passionate caring generous inspiring welcoming kindVolunteer tirelessCommunity compassionate supportive service



New River Valley Leading Lights



Celebrating Neighbors Helping Neighbors *Awards Ceremony April 13, 2017*





If you want to lift yourself up, lift up someone else.

-Booker T. Washington



2016 Montgomery County Nominees

2017 Nominees





High School

Bethany Hsiao
Brendon Pettus
Carlee King
Cody Hardwick
Jessica Shelburne
Joseph Carman
Taylor Hawkins
Tyler Kwak
Violet Neikirk

Collegiate

Ajla Becirevic
Ammon Miller
Emma Thompson
Jacob Long
Kyndal Stakes
Linda Beckett
Matthew Boward
Murphy Massey
Rebecca Brown
Samantha Capaldo
Samantha DiBiaso
Sydney Curtis
Toby Akers

Community Members

Ann Goette
Anthony Woodyard
Barnett Carr
Cathy Shaut
Charles Herbert
Charlie Whitescarver
Claude Wimmer
Connie Richardson
David Brady
David Hagan

Diane Blair Elaine C. Cook Gordon Yee Irvin Clark Janne Mathes Jean Umberger Judy Foster Kimberly Haug Krittanai (Gap) Pisarnpong Marcia Murphy Mel Hassan Melinda Dunford Nikki Collins Patsy Akers Peggy Rasnick Penny Sweet Sara Perks Scott & Mendy Sink Sharon Eifried Sharon Friedberg Susan Sutterer Tacie Jones Trish Muldoon Valerye Phillips-Downing Vickie Spangler William Neely

Lifetime Achievement

Aldora Green
Catherine Vaughn Pauley
Joe Thompson
Larry (L.B.) Day
Margot Thompson
Marsha Garrison
Stephen Howard
Woody Crenshaw



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.

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 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.

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SWVA Education Consortium

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Lindsey Gleason

VT Engage

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Bob Job Bill King Billy Motley Keith Nunn

Morris Fleischer Terry Arbogast

Melvin Robertson



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 (\$2,000+)

German Club Alumni Foundation

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Habitat for Humanity of the New River Valley

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Brian Torgersen
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Virginia Leader (Pearisburg)

In-Kind Contributions

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Keynote Speaker





Dr. Nikki Giovanni

Dr. Nikki Giovanni, University Distinguished Professor of English at Virginia Tech, is renowned and beloved especially for her poetry. Dr. Giovanni has long used her literary gifts to raise awareness of social issues, particularly those of gender and race. By the time she received her bachelor's degree in history from Fisk University in 1967, she was already an outspoken activist for civil rights and equality.

Dr. Giovanni joined Tech's English faculty as a Commonwealth Visiting Professor in 1987 and became a full professor in 1989. She has published more than two dozen volumes of poetry, essays, and edited anthologies, as well as 11 children's books, including "Rosa," an award-winning biography of Rosa Parks. Dr. Giovanni's autobiography, "Gemini," was a finalist for the 1973 National Book Award. In 2004, her album, "The Nikki Giovanni Poetry Collection," was a Grammy finalist for the Best Spoken Word Album.

Dr. Giovanni has received numerous awards, including the inaugural Rosa L. Parks Woman of Courage Award, the American Book Award, the Langston Hughes Award, the Virginia Governor's Award for the Arts, and the Emily Couric Leadership Award. She is also a seventime recipient of the NAACP Image Award. A devoted teacher, Dr. Giovanni has been a visiting professor and poet-in-residence at numerous colleges, and she encourages students of all ages to express themselves creatively through writing.



Tonight's Program



Reception Music
Master of Ceremonies
Welcome
Invocation
DinnerProfessional Catering Inc.
Keynote Speaker
Awards
High School · Collegiate
Community: Floyd • Giles • Montgomery • Pulaski • Radford
Jim & Lenna Moore Lifetime Achievement Award
Closing Remarks

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Our Impact



9 years of honoring volunteers

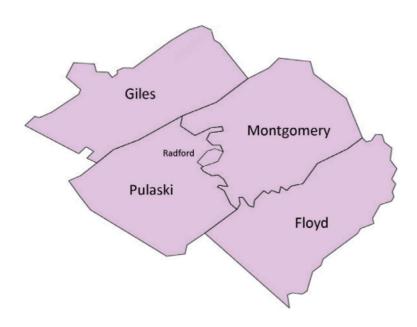
457 individuals nominated for awards

57 awards presented to outstanding volunteers

\$45,000 distributed to NRV nonprofits of winners' choosing

We are honored that 67 individuals were nominated for awards this year. Tonight, 11 awards will be given out: two High School Awards, two Collegiate Awards, along with Community Member Awards for residents in the city of Radford, the counties of Floyd, Giles, Pulaski, and Montgomery, and a Lifetime Achievement Award.

Each award winner will receive \$400 to donate to a New River Valley nonprofit of their choosing. The winner of the Lifetime Achievement award will receive \$1,000. This will bring NRV Leading Lights' total to \$45,000 distributed to organizations in our region.





Stay Involved with Us



Nominate a volunteer this fall for the 2018 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.



2016 Pulaski County & City of Radford Nominees



Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.

-Helen Keller



2016 High School Nominees



High School Nominees



Bethany Hsiao, Blacksburg High School

Bethany has a quiet strength about her. Co-vice president of her sophomore class, she works hard, takes responsibility seriously, and places others above herself. In 2016, Bethany had a vision to start a new club at her school called the Arts of Care, using the arts to raise money for UNICEF. She created and implemented a plan to find a sponsor and recruit members. Now club president, Bethany has lead the club this year in raising money for UNICEF USA. Additionally, she volunteers as a math tutor for her peers.

* * *

Brendon Pettus, Eastern Montgomery High School

Volunteering approximately ten hours a week, Brendon exhibits a willingness to serve others and is there to help others when needed. One day, when a student was experiencing high blood pressure and a nurse was not available, Brendon was called to help. He took the student's blood pressure several times, noting all the vitals and waited until a school nurse was available. Brendon's ability to respond quickly comes from his background in passing the National Registry Exam, which assesses the knowledge and skills required by EMS professionals.

* * *

Carlee King, Auburn High School

Carlee is motivated, determined, and highly involved with her community. She is the president of Auburn's Help Save the Next Girl club, and the Future Business Leaders of America. With her church, Carlee has been a counselor with Gospel Light Christian Camp, served on a mission trip to Grenada, and visited nursing homes to sing Christmas carols. She has also served as a group leader for the Be Safe Blacksburg Field Day and the Auburn Baptist Christian Academy, and has been involved with veterans projects. Carlee was also instrumental in designing and selling shirts to raise money for an individual struggling with cancer.

Cody Hardwick, Christiansburg High School

Cody is a compassionate person, leader, and mentor to younger students. For the past three years, he has devoted many hours spreading awareness about personal safety at numerous events. He is now a member of his school's Help Save The Next Girl club, where he coordinates events and designed a wrist band to spread the word about the initiative. Additionally, Cody is an aide in the guidance office, volunteers for events with the choral department, and is involved with the Youth of Virginia Speak Out About Traffic Safety initiative.

* * *

Jessica Shelburne, Auburn High School

Jessica truly cares for others, and is very giving of her time. She is proactive in watching out for other students, and does all that she can to help. For the past five years, she has been involved in many groups, including the Rotary Club, the Beta Club, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and a bible study group. Jessica has also volunteered with Snowville Baptist Church's Children's Church and with Seneca Baptist Church's nursing home ministry. Additionally, she has served as head editor and chief of production for her school newspaper. A member of the National Honor Society, Jessica was also selected to attend the Rotary leadership conference in 2015 and 2016.

* * *

Joseph Carman, Blacksburg High School

A team player and leader, Joseph is known for his kind nature. For the past two years, he has volunteered with the Special Olympics, helping to run events, and has served with the Linus Project for three years, an organization that makes blankets for sick children. Joseph has been a 4-H camp counselor for several summers, where he supervises five children. An active soccer player, he helps run a kindergarten soccer team. Joseph also spends at least an hour each month collecting trash in his neighborhood. He is currently the treasurer of the BHS Key Club, and previously served as the club's secretary.

Taylor Hawkins, Floyd County High School

Taylor is a dedicated and compassionate community servant. For the last five years, she has volunteered with numerous organizations including Project Floyd, the Humane Society, and Plenty! Farm and Food Pantry. But her largest contribution is to the Red Cross. Taylor has family members with blood disorders who require frequent blood transfusions; from her personal experience with this issue, her eyes were opened to the need for blood donations. She now heads and coordinates blood drives in Floyd. Because of Taylor's drive, problem-solving skills, and passion for helping others, she has single-handedly increased the number of blood donations in Floyd.

Tyler Kwak, Christiansburg High School

Tyler is a motivated, kind, and helpful sophomore committed to extraordinary standards. Active with the Boy Scouts of America since first grade, he is now a Senior Patrol Leader. Tyler has played a large support role for his brother's Eagle Scout project, and is about to begin his own Eagle Scout project. He is a percussionist in his school's band, and participates in youth exposure and recruitment trips. Tyler served as a volunteer food runner and culinary assistant for this year's Home Builders Association Cooking Contest. An honor roll student, he is also active with his wrestling team.

Violet Neikirk, Giles High School

Violet values service to the community and to others, and is someone who gives 110% regardless of the cause. She is a Senior Girl Scout, who has received both the Bronze and Silver award, and last year sold the most cookies in the Skyline Council. Violet has participated in fundraisers for Giles High School choir and the Giles County School of Dance. She also has volunteered for the Newport Methodist church play, LOCO Arts plays, and Y Street. An honor roll student, Violet is also involved with tennis, cheerleading, as well as her school's choir and ensemble. She is not afraid to try something new and encourages her peers to do the same.



I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy.

-Rabindranath Tagore



2016 Collegiate Nominees



Collegiate Nominees



Ajla Becirevic, Radford University

Ajla is driven and committed to volunteering her time and expertise to help different segments of the local community. She is CPR and First Aid Certified and is a recipient of the Teachers for Tomorrow Scholarship. Ajla routinely volunteers with the Montgomery School's Nutrition Program and plans to volunteer for the Women, Infants, and Children program. Currently a nutrition and dietetics student at Radford University, she has an associate's degree in Applied Health Sciences and was in the Honor Society during community college.

Ammon Miller, New River Community College

Ammon is deeply dedicated to his community. He is president of New River Community College's Honor Society and participates in the chapter's service events. This year, Ammon has overseen the chapter's voter registration drive, a volunteer program at Head Start in Pulaski, as well as fundraisers for the American Diabetes Association and Head Start. He organizes induction ceremonies for new members, and personally paid the \$100 enrollment fee so another student could join the Honor Society. Ammon attended the Honors in Action Academy at Old Dominion University and assisted with the regional Honors in Action Project. He is also highly involved with his church.

Emma Thompson, Virginia Tech

Emma is known for her integrity, team-building skills, and passion for community engagement. She has been an active volunteer throughout college, particularly with emergency and disaster response work. Since her first year, Emma has been a member of SERVE, a service-focused living learning community, and also served as the community's resident advisor for two years. Her quiet but confident servant leadership style motivates her peers. Skilled in assessing situations quickly, Emma is a volunteer fire fighter for Blacksburg, and has worked for Montgomery County Emergency Services, as well as VT Emergency Management. Emma has also participated in disaster relief efforts around the U.S.

Jacob Long, Virginia Tech

Jacob radiates a passion for service and is known for his welcoming and supportive spirit. He has been a member of the SERVE Living Learning Community for four years and serves as vice president of the service fraternity Alpha Phi Omega. With his fraternity, Jacob coordinates 35+ service projects for 140 members and incorporates reflection into each project. He also serves as a shift manager for 209 Manna Ministries (VT's food pantry for students), served as a VT Engage service trip leader, and works with youth in the community as an Autism and Behavioral Counselor. With each role, Jacob ignites others' passion for service with his effervescent approach.

Kyndal Stakes, Virginia Tech

Before college, Kyndal was a member of the Girl Scouts for 12 years. She has continued to explore her passion for service in college, and has become a mentor and teacher for her peers. A member of the SERVE Living Learning Community since her first year, Kyndal is also active as a VT Engage service trip leader. In this capacity, she co-led service immersion trips to the Dominican Republic, coordinated weekend trips, and numerous weekly semester-long trips. Kyndal has been a member of the service fraternity Alpha Phi Omega since the spring of her first year and served one year as vice president of service. She is known for her ability to build relationships with trip participants and community, as well as her thoughtful, inclusive leadership style.

Linda Beckett, Virginia Tech

A member of the SERVE Living Learning Community, Linda has been active in service since first coming to campus. For four years, she has been a student leader and mentor to other students with VT Engage. A true servant leader, Linda has lead weekly semester-long service trips, as well as week-long and weekend service immersion trips. She has developed many of these trips from her own initiative, reaching out to nonprofit partners to meet community-identified needs. Linda has also served as a cultural ambassador with the Saudi Young Leaders Exchange Program, is a member of the Block and Bridle club, and committee chair of Little International Livestock Show.

Matthew Boward, Virginia Tech

Leadership and service have been at the forefront of Matt's college years. A member of the Residential Leadership Community (RLC), he has been a leader with the YMCA at Virginia Tech's Alternative Service Break program since his sophomore year. In this role, Matt recruits trip participants, creates group cohesion, handles finances, and helps direct on-site work. As the Y's student council president, he provides leadership and direction, and has strengthened the connections between the Y's staff and students. Matt also serves as the student representative on the Y's board. Additionally, he is involved with the Order of the Gavel, serves as an RLC Peer Leader, is a member of Student Government Association, and is president of Omicrom Delta Kappa.

Murphy Massey, Virginia Tech

Since fall 2014, Murphy has been an active volunteer with Medi Home Health and Hospice. With Medi, she provides companionship for patients and puts a smile on their faces while they are on their last journey of life. Murphy has also assisted with many of Medi's Veterans Honoring programs and regularly speaks about Medi's work to other organizations. A member of the Honor Society, she has also served in leadership positions for three organizations: College of Science Dean's Leadership Council Recruitment Committee member, the American Medical Student Association Executive Board as volunteer chair, and the secretary for the Minority Association of Pre-Health Students.

Rebecca Brown, Virginia Tech

Rebecca is a hard-working, persistent, and compassionate individual who has been volunteering regularly for four years. Beginning as a high school senior, she has dedicated hundreds of volunteer hours the Christiansburg Rescue Squad. Now a full-time student at Virginia Tech majoring in human nutrition, foods, and exercise, she continues to volunteer with the Rescue Squad. On top of this, Rebecca also finds time to help out at her church.

Samantha Capaldo, Virginia Tech

Samantha brings a tremendous amount of positivity to all that she does and has been a dedicated volunteer since high school. A member of SERVE Living Learning Community since her first year, she became deeply involved in VT Engage as a service trip leader. In this capacity, Samantha has displayed a great amount of initiative and follow-through, and has led numerous weekly trips, a weekend trip, and an alternative spring break trip. Also, Samantha spent three years as a regular volunteer with the PetSmart Cattery and is a founding member of Delta Epsilon Mu, a coed pre-health fraternity. In this role, she helped build relationships with community partners and plan service events.

Samantha DiBiaso, Virginia Tech

Samantha inspires others to serve, and continually pushes herself and others outside their comfort zone, allowing them to better understand themselves. She is a student leader for VT Engage, and has been a member of the SERVE Living Learning Community since her first year. Samantha has led many different types of service trips, including immersion trips to Peru and the Dominican Republic. She has dedicated significant time to these trips and is committed to making the trips meaningful. Additionally, Samantha is a student leader for Lutheran Campus Ministry, where she leads retreats and reflections. She has also served as a Virginia Tech orientation leader.

Sydney Curtis, Virginia Tech

Sydney has a constant drive to do more to better the lives of the people around her. She was an executive board member and women's soccer representative for the Student Athlete Advisory Committee, member of the leadership council for the Student Hokie Club, and a member of the women's soccer team community outreach program. Sydney has volunteered with the Special Olympics, West Virginia Food Relief, the Appalachia Service project, Micah's Backpack, and the Montgomery County Christmas Store. After a West Virginia flood, she organized a food drive to help those affected. When Sydney sees a need, she does anything she can to fix it.

Toby Akers, New River Community College

Toby is a caring, kind, hardworking, and extremely motivated individual. Since 2014, he has dedicated more than 1,500 hours a year to his work as an Emergency Medical Technician with the Christiansburg Rescue Squad. He has held multiple leadership roles in those three years including serving as junior captain from 2014-16 and CPR instructor. With the Virginia Junior Varsity Rescue Squad (VJVRS), Toby serves as junior advisor and life member liasion. Previously, he served as VJVRS's secretary and treasurer from 2015-16.



We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny.

Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.

-Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



2016 Giles County Nominees



Community Nominees



Ann Goette, Eggleston

A quiet leader, Ann works tirelessly on behalf of Giles County's citizens and environment. She is one of the founders of Renew the New, which organizes multiple river cleanups each year. Ann is also a founding member and chair of Giles Early Education Project, and has worked on numerous literacy related projects. She was instrumental in raising money to create the Books for Babes program, which gifts two books to every new parent in Giles, and has distributed her own ABC book about Giles to every 3-5 year old in the county. Ann is on the board of Mountain Lake Hotel and Smart Beginnings. She puts thoughts into action, spending at least three full days each week volunteering.

Anthony Woodyard, Dublin

Anthony is a very people-oriented person who will do absolutely anything to help people around him or the organization he works for. Since fall 2016, he has served as the Executive Director of the Pulaski County Humane Society, where he is working to expand volunteer recruitment and fundraising efforts to save more animals. Anthony has been involved in service for ten years and serves approximately 500 hours per year. He serves on the Event Leadership team for the American Cancer Society Relay for Life in Giles County.

Barnett Carr, Christiansburg

Steadfast in his guiding principles to help others, pitch in, and step up, Barnett serves hundreds of hours every year with numerous organizations. He is the assistant baseball coach for Blacksburg High School and a board member for Camp Alta Mons. With his church, White Memorial United Methodist, Barnett has served as the youth director for 14 years and is currently the administrative council chair. He also volunteers with the Montgomery County Library, the Shawsville Ruritan Club, and Stamp Out Hunger. During the holidays, Barnett buys and delivers gifts to nursing home residents and children.

Cathy Shaut, Floyd

Cathy goes above and beyond when it comes to serving homeless and neglected animals. For more than 15 years, she has volunteered with the Floyd County Humane Society (FCHS), where she finds homes for animals, helps citizens find ways to keep their pets, traps feral cats to be spayed or neutered, transports animals to other rescues, assists when animals are pulled from abusive situations, and acts spokesperson for FCHS. Cathy also fosters animals. When FCHS's budget is low, she buys food for the animals. In 2015, she also helped provide over one ton of food to Plenty! Farms' pet program. The epitome of compassion, Cathy has helped save the lives of over 200 animals.

Charles Herbert, Pearisburg

Charlie has a great big heart and sees the best in others. A founding member of the Giles Breakfast Lions Club, he has served the club in nearly every capacity, including doing yoga with Head Start students and providing eye examinations for children throughout Giles. Charlie also volunteers monthly with Head Start, planning gardening activities with preschoolers at the community garden he helped start. During these sessions, he teaches the children about where their food comes from, as well as healthy eating habits. The children love him, and ask for him. Additionally, Charlie is very active with his church and the Giles County FOCUS on Communities Utilizing Services group.

Charlie Whitescarver, Christiansburg

Charlie is a key member of and driven to continually make improvements with the organizations he's involved with. He is the president of Network NRV and was instrumental in developing and creating this networking group. Charlie has been the Community Impact Panel chair for the United Way of Montgomery, Radford, & Floyd for five years and has also served as a United Way Community Ambassador leader. He previously served as president of the Radford Kiwanis, sat on the board of Big Brothers Big Sisters, and served as a Big Brother. Charlie is active member of the Dublin United Methodist Church. He is also a volunteer photographer for numerous nonprofits.

Claude Wimmer, Newport

Claude is a reliable, "go to" person. He has been a member of the Newport Ruritan Club for over 35 years, and serving as secretary and board member for many of those years. In his role as a Ruritan, Claude oversees, plans, and participates in work days to maintain and improve the Newport Park. He currently volunteers with the Giles County Social Services Board, where he does income taxes for the elderly. Claude has been a mainstay in the Newport Village July 4th parade for more than 25 years. He volunteers more than 150 hours per year.

Connie Richardson, Pearisburg

Connie's willingness to help others is amazing. As a volunteer for Giles Health and Family Center, she delivers food to individuals in need in Giles County seven days a week using her own vehicle to pick up and deliver supplies. In this capacity, she serves more than 100 families. Cathy spends an estimated 1,000 hours a year in her volunteer efforts and has been volunteering for more than ten years.

David Brady, Newport

David loves Giles County and works tirelessly for the betterment of his community. He does not cower in the face of opponents who pose a threat to the quality of life and the land that Giles County residents call home. David has spent countless hours devoted to his commitment in the fight to block the Mountain Valley pipeline being routed through Newport. In the 1990s, he also lead a successful battle blocking a powerline in Giles. David has dedicated much of his time through the years to the Newport Agricultural Fair, and served several years as the fair director. He has been a faithful member of local Ruritan Club, including serving as the president at one time.

David Hagan, Christiansburg

David is well-known throughout his community as a business man and philanthropist. He uses his business knowledge to give back whole-heartedly to his community by supporting many charities and projects. Most notably, David worked with his partner to create Growing the Future Community Partners, an organization that supports New River Valley schools by generating substantial financial support for schools. Also, he and his partner have been instrumental in revitalizing the economy of the town of Pulaski, including providing many employment opportunities in the NRV.

Diane Blair, Dublin

Always in service to others, Diane is a vital volunteer for LewisGale Hospital in Pulaski. She ensures that anyone in need is taken care of, and is the first person to help out when called on. Hospital staff know that they count on Diane anytime they have a dying patient with no family support; she will show up to stay with that patient. She has an uncanny sense of knowing when people around her are struggling, and supports both patients and their families with visits and calls. Diane also hand crochets prayer cloths for inpatients and cancer center patients. Previously a hospital chaplain and teacher, she is active with New Dublin Presbyterian Church, where she serves as an elder and assists with children's church.

Elaine C. Cook, Blacksburg

Elaine is incredibly welcoming, kind, and always willing to lend a helping hand. For over 20 years, she has served the NRV in a variety of ways, standing out for her compassion for newcomers to the NRV. Elaine commits many quiet acts of hospitality by introducing new residents to the NRV and its services, as well as helping to navigate barriers. An active member of Blacksburg Baptist Church, she teaches English to immigrants, and has opened her home to foreign visitors through VT's Cranwell International Center. Elaine is a member of the Blacksburg Host Lions Club, where she is a key organizer for their annual pancake breakfast, and has served in numerous leadership roles.

Gordon Yee, Blacksburg

An associate professor at Virginia Tech, Gordon considers Tech and Blacksburg to be extensions of his home, and does everything in his power to make these places better. He is a mentor to his students, spearheaded an effort to connect students with course materials if they demonstrate unmet need, and helped start the chemistry department's lending library. Gordon has also helped students organize the first-ever music day, which consisted of numerous free pop-up performances by faculty members and students. He is a dedicated volunteer to the Montgomery County Christmas Store, a co-parent to a service dogin-training, and previously served as a RAFT Crisis Hotline volunteer.

Irvin Clark, Radford

Irvin is a cheerful giver with a humble attitude. During his time at Radford University, he has made strides to demonstrate his care for the community, the university, and beyond. Irvin's commitment to the community shows in all he does. Whether it's opening up his home to parents who have come to visit their sick student or offering his car as a means of transportation for a local family who needed to travel to Richmond to visit a very sick family member, he embodies helpfulness in his efforts to care for others. Irvin does a remarkable job at noticing individuals it seems as if others have neglected.

Janne Mathes, Blacksburg

Janne's caring heart guides her to give to others, and makes her a successful leader. With her bright smile and can-do attitude, she has been a volunteer for more than 30 years. She served many years on the board of To Our House, helped launch the Baby Store where low-income parents can get supplies for children, and leads the Blacksburg Presbyterian Church's Caring for the Community Ministry, which she built from the ground up. Her most recent efforts involve serving on the board of Blacksburg Refugee Partnership (BRP), a resettlement program for refugee families, and was, in part, her brainchild. In addition to providing support for families, Janne filed for the BRP's nonprofit status and handles its finances.

Jean Umberger, Radford

Highly involved with her community, Jean's dedication to helping others is contagious, and she is an inspiration to other volunteers. With grace and a commitment to perfection, she coordinates volunteers and oversees operations at the Radford Clothing Bank, where she has served for 30+ years. For more than 20 years, Jean has been an integral part of Radford Elf Shelf, serving as director of volunteer services and board member. She also coordinates operations for the Central United Methodist Church Food Pantry, and is a longtime volunteer for Meals on Wheels and the August Kids Program. Jean serves a grant reviewer for Radford High School's foundation as well.

Judy Foster, Blacksburg

Judy works tirelessly for the organizations she volunteers for. She is deeply involved with the Smithfield Plantation, where she serves as the museum's store manager and is the treasurer for a secondary operation of the Smithfield Review, an annual journal. She is a member of the operations oversight committee for Smithfield, which acts as a liaison between Smithfield staff and the governing board. Judy also volunteers for the Virginia Veterans Cemetery, the Gold Star Families Memorial Committee, and the Southside Garden Club. She also volunteers at her church with whatever they need. Judy truly understands the meaning of teamwork, and values each volunteer as an equal.

Kimberly Haug, Radford

Kim is incredibly caring, engaging, and full of positivity. Throughout her law enforcement career, she has looked for ways to help not only the office, but also those in the community. Kim has pursued programs within the jail to help inmates improve their life situations, including a GED and substance abuse program. Her hours of dedication spill over into her personal time. Kim was responsible for the launch and success of Enabling Friends For Our Response Teams, an event where police officers interacted with individuals with special needs; this event lead to changes in response procedures. She also helped bring Growth Through Opportunity to Radford, which creates volunteer opportunities for individuals with special needs with the police department.

Krittanai (Gap) Pisarnpong, Blacksburg

Gap stands out for his service with New River Community Action's (NRCA) Head Start program. He began volunteering at Narrows Head Start in fall 2015, and quickly recognized the need for supplemental nutrition for the students on weekends. Gap researched how to begin a backpack program, then found a store to donate food, and brought the idea to his fraternity so he could schedule volunteers to assist. In connecting the program to his fraternity, he helped ensure it would continue beyond his graduation. After graduating in 2016, Gap has continued to help at Narrows. His dedication to students, particularly those in need, is a model of community ethic.

Marcia Murphy, Blacksburg

Marcia lends her grace and joy to the organizations she serves with. For the last two years, she has served with Habitat for Humanity of the NRV, focusing on the ReStore's inventory to help the store maximize its fundraising potential. Marcia also serves with To Our House, which provides assistance for homeless men. Her advocacy for food and shelter extends to service with the Gleaners Food Bank, Potato Drop to End Hunger, and Shelter Fest. A master gardener with a 500-hour service award, Marcia has served with the Stadium Woods project and Pandapas Pond's Pollinator Garden. Active with her church, she serves in its garden, and by knitting prayer shawls and baptism blankets.

Mel Hassan, Radford

A giving and energetic volunteer, Mell is incredibly generous and willing to help others. She is an active member of the Blacksburg Junior Women's Club, and volunteers with numerous organizations, including Micah's Backpack, the Lyric Theater, the Women's Resource Center, the Montgomery County Christmas Store, the Giving Tree Pantry, and the Radford Farmers' Market. In addition, Mell takes part in the Polar Plunge to raise funds for Special Olympics, and works with the Bobcat Backpacks to ensure children have food over the weekend. She is a regular team member for the Unity Christian Church Community Table, serving serves a free meal to anybody who comes through the door every Saturday.

Melinda Dunford, Radford

A deeply engaged volunteer, Melinda initiates action when she sees need and infuses kindness into the work that she does. She is the president of the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce, a member of the HHHunt United Way Campaign team, and a member of the Care Committee at her church. She also gives her time to food and school supply drives, and participates in various nonprofit fundraiser runs. As the campaign leader for HHHunt United Way, Melinda has helped HHHunt grow into a Top 10 campaign in the community. She is also a founding member of the NRV Express American Business Women's Association. At her church, Melinda serves on the Care Committee, caring for church members in their time of need, and helps coordinate drives for community resources.

Nikki Collins, Narrows

With her natural love of children, Nikki has been an exemplary foster mother through the Montgomery County Department of Social Services. With both foster and adoptive children, the amount of time she spends volunteering is endless. In eight years, she and her husband have fostered 22 children ranging in age between one day to 11 years old, and have adopted two children. As a Licensed Practical Nurse, Nikki is willing and able to foster children with severe medical issues, immersing them into routines with her two biological children.

Patsy Akers, Dublin

Patsy is a great seamstress who approaches life, and ministry, in the same way. If faith is the needle, she is the thread that joins two pieces of fabric to create something more usable and helpful for our community. Patsy takes charge in a way that brings others along, and gets things done. She has volunteered 300-400 hours a year for more than eight years with the Dublin Elementary School Backpack Program, which she has helped grow through her passion for the program and hard work. Patsy has been the Missions and Outreach Coordinator for Dublin's United Methodist church for many years. She also serves in supportive roles related to children and poverty issues.

Peggy Rasnick, Christiansburg

A longtime, dedicated volunteer at LewisGale Hospital Montgomery, Peggy takes her position seriously. She has served as lead floor volunteer for 12 years and has been repeatedly recognized for her work, winning multiple Outstanding Team Member Awards and two Volunteer of the Year Awards. Peggy not only covers her scheduled shift but, if a volunteer calls in sick and she is unable to find coverage for them, she will come in herself and make sure that our patients and her coworkers have full coverage. She has also been involved with American Cancer Society's Relay for Life of Montgomery County for 10 years.

Penny Sweet, Radford

Penny is generous and compassionate community member who is always willing to lend a hand to people in need. She is the NRV's Project Linus Coordinator, for which she organizes Blanket Day events where people from across the community send blankets to people in need. Penny has created partnerships with over 30 local agencies to supply blankets to children who have suffered loss and devastation. She has logged thousands hours of volunteers service with community agencies including Radford Elf Shelf, as a board member with Radford Department of Social Services, and Radford Clothing Bank. Penny has been a member of the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program for 10 years, and is an active member of Grace Episcopal Church in Radford.

Sara Perks, Blacksburg

Sara cares deeply about the well-being of others and demonstrates that on a daily basis. She is a longtime volunteer member of the parent teacher organization at Gilbert Linkous Elementary School, where she spends 2.5 hours each week in the school office, volunteers in classes as needed, and bakes for special events. Sara has also been known to help school staff on a personal level, such as watching their children or animals during trying times, or helping them get to appointments. She also volunteers at Blacksburg High School on a regular basis and at Virginia Tech. She is empathetic to others, no matter what their job title or nationality, and has a way of making things seem better.

Scott & Mendy Sink, Blacksburg

For more than 16 years, Scott and Mendy have integrated all aspects of their lives into supporting their community. They serve as role models for youth, inspire others to serve, and encourage people to get involved in agriculture. Through their businesses, teach workforce development skills to high school students with disabilities, and offer mentorship opportunities to high school and college students. Scott serves on the United Way of Montgomery, Radford and Floyd board, is a member of a Community Investment team, and is active with regional farm bureaus. Mendy is the leader of the model United Way campaign at HHHunt/Foxridge, and she has served in leadership positions with the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce.

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Sharon Eifried, Draper

A tireless volunteer, Sharon has served with the Pulaski YMCA for several years as a volunteer and board member. She played an instrumental part in getting raised flower beds installed and planted at the YMCA Child's Development Center. These beds allow the YMCA to teach children about planting, harvesting, and growing their own food. Along with this, Sharon also volunteers within the center as a teacher, and continues to find new projects and activities to engage children. She also coordinates and teaches volunteers to lead boater safety classes at the Y. She is an active member with NRV Master Gardeners, the NRV Art Center, and the US Coast Guard Auxiliary.

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Sharon Friedberg, Blacksburg

Sharon has unconditional compassion, empathy, and patience. She is a volunteer with the Roanoke Rescue Mission, To Our House, and serves as a parish nurse at Blacksburg United Methodist Church. With the Rescue Mission, she serves with their monthly Bless My Sole Ministry. A registered nurse, she uses her training to trim nails and check for foot wounds, which are often a source of pain and infection for the homeless. Sharon administers treatment and offers recommendations when additional care is required. She is willing to see everyone who comes until the last person is ministered to, and works to establish relationships with the guests as they receive care.

Susan Sutterer, Floyd

Susan is a caring, dedicated volunteer with a humble attitude. She has more than 10 years of volunteer service, including her work as chair of the New River Community Action Empty Bowls Committee, which provides lunch for over 550 people in her community. Susan is also a part of the Baking Gals program which started out by sending baked goods to soldiers, and now sends complete care packages. She also serves on the Floyd Center of the Arts' Community Membership Service Committee. In 2014, Susan befriended a community member in need and began delivering bags of fresh vegetables to her. She now visits her neighbor weekly to help out.

Tacie Jones, Blacksburg

Tacie is tirelessly committed to community arts programming. She holds true to her vision, and works in collaboration with other community members to make it happen. Under Tacie's leadership for the past five years, LoCo Arts has grown from a hopeful idea to a series of workshops to a steady force for students in Giles County. Now, LoCo Arts provides high-quality, reliable afterschool programs and summer camps where children participate in art projects and engage in self-discovery. She has also fostered others' ideas, helping create the Mayapple School, Newport's nature-based preschool program. Tacie also serves the chair of the board of the Newport Recreation Center.

Trish Muldoon, Pembroke

An experienced educator and community leader, Trish is passionate about literacy, education, and youth. She has been a member of the Giles County Rotary Club for 25 years, has served multiple times as club secretary. She led and implemented the Rotary's Little Library program and was responsible for the first Rotary Little Library being installed at the Holy Family Hostel in Pearisburg. Trish is also very active in her church groups and local Women's Committee. Now retired, she spends over 50% of her time devoted to volunteerism. Trish goes above and beyond in her commitment to her community.

Valerye Phillips-Downing, Riner

Valerye is willing to do whatever is needed to get the job done, and is a go-to person. She has been a part of the Riner Community School Volunteers for over 15 years. She has also been a part of the Radford Booster Club, volunteered with Mothers of Preschoolers, and is a Building Committee member at Auburn Middle and High Schools. Valerye has been the Auburn Elementary Parent, Teacher, Student Organization's class representative, she also is president of the Parent Teacher Organization for all three Auburn Schools and volunteers in the classrooms. Valerye also runs and organized the concessions stands and has organized and lead the SOL breakfast for students.

Vickie Spangler, Floyd

Vickie is the backbone of many successes, and is patient, generous, and kind. She is wholeheartedly dedicated to Floyd County's 4-H programs and the Farm Bureau. With 4-H, Vickie has served in many roles, including camp volunteer, volunteer leader, programs volunteer, and representative for Floyd County at conferences. A volunteer for over 40 years, several generations of children have been the beneficiary of her service to 4-H. Vickie is the treasurer for Floyd County Chamber of Commerces, the chair for Farm Bureau's Women's Committee, and a board member for the Farm Bureau. She also oversaw the growth and venue relocation of the Floyd Livestock and County Fair, which has shattered attendance records the past two years.

William Neely, Blacksburg

Bill has applied a lifetime of learned skills to the musical, spiritual, physical, and financial needs of many in his community. He provides spiritual support by participating leadership of his church's local and regional needs. Bill serves those in need through active involvement in the Blacksburg Presbyterian Church's firewood ministry. This group of volunteers identifies, cuts, splits, and delivers firewood. This outreach mission has been active for 20 years, and currently delivers over 50 truck loads of firewood to individuals in need every year.



What is the essence of life? To serve others and to do good.

-Aristotle



(L) Don Mullins, recipient of the 2016 Lifetime Achievement award with Leading Lights Board president Dick Arnold.



Lifetime Achievement Nominees



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.

Aldora Green, Blacksburg

Aldora has led a life of service, seeking to help people in need. Whenever she hears of a tragic situation, she is quick to respond with food or whatever the situation requires. She started working at 14 and worked for 71 years. She graduated from the Christiansburg Institute and worked at Radford University, spending 67 years with food services, eventually rising to a leadership position. During these years, she volunteered at Eastern Star and was recognized with the Presidential Service Award in 1955, the Heroine Award, the Limelight Award, and the Black Caucus Award. At 85 years young, she continues to serve and spends at least three hours a week at the Giving Tree Food Pantry.

Catherine Vaughn Pauley, Floyd

For decades Catherine's heart and efforts have been dedicated to helping the Floyd community understand the richness of its culture and help individuals appreciate their own unique contributions to it. As one of three founders of the Old Church Gallery, Ltd. in 1978, she continues to direct its evolution as Floyd's cultural center. Catherine has served on its board and is now the board's executive vice president. She also volunteers with numerous organizations in her community, including Floyd's Historical Society, the Ruritan Club, the Floyd Public Library, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Garden Club, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, 4-H, and Farm Girls.

Joe Thompson, Christiansburg

Joe is a tireless servant leader who has taken to heart his faith's values to minister people in need. With his wife, Margot, they established Dental Aid Partners of the NRV in 2009 as an extension of the Dental Benevolence Fund that they had previously established. Joe has led the organization in creating its mission and vision, and establishing its board. He currently manages the process of matching community members in need with donated dental services. Joe also created its website, which serves as a community resource, developed partnerships with several community agencies, and established the Dental Aid Day Clinics. He has also served on Warm Hearth Village's board for 15 years, including as board chair.

Larry (L.B.) Day, Christiansburg

L.B. exemplifies the concept of "good" in the community. He is incredibly active with Habitat for Humanity of the NRV. L.B. currently serves as co-vice board chair and chair of the Construction Committee, and devotes many hours to Habitat's programs. He 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 plans to replicate the program in Pulaski. L.B. serves as vice-chair of CV-CSI, a professional organization that focuses on improving the communication of construction information. He also ran a successful campaign to find a liver donor for Giles resident.

Margot Thompson, Christiansburg

Margot cares deeply about her community. With Dental Aid Partners of the NRV, the organization she started with her husband Joe, she works to create a culture of good dental and oral health in the NRV. She oversees and executes a number of activities in support of this, including providing every first grader in the NRV with a dental kit, distributing dental teaching aids for teachers, and donating dental supplies to school nurses. Margot helps coordinate dental screenings for and provides schools with educational materials. Additionally, she serves on the board of Good Samaritan Hospice, and is involved with the Montgomery County Christmas Store and the NRV Free Clinic.

Marsha Garrison, Christiansburg

Marsha is known for her enthusiasm and compassion. She serves with Literacy Volunteers of the NRV, the YMCA's International Women's Group, and a substitute teacher for her church's English as a Second Language program. Through her service with immigrants, she goes beyond her volunteer duties - helping one student practice her driving skills, another with a song she wanted to learn in English, etc. A nurse, Marsha volunteered for the NRV Free Clinic for over 20 years. She is also a "Mentor Mom" for the Mothers with Preschoolers, is on her church's fellowship committee, and volunteers with the American Diabetes Association.

Stephen Howard, Christiansburg

Stephen is reliable and willing to serve in any capacity. He has been a dedicated member of the Christiansburg Lions Club for decades. Stephen has served as treasurer for 34 years, and previously served as vice president and president. A active member of the Christiansburg Church of Brethren, he serves as deacon, moderator, and board chair. Stephen has been involved with the Montgomery County Planning Commission for more than 10 years, previously serving as the commission's chair and secretary. He is a member of the Montgomery County Boards of Appeals and the TRIAD council, and has served as a volunteer election worker for years.

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Woody Crenshaw, Floyd

A persistent advocate for the causes he's dedicated to, Woody has given countless numbers of hours, and years of service to the NRV through his involvement in a variety of organizations and projects. With tireless hands-on support and leadership, he has served as the vice chair for the Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Commission Foundation, the president of the Crooked Road board of directors, the president of Round the Mountain, a founding board member of the Jacksonville Center for the Arts, and president (as well as founding member) of Sustain Floyd. With Woody's personal support and leadership, Sustain Floyd created the Floyd Farmers Market and Friday Night Artisan Market, along with the Floyd County Artisan Trail and Tour Weekend.

Past Award Winners





High School

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

Collegiate

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
Matthew Johnson, Virginia Tech
Stephanie Connelly, Virginia Tech

Community Members

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

Lifetime Achievement

Don Mullins, Blacksburg Merilyn & Dave Armstrong, Dublin Dr. George Smith, Shawsville



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