

passionate caring
generous inspiring
welcoming
kind volunteer
tireless community
compassionate
supportive service



New River Valley Leading Lights

Celebrating Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Recognition Ceremony
October 8, 2020



mentor loving
leader driven
vital enthusiastic
supportive
go-to devoted
joyful



CONGRATS TO ALL
2020 NRV LEADING LIGHTS!



WHIT & KELLY BABCOCK

There are people in
your life whom you
unknowingly inspire
simply by being you.

- *Unknown*



2020 *Leading Lights*



* * *

High School

Lacy Bailey
 Brandi Clemons
 Carley Cox
 Gibson Graham
 Clay Jennings
 Violet Neikirk
 Morgan Ralph
 Thinna Svetanant
 Cohen Taylor
 Heidi Treser

* * *

College

Amara Alexander
 Amanda Guevara
 Maya Johnson
 Nick Kaloudis
 Danielle Kassel
 Molly Kwitny
 Addison Levy
 Jami Martin
 Hannah Westbrook

* * *

Lifetime Achievement

Lynne Clark
 Carol Fox
 Dave Roper
 Pat Worrell

Community Members

Michael Abbott
 Tony Blair
 Chris Bowers
 Tess Brooke
 Jackie Brown
 Robin Burdette
 Carolyn Dove
 Michael Emero
 Gary Fields
 Christine Gibson
 Elizabeth Hamley
 Dr. Daniel Kelly
 Penny Livesay
 Dr. Carolyn Mathews
 Paul Moody
 Deborah Morris
 Sheila Nelson
 Travis Sparks
 Cheri Strenz
 Graham Swinfen
 Sharon Thompson
 Katrina Underwood
 Sally Warburton
 Elizabeth Warriner
 Rebecca Weeks
 Rhonda Whaling



About New River Valley Leading Lights

Since 2009, New River Valley Leading Lights has acknowledged and honored volunteers across the NRV who are making community-changing impacts, culminating in an annual celebratory banquet.

NRV Leading Lights was formed following the events of April 16, 2007 at Virginia Tech. During this time, our community witnessed an incredible outpouring of support from community members who performed extraordinary acts of service in response to the tragedy.

Seeing the importance of volunteers during this time inspired the German Club Alumni Foundation and other community leaders. They created NRV Leading Lights in an effort to recognize the incredible contribution volunteers make to our community every day.

**In this spirit of volunteerism,
we celebrate this evening.**

**We dedicate this night to all those
impacted by April 16, 2007.**

Award Selection Committee

Catherine Cotrupi

Bill King

Steve Skripak

Sharon Eifried

Christina McIntyre

A Note from the Board

We owe a debt of gratitude to each of the outstanding volunteers nominated tonight, and to all their nominators. Thank you also to each of our organizations for granting us leave to serve with NRV Leading Lights.

Included in this program is a short summary of each nominee that will give you a glimpse into each person's contributions to our community. We hope their stories inspire all of us to get more engaged in service.

Board of Directors

Dick Arnold, President
Virginia Tech German Club
Alumni Foundation

Ann Cassell
Montgomery County

Catherine Cotrupi
VT Engage

Kymn Davidson-Hamley
Montgomery County

Janiele Hamden
Radford

Kelly Kaiser
New River Community College

Rev. Bill King, Vice President
Montgomery County

Ryan Martin
YMCA at Virginia Tech

John McEnhill
Floyd County

Christina McIntyre
Giles County

Charlie Mullins
Giles County

Enrique Rebolledo
YMCA at Virginia Tech

Tim Rosche, Treasurer
Christiansburg Lions Club

Jill Ross
New River Community College

Carol Smith
Pulaski County

Jessica Twiest, Secretary
Radford University



A Special Thank You



This evening was made possible by our generous sponsors and donors.
Thank you so much for supporting NRV Leading Lights!

Leading Lights

Major Sponsors (\$1,000+)

C.E. Richardson Benevolent Foundation
German Club Alumni Foundation
Randolph House of Pulaski

* * *

Flood Lights

Table Sponsors (\$500 - \$999)

David E. Lowe
John and Elizabeth Dooley
LewisGale Hospital Montgomery
MOOG Components
Managed Growth, Inc.
VT Engage
Blacksburg Breakfast Lions Club
Delwyn Dyer
National Bank
Christiansburg Lions Club
Stateson Homes
New River Community College Educational Foundation

Spot Lights

(\$250 - \$499)

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Huber	Foxguard Solutions
Courtyard by Marriott	Craig E. Nesbit
MT. Tabor Ruritan Club	AARP Blacksburg, VA Chapter
William Earle Spruill	(Pat Ballard)
Qualtrax	Marjorie Marcy
Richard M. Arnold	Dawn Musser
Whit and Kelly Babcock	Gary and Sharon Eifried
Richard M. Arnold	Trevor Gray
Mark Ringold	Christina McIntyre
Wallace and Heather Nelson	Tim Rosche
William H King	Ronnie and Faye Marcum
Dr. Steve & Cathy Jacobs	

* * *

Strobe Lights

(\$100 - \$249)

Charles and Andrea Parron	Family Martin Inc
Thomas J. Dalzell	C Bryan Cloyd
Bob and Scottie Dickenson	Randall Crockett
Thomas J. Dalzell	Mark J Benson
Charles Mullins	Jane Bonomo
Paul Knox	J Lewis Webb
Charles O. Warren	Richard and Phyllis Geoghegan
Habitat For Humanity of The	Ryan Martin
NRV	
Memorial Gardens of The New	
River Valley, Inc.	
Richard and Phyllis Geoghegan	
Celco Federal Credit Union	
Kerry Gillispie	
William Neely	

Bright Lights (Up to \$99)

Virginian Leader Corporation

John Galbraith

Kroger

Mark B. Wigginton

Catherine Cotrupi

* * *



Sprint Store

Spradlin Farm Shopping Center

Across from Chick-fil-A

Eric Shephard, Store Manger

540-382-0072

CONGRATS TO ALL 2020 NRVLL VOLUNTEERS!



Keynote Speaker



Kevin L. Foust

Kevin Foust grew up in Greenville, Pa. and received bachelors' degrees in communication arts and political science from Grove City College. He has spent his entire professional career in public service with his start as a deputy sheriff for Mercer County Sheriff's Office.

Foust has worked for the FBI in Jacksonville, Fla. and Washington field offices doing drug investigations. In 1992, he was assigned to International Terrorism and later became the supervisor to that squad. He has traveled to over 25 countries investigating and supervising such cases as Pan Am 103, the East Africa Bombings of the U.S. Embassies in Tanzania and Kenya, and the attack upon the U.S.S. Cole. On Sept. 11, 2001, Foust reported to the FBIHQ as the Unit Chief of the Usama Bin Laden Unit. Later, he was assigned as the Supervisory Senior Resident Agent of the Roanoke, Lynchburg and Bristol offices of the FBI. In 2007, Foust also became an adjunct faculty member at Roanoke College in the Public Affairs Department.

He retired from the FBI in 2011 and took the position of Deputy Chief of Police at Virginia Tech. He was later named Chief of Police and Director of Security at the Virginia Tech Police Department in 2014. Most recently, he was appointed the Associate Vice President for Safety and Security at Virginia Tech in October 2019.

Foust has been appointed to the Governor of Virginia's Alcohol Beverage Control Expert Review Panel, the Joint Task Force to Reduce Gun Crime in Virginia, and the Governor-elect of Virginia's Policy Council for Public Safety. He is a member of the Board of Directors for the New River Valley Emergency Communications Center (911 Center). He has also served as a guest instructor at the FBI Academy, the International Law Enforcement Training Academy in Budapest, Hungary, and the Shenandoah Police Training Academy in Staunton, Va.



Tonight's Program



Welcome..... Catherine Cotrupi
NRV Leading Lights Board Member

Introduction to NRV Leading Lights..... Dick Arnold
NRV Leading Lights Board President

Leading Lights Recognition Christina McIntyre
NRV Leading Lights Board Member

Introduction of Speaker..... Ann Cassell
NRV Leading Lights Board Member

Keynote Speaker..... Kevin Foust

Distinguished Recipients..... Christina McIntyre
NRV Leading Lights Board Member

Closing Remarks..... Catherine Cotrupi
NRV Leading Lights Board President

High School • College

Community: Floyd • Giles • Montgomery • Pulaski • Radford

Jim & Lenna Moore Lifetime Achievement Award



Our Impact



12 years of honoring volunteers

623 individuals nominated for awards

90 awards presented to outstanding volunteers

\$63,000 distributed to NRV nonprofits of winners' choosing

We are honored to recognize 49 Leading Lights this year. Tonight, 11 distinguished recipient awards will be given out: two High School, two College, along with Community Members for residents in the city of Radford, the counties of Floyd, Giles, Pulaski, and Montgomery, and a Lifetime Achievement recipient.

Each distinguished recipient will receive \$500 to donate to a New River Valley nonprofit of their choosing. The Lifetime Achievement recipient will receive \$1,000. This year, in lieu of the expense of the Recognition Ceremony, each Leading Light (except Distinguished Recipients) will be able to direct a donation of \$100 to the charity of their choice. This will bring NRV Leading Lights' total to \$66,800 distributed to organizations in our region.



Stay Involved with Us



Nominate a volunteer this fall for the 2021 awards!

Do you know an outstanding volunteer and resident of the NRV who meets the below criteria? *Submit a nomination at leadinglightsnrv.org!*

- Devotes a significant, ongoing amount of time to volunteerism.
- Addresses community needs & is making an impact.
- Demonstrates leadership and/or shows initiative.

Join our Board or become a Community Advisor.

We are always looking for new board members. Members serve three year terms, attend monthly meetings (Sept. - May), and participate on one or more team (such as fundraising or banquet planning.) Advisors have a less formal commitment, lending their expertise to specific projects or teams.

Donate or become a sponsor.

Every donation or sponsorship supports our banquet and awards, and, in turn, our community. *Donations may be made payable to:*

German Club Alumni Foundation
Memo line: NRV Leading Lights
711 Southgate Drive
Blacksburg, VA 24060

Interested in becoming more involved with us?
Contact us at leadinglightsnrv@gmail.com.

NEW RIVER
Community College



www.nr.edu - (540) 674-3600

**Congratulations to the 2020
NRV Leading Lights volunteers!**



A person's true wealth is the
good they do in this world.

-Muhammad (570-632 CE)

CONGRATULATIONS

*TO ALL LEADING LIGHTS
& THANK YOU TO ALL VOLUTEERS
IN THE NEW RIVER VALLEY!*



GARY & SHARON EIFRIED



High School Leading Lights



Lacy Bailey

Lacy spends her time heavily involved in school organizations while often times having a leadership role and also joining organizations in the community. At Auburn High School, she is a part of Young Democrats, Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), Student Government Association, Young Life, MCPS Strategic Planning Team and MCPS Corp of Cadets. Lacy works with kids while volunteering in classrooms at Auburn Elementary and with Montgomery County 4-H, where she spends over 100 hours a year with 4-H and is a part of the Teens for a Better Tomorrow 4-H Club that focuses on leadership, career readiness and community service. She is also part of the Appalachian Youth Climate Coalition and has participated in climate change protests. Lacy's only paid activity is lifeguarding, where she can still serve and give back to her community.



* * *

Brandi Clemons

Brandi volunteers with several organizations including Carilion Giles Community Hospital, White Gate Ruritan Club, and Mt. Zion United Methodist Church, while also giving back to others at her school as a Giles High School Ambassador and a member of the National Honor Society. She volunteers for four hours every week at the hospital, where she works at the information desk, answers phones, and assists visitors as they need. She assists patients into wheelchairs when they arrive or leave the hospital and also provides support to those in the waiting room. As a Student Ambassador at her school, Brandi helps out with events that the school offers and assists future students by giving tours to eighth graders and introducing them to teachers.





High School Leading Lights



Carley Cox



Carley is dedicated to serving her community through her volunteer work with Pulaski Daily Bread INC and the Pregnancy Resource Center in Radford. While working with the Pregnancy Resource Center, she helps by making baskets for the patients and their children and also helps by organizing and cleaning the facility. Carley helps to make and serve the food at Pulaski Daily Bread. She worked to start a Youth Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Project (YADAPP) club at Pulaski County High School and earned the club \$250 from a YADAPP camp over the summer.

* * *

Gibson Graham

Gibson has been volunteering in the New River Valley in some capacity for the past eight years with an Eagle Scout project that included 85 hours of service time. He has volunteered with several projects during his time as a Boy Scout, and his Eagle Scout project which included adding trees to the Huckleberry Trail in Christiansburg and also adding tree identification signs, a history sign, and bird houses to the trail. Gibson's love for history led to him volunteering as a Junior Patriot for six years at Smithfield Plantation and now at the Wilderness Road for the past two years. He has also helped the VFW American Legion place flags at Sunset Cemetery for Memorial Day.



High School Leading Lights

Clay Jennings



Clay has been volunteering in the community since he was in fifth grade when he began working with Bricks 4 the Brave, an organization that provides LEGOS to children with cancer. He worked with his family to get the program started in Southwest Virginia so kids locally could benefit. Clay is very active in helping children at his church by serving as a teacher/youth helper for Vacation Bible School each summer, a Sunday School teacher, and a tutor to kids in the Fun143 program. Not only does Clay tutor the kids in the Fun143 program, but he becomes a “pew buddy” for them on Sundays and makes sure they have money for the collection plate. He is also very passionate about helping current elementary school students at his old school by being a positive face to read and chat with the students. He also helps the teachers there with making copies, creating bulletin boards, filing, checking papers, and cleaning.

* * *

Violet Neikirk

Violet has been volunteering in her community since she joined the Girl Scouts at age five and continues to find more ways she can make a difference in Giles County. She has collected food donations for the elderly and their pets, participated in a project that promotes seat belt safety, worked with the Angel Tree Project, and the ReNew the New River cleanup event. Violet also serves as a Giles High School Ambassador by traveling to elementary schools to teach life lessons such as dealing with bullying and treating others with respect, while also helping provide school tours. Violet is currently working to shine a light on mental health in several ways such as gathering plastic bags which will be used to make a bench in honor of a friend, working to put in a school suicide hotline, starting a music therapy section in the school’s library, and starting a mental health workshop for students.





High School Leading Lights



Morgan Ralph

Morgan is a very active student at Narrows High School and in her community and has found many opportunities to volunteer through the organizations she is a part of such as National Honor Society, International Thespian Society, Narrows High School Drama Club, Narrows Keyettes Club, President of the Narrows High School Senior Class, Captain of the Narrows High English Team, Narrows High All-Around Team, Scholastic Bowl Team and Wolf Creek Ruritan Club. Through these organizations, Morgan works concession stands, participates in food drives, makes pet tags to give to animal shelters, raises money for a “Christmas Jar,” helps younger students, chaperones school dances, works bake sales, and keeps county roadways clean. Morgan also really enjoys doing the “small things” for her community such as cooking for a neighbor and picking up trash.



* * *

Thinna Svetanant

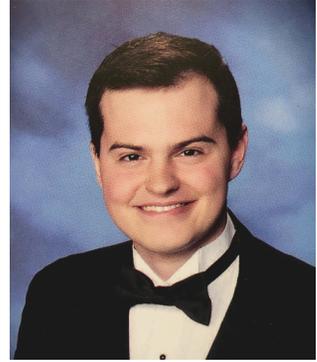
Thinna has found several ways to give back to community by helping her fellow students and community members. She typically spends about 30 hours a week volunteering as an EMT for the Blacksburg Rescue Squad, as well as serving on the Blacksburg High School Student Council Association, coaching Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu and volunteering at Warm Hearth Village, a retirement community. Thinna spends time there chatting with the elderly, playing cards, doing puzzles, and holding coffee and tea socials. In her work as her school’s SCA secretary, she is one of the officers responsible for organizing events that includes planning and decorating for the Homecoming game, parade, and dance, and spearheading the effort that provides more than 600 food baskets for families during Thanksgiving. She uses her seven years of Jiu-Jitsu experience to work with special needs children to not only teach them but help build their confidence.



☆ *High School Leading Lights* ☆

Cohen Taylor

Cohen started the largest club at Narrows High School, Pickup 365, a club that supports the well-being of students through uplifting meetings, teaching mechanisms that others have used to overcome challenges, and working to pick people up emotionally by being a friend to them 365 days of the year. He says his goal with the club was to bring people together and show support for each other because teens can feel isolated and need a friend to talk to. Cohen is also a volunteer at Carilion Giles Community Hospital, a junior Giles Rescue Squad member, certified EMT and was elected as the Narrows High School representative for the Giles County School Board.



* * *

Heidi Treser

Heidi has a heart for helping others and volunteering through her church youth group. During her seven-year involvement with her church youth group, Heidi has done yard work for people in the community, participated in babysitting nights to give parents a night out, collected food for local food pantries, provided cards and cookies for our local first responders, and participated in yearly mission trips outside of the New River Valley community. She serves as an acolyte for Blacksburg United Methodist Church, as well as assists behind the scenes. Heidi is always interested in finding new ways to serve her community. She is also part of the National Honor Society at Blacksburg High School and serves as a volleyball coach to girls in the Blacksburg community.



Heidi Treser pictured center



College Leading Lights



Amara Alexander

Amara has been a volunteer with the YMCA at Virginia Tech for two years, where she is a trusted leader among her peers. There she has served as an outstanding student program leader for Alternative Service Break (ASB), a YMCA student program. She was currently planning a service trip for this year to San Juan, Puerto Rico, after participating herself in the event in 2019. In addition to handling the logistics for the trip, Amara is also helping to fund raise for the expedition to help offset the costs for those who go to serve. Whether because of natural disasters, public health, or social issues, the ASB trip allows for its participants to critically think about the issues and learn about the cultural similarities and differences that exist in Puerto Rico. By allowing the attendees to attend this trip, they will be allowed the opportunity to bring back what they learned and apply it to solving the issues that the local community faces.



* * *

Amanda Guevara

Through her work at numerous organizations, Amanda has proven to be a compassionate, professional, caring, and steadfast volunteer who is always willing to take on any task. Amanda's service includes volunteer work at LewisGale Hospital Montgomery, Warm Hearth Village, Sentara Princess Ann Hospital, The Big Event, Services for Students with Disabilities, 3.2 for 32 Volunteer, Turkey Trot Volunteer, and Nursing Club at Virginia Tech. Amanda aspires to be a registered nurse, and at the medical facilities where she volunteers, she works closely with staff, patients, family members, and volunteers with a sympathetic, positive, professional attitude. Her caring manner and dependability makes a huge impact with all she comes in contact with. Amanda also encourages her fellow VT Nursing club members and friends to volunteer at not only the hospital but with other organizations as well.





College Leading Lights



Maya Johnson

Maya is a truly altruistic volunteer who devotes countless hours each day to ensure that the population of Virginia Tech has responders ready to answer any call. She serves as lieutenant in charge of personnel at the Virginia Tech Rescue Squad where she organizes a schedule that involves multiple crews 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days per year while outfitting members with uniforms, handling administrative tasks, and serving on the recruitment committee. Maya has shown great leadership with her integrity, accountability, and positive influence. She exemplifies a bright attitude every day and creates a welcoming environment for recruits who seek to join the team. Her work on the recruitment committee draws in potential members and educates them on opportunities. She goes the extra step to personally oversee their progress through the duration of recruitment. With the help of volunteers like Maya, the Virginia Tech community has been able to keep peace of mind and security knowing that the Virginia Tech Rescue Squad is always ready to answer their call.



* * *



College Leading Lights



Nick Kaloudis

Nick is a Virginia Tech student who works diligently with campus organizations including VT Engage, Campus Kitchen, and Alternative Spring Break (ASB). He also serves as student director for Step Up student leadership program. Nick is known in these organizations as having a charismatic personality, a passion for community engagement, and an overall positive attitude who is always ready to dive in and get to work. With ASB, Nick works to coordinate the logistics of the trip as well as facilitating student leadership meetings. He is always fully engaged in the group dialogues and welcomes other's opinions and views into the conversations even if they do not align with his. Nick has worked to develop a better understanding about local food security and hunger issues, as well as exploring different community response actions towards the issue. He used his knowledge to work with local Feeding America efforts.



* * *



College Leading Lights



Danielle Kassel

Danielle is a passionate and determined student leader who is always looking for the next way to make a difference in someone's life, even if it's just a small gesture. She serves as a student director for VT Engage's Step Up student leadership program. She also heads up local programs by leading students through Campus Kitchen at Virginia Tech and Get on the Bus programs. Danielle expanded the Campus Kitchen Project dry meal packing program by working with student organizations and other groups to pack several thousand dry meals. These dry-meals ensure clients of the New River Valley Council on Aging have meals over the weekend. Her work is leaving a huge impact not only on VT Engage's office, but also on the greater New River Valley community. Outside of VT Engage she has been heavily involved within the College of Engineering and engineering student organizations. She has also worked in the Dominican Republic with the College of Engineering Rising Sophomore Abroad Program to design a parking lot and construct a new clinic in San Juan de la Maguana.



* * *



College Leading Lights



Molly Kwitny

Molly is a quiet, insightful, and caring leader whose critical thinking makes a huge impact. She volunteers with Alternative Spring Break (ASB) and Virginia's Tech's VT Engage, a center for service learning, leadership education, and civic engagement. Molly serves as a student director for the Step Up student leadership program through VT Engage. She heads up the service immersion programs by leading students through alternative break experiences. In particular, she works with global service trip and weekend service trip leaders. She helps coordinate the background logistics and facilitates student leader meetings along with staff. She helped cultivate a community partnership with the St. Bernard Project (SBP) out of New Orleans, an organization that works with disaster relief, recovery, and policy work in various locations around the U.S. and Puerto Rico. Molly has led trips to New Orleans and Columbia, South Carolina with SBP.



* * *



College Leading Lights



Addison Levy

Addison is deeply committed to the well-being of her local community. Her extensive community involvement includes a multitude of organizations such as Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, National Honor Society, First Tech Challenge, Relay for Life, Floydfest, Houstonfest, Chantilly Farms, Newbern Community Christian Church, New River Community College, and the Christmas Store of Pulaski. Addison is currently a volunteer with First Tech Challenge, a robotics competition league. A talented vocalist, Addison's band "Gate 10" performs at nursing homes, community events, and fundraisers around the New River Valley. She has also assisted with numerous fundraisers including Relay for Life, Fellowship for Christian Athletes, academic scholarships, and church conferences. She recently took a service learning course at NRCC where she learned about the importance of volunteerism. She and her classmates performed numerous projects including baking and delivering cookies for fire, rescue, and police, set up flags for Veterans Day for the Lions Club, and made flyers for the Humane Society to help their animals get adopted. Additionally, her individual project stationed her at the Fine Arts Center of the NRV where she helped organize the Scholastic Art Contest.



* * *



College Leading Lights



Jami Martin

Jami's dream to work in a "helping profession" has been the cornerstone of her volunteer service. She provides safe child care for infants at her church, Cornerstone Pentecostal Holiness Church in Narrows. Jami is a Giles County ACCE Scholar through New River Community College (NRCC), and she also appeared in a promotional video for ACCE, where she articulated the importance of giving back to her community. She volunteered for two years at the School Lunch Program at Narrow High School, a program that provides food to students and community members during the summer months in Giles County at a small cost. Jami also served on the 2020 Black History Committee at NRCC and served as a vocalist at the celebration. She has been accepted into multiple medical programs and looks forward to transitioning her desire to help others into a career in the medical field.



* * *

Hannah Westbrook

Hannah's love for animals, including her own dog, cats, lizards, and goats, has turned into a passion for helping animals in need. She currently volunteers to care for animals while studying to become a veterinarian. Beyond furry friends, Hannah also volunteers with her church and does mission work. She is also involved in multiple town festivals, including the Narrows Fall Festival, Community Easter Egg Hunt, and the Lord's Acre Sale. She has also volunteered at the ReNew the New River yearly cleanup events and at the Giles County Land Lab. Presently Hannah volunteers at St. Albans Sanatorium in Radford, where she helps to restore the buildings and gives tours. Her mission work has included helping to rebuild a house for an elderly woman, a project that opened her eyes to the poverty all around. Hannah has a personal understanding of the value of volunteering. She has also enjoyed volunteering at soup kitchens, working to grow vegetables for Giles County Schools, bottle-feeding calves, helping put in irrigation lines in depressed areas, and preparing care packages to be sent to third world countries.





Community Leading Lights



Michael Abbott, Radford

Mike Abbott has a unique way of getting the most out of individuals and does so while putting others first. His leadership efforts in the New River Valley includes scoutmaster of Troop 141, adopt-a-street clean-ups, ReNew the New, and the mussel salvage event at Claytor Lake. Mike has given outstanding service to the local scouting community for more than seven years.



* * *

Tony Blair, Pulaski County



Tony Blair is a dedicated volunteer at the Ratcliffe Memorial Museum of Transportation. For over four years, he has promoted the museum by being a good community ambassador. His constant cheerleading has caused guests to visit and enjoy the museum and programs. Tony's enthusiasm has encouraged others to volunteer as well.

* * *

Chris Bowers, Floyd County

Chris Bowers has made a critical difference in the Scouting program of Floyd County. He has served as the Scoutmaster for the Floyd Boy Scout Troop, and over five years, he has doubled the number of youth involved in the program. At scout camp, Chris received the nickname, "Tasmanian Devil," reflecting his energy and enthusiasm for youth and the scouting program. Chris is a reliable volunteer. If he makes a commitment to making something happen, you can count on the fact that it will be done.





Community Leading Lights



Tess Brooke, Giles County

Tess Brooke has a passion for mentoring and supporting young children to become service oriented citizens. Though she is a kindergarten teacher, she gives her time in support of Captain Louie's Future Leaders, a county-wide service organization for fourth and fifth graders. She spends countless hours planning for and hosting monthly meetings, as well as working on over 14 service projects at night and on weekends to help students in Montgomery Country learn and grow together.



* * *

Jackie Brown, Montgomery County



Jackie Brown leads by engaging people in learning and being enthusiastic. Whether she is volunteering at SEEDS or the Virginia Tech Nature History Collection Club, Jackie is focused on bringing together community members, youth, and college students in meaningful ways to help build community. Jackie plays an essential role in improving environmental education in our region.

* * *

Robin Burdette, Pulaski County

Robin established the Fudge for Vets program which delivers free fudge packages to veterans in the New River Valley. As a veteran herself, she understands the need to thank and honor those who have served. She is very proud of her community and recently helped to organize the Town of Pulaski HGTV video for a chance to be on a show. Robin brings a smile and goodwill to those she serves.





Community Leading Lights



Carolyn Dove, Pulaski County

Carolyn Dove volunteers her service to drive elderly adults to medical appointments through Med-Drive NRV. She is relentless in her commitment and has been a volunteer driver since 2017. To provide a safe environment for her passengers, she has trained in CPR and first aid. Carolyn makes it a point to encourage others to consider volunteering as well.



* * *

Michael Emero, Pulaski County

Mike Emero is the “go to” guy when something needs to get accomplished. He eagerly accepts a challenge and sees the job through to conclusion. He volunteers with several organizations in Pulaski county including the USCG Auxiliary, United Methodist Church, the Pulaski County Christmas Store, Newport Ruritans, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Mike volunteers to try to pass on God’s many blessings in my life to make our area a better place to live.



* * *



Community Leading Lights



Gary Fields, Giles County

In Giles County, Gary Fields is known as a man who will not just offer help, but when the time comes, he will extend his hand. He is known for helping those facing high medical bills by assisting with basic needs such as shelter, travel, food, and medicine. Though he raised \$16,000 for one family facing crushing medical bills and is effective in fundraising, his service is often in small ways, such as paying for a cart of groceries or working to get a food pantry for seniors and their pets.

His nominator writes, “Volunteering is not something Gary overthinks; he believes sickness and struggle will eventually find everyone. He doesn’t go about his days trying to spot needs; he just runs into them in his day to day activities and tries to help if he can. Even if just a little bit. Gary believes every little bit matters.”



* * *

Christine Gibson, Montgomery County



Christine Gibson has become a direct contributor to the vitality of arts in the New River Valley. As a volunteer with five local organizations, Christine found herself the leader of the Panjammers, a volunteer musical group which performs for public events, non-profit events, and church activities. Through Christine’s patience and ability to teach, Panjammers has grown to be a diverse group of over 20 members, all from the New River Valley.

* * *



Community Leading Lights



Elizabeth Hamley, Montgomery County



A reliable, dependable, and hard worker, Elizabeth Hamley can be counted on by the United Way of the New River Valley to help with programs and organizing. She helps with all seasonal programs, often dedicating six to eight hours a day during their busy seasons with a smile and taking on whatever is needed. The United Way says they would be lost without her. Elizabeth has an intellectual disability and is a regular participant with Intellectual Disabilities Agency. She loves to share her volunteer experiences and recruits others to help.

* * *

Dr. Daniel Kelly, Radford

Dr. Daniel Kelly has spent the last 20 years in service to his passions which include the Belmont Christian Church, Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine, Medical Student Missionary Trips, and the New River Valley Agency on Aging. He is an advocate for health and well-being in the Radford community. He assisted in building a senior weekend meals program, and he gives of his time to teach medical students and future physicians of the impact and importance of access to medical care and services.



* * *



Community Leading Lights



Penny Livesay, Giles County

Penny Livesay is New River Community Action's "Book Lady." She keeps Head Start and Children's Health Improvement Partnership (CHIP) programs stocked with new and gently used books, crayons, and coloring books, which are available to children at no charge. She is passionate about the value of providing worthwhile books so that children can learn to read, and she has donated over 1,000 books to these programs. Her work is critical in promoting reading readiness and love of reading to families who often lack financial resources to purchase books.

Inspired by her father to love books, she does this work in honor and memory of him. Penny encourages others to donate books and regularly lifts up the importance of books and the need for all children to have access to them. Her passion and enthusiasm are visible. There is no doubt that her heart and soul are being poured into this project.



* * *

Dr. Carolyn Mathews, Pulaski County



Dr. Carolyn Mathews happily gives her time, skills, love and service to the Pulaski community. She actively volunteers for the Wilderness Road Regional Museum, American Evolution Committee of Pulaski County, the New Bern Christian Church, and Radford University. Her very being and attitude encourages volunteerism. Through positive engagement, she leads and has more than 20 years of service to her community.

* * *



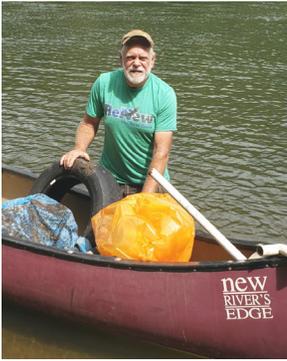
Community Leading Lights



Paul Moody, Giles County

Paul Moody has supported a number of good causes in Giles County, but he is particularly well-known for his advocacy on behalf of the New River. Paul is a founding member and driving force of ReNew the New, a multi-agency group which plans and coordinates cleanup events on the river. He loves the river and seeks to preserve its beauty for the next generation. He hopes, in getting people out on the river for cleanup days, to build a bond between them and the river, so that they feel a sense of ownership in its long term health.

Paul gives a great deal of his time and resources to promote the health of the New River through cleanup days. Yet many feel it is his quiet advocacy which is most important. His nominator sums it up, “Paul does not preach when talking to others about his passions for helping others and taking care of the river. He tells stories from his own experience, and he is an engaging storyteller. People listen to him.”



* * *

Deborah Morris, Giles County

Deborah Morris is committed to making Giles County a great place to live. She has volunteered with a variety of organizations including the Pearisburg Women’s Club, Giles Chamber of Commerce, Pearisburg Festival in the Park Committee, Virginia Extension Office, the Agency on Aging, Lord’s Acre Sale Committee, and the Town of Pearisburg. She eagerly offers her skills in money management, organization, budgeting, and food preparation to address community needs. Deborah has worked to provide shuttle service for the elderly and those with disabilities. She is currently working to place a food pantry which will provide staples to seniors and their pets. Her nominator writes, “She has inspired me and others in the community who are volunteer/community minded to do their part to make Giles a better place.”





Community Leading Lights



Sheila Nelson, Pulaski County

Sheila Nelson's life is all about volunteerism. She has devoted countless hours at Lewis Gale Hospital, Pulaski County Schools, Friends of the Pulaski County Library, Ratcliffe Transportation Museum, and numerous other organizations. For nearly 18 years, she has improved the lives of others through her leadership and service. Her efforts have had an impact throughout the community.



* * *

Travis Sparks, Giles County

After his own battle with cancer, Travis Sparks founded Cancer Kids and Christmas to provide Christmas for cancer families in the New River Valley. Seeing firsthand how financially devastating cancer can be for a family, Travis resolved to ease this burden for others facing similar challenges. Since its founding in 2012, Travis's organization has raised over \$230,000 and assisted 60 families, with gifts ranging from \$750 to \$2,900. In addition to serving through his own organization, Travis is always the first to organize a fundraiser for those in the community facing a medical situation.



One of Travis's nominators summarizes his contribution in this way, "I honestly can't list every responsibility he has assumed. He chairs, organizes, solicits, builds, makes contacts, provides manpower, and offers every commitment you can imagine to his organization. In just eight years, he has inspired our area and countless volunteers to give more than you can ever imagine."

Another nominator writes, "Travis's advice is simple for anyone thinking about volunteering: jump in and help somewhere. It was only after volunteering that he realized what a powerful and rewarding effect it would have on his life."



Community Leading Lights



Cheri Strenz, Pulaski County

Cheri Strenz is dedicated to conserving and protecting the sustainability and tranquility of Claytor Lake and the area around it for all generations to visit. She generously oversees numerous major volunteer cleanups of the lake so visitors can enjoy it. Cheri also is a champion of water safety, and her efforts will make it possible for children of Pulaski County to enjoy Claytor Lake safely when swimming and boating. She teaches boater safety to all second graders in Pulaski County. Cheri extends her time as well to teach Sunday School and volunteer with her local food bank.



* * *

Graham Swinfen, Montgomery County



Graham Swinfen is a long-time, dedicated “on-call” volunteer who always rises to the occasion when asked by the United Way of the New River Valley. He is an all-around excellent volunteer who assists the organization with special events, seasonal programs, fundraisers, and even campaign preparations. Graham even stepped up to become a Community Investment Volunteer when needed. Most of all, Graham is an inspiration to everyone for his passion for helping others and his “worker bee” attitude. He volunteers because he enjoys it.

* * *



Community Leading Lights



Sharon Thompson, Montgomery County

Sharon Thompson inspires and engages others by being inclusive and setting a first-class example. Her volunteer work has focused on Blacksburg Battles Cancer, the Montgomery County Christmas Store, and Special Olympics. As the Chair of Blacksburg Battles Cancer, Sharon has overseen its tremendous growth in resources and outreach. Since 2017, Sharon has been a co-coordinator of hundreds of volunteers who give their time to the organization, and she makes them feel welcome. Sharon has lead the development of numerous projects with these organizations, but she is a humble volunteer who gives credit of the work to “the village.” She never misses an opportunity to promote volunteerism.



* * *

Katrina Underwood, Floyd County

As volunteer manager of the Floyd site of New River Community Action’s CHIP Baby and Toddler Shop, Katrina Underwood works to ensure that low-income families have baby items such as formula, toys, books, and diapers. She goes beyond working in the shop to helping families find painting supplies, food, and Christmas presents. Clients comment on the way Katrina makes them feel welcomed and respected when they come to the shop. She communicates to those who may already feel defeated that there is no stigma in shopping at the Baby and Toddler Shop. She has been a tireless advocate for the shop and those it serves in Floyd. She posts on social media and talks to businesses, political leaders, and organizations about the work of the shop. Due to her efforts, the shop enjoys strong community awareness which has resulted in increased donations. She does everything from fundraising to cleaning the shop—all benefiting the families of babies and toddlers in Floyd County.



* * *



Community Leading Lights



Sally Warburton, Pulaski County

Sally Warbourton makes service to others a top priority. This is evident in the numerous non- profits where she volunteers including PCPC, Literacy Volunteers of the NRV, Pulaski County Reads, St. Edwards Catholic Church, and the Community Foundation of the New River Valley. Her volunteer service began in the 1980s, and she has been steadfast in promoting the Pulaski community where she lives and works. Her commitment as a volunteer is extraordinary and exhaustive.



* * *

Elizabeth (Liz) Warriner, Floyd County

As a volunteer and board member of Plenty!, Liz Warriner has worked to nourish her community and build partnerships around the idea of neighbors helping neighbors. She heads a team which makes a bi-weekly collection of food from Food Lion for the local food pantry. The team then sorts and displays what is collected. Teams include those who have mental and physical disabilities, and she ensures that all have appropriate tasks. In addition to addressing hunger concerns, her work creates a sense of shared purpose and promotes personal development and socialization for those on her team.

Liz is willing to do whatever needs to be done to promote the work of Plenty! She works in fundraising, encourages others to volunteer, and builds partnerships between those with fresh food or financial resources and those who have need.



* * *



Community Leading Lights



Rebecca (Becky) Weeks, Floyd County - Posthumously

Becky Weeks had a passion for preserving, protecting, and promoting the history of Floyd County. Since retiring from a career in education and returning to Floyd County, she devoted herself to receiving, documenting, and displaying archival materials related to the county's past. Under her leadership, the Floyd County Historical Society (FCHS) opened a museum in 2010, which has become a resource for those doing historical research. The museum has steadily expanded its program offerings to include exhibits, self-guided tours, a regular newsletter, historical signage in the county, and published materials.

Becky supported the work of the FCHS in critical ways. She wrote numerous grants to support operations and technological innovation at the museum. She recruited and trained docents for the museum. By her positive example, she forged partnerships with local government, businesses, and civic groups. Her tireless efforts were critical to the growth and success of the FCHS, and she leaves a legacy of service.



* * *

Rhonda Whaling, Montgomery County



Rhonda Whaling has a spirit of creativity, is organized, and has a desire to succeed—all qualities that make others around her want to succeed as well. She not only gets involved in helping with Relay for Life, American Heart Association, and Juvenile Diabetes, she also sticks with them for years, continuing to work on their success. She has a willingness to serve, which brings awareness and a sense of togetherness to those who serve with her. Due to these characteristics, Rhonda has won the First Humanitarian Award three times from the HCA Corporation.

* * *

✧ Lifetime Achievement Leading Lights ✧

About NRV Leading Lights' Lifetime Achievement Award

The Jim & Lenna Moore Community Service & Citizenship Award

Given in honor of two longtime New River Valley volunteers, Jim and Lenna Moore, our Lifetime Achievement award celebrates volunteers who have devoted their lives to their community. The organizations Lenna was most active in, the YMCA at Virginia Tech, the American Red Cross, AARP, and Voluntary Action Center, decided to honor her memory with this award, which was first given in 2000. Jim's name was added to the award following his passing in 2001.

* * *

Lynne Clark

Lynne Clark is a dedicated example of a “servant leader” throughout numerable charitable efforts and organizations in Pulaski County affecting children and youth. Whether she is a leader or a hands-on worker, her enthusiasm is contagious to those who work alongside her, inspiring them to do the same. A teacher by profession, Lynne walks her talk when not teaching, and for more than 33 years, she had extended her teaching and leadership expertise outside the classroom. She has served in leadership positions with the Pulaski County Library Board of Trustees, Pulaski County Reads, the Parent Teacher Organization, Pulaski and Dublin Elementary schools, and First United Methodist Church.

Lynne found other hands-on and fulfilling volunteer work with Pulaski County Partners Coalition, the Girl Scouts of America, Go Pulaski County, Walk MS for Multiple Sclerosis, and more—anywhere she believed made a difference and lifted up the youth and others struggling in her community. She is a leader, and a doer, often one of the people who helps found a project and get it off the ground.

* * *



☆ Lifetime Achievement Leading Lights ☆

Carol Fox

Carol Fox has spent decades of her adult life focusing on the Montgomery County Christmas Store and Christ Episcopal Church as a volunteer. With the Christmas Store, Carol coordinates the toy section leading others. For the church, Carol organizes an annual yard sale that benefits up to 11 community agencies a year. Under her leadership, she has helped raised thousands of dollars to support those agencies.

Any volunteer effort Carol undertakes, she does so with consistency, reliability, dedication, and relentless good humor inspiring all those around her. She just keeps going. Although she is responsible for a thousand thankless tasks for both organizations, she just keeps smiling and keeps others laughing.



* * *

Dave Roper

A “renaissance volunteer,” Dave Roper has volunteered with and served as a leader with numerous New River Valley non-profit and government organizations during his lifetime. He is an energetic and caring person who is passionate about creating positive change in the New River Valley. Citing his wife Jeanne Roper as his inspiration, Dave began his charitable work in 1989 and has never stopped.

Dave has committed a great amount of time and resources to providing affordable child care in our community through VICCC which he co-founded; addressing housing issues through the NRV Habitat for Humanity including co-founding the Habitat Re-Store; helping develop emergency resources for MCEAP and the NR Family Shelter; worked with the YMCA at Virginia Tech community gardens program and designed a solar greenhouse for it; through the Open University & Lifelong Learning Institute has educated people about climate change and sustainable practices; and with the Town of Blacksburg has worked on Sustainable Blacksburg and the Cool City Initiative. More than just his service, it is the impact he that he created with his service that has proven to be lasting.





Lifetime Achievement Leading Lights



Pat Worrell

Pat Worrell is the long-time heart of the Montgomery County Relay For Life. Passionate about the work the Relay accomplishes, she covers numerous positions on its leadership team. She works tirelessly to raise money to help find a cure for cancer. She is always out in the community sharing the American Cancer Society/Relay For Life mission.

True to her dedication, Pat shares her story with others as an advocate of American Cancer Society and Relay For Life telling of the remarkable cancer fighting advances that have been made since she started as a volunteer. She is a true example of a wonderful volunteer.



* * *



Past Leading Lights Distinguished Recipients



High School

- Taylor Hawkins, Floyd
- Jessica Shelburne, Pulaski
- Connor Moran, Christiansburg
- Aaron Miller, Radford
- Olivia Hodge, Blacksburg
- Rebecca Kay Stephens, Giles
- Laura Froggard, Blacksburg
- Anna Keppel-Benson, Blacksburg
- Jessica Vance, Blacksburg
- Marie Stump, Christiansburg
- Ben Webster, Snowville
- Neha Hudait, Blacksburg
- Megan Talarek, Blacksburg
- Hannah Shuff, Narrows
- Mackenzie Farmer, Pulaski

College

- Kyndal Stakes, Virginia Tech
- Sydney Curtis, Virginia Tech
- Kelly Berry, Virginia Tech
- Elizabeth Domann, Virginia Tech
- Austin Larrowe, Virginia Tech
- Chelsea Hall, Virginia Tech
- Ryan Brock, Virginia Tech
- Analise Adams, Virginia Tech
- Victoria Sarbin, Radford University
- Matthew Johnson, Virginia Tech
- Stephanie Connelly, Virginia Tech
- Hunter Cole, NRCC
- Olivia Obertello, Virginia Tech
- Clendal Brown, NRCC
- Tanah Patel, Virginia Tech

* * *

* * *



Past Leading Lights Distinguished Recipients



Community Members

Susan Sutterer, Floyd
 Ann Goette, Eggleston
 Diane Blair, Pulaski
 Jean Umberger, Radford
 Scott & Mendy Sink, Blacksburg
 Barnett Carr, Blacksburg
 Susan Icove, Floyd
 Donna & Doug Martin, Newport
 Ben Crawford, Blacksburg
 Melvin Robertson, Christiansburg
 Nancy & Bill Hudson, Fairlawn
 Keith Nunn, Radford
 Todd Fitch, Christiansburg
 Molly McClintock, Christiansburg
 Dr. Steve Jacobs, Blacksburg
 Mary Susan Vehorn, Radford
 Col. John Getgood, Floyd
 Doris Hendrickson, Radford
 Kim Schwenk, Blacksburg
 Jerry Higgins, Radford
 Rebecca Rees, Blacksburg
 Lindsay West, Blacksburg
 Phyllis Albritton, Blacksburg
 Pat Ballard, Christiansburg
 Mary Ann Hinshelwood, Christiansburg
 Jon McEnhill, Floyd
 Dr. Nelda Pearson, Radford
 Margie Vitale, Christiansburg
 Karen Cronin, Shawsville
 Fran Rooker, Radford
 Rador Vaden, Blacksburg
 Vickie Spangler, Floyd
 Lynn Hill, Giles
 Archie Boothe, Pulaski
 Penny Sweet, Radford
 Janne Mathes, Blacksburg

John Galbraith, Blacksburg
 Travis Cantrell, Floyd
 Rodman Freeman, Giles
 Daniel Grubb, Pulaski
 Kelly McPherson, Blacksburg
 Janiele Hamden, Radford
 John Hess, Christiansburg

* * *

Lifetime Achievement

Catherine Vaughn Pauley, Floyd
 Don Mullins, Blacksburg
 Merilyn & Dave Armstrong, Dublin
 Dr. George Smith, Shawsville
 Tom Sherman, Blacksburg
 Carol Smith, Draper



 New River Valley Leading Lights

 @LeadingLightsNRV

 LeadingLightsNRV

 leadinglightsnrv@gmail.com

 leadinglightsnrv.org



*Program Production: NRV Leading Lights Public Relations Team
Original Design: Lindsey Gleason*

