

devoted
committed generous forward-thinking
compassionate empathetic
advocate community
caring change-maker
admired
enthusiastic empowers
dedicated

*New River Valley
Leading Lights*

Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Awards Ceremony
April 14, 2016

positive service
tireless
innovative
mentor
motivates
inspires
joyful
persistent
passionate
volunteer
leader
role model invaluable



Memories of our lives,
of our works, and our deeds
will continue in others.

-Rosa Parks





2016 Leading Lights Nominees



High School

Aaron S. Miller	Connor Moran	Shayley Martin
Alyssa Sampson	Dakota Driscoll	Tiana Cole
Andrew Earp	Jeremiah Rutherford	Tori Deibler
Asher Quesenberry	Kim Nichols	Zackary Nelson

Collegiate

Alyssa Wray	Elizabeth Domann	Macarah Collins
Anna Olenick	Hayley Piercy	Shannon Cooke
Audrey Semel	Jordan Coburn	Stephanie Hoang
Austin Rakes	Kelly Berry	Taylor Quesenberry
Claire Kelling	Levi Meadows	

Community Members

Allyne Schoff	Jennie Hodge	Nancy & Bill Hudson
Arden Howell	Karen Day & McCabe Coolidge	Pam Reed
Ben Crawford	Keith Nunn	Penny Franklin
Betty Bartschmid	Larry (L.B.) Day	Roxanna Link
Catherine Pauley	Lesa Viers	Scott & Mendy Sink
Don Mullins	Lois Wade	Steve Pond
Dot Sowers	Lynn Brammer	Susan Icove
Doug & Donna Martin	Lynn Chenault	Teresa Fields
Doug Townley	Melvin Robertson	Toby Simmons
George McNeill	Michaelene Balconi	Tacie Jones
Isabelle Marchand	Michele Ren	Vickie Spangler



About Leading Lights



New River Valley Leading Lights seeks to recognize volunteers from across our region who are making community-changing impacts through volunteer service and serving as models to inspire others.

The events of April 16, 2007 made our community acutely aware of life's fragility and reminded us of how precious our loved ones are. During this time, we 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 tragedy inspired the German Club Alumni Foundation and other community leaders to create Leading Lights. The first awards were given in 2009.

**It is in this spirit of volunteerism that we celebrate this evening.
We dedicate this night to all those impacted by April 16, 2007.**





Leading Lights' Impact



Honoring volunteers for **8 years**

330+ people nominated for awards

35 awards presented to outstanding volunteers

\$35,000 distributed to NRV nonprofits of winners' choosing

How Can You Support Leading Lights?

Nominate a volunteer!

Nominations open for the 2017 awards this fall. Know someone 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.

Follow us on social media.



New River Valley Leading Lights



@LeadingLightsNRV



LeadingLightsNRV

Donate or become a sponsor.

Every donation or sponsorship helps support 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 a sponsor?

Contact us at leadinglightsnrv@gmail.com.



Speakers



Whit Babcock

Whit joined Virginia Tech as Director of Athletics in January 2014. Previously, he served as the University of Cincinnati's Director of Athletics.

Whit's career path has also included stops at West Virginia, Auburn, Missouri, and James Madison University (JMU).

A native of Harrisonburg, he played baseball at JMU, while earning a bachelor's degree. Whit received his master's degree in sports management from West Virginia University. He and his wife, Kelly, have three sons.



Molly McClintock

Molly is a member of the board with the Montgomery County Christmas Store, where she also leads the eligibility team. She recently joined Virginia Tech's Lifelong Learning Institute program committee.

Molly served three terms on the board of Equality Virginia, including a term as chair. She received a Leading Lights Community Member Award in 2015. Molly earned a degree in communication from Cornell.

Molly and her partner, Irene Peterson, have lived in Christiansburg for 30 years. They have volunteered as emergency foster parents for seven years.



Tonight's Program



Reception Music.....Anna & David Smith of Radford, Va.
They have studied music for 6+ years. Parents are Carolyn & Ken Smith.

Master of Ceremonies.....Andy Morikawa
Emeritus Executive Director, Community Foundation of the NRV

Welcome & Invocation.....Bill King
Pastor, Luther Memorial Lutheran Church

Speaker.....Whit Babcock
Director of Athletics, Virginia Tech

Dinner.....Professional Catering Inc.

High School & Collegiate Awards.....Andy Morikawa

Speaker.....Molly McClintock
2015 Leading Lights Community Member Award winner

Community Awards.....Andy Morikawa

Floyd County

Giles County

Montgomery County

Pulaski County

City of Radford

Jim & Lenna Moore Lifetime Achievement Award

Closing Remarks.....Dick Arnold
Leading Lights Board Chair



A Special Thank You



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

Leading Lights

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Flood Lights

Table Sponsors (\$500+)

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New River Community College Educational Foundation

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VT Student Life Council

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YMCA at VT

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(\$250+ Supporters)

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Dick Arnold
Blacksburg Rotary, Thurs. noon
Blacksburg AARP
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Fieldstone United Methodist Church
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(\$100+ Supporters)

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Casey Jones, Blacksburg Animal Clinic
Bill King
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Ryan Martin
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Frank & Kelly Shushok
Virginia Leader (Pearisburg)

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Betty Day

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Karen Gilbert

Bob Job

Todd Fitch

Bill King



From the Board & Selection Committee:



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

The biographies that follow are a glimpse into the lives of 63 exceptional volunteers. We hope they continue to serve and inspire others to join them. With the expansion of the awards from six to 11 this year, we sought to encourage more nominations from across the NRV; 34% of our nominees live outside Montgomery County.

In coming years, we hope to keep expanding our reach. As you listen to tonight's stories, please consider nominating someone for a 2017 award!

Nominations will open this fall at leadinglightsnrv.org.

About the 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, this 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.





We cannot seek achievement
for ourselves and forget about
progress and prosperity for
our community...our ambitions
must be broad enough to include
the aspirations and needs of others.

-Cesar Chavez





High School Nominees



Aaron S. Miller, Radford

Advocate • Spokesperson • Motivational Speaker

A spokesperson and advocate for students with disabilities, Aaron is a leader and motivational speaker for the “I’m Determined Project” which encourages youth self-advocacy. He has been instrumental in organizing “inclusion day” at his high school to raise awareness about living with disabilities. He serves on his church's leadership team and the United Methodist Church's Holston Conference's youth leadership team, helping to plan conference-wide events. Aaron has also served on mission trips and is a National Honor Society member.

* * *

Alyssa Sampson, Shawsville

Dedicated • Hard Worker • Serves in Many Ways

Alyssa is a hard worker who maintains her grades while playing sports and volunteering approximately 150 hours per year. She has volunteered for Habitat for Humanity, helped with childcare at her church, served at a blood drive, and a turkey drop at Thanksgiving. In her three years of service, she has also volunteered to feed police officers and firemen on Thanksgiving and has made blankets for hospitalized children.

* * *

Andrew Earp, Christiansburg

Role Model • First to Volunteer • Champion of Veterans

Andrew is a role model to younger Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts. A tireless champion of veterans, he is the first to volunteer for any veteran-related service projects: serving meals, working at parades, or performing taps on his trumpet every Veterans Day. For his Eagle Scout Project, Aaron organized the installation of a flagpole to honor veteran residents at the Crossings at Blacksburg Senior Living Community. In addition to his service work, he is also a member of the National Honor Society, the Thespian Troupe, and is active in his school's band, choir, and theater.

High School Nominees

Asher Quesenberry, Blacksburg

Leader • Gets Things Done • Dedicated to Kids

Asher is someone who senses the need for something to be done and takes care of it. Since middle school, he has cultivated this skill from service with “What’s On Stage”, an after-school program for at-risk kids at Harding Avenue Elementary. Now in high school, Asher facilitates weekly program sessions as well as supervising field trips, special events, and younger volunteers. He is skilled at identifying students who need personal attention, and willing to do whatever is necessary to make the program and students successful.

* * *

Connor Moran, Christiansburg

Determined • Compassionate • Leader

Connor consistently demonstrates that "everyone can all do something small to do something big". Much of his volunteer work has focused on food insecurity. Connor takes a lead role in packing food bags for high schoolers in need with his role as president of the Christiansburg High School Outreach Club, organizing fundraisers, and maintaining the club’s food pantry. He has volunteered for Bellevue United Methodist Church’s Backpack Program fundraisers, a United Way food drive, and the Montgomery County Christmas Store. Additionally, he has served his school as a class treasurer and as a class mentor.

* * *

Dakota Driscoll, Blacksburg

Passionate • Avid Fundraiser • Incredibly Giving

For years, Dakota has been passionate about volunteering. She has helped raise more than \$20,000 to benefit the nonprofits she’s involved with, including organizing fundraisers to pay for mission trips to Haiti and Chile. Dakota has served with World Vision, the Blacksburg Christian Fellowship, and as a leader with the Pioneer Club. She has also served many roles with her church as a gardener, Young Life youth weekend retreat volunteer, and babysitter. Dakota is incredibly giving, hard working and dedicated to all that she does.

High School Nominees

Jeremiah Rutherford, Blacksburg

Empathetic • Trustworthy • Team Player

Jeremiah serves as a junior volunteer at the Lewis Gale Hospital in Montgomery County. He is an empathetic and dependable team player. Jeremiah has an excellent ability to listen to patients and visitors who need extra attention. He has earned the respect and confidence of his fellow volunteers and hospital staff, and is entrusted to run his area of the hospital. Jeremiah has transformed in this role from a shy young man to one with confidence. His exceptional service over the past ten months led the hospital to recognize him as a Volunteer of the Year candidate.

* * *

Kim Nichols, Elliston

Committed • Hard Worker • Passionate

Kim has long had a passion for helping. She serves her community as a member of the Elliston Rescue Squad. A registered EMT, she works four hour shifts on Sundays and 12 hour shifts when school is out, logging over 210 hours since January 2015. Kim thinks quickly on her feet when responding to calls and has a strong knowledge of emergency medicine. Also, when Kim completed 150 hours of the EMT course and passed the state practical exams, she ranked first in her class. She is in the process of obtaining her CPR, HAZMAT, and Incident Command certifications.

* * *

Shayley Martin, Riner

Innovative • Forward-Thinking • Advocate for Education

Shaylee's innovation and determination sets her apart from her peers. She volunteers many hours at Angels with the Attic, Plenty!, her church, Floyd Feast's planning committee, and Floyd's Historical Society. Shaylee is an avid reader and advocate for education. When she learned that 60% of children from low income families do not have books at home, she came up with "Backpack Books", a program that distributes donated books to local children. Through her service, Shayley has proven that one forward-thinking person can make an impact.

High School Nominees

Tiana Cole, Christiansburg

Self-Motivated • Compassionate • Persistent

A self-motivated volunteer, Tiana is committed to giving her time to help others. Instead of receiving birthday gifts, she started Tiana's Toy Trunk, a toy drive for children in hospitals, which collected \$2,500 worth of donated toys. For five years, she has served with the Salvation Army in various ways, including teaching music each Sunday to underprivileged children. A National Honor Society member, Tiana has been involved with her school's marching band for four years, including two as section leader. She is compassionate and persistent in her devotion to service.

* * *

Tori Deibler, Christiansburg

Positive • Loves Seeing Others Succeed • Happy to Help

Tori is a positive team player who commits many hours to service. She is the co-founder of "Flowers for Fountain" at her high school, which raises money to build wells in Africa. Tori has also gone on mission trips to build houses in Mexico, and volunteers closer to home with Roanoke Rescue Mission and Warm Hearth Village. She is also a math tutor and participates in Reading Night with Athletes at elementary schools. She has served as class treasurer for two years and is a National Honor Society member. Tori is someone who is happy to help and loves to see others succeed.

* * *

Zackary Nelson, Christiansburg

Patient • Friend to All • Scouting Role Model

Zack is the epitome of what Scouting represents and is always willing to help others. At age 15, he became the youngest Eagle Scout in his Troop's history and completed his Eagle project by constructing an outdoor worship area at a Baptist church. He serves as Den Chief for Pack 348 and volunteers at Cub day camps and Pinewood Derbys. Zack shows patience with younger scouts to help them learn and grow, and is a friend to all. Outside of Scouting, Zack has served with the United Way, the Humane Society, Good Shepherd Baptist Church, the PetSmart Cattery, the Salvation Army, and Warm Hearth Village.



Never doubt that a small group
of thoughtful, committed
citizens can change the world;
indeed, it's the only thing
that ever has.

-Margaret Mead





Collegiate Nominees



Alyssa Wray, New River Community College

Compassionate • Exceeds Expectations • Highly Motivated

Alyssa is a highly motivated individual who perseveres in pursuing her dreams. In order to achieve financial aid through the Giles County Access to Community College Education program, Alyssa not only completed the required 80 hours of community service in two months, she signed up to serve more. She served at the Giles County Animal Shelter, demonstrating great compassion for the abandoned animals. Alyssa takes service and school seriously - maintaining a 4.0 with plans to study veterinary medicine at Virginia Tech.

* * *

Anna Olenick, Virginia Tech

Servant-Leader • Devoted • Persistent

For two years, Anna has shown deep compassion for and dedication to community members with disabilities by volunteering with the NRV Special Olympics and Young Life Capernum, a ministry for students with disabilities. She serves her peers as a team leader with Capernum, and is a behind-the-scenes servant-leader. Whether she is taking on big tasks like implementing programs and organizing events, or serving in micro-level roles such as making phone calls and assisting with logistics, she is vital to making Capernum's programs a success.

* * *

Audrey Semel, Virginia Tech

Leader • Innovative • Embodies Ut Prosim

Since her first year of college, Audrey has embodied Tech's motto, *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve) in her extensive work as a VT Engage leader. She is a member of SERVE, a service-based living learning community, and was a Resident Advisor. Audrey has also served as a program leader with the YMCA at Virginia Tech and as a volunteer with Warm Hearth Village. She is a hard-working, compassionate person with innovative ideas, especially with her work in leading service immersion trips. Audrey's thoughtful approach to trip design has created wonderful learning opportunities for participants. She has an incredible ability to inspire her peers to serve and reflect.

Collegiate Nominees

Austin Rakes, Virginia Tech

Mentor • Role Model • Team Player

For four years, Austin has served with the Special Olympics in the New River Valley as a coach, mentor, and role model with an exceptional ability to communicate with program athletes. The consummate team player, she is involved in virtually all of the program's fundraising and recruiting efforts and takes a lead role in area and regional competitions. A standout leader with a deep understanding of inclusion, Austin gives as much time as needed ensure the athletes' success and the success of the Special Olympics overall.

* * *

Claire Kelling, Virginia Tech

Leader • Creates Change • Social Justice Advocate

Claire is tireless in her pursuit of social justice and models courageous leadership. She is heavily involved at Blacksburg Middle School as a volleyball coach and an AWARE peer mentor, offering workshops to empower middle school girls on topics ranging from bullying to body image. Claire is president of both Womanspace and the Student Power Network. She has also volunteered with the Special Olympics, Math Counts, and the Montgomery County Animal Shelter. Claire has a passion for giving a voice to those who are not heard on their own.

* * *

Elizabeth Domann, Virginia Tech

Positive • Devoted • Incredibly Giving

Elizabeth brings a positive, energetic, and kind outlook to all the service she participates in. She has been crucial in coordinating the Blacksburg United Methodist Church's after school tutoring program, Fun143. In this role, Elizabeth coordinates events and volunteers, and supervises tutoring sessions. She is calm in the midst of conflict, nurtures students' needs and interests, and is a source of stability and love for teenagers whose lives are sometimes filled with upheaval. Elizabeth has also served with the Wesley Foundation, Hokie Helpers, and Relay for Life.

Collegiate Nominees

Hayley Piercy, Virginia Tech

Kind • Leader • Compassionate

As a volunteer with Medi Hospice, Hayley demonstrates leadership and compassion through her work as a companion to the patients. She has given presentations about the importance of hospice to various groups. Hayley also serves at a hospital working with burn patients, where she helped a patient to see his family through Skype, which improved his quality of life. In another role, she wrote a grant proposal for a Head Start Program. Hayley aspires to become a speech therapist.

* * *

Jordan Coburn, Virginia Tech

Dedicated • Perseveres • Student Athlete

A dedicated student athlete, Jordan has been active in her community throughout college. With the Hokie Soccer Leadership Academy, she planned and coordinated a soccer camp for 70 elementary students. Jordan has served with Micah's Backpack, the Montgomery County Christmas Store, Habitat for Humanity, and the Special Olympics. She has also traveled to the Dominican Republic through Tech to help with sports camps for youth. Jordan is a member of the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee and served as captain of the soccer team in 2015.

* * *

Kelly Berry, Virginia Tech

Leader • Advocate • Unrivalled Dedication

A devoted volunteer and food security advocate, Kelly founded Wesley Foundation's 209 Manna Ministries, a food pantry that serves Virginia Tech students. She was the catalyst for raising awareness of the need for the pantry, which now serves 30-60 students each week. Kelly devotes at least 15 hours per week to serving at the pantry. Through this work, Kelly has raised awareness at other college campuses to recognize the need to establish food pantries and has been heavily involved in consulting with other colleges. She has also served in leadership roles with the Wesley Foundation and as a Fieldstone Church volunteer.

Collegiate Nominees

Levi Meadows, New River Community College

Fire Fighter • Strong Work Ethic • Eagle Scout

Levi has a strong work ethic, going to school full-time as a Giles County Access to Community College Education (ACCE) Scholar and working full-time. With ACCE, he must complete 80 hours of community service each year. To meet these requirements, he served on a farm harvesting vegetables for a summer food program and volunteered as fire fighter with the Glen Lyn Fire Department. As a Free Mason and Eagle Scout, Levi is active in his community, helping with town construction projects, sending care packages to service members, and participating in highway clean-up events.

* * *

Macarah Collins, New River Community College

Determined • High Achieving • Dependable

Macarah has proven outstanding determination and maturity beyond her years in her dedication to fulfilling community service hours as an ACCE Scholar. She completed the required 80 hours of community service per year in two months, volunteering in a variety of places around Giles County including the school board office, the Chamber of Commerce, and a summer food program. Last year, Macarah also spent time as a recreation league cheerleading coach. She is a hard-working, eager, and dependable volunteer and student.

* * *

Shannon Cooke, Virginia Tech

Positive Attitude • Very Involved • Infectious Enthusiasm

Shannon is an incredibly positive, active member in Sigma Kappa with infectious enthusiasm. She has organized many service events, including the NRV Walk to End Alzheimer's. Shannon served as the event chair for the 2015 walk, helping to raise more than \$50,000. She was very involved in marketing the event and bringing in new teams from around the NRV and Virginia Tech campus. Shannon has an amazing ability to get others on board for even the most arduous tasks. She has also been a Hokie Camp Counselor and has served with Habitat for Humanity.

Collegiate Nominees

Stephanie Hoang, Virginia Tech

Positive • Full of Energy • Committed

Stephanie's optimism and willingness to go above and beyond make her a standout volunteer with the Smart Beginnings New River Valley Reading Hour program. She has participated every week of the 2015-16 school year as a Reading Buddy, reading with preschool-aged children to help improve their literacy skills. Stephanie is always available to pitch in, and willing to help however she can. She has been volunteering in various ways since high school. Additionally, she is in Virginia Tech's Honors program and is on the highest distinction Dean's List.

* * *

Taylor Quesenberry, Virginia Tech

Mentor • Dedicated • Role Model

Taylor brought his love of leadership and service to Virginia Tech. For ten years, he has been dedicated to What's On Stage, a program that targets at-risk children at Harding Avenue Elementary School. Throughout middle school, high school, and now in his third year of college, Taylor been involved in all aspects of the program. He facilitates weekly meetings, supervises field trips and special events, and acts as a mentor to both the participants and other volunteers. He instinctively knows which students need a little extra love and attention and works hard to help them succeed.





We must use time wisely
and forever realize that the time
is always ripe to do right.

-Nelson Mandela





Community Member Nominees



Allyne Schoff, Blacksburg

Always Willing to Help • Instrumental • Dedicated

Allyne has served with Valley Interfaith Child Care Center for more than five years, and served, unpaid, as Board President and Acting Executive Director for three. Her commitment has helped VICCC move forward in many ways. She established relationships with 15+ new community partners and 20+ new donors as President, resulting in over \$10,000 worth of donations. A retired school teacher, she has also served with Lutheran Family Services, Montgomery County Emergency Assistance, Micah's Backpack, and the Christmas Store.

* * *

Arden Howell, Christiansburg

Made Lasting Impact • Wonderful • Goes Extra Mile

Arden began volunteering with Carolin Clinic Hospice NRV in 2015, and has made a tremendous and lasting impact. He serves with the No One Dies Alone program, sitting with dying patients to ensure that someone is beside them when they die. Arden also calls patients on Fridays to ensure they have enough supplies for the weekend. Described as “absolutely wonderful” by patients, he speaks at volunteer trainings and helped establish the Veteran to Veteran Volunteer Program. Arden has blessed many patients and families through his service.

* * *

Ben Crawford, Blacksburg

Works Tirelessly • Leader in Community • Recruits Others

For over 40 years, Ben has worked tirelessly on any project he volunteers for. In addition to the time he commits, he is very effective at bringing together others to improve their community. Ben is the founder of the Community Foundation of New River Valley and the co-founder of Blacksburg's Kiwanis Club. He has served in numerous leadership roles, including Executive Director of Ruritan National, President of the Association of Virginia Ruritans, President of the Ruritan Club, and President of the Blacksburg AARP. His numerous volunteer roles range from work at the American Red Cross to the YMCA to National 4-H.

Community Member Nominees

Betty Bartschmid, Blacksburg

Committed • Inspiring • Compassionate

Betty's commitment to and compassion for homeless cats is inspiring. She was active with the Montgomery County Humane Society for 15 years before founding the Animal Hope Alliance (AHA). The AHA, where Betty serves daily, is dedicated to stabilizing the NRV's feral cat population and rescuing adoptable cats. Through the AHA, 2,000 cats have been spayed or neutered, and vaccinated. With PetSmart's Cattery, Betty has adopted out 219 cats. Also, she has been a member of Toastmasters since 1978, and currently serves as secretary and treasurer.

* * *

Catherine Pauley, Floyd

Culture Keeper • Big Heart • Dedicated

Catherine is a gifted artist, teacher, and historian who serves on the Board of Trustees and is a founding member of Old Church Gallery, in Floyd. She helps people of all ages understand Floyd's rich culture and history through exhibits and programs, volunteering with the "Roots with Wings" oral history program, and the Arts Legacy Program. Known as Floyd County's 'culture keeper', Catherine draws from deep springs of mountain memories to build resilience in new generations. Catherine has served with many other organizations, including the Ruritan Club, 4-H, Women's Club, Girl Scouts, and Boy Scouts.

* * *

Don Mullins, Blacksburg

Leader • Generous • Instrumental

Don's generosity and innate sense of direction when leading a project have benefited many organizations in our community. He is the Advisory Committee Director for the YMCA at VT and has served with Habitat for Humanity for the past 15 years. Don's other leadership roles have been with the Wesley Foundation, 4-H, the Montgomery County Christmas Store, and the Quality of Life team. He was instrumental in installing a playground at Margaret Beeks and co-organized the Blacksburg Interfaith Habitat Group. Don also helped the Y's Thrift Shop grow to be the largest financial contributor to the Y's programs.

Community Member Nominees

Dot Sowers, Dublin

Caring • Dedicated • Goes Above & Beyond

Dot shows deep compassion for and dedication to the residents living at Highland Ridge Rehab. For two years, she has been a volunteer who pays special attention to residents without loved ones, going above and beyond what is expected to support them. Beyond her service with Highland, she has spent many years volunteering in her community. She has been also involved with the YMCA, the Veterans Cemetery, Pulaski Health and Rehab, and the local AAU basketball team.

* * *

Doug & Donna Martin, Newport

Mentors • Inspire Others • Devoted

Doug and Donna are incredibly devoted community members. Known for making things happen, Donna coordinates the Newport Cares Backpack and Summer Food Box Program, which provide food each week for kids at Eastern Elementary and Middle Schools. For 25 years, she has organized fundraisers to support the construction and upkeep of Newport Village Green. Also, Donna serves as treasurer of her church and often coordinates potlucks for town events and families in need. Doug founded Newport's first little league team in the 1970s. He is now actively involved as a coach and mentor in Newport Sports, which invites area youth to play sports for free. Doug serves as president of both the Newport Ruritan Club and the Giles Historical Society, and is a church lay leader.

* * *

Doug Townley, Pulaski

Compassionate • Always Willing to Help • Warm-Hearted

Doug is a compassionate volunteer who is always willing to help. He has served with the MedRide Program for two years, where he has driven more than 83 individuals to their medical appointments throughout the New River Valley in the past year alone. Doug is a valued member of not only this program, but the broader community. He is understanding and warm-hearted toward members of the community who are struggling economically and suffering from devastating illnesses.

Community Member Nominees

Lt. Colonel George McNeill, Christiansburg

Dedicated • Innovative • Conscientious

For 10 years, George has been a hard-working, innovative volunteer for the YMCA at Virginia Tech. He served as director of the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets Regimental Band, the Highty Tighties, for 23 years, and continued to serve the community after his retirement at the Y's Thrift Store. George is a determined, creative, and conscientious volunteer, dedicated to the store's recycling program. He developed the store's computer recycling program, which combines working parts into whole computers that are then resold to community members on a budget. George is unwavering in his efforts to find better solutions for the Y.

* * *

Isabelle Marchand, Christiansburg

Leader • Inspires Children • Tireless STEM Advocate

Isabelle is a tireless advocate of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education. Through her work, she has motivated and inspired many children in our community. Isabelle has created and facilitated many STEM-oriented teams for local schools, Boy Scouts, and Girl Scouts. She also works with Montgomery County school teachers to integrate engaging and hands-on STEM activities into their classrooms. Isabelle's leadership has encouraged community support of STEM, and helped teams get to VA and World Championships.

* * *

Jennie Hodge, Blacksburg

Passionate • Works Tirelessly • Advocate for Children

Jennie is the founder and director of Micah's Backpack. The program feeds 300 food-insecure children in Blacksburg and Christiansburg schools each weekend throughout the year, including the summer. She coordinates hundreds of volunteers every week who pack and deliver food. Jennie has written many grants to fund the program, including one that acquired a school bus to deliver food to children over summer breaks. Serving children facing food insecurity is Jennie's passion, and she is determined to ensure that no child in the NRV goes hungry.

Community Member Nominees

Karen Day & McCabe Coolidge, Floyd

Caring • Inclusive • Change-Makers

Karen and McCabe founded Plenty! of Floyd in '09 with a vision to feed hunger by both providing food and by creating a sense of community at their events. They have an uncanny knack for noticing and putting to great use each person's gifts. Building upon their work with Plenty!, Karen and McCabe also started "A Conversation on Kids and Poverty", a regular gathering of agencies and individuals concerned about low-income children in Floyd. Through their work, they have built relationships with nearly every non- and for-profit Floyd organization.

* * *

Keith Nunn, Radford

Generous • Enthusiastic • Empowers Others

Keith is a difference-maker in the community whose enthusiastic participation in service inspires others. He raised money to provide 60 children with weekend meals for an entire school year and to help two families pay medical bills. Keith brings joy to nursing homes by playing music and has provided food, clothes, and toys for the Montgomery County Christmas Store. He has served as a Cub Scout Master, Sunday school teacher, and a Habitat for Humanity volunteer. Keith's generosity also has extended to taking in a homeless college student.

* * *

Larry (L.B.) Day, Christiansburg

Devoted • Gets Things Done • Long-Time Volunteer

L.B. is incredibly active with Habitat for Humanity of the NRV. He currently serves as Co-Vice Board Chair and chair of the Construction Committee, while also devoting many hours to Habitat's programs. L.B. implemented a Habitat program with students at Giles Technical Center that involves building housing modules that are then moved to the home site, and he hopes to replicate the program in Pulaski. Other community service includes his position as Vice-Chair of CV-CSI, which focuses on improving the communication of construction information. L.B. also recently ran a successful campaign to find a liver donor for a man in Giles.

Community Member Nominees

Lesa Viers, Hiwassee

Dependable • Positive Attitude • Always Willing to Help

Lesa is always willing to assist her community. She has served as a Station 4 Leader in Pulaski County for more than 10 years, which is a volunteer EMS ambulance organized by Regional Emergency Medical Services, Inc. While working full time, Lesa obtained her Paramedic Certification. She serves 240 hours every year with training and response responsibilities. Lesa maintains a positive attitude and calm demeanor when providing emergency care under extreme pressure.

* * *

Lois Wade, Christiansburg

Joyful • Tireless Dedication • Volunteer Extraordinaire

Lois, volunteer extraordinaire, has spent many years and thousands of hours visiting Heritage Hall assisted living facility's residents on nearly daily basis. With her joyful attitude, she coordinates activities with the goal to make the residents laugh, smile, and feel important. Lois also serves with several other organizations, including Warm Hearth Village, Richfield Retirement Community, Montgomery County Emergency Assistance Program, First Wesleyan Church. She has received many service awards, including the President's Lifetime Volunteer Service Award and the NRV Outstanding and Valuable Volunteer Award.

* * *

Lynn Brammer, Christiansburg

Leader • Committed • Consensus Builder

Lynn believes that if everyone found time to volunteer, our community would be a better place, and she inspires others with her dedication. Over the years, she has served with the Blacksburg Farmers' Market Share the Spare program, Save Stadium Woods, the Lyric Theater, and Friends of the Library Garden. She helped grow Share the Spare to collect over a ton of produce and distribute it to lower income families. Lynn helped expand the program to the Christiansburg Market, and has created partnerships with Market Kids, the NRV Juvenile Detention Center youth, the Junior Master Gardener program, and the Y's Neighborhood Harvest program.

Community Member Nominees

Lynn Chenault, Draper

Dedicated • Invaluable Asset • Motivates Others

Lynn is an invaluable asset to New River Community College, where he dedicates time helping students pursue their goals. He focuses mainly on students in ESL and GED classes, tutoring beginners and assisting those with specific goals, such as obtaining U.S. citizenship. Lynn facilitates a conversation group that helps ESL students gain communication skills, confidence, and provides an opportunity to participate in cross-cultural exchange. He is invested, generous, and motivated in his service to these students. Also, Lynn has served on the Board of Directors of New River Valley Community Services for many years. He is a long-time volunteer musician for the Old Pros Big Band Orchestra.

* * *

Melvin Robertson, Christiansburg

Mentor • Hard-Working • Mr. Positive

Melvin has a generous heart and is deeply committed to his community. At the Giving Tree Food Pantry, Melvin serves as food pantry leader on Fridays and co-hosts the Day Center Program, which serves low-income community members. At To Our House, he is tireless in his efforts to connect individuals who are experiencing a crisis with resources. His other service work includes volunteering at Community Action and Fieldstone United Methodist Church's Day Center. Melvin is driven to give back and provides a wealth of empathy to those he serves with.

* * *

Michaelene (Mickey) W. Balconi, Hiwassee

Educator • Committed • Master Gardener

Mickey is a Master Gardener who creates meaningful and educational gardening experiences for ages. She developed the "Children's Zoo Garden" at the Pulaski County Public Library, and engaged children's groups in planting and cultivating the garden, which serves as a learning center. Mickey founded the Town and Country Garden Tour of Pulaski, spearheading the tour for four years. The tour connects community members to one another as they learn about gardening. She recreated the Blacksburg Friends of the Library garden tour singlehandedly.

Community Member Nominees

Michele Ren, Radford

Generous • Compassionate • Social Justice Advocate

Michele does not sit idly by and watch injustice happen. She takes action on women's issues, and as a Radford University professor, she teaches her students to do the same. She advises RU's Women's Studies Club and is an avid volunteer with the Women's Resource Center of the New River Valley, as a fundraiser and volunteer organizer. Michele is a tireless member of the Scholar-Citizen Steering Committee, providing expertise to steer and guide the program in its social justice mission. She embodies compassion with her generosity and proactive spirit.

* * *

Nancy & Bill Hudson, Fairlawn

Dedicated • Active in Community • Admired

Nancy and Bill have been volunteering in their community for many years. They have dedicated hours of service to Radford-Fairlawn Daily Bread, both cooking and picking up donated food. Nancy and Bill have also long served with RSVP of Montgomery and Radford, and been involved with Pulaski County Friends of the Library, Project Linus, and Good Samaritan Hospice. For years, they participated in disaster relief with the Red Cross and are avid supporters of Heifer International. They also have been active in the Presbyterian Church of Radford.

* * *

Pam Reed, Blacksburg

Passionate • Makes Students Feel at Home • Always Willing to Help

Pam has a passion for helping members of our international community. For more than a decade, she has volunteered 500 hours a year with the English as a Second Language Program. She has an incredible gift for making the students feel proud as they find success in the program. She relates to children in the program with games, painting, cooking, and dancing. Pam includes the students' families by inviting them to Christmas parties at her home. She also teaches Sunday school and organizes weekly bible studies for residents at Wheatland Hills assisted living facility.

Community Member Nominees

Penny Franklin, Christiansburg

Challenges Others to Act • Inspires Change • Leader

Penny is a leader who inspires and challenges others to act as she works to advance the lives of those she serves. She has been serving the NRV for more than 28 years, in her Montgomery County School Board position, on the Dialogue on Race (DOR) Steering Committee, and as past president of the local NAACP. Through her involvement in DOR, Penny has been instrumental in engaging community leaders to address profiling and the recruitment of black police officers. The breadth of her service is remarkable, and also includes work with the Community Group, New Mountain Climbers, and the Human Relations Council.

* * *

Roxanna Link, Newport

Compassionate • Creative • Animal Advocate

Roxanna exhibits compassion and creativity in all the service she has done for more than 40 years. She currently serves on the Newport Community Action Committee Board and the Newport Fair Board, where she leads and organizes children's games. Roxanna has also taught Sunday school for 25 years. She is active with Animal Hope Alliance, serving with the PetSmart Cattery. Additionally, Roxanna and her husband have fostered more than 30 cats. She was recently named a Virginia Tech Extraordinary Employee for her work and service.

* * *

Scott & Mendy Sink, Blacksburg

Inspiring • Model Citizens • Leaders

Scott and Mendy integrate all aspects of their lives with supporting their community, serving as role models for youth, and inspiring others to serve. Through their businesses, they work with Blacksburg High School to teach workforce development skills to students with disabilities, and offer mentorship opportunities to high school and college students. Scott serves on the United Way of Montgomery, Radford & Floyd Board and on a Community Investment team. Mendy is leader of the model United Way campaign, and she has served in leadership positions with the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce.

Community Member Nominees

Steve Pond, Radford

Devoted • Goes the Extra Mile • Always Contributing

Steve has been a devoted volunteer with the American Red Cross for 15 years. He is known for his readiness to do whatever is needed to assist those affected by disaster. Steve is always willing to go the extra mile, whether it is responding to people in need in the middle of the night, or serving at the national response level after Hurricane Sandy. Red Cross employees and community members alike rely on Steve as a major source of support in the community. He has also served as the Vice Chair for the Radford Red Cross Chapter and as a NRV Disaster Response Leader.

* * *

Susan Icove, Floyd

Motivated • Dedicated • Key Leader

Perseverance, motivation, and dedication describe Susan's leadership in the Floyd community. As the Chairperson of the New River Community Action Floyd Building Renovation Committee, she was instrumental in raising over \$100,000 to renovate the multipurpose building that serves as a home to programs including Head Start, food pantries, and job fairs, among others. Susan coached her committee members throughout the fundraising process and organized several events, including a poetry reading by Nikki Giovanni to help reach the organization's goals.

* * *

Teresa Fields, Pearisburg

Enthusiastic • Great with Children • Caring

The depth of Teresa's compassion and concern for children is inspiring. She is very involved with the Macy Backpack Program, which supplies a backpack of food to children at Macy McClagherty Elementary School in Giles County. Teresa organizes the volunteers, the buying and packing of food, and delivers the backpacks to the school. A former teacher, she is involved with Take TWO, an after-school program through her church, which serves children in preschool through fifth grade and incorporates religious study, service, crafts, and other activities. Also, on a weekly basis, Teresa reads with preschoolers at Macy.

Community Member Nominees

Toby Simmons, Elliston

Devoted • Advocate for Veterans • Compassionate

A Marine Corps veteran, Toby has been involved in his community for decades, serving veterans and volunteering for the past 12 years with the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) of Montgomery County & Radford. Whether he is transporting veterans to the VA, visiting VA patients, or delivering flowers to veterans in nursing homes, Toby is constantly advocating for veterans in need. As the Post Commander for Ellison's Veterans of Foreign Wars, he assists with appreciation days and educational programs. He also coordinates an annual dinner through his church for 200 seniors.

* * *

Tacie Jones, Eggleston

Does It All • Tireless Commitment • Creative

As the Executive Director of LoCo Arts, Tacie has done it all. From legal assistant to janitor to teacher, she has helped build LoCo Arts from an idea to a reliable after-school program. Because of her tireless efforts, children in Giles County have the opportunity to make art and engage in self-discovery in a high-quality program. LoCo Arts inspired Mayapple School, which is a nature-based preschool. Most of Tacie's time is spent volunteering, and she also serves as chair of the Newport Recreation Center.

* * *

Vickie Spangler, Floyd

Generous • Key Contributor • Change-Maker

Vickie is a patient, generous person who doesn't seek the limelight, and is the backbone of many successes. She has served with the Chamber of Commerce in Floyd for several years and in numerous leadership roles with 4-H and the Farm Bureau Women's Committee. She oversaw the growth of the Floyd Livestock and County Fair and received a 4-H All Star Award. Vickie has time and again been a key contributor to the success and longevity of the Floyd County 4-H program. Many 4-H participants have credited her support with their success the program and in their careers.



Past Award Winners



High School

Olivia Hodge, Blacksburg	Jessica Vance, Blacksburg
Rebecca Kay Stephens, Giles	Marie Stump, Christiansburg
Laura Froggard, Blacksburg	Ben Webster, Snowville
Anna Keppel-Benson, Blacksburg	

Collegiate

Austin Larrowe, Virginia Tech	Victoria Sarbin, Radford
Chelsea Hall, Virginia Tech	Matthew Johnson, Virginia Tech
Ryan Brock, Virginia Tech	Stephanie Connelly, Virginia Tech
Analise Adams, Virginia Tech	

Community Members

Todd Fitch, Christiansburg	Phyllis Albritton, Blacksburg
Molly McClintock, Christiansburg	Pat Ballard, Christiansburg
Dr. Steve Jacobs, Blacksburg	Mary Ann Hinshelwood, Christiansburg
Mary Susan Vehorn, Radford	Jon McEnhill, Floyd
Col. John Getgood, Floyd	Dr. Nelda Pearson, Radford
Doris Hendrickson, Radford	Margie Vitale, Christiansburg
Kim Schwenk, Blacksburg	Karen Cronin, Shawsville
Jerry Higgins, Radford	Fran Rooker, Radford
Rebecca Rees, Blacksburg	Rador Vaden, Blacksburg
Lindsay West, Blacksburg	

Lifetime Achievement

Dr. George Smith, Shawsville
Dave & Marilyn Armstrong, Dublin



New River Valley Leading Lights



@LeadingLightsNRV



LeadingLightsNRV



leadinglightsnrv@gmail.com



leadinglightsnrv.org



Banquet program designed by Lindsey Gleason