackie (Glenville) and they married in 1963. They have two sons and three grandchildren. Ed started teaching in Grand Gorge as a business teacher. In 1966, the family moved to Middleburgh where he was a junior high school guidance counselor and eventually an administrator.

In 2003, Ed and his wife were recognized as American Red Cross Hometown Heroes. Also in 2003, the Town Board of Middleburgh recognized them for service to the community. In 2006, they received the Middleburgh Community Service Award.

In 2008 the Gunterts received the NYS Assembly Certificate of Merit for community servicen and were made Honorary Rotarians for service to their community.

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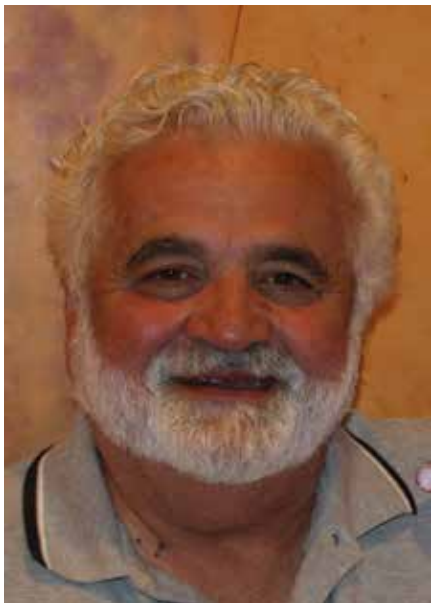

NOMINEE:
Tony Vickio
Schuyler County

Tony Vickio has always donated his time and talent to such organizations as Boy Scouts and animal shelters, as well as volunteering to teach art students at local schools. In the 1980s, he wanted to do something bigger, so he started holding an annual event to collect toys for indigent children in the county.

Wishing to do even more, in 2002 he founded "Spirit of Schuyler" or SOS, an organization that raises funds to assist county residents in times of emergency, including such basic needs as fuel oil, electric bills, or car repairs. As President of SOS, Tony volunteers countless hours to promote, organize and staff several of its vital fundraising events, as well as many hours to review applications submitted by those residents in need.

Tony has always felt fortunate to live in such a beautiful and close-knit area; his deep roots in and love for his community motivated him to "give something back." The greatest reward hew receives from volunteering is the satisfaction and fulfillment of helping those in need in Schuyler County.

Tony is a life-long resident of Watkins Glen, and is well-known throughout the county. Married to Harriett, their family includes a son, and a daughter. In his early years, Tony's hobby was driving racecars at local tracks.

In his early 20's, he embarked on his sign-painting career, using his artistic abilities to create innumerable, distinctive signage, both locally and worldwide.

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Office for the Aging
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NOMINEE:
Francis Hurd
Seneca County

photo unavailable

Francis Hurd, age 90, works part time at the Seneca County Office Building inspiring all senior citizens to realize that, regardless of one's age, you can continue to be a most constructive contributor to the welfare of the community. The Seneca County Office for the Aging also benefits from the work he does.

Fran was a truck driver and heavy equipment operator in the U.S. Army's 291st Combat Engineer Division, B Company in the European theater in World War II. Although he has a low-key personality and would never brag about his military service, what he and his unit members did in the Battle of the Bulge deserves special accolades. Without any real weapons other than "just the M-1 rifles on their shoulders, six .30-caliber machine guns, a dozen bazookas and maybe some mines," Fran and his fellow soldiers, complied with their unit commander's orders to hold the Belgian town of Malmedy for three days and convinced the commander of a German tank division to turn around. Although he simply referred that feat as "We all just did our job" and "That's what we had been trained to do and that's what we done," his modesty cannot overshadow the reality that he and his fellow soldiers played a key role.

Given the significance of their contribution, it should not be surprising that a historian at the National World War II Museum in New Orleans came to his home in 2010 to do an extensive oral history interview for their archives. Similarly, in November 2012, a professional crew for The American Heroes Channel did an extensive film interview for part of their Battle of the Bulge program in the "Against the Odds" series aired in March 2014. As a local newspaper reported it, "Still active and with a clear mind, it's no wonder historians have come calling for his memories of war."

In support of Fran's nomination, a neighbor shared: "During the 1970s, Fran was a near neighbor of my widowed, 80-year-old mother, who did not drive. They lived in the north cove of Lodi Point where the summers were easy, but the winters were harsh. He would stop in to say hello during the week and check to see if she needed groceries, milk or coffee. Then, on Sundays after church, he would always bring her the paper which she enjoyed reading through the week. His generosity and friendship meant a lot to my mother and she remarked upon it many times to us. He gave freely to his neighbors as well to our town where he was supervisor for many years."

New York State Office for the Aging
Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor
Corinda Crossdale, Acting Director

Fran is an inspiration to all senior citizens. Honoring him with this award helps to give proper recognition to all those young men and women who sacrificed so much for the defense of the United States in World War II and helps to instill in everyone the reality that they all can contribute in their own way—at any age—to the betterment of the community.

photo unavailable

NOMINEE:
Father John Downs
St. Lawrence County

Father Downs was born in Keeseville, NY in 1929. He completed his religious studies at Mt. St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland. He was ordained a priest in 1955 and his assignments took him to many pastorates within northern NY. He retired in 2004, but remains active in ministry, assisting in local parishes and serving as spiritual director at Our Lady of the Adirondacks House of Prayer in Ellenburg. He currently resides at St. Raymond's Church in Raymondville.

Father Downs was named St. Lawrence County's Senior Citizen of the Year for 2014. He is an active member of the Massena Senior Citizen's group, has served as club secretary, and chairman of the Nominating and By Laws Committee. He has served as Secreatary of the St. Lawrence County Council of Senior Citizens for the last seven years and also serves on the By-Laws committee. He has always been an active volunteer at the Mayfest and at the County Senior Picnic.

For the past 10 years, Father Downs has been a volunteer instructor for the AARP Safe Driving Course, teaching classes in Massena and Potsdam. He is also a member of AARP and StateWide Senior Action Council of Northern NY. For many years he has been a volunteer driver and friend to all, taking those in need to doctor appointments, physical therapy and to the hospital. As a retired priest, he is still active in the church, filling in and helping everywhere he is needed and doing the same with seniors and senior groups.

He began volunteering because he enjoys assisting others within his community and providing spiritual assistance to individuals in need. He explains, "I retired from administration, but not from Ministry." This is what he enjoys doing, wherever he goes, at Church and in the community he serves.

St. Regis Mohawk Church, part of the Mohawk Indian Reservation always had Jesuit pastors; a few years ago they were unable to continue assigning a priest. Father Downs, then retired, volunteered and spent over six months providing pastoral care to church members. He found it was very rewarding, providing spiritual care to a community with such devoted faith.

New York State
Office for the Aging

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NOMINEE:
Shirley Meek
St. Lawrence County

photo unavailable

Shirley Meek was awarded the 2014 St. Lawrence County Outstanding Contribution by a Senior Citizen Award. She has been the Secretary of the Clifton-Fine Senior Club for six years and volunteers three times per week at the local nursing home, helping residents play bingo, assisting residents when they go on their bus trips, and other activities. Shirley has served for 10 years as the Secretary of the Oswegatchie Cemetery Association, was President of the Clifton-Fine Hospital auxiliary for nine years, and has been the President of the Fine Home Bureau for five years. As a postal carrier, Shirley went beyond job duties to show kindness and assist the people on her route. She continued to do good deeds for them after her retirement.

Shirley started volunteering when she saw needs that she could fulfill within her community.

Her greatest reward is "knowing that people are helped and their quality of life improved."

New York State
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NOMINEE:
Alise Irwin
Steuben County

When Alise Irwin retired to Keuka Lake in Steuben County, she dove into volunteer work. Alise's involvement has included working with AAUW, the Pulteney Free Library, St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Penn Yan, where she is a Sunday School teacher, and as a staff worker at the Closet of Hope. She serves as a member of the Pulteney Aging in Place advisory group, which has been instrumental in establishing the Pulteney Senior Lunch Bunch, and is also serving on the Office for the Aging Advisory Council. Seen as a leader wherever she volunteers, Alice has served as President of AAUW for four years, is current President of the Pulteney Free Library, Board of Trustees, and currently serves as Chairperson of the OFA Advisory Council.

When asked why she enjoys community service, Alise said "it's a way of life which began with my family in Alfred and has continued all my life. It's what we do. You meet the most wonderful people when you're sharing time and energy on behalf of the community."

Alise was born in West Virginia, but moved to New York when she was eight. She graduated from Alfred University and holds a Master of Science in Nursing and an MPA Degree. Alise has four children, five grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. She moved out of state in 1974, but returned after her retirement from nursing. Her husband of 35 years, Bill, died in 2007.

New York State
Office for the Aging
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Corinda Crossdale, Acting Director

NOMINEE:
Sally Economou
Suffolk County

Sally Economou sets an excellent example of aging actively. She has been a dedicated volunteer with RSVP's Telephone Reassurance Program. Additionally she offers her warmth and compassion to the Visiting Nurse Services as a hospice volunteer, not an easy placement. At age 82, Sally has given over 5,000 hours of her time to civic engagement.

Recently, she had her dog trained to be a service dog, so Sally and her pup also visit the elderly in nursing homes in the area.

When asked how she got started, Sally said she still had "plenty of energy" left after raising her four children and wanted to give back to her community. She feels good about helping others in her community. She says her greatest reward in volunteering for the past l8 years is the feeling of satisfaction she gets from helping others and making a small difference in their lives. She has made terrific and long lasting friendships by meeting other volunteers.

Sally was born and raised in Ohio. She married and raised her four children there. Sally moved to New York (Suffolk County) and for the past 30 years, has lived in Smithtown. She is a former registered dietician and diabetes educator, has four children, and eight grandchildren.

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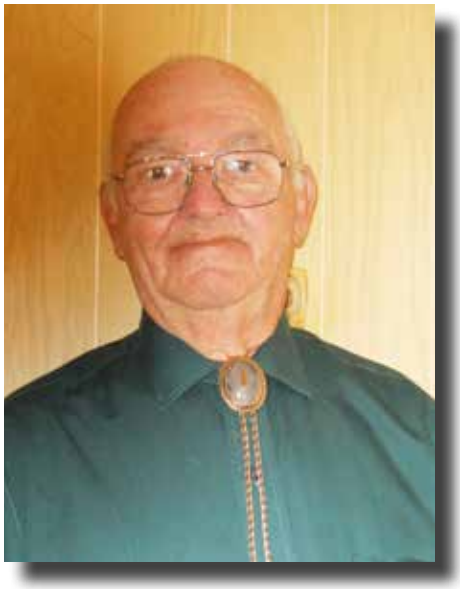

NOMINEE:
Arthur Viele
Sullivan County

Arthur Viele has given his community more than 47 years of volunteer service. He has logged more than 2,400 hours as an RSVP Medical Driver. Arthur also volunteers at the Sullivan County Historical Society Museum. He has been a member for 22 years and was the director for 11 years. The Museum forum allows him to do what he loves, helping and educating people on the legacy and history of Sullivan County. In addition, Arthur has volunteered with at least ten different organizations in Sullivan County including: the Liberty fire department, Liberty PBA Children baseball team, the Jr. Chamber of Commerce and Boy Scout Pack #95, Liberty Lyon's club and Sullivan Renaissance.

His current focus is on his position as Treasurer of The Longbeards of Sullivan County. Arthur strongly believes that our children are the heirs to the future we leave them. As a member he intends to be a positive influence on these children both individually and with much emphasis on family through his active volunteer involvement. He intends to help instill a love of all things outdoor which goes well beyond hunting and fishing.

Art has been a member of the Happy Footers Square Dancers' Club since 1973!

His personal objective is to aid others - he is truly a selfless volunteer dedicated to our county. Art assists in organizing and holding events advocating good land stewardship as a resource.

Arthur Viele and his wife of 53 years Barbara have lived in Liberty for 52 years. His son and daughter, along with seven grandchildren and one great-grandchild, reside in Sullivan County.

New York State
Office for the Aging
Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor
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NOMINEE:
Robert Spaulding
Tompkins County

Robert "Bob" Spaulding has a vast repertoire of interests and his passions shine through in his volunteerism.

He has served as President of the Ithaca Board of Realtors, Treasurer of Brooktondale Community Center and editor of the *Caroline Community Newsletter*. Currently, Bob is the President of Caroline Seniors Inc. which operates Fountain Manor, 24 units of senior/disabled housing. He's been President of the Caroline Senior Unit for two years, and a volunteer ambulance driver for three years.

Last but certainly not least, Bob is the Vice President of Slaterville Fire Company, and Commissioner for Slaterville Fire District. In addition to these duties, and as an avid motorcyclist, he presents safety training to local motorcycle clubs. His countless hours of dedication represent hundreds of hours of service to our community and the Town of Caroline.

Bob started volunteering because he likes to be involved in his community. In his own words, "I'm a part of my community and it's a part of me."

His greatest reward from volunteering is contributing toward keeping it strong and healthy.

"Caroline is a super place to live. It's the best kept secret in Tompkins County," he said.

New York State
Office for the Aging
Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor
Corinda Crossdale, Acting Director

NOMINEES: Eunice & Richard Tabor

Tompkins County

The Tabors are native to upstate New York: Eunice is from Watertown, and Richard, from Cooperstown. The two met while attending SUNY Geneseo, and will celebrate their 50th anniversary this June. Richard spent most of his career as an elementary school teacher at Marcellus Central School. Eunice attended seminary at age 52, becoming a United Methodist pastor and served in Madrid, Massena, and Ithaca.

Richard and Eunice Tabor have shared their energies with the community since arriving in 2007, creating an inviting place, with new bookcases and furniture, for children to experience literacy at the Ithaca Youth Bureau. His efforts include grant writing to purchase books, organizing, cataloging, and weekly oversight. He also volunteered at the Tompkins County Public Library and the Friends of TCPL Book Sale. At *Loaves and Fishes*, a free community meal site, he provided hospitality as an Advocate.

Eunice has led Bible Study and worship services at Longview senior housing for six years. She is a member of St. Paul's choir and hosts a card making workshop for creating valentines for people who are shut-in. She provides grief counseling and comfort care to many in the community. Together the Tabors volunteer at Rescue Mission's Court Street Place, Emergency Shelter and Food Pantry.

Eunice's volunteer work grew out of concern for the needs of others. Richard's volunteering increased when he retired. He says, "I like to give of myself to help other people and the community."

Eunice is rewarded when she sees how people feel when they are cared about and appreciated. Richard's greatest reward is seeing how his efforts have helped change people's lives.

New York State
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Corinda Crossdale, Acting Director

NOMINEE:
Donald Dubois
Ulster County

Donald Dubois started working at DeLaval in Poughkeepsie in 1942. He retired in 1969. After retiring he built a personal machine shop. He has three patents for his unique ideas and inventions. He volunteers for the international P.E.T. Project, an organization that donates hand or motor powered personal vehicles for persons in third world countries who cannot walk.

In his shop, Don cuts lumber for the construction of the "Personal Energy Transportation" (PET) vehicles, which give people in need the gift of mobility.

In his spare time he loves to write books; of which four have been published. In his books of essays, poetry, homilies and limericks, Don collects his observations of life. He is a humble gentleman. His advice to all is "to keep your head in the clouds but your feet on the ground."

Don is a member of the Reservoir United Methodist Church. He has devoted himself to the church his entire life, teaching Sunday School and Bible study since he was 20 years old.

He was born on January 15, 1914 in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania but has lived the past 95 years in Shokan, NY. He graduated from Kingston High School in 1936.

His late wife Bessie, three children, seven grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren are his blessings, he said.

New York State
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NOMINEE:
Marie Post
Ulster County

Marie Post is well known for her love for animals and is literally on call 24 hours a day to offer assistance with dog and cat issues.She manages the Town of Saugerties “no kill” Animal Shelter, heads up numerous fundraising activities, and founded the “Four Paws Pet Food Pantry” to help community pet owners who are having temporary difficulty feeding and caring for their pets.

In addition, Marie tirelessly assists senior citizens throughout the Hudson Valley to find homes for their pets when the senior enters a care facility.

At the age of 66 she was elected to the Town Board of Saugerties and has served three consecutive terms from 1992 through 2003. She has managed the town’s Transfer Station since 2006 and serves on the Saugerties Area Council of Churches as a liaison to fund temporary food and shelter expenses for the homeless people passing through the town. She serves on the Consistory of the Reformed Dutch Church of Blue Mountain. She was the organist and choir director for many years.

Marie’s reputation of giving back to the community has enabled her to enlist volunteers enthusiastically. No one ever says no to Marie, for whom volunteerism comes naturally - she gives of herself to help others!

Mrs. Post has been an asset to the Saugerties Community through her hard work and dedication for more than 60 years.

She is married, has five children,17 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

New York State
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NOMINEE:
Lucy Abraham
Warren County

Lucy was born in Schenectady, NY and after graduating from St. Columba's High School she worked for a local architect before marrying and moving to Glens Falls. She stayed home to raise her four children and then returned to work as a medical assistant for Dr. Richard Hughes. After five years she moved on to Adirondack Resource as an administrative assistant and was there until her retirement in 1991.

Lucy has been an active and dedicated member of the Lake George Senior Citizen's Club. She has held the offices of president and vice president. She works tirelessly on fundraising efforts to support the club. Lucy started a monthly newsletter to keep people updated on club events and information. She arranges all sorts of activities- trips, picnics, parties, bake sales, card playing and a membership tea. Lucy also took over organization of the club trips to the local Racino; a big undertaking as there are 40-50 seniors who enjoy these outings! She assists the club officers by typing and preparing agendas and she has even offered her expertise to teach other seniors computer skills. Lucy is very passionate about older people and can always be counted on to provide rides to medical appointments, meetings and luncheons and she is always available to lend an ear. She also volunteers at her church, with the local hospice, and local library. Lake George is lucky to have such a gem!

Lucy began volunteering after her children were grown. She has a personality for caring, giving back. She started volunteering with hospice. After joining the Lake George Senior Club as a member she became more involved from there.

Lucy believes in giving back to the community. This is proven by the lives she has touched, the friendships she has made, and the happiness she has brought to the lives of the many people she has helped.

New York State
Office for the Aging

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NOMINEE:
Bob Dalaba
Warren County

Bob is a dedicated volunteer - he is the first one to arrive at the Warren County Office for Aging meals on wheels site every Monday through Friday, rain or shine, and the last one to leave at the end of the day. He arranges the coolers, helps pack them and get them to the proper car/route, and then he does a route of his own. He is always available to drive an extra route if another volunteer is unable to make it and he always does it with a smile! In addition to volunteering so much time and energy to delivering meals every day he also transports seniors to medical appointments.

Bob retired in September of 2004. By January 2005 he was bored with retirement and saw an appeal in the paper for volunteer drivers. He called that day and they asked if he was available the next day; he said “yes” and he has been delivering ever since!

Bob feels his greatest reward is just being able to contribute. There is so much heartache out there and so many home bound seniors unable to go anywhere or do anything; he is glad to be able to brighten someone’s day and give something back.

Bob is a native of Warren County, New York. He was born in 1937 and grew up in Warrensburg. In 1959 he bought a home in Queensbury, and he lives there to this day.

Bob has four children, seven grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

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NOMINEE:
Sally Walker
Washington County

Sally Walker is the second of nine children and is originally from Queensbury. Sally has resided in Washington County in the Town of Fort Ann for the past 50+ years.

Sally married Leon Walker in August of 1963 and they have three children and five grandchildren.

She is a graduate of SUNY Plattsburgh with a BS Degree and was an elementary school teacher for 30 years for Fort Ann School. In addition to being a school teacher, she also worked for the family business which includes a dairy farm, a trucking company and a store.

Sally is highly commended for her civic engagement, volunteering for the past 30 years for a variety of organizations, including but not limited to: Adult Literacy, Fort Ann School's Kindergarten round-up, school voting and steering committee, and the Glens Falls YMCA children's swim group, and baking for youth groups, the local Volunteer fire Department, and the girls' soccer team. She also was the leader in collecting, returning cans and bottles for the PTSO, and collecting and counting soup labels and box tops for school credit.

In addition, Sally has also been on the Fort Ann Planning Board, the Fort Ann Central School Board, the Fort Ann Revitalization Board, the Board of Director's for Friends of Hospice, and served on the Washington County Dairy Princess Committee. Furthermore, Sally has been President and Vice President of the Washington County Senior Citizens Council and currently serves as the President of the Fort Ann Queen Anne Seniors Club.

Sally said, "I started volunteering because it makes the community better and I feel that if you take something you should give something back."

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NOMINEE:
Gail Dewey
Washington County

Gail Dewey (a.k.a "Mrs. Greenwich") is a loyal and dedicated volunteer transportation dispatcher for the Retired Seniors Volunteer Program (RSVP)/VAN GO program in Greenwich, coordinating medical and disabled transportation services for seniors with available volunteer drivers and confirming the arrangements with the riders. Gail goes above and beyond her duties by taking phone calls from seniors with their "everyday problems" and keeps track of their welfare. For instance, she checks to see if individuals are taking their medications, reminds individuals of their appointments, and makes sure they are safe at home. In addition, she assists seniors with Tuesday morning grocery shopping trips. Gail has also maintained the Greenwich Central Alumni data since 1972.

When asked why she started volunteering, Gail said, "I've always been good with people and enjoy putting a smile on their faces. I find senior citizens really enjoy my entertainment."

Gail also said "It's a feel-good job when you know you've helped them. They are so grateful knowing there is always someone who they can turn to."

Gail was born and raised in Washington County and currently lives in Greenwich.

She graduated from Greenwich Central School and started as a secretary for the school on the day after her graduation. After working at the school for 40 years, she retired in 1999. In addition she also worked for Rascher Real Estate for six years. Gail has been married to Robert Dewey, also from Greenwich, for 50 years. Robert is an Air Force/Vietnam Veteran. They have two sons, four grandchildren, and a yellow lab named Molly.

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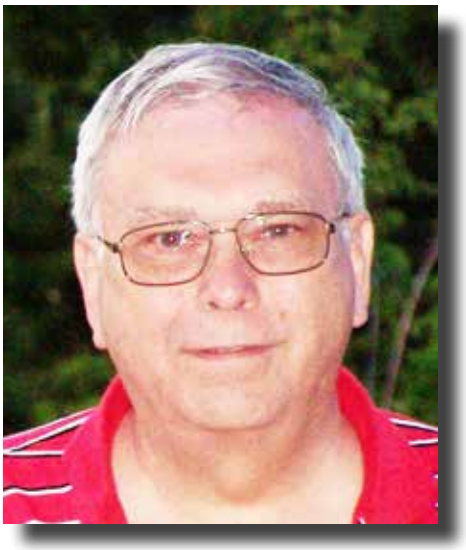
NOMINEE:
Robert Hanson
Wayne County



Robert Hanson has volunteered and worked for Newark Arcadia Volunteer Ambulance serving as both an active medic and as a member of their board of directors. He has helped run ambulance operations, serving as its director of operations and director of equipment procurement.

Robert has also served on the Wayne County Senior Advisory Council, both as a member and its chairman. He states “It has been a great privilege to help support the many activities of our county’s Department of Aging and Youth as it works to improve the quality of life of our senior citizens.”

Robert began volunteering with the hope that he could improve the quality of life in his community in ways that otherwise could not be done. He says “I believe that even if our community had unlimited wealth, it could not produce the same results as what is achieved by having community members give the gift of their time and talents to help their community.”

When asked about the greatest reward he’s received through volunteerism, he shared “When it was my honor to save the life of another person through my volunteer efforts.”

New York State
Office for the Aging
Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor
Corinda Crossdale, Acting Director

NOMINEE:
Peg Hanson
Wayne County

Peg has a total of more than 50 years of volunteer experience.

For the past 21 years, she has been a member and past president of Newark Kiwanis Club. She has also held various committee memberships for St. Michael's Catholic Church in Newark and numerous volunteer positions for Newark Wayne Community Hospital, including as a current membership on their volunteer Board of Directors. In addition, she is a volunteer member of the Wayne CAP RSVP program, and a member of the Wayne County Aging and Youth Advisory Council, and an Advanced EMT with Newark Arcadia Volunteer Ambulance.

When asked why she began volunteering, Peg said "I wanted to give back to the community all that had been given to me. I was raised to enjoy volunteering." She added that she felt rewarded "Knowing that I can do for others things that they cannot do for themselves either physically, emotionally, or financially."

Peg was born and raised in Brighton, New York. During her childhood, she lived in the Rochester and Buffalo area. She graduated from Brighton High School, and received her Associates degree in Criminal Justice from SUNY Finger Lakes Community College. Peg is disabled with Multiple Sclerosis and has been retired since 1991 from her career as an independent insurance agent.

New York State
Office for the Aging
Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor
Corinda Crossdale, Acting Director

NOMINEE:
Lavinia Smith
Westchester County

Ms. Smith has been a New Yorker for all of her 91 years, and was born and raised in Harlem. Since 1965, she has resided in Mt. Vernon. Ms. Smith earned a master's degree from Teacher's College at Columbia University in 1947. She taught in elementary schools for over 20 years and was a guidance counselor for 15 years.

Ms. Smith has volunteered in intergenerational programs since 1988. For 26 years, Ms. Smith has been a literacy mentor in Mt. Vernon's public schools where she works with entire classes and with children individually to improve their reading skills. Currently, she volunteers twice a week at two schools. During the summers, Ms. Smith reads to children at her library as part of a summer reading program. Ms. Smith is a founding member of the Rapping Grannies, an intergenerational choir of senior citizens and middle school children started in 1990 by the Mt. Vernon Youth Bureau. She continues to practice weekly and perform with them. Ms. Smith is a senior advocate for Communities that Care, a senior representative for the Mt. Vernon Youth Bureau's Intergenerational Programs and a board member of Sister to Sister, International.

Ms. Smith feels she has never retired. She continues to be interested in the lives of children and in improving their lives. Ms. Smith believes that reaching out to younger generations is very important for senior citizens because everyone can learn from each other, which helps to develop strong relationships among the generations.

Ms. Smith has been immeasurably enriched working with children. Helping children develop, grow, and reach their potential has sustained her throughout her life. She has one son and two grandchildren.

New York State
Office for the Aging

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NOMINEE:
Lucy Schmolka
Westchester County

Lucy and her husband Lenny moved from NYC to Scarsdale in 1971. Married for 48 years, they raised two sons. Lucy was an active volunteer in her community: Scarsdale PTA President,Village Advisory Board, League of Women Voters, and President of White Plains Hospital- Scarsdale Auxilary. At the same time, she also enjoyed an extremely successful career which focused on health/ community: Patient Advocate/Mt. Sinai Hospital; Health Advocate/ Instructor and Newsletter Editor at Sarah Lawrence College; and Magazine Editor. When not volunteering, she loves to play tennis, spend time with friends/family and go to the theater.

In 2005 at White Plains Hospital, Lucy became Coordinator of the newly created Ambassador Program. With great enthusiasm and vision, Lucy spent countless hours and many months of planning to ensure a smooth and successful program launch. The Ambassador Program was designed to help improve access to healthcare in our community. They escort people to their destination, listen, answer questions, help problem solve, connect people with appropriate staff, and play a key role in easing the stress of a hospital visit. In 2006, she helped expand the program to the Emergency Department. The program began with eight volunteers in June 2005. Today, under Lucy's outstanding leadership, passion, and training, the program has grown to 47 volunteers contributing over 31,000 hours of caring service!

Among her other volunteer contributions are: Board member of White Plains Hospital and Blythedale Children's Hospital; past member of the Advisory Board Westchester County Office for Women and the Women's Enterprise Development Center.

Lucy has a great capacity for giving. She is truly gifted at engaging, training, and motivating people by connecting with their hearts and minds, exceptional at putting people at ease and can relate to folks from all walks of life. She has a remarkable ability to comfort a person who is anxious, frightened, or in physical or emotional pain.

When asked what she most enjoys about volunteering, Lucy said "Volunteering in the healthcare sector has kept me current and involved, both physically and intellectually, in one of today's most critical and challenging areas."

New York State
Office for the Aging

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NOMINEE:
Bonnie Stockholm
Wyoming County

Bonnie Stockholm has volunteered at many different organizations for over 50 years. Currently she is the Attica Representative to the Wyoming Co. Office for the Aging Advisory Council, and the Treasurer of the Attica Senior Club where she focuses a lot of her time planning trips for the Senior Citizens in her community. Her biggest volunteer endeavor has been her work with the Trinity United Methodist Church in Attica, holding many positions within the church and has been on numerous committees. She is currently a trustee and serves on the Finance Committee, and has spent many hours working on different fundraisers within the church, which have benefitted not only the church community, but the town of Attica as a whole. Bonnie considers herself blessed with good health and an ability to help others. If anyone in her community needs help, whether it be a ride to a doctor's appointment, or errands to run, she makes herself available to help. Her dedication to giving is exemplary and something that she is very proud of.

Bonnie started volunteering shortly afer highschool because she always thought it was the right thing to do. She watched both of her parents give to the community, and it sparked her to continue. Her greatest rewards from volunteering?

"Helping others makes you feel good about yourself," she said, and when someone says "thank you."

Bonnie was born in Batavia and has lived in Attica, NY for all of her 73 years. She has even lived in the same house for 66 years. She spent most of her working years at Metropolitan Life where she was a Branch Manager, where she worked until the company moved.

Bonnie has no children of her own, but has taken many kids under her wing and considers herself a grandma by default.

New York State
Office for the Aging

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NOMINEE:
Lauren Snyder
Yates County

After 33 years at Yates County Public Health, Lauren Snyder retired and took a leadership role in starting a community health improvement project in Yates County focused on the social determinants of health. Currently she works part time on her passion – as coordinator on a Greater Rochester Health Foundation-funded Community Health Improvement Project in Dundee.

Her community service contributions include service to the Arc of Yates, Genesee Region Public Health Association, Rainbow Junction Day Care, the Council on Alcoholism, St. Mark's Terrace Senior Housing, Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency, Lett's Memorial Adult Home, American Red Cross, Christmas for the Needy, Milly's Pantry, Dundee Rotary, and the Dundee Mobile Food Pantry.

Lauren started volunteering because she believes it is her responsibility to give back to the community that has given so much to her and to her family. She finds great joy in knowing that she has played a small part in helping organizations to deliver services to people who need them.

Lauren was born and raised in Penn Yan, NY and has been married for 44 years to Alan "Herbie" Snyder. They have two daughters, one is a consumer of the Arc of Yates services, one is an Instructional Designer living in Rochester.

Lauren received her bachelors degree in nursing from the University at Buffalo and her masters in public administration from SUNY Brockport. She was employed at Yates County Public Health for 33 years, 28 years as Director.

Lauren is caretaker for her 90-year-old mother who has Alzheimer's and her 95-year-old father who has Parkinson's Disease.

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