

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



 *New River Valley
Leading Lights*

Celebrating Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Recognition Ceremony
April 12, 2022



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



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.**



Tonight's Program



Welcome & Introductions

Ann Cassell

NRV Leading Lights Board President-Elect

German Club Alumni Foundation Welcome

2022 Leading Lights Recognition

Keynote Speaker

Martha Ann Stallings

2021 NRV Leading Lights Distinguished Recipient

Distinguished Recipients

High School • College

Community: Floyd • Giles • Montgomery • Pulaski • Radford

Lifetime Achievement Award

Closing Remarks

A Note from the Board

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

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

Board of Directors

Dick Arnold, Past President
Virginia Tech German Club
Alumni Foundation

Ann Cassell
Montgomery County

Janiele Hamden
City of Radford

Amanda Jiménez Thornton
City of Radford

Kelly Kaiser
New River Community College

Rev. Bill King, President
Montgomery County

Meghan Kuhn
Virginia Tech

Ryan Martin
YMCA at Virginia Tech

John McEnhill, Secretary
Floyd County

Jen Rentschler
Radford University

Tim Rosche, Treasurer
Christiansburg Lions Club

Jill Ross
Pulaski County

Amy Slone
Pulaski County

Chris Stafford
Pulaski County

Terri Welch
Montgomery County

Award Selection Committee

Jenise Jacques
Bill King

Ryan Martin
John McEnhill



2022 *Leading Lights*



High School

Camden Hite
Gabiella Martin
Krystal Mattson
Gwendolyn Puckett
Josiah Shrestha
Grace Trent
Thai Yuvanavattana

* * *

College

Aaron Howard
Abigail Ridpath

* * *

Lifetime Achievement

Dora Butler
Susan Icove
Lester Karlin

* * *

Community Members

Sybil Atkinson
Kamala Bauers and Jack Wall
John Beasley
Harriet Berry
Sherri Blevins
Teresa Cassell
Donna Christian
Jane Cundiff
Garnie Dishon
Dave Dobyns
Morris Fleischer
Jason Golden
Karin Grosshans
Sandra Hagman
Andrae Hash
Gary and Meghan Hash
Pete Huber
Amanda Jiménez Thornton
Polly Myers
Peggy Rasnick
Vern Simpson
Paul Tremblett
Hazel Wines
Jean Woods



A Special Thank You



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

Leading Lights

Major Sponsors (\$1,000+)

The Community Foundation of the New River Valley
German Club Alumni Foundation

* * *

Flood Lights

Table Sponsors (\$500 - \$999)

Blacksburg Breakfast Lions Club
John & Elizabeth Dooley
National Bank
VT Engage

* * *

Spot Lights

(\$250 - \$499)

Richard M. Arnold	Long & Foster Realtors
Brown Insurance	David E. Lowe
Buffalo Mountain Zipline	Managed Growth, Inc.
Christiansburg Lions Club	William Neely
Delwyn Dyer	Craig E. Nesbit
First Bank and Trust Company	NRCC Educational Foundation
Habitat for Humanity of the NRV	Tim Rosche
Dr. Steve & Cathy Jacobs	Brian Torgersen Anthony Wade

Strobe Lights

(\$100 - \$249)

A Cleaner World	Mt. Tabor Ruritan Club
Ann Cassell	Charles & Andrea Parron
Celco Federal Credit Union	Minnis Ridenour
Crockett Home	Rotary Club of Floyd County
Improvement, Inc.	William Earle Spruill, Jr.
Thomas J. Dalzell	Christopher Stafford
Anita Franklin	Terry L. Strock
Richard & Phyllis Geoghegan	
Memorial Gardens of the	
New River Valley, Inc.	

* * *

Bright Lights (Up to \$99)

Mark J. Benson
Catherine Cotrupi
Meghan Kuhn
Randy Lundberg
Carl Polan
Mark B. Wigginton

* * *

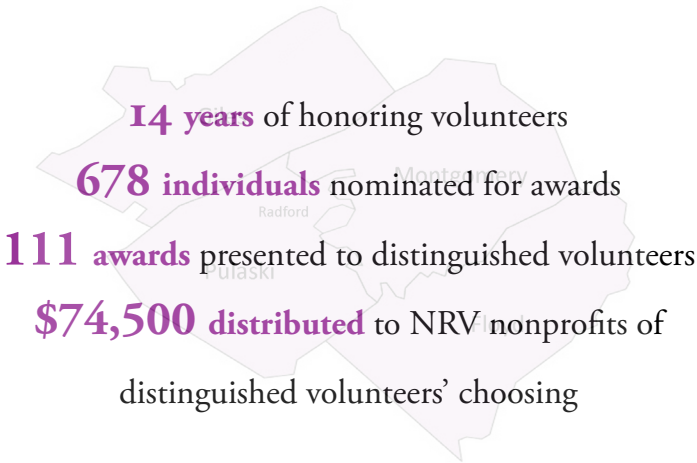
In-Kind Contributions

KymnImages Photography

HazelBea Catering



Our Impact



We are honored to recognize 36 Leading Lights this year. Tonight, 11 distinguished recipient awards will be given out: two High School, two College, along with Community Members for residents in the city of Radford, the counties of Floyd, Giles, Pulaski, and Montgomery, and a Lifetime Achievement recipient.

Each distinguished recipient will receive \$500 to donate to a New River Valley nonprofit of their choosing. The Lifetime Achievement recipient will receive \$1,000.



Stay Involved with Us



Nominate a volunteer this fall for the 2023 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 and is making an impact
- Demonstrates leadership and/or shows initiative

Join our Board or become a Community Advisor.

NRV Leading Lights is always looking for new board members. Members serve three-year terms, attend monthly meetings (Sept. - May), and participate on one or more teams (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:*

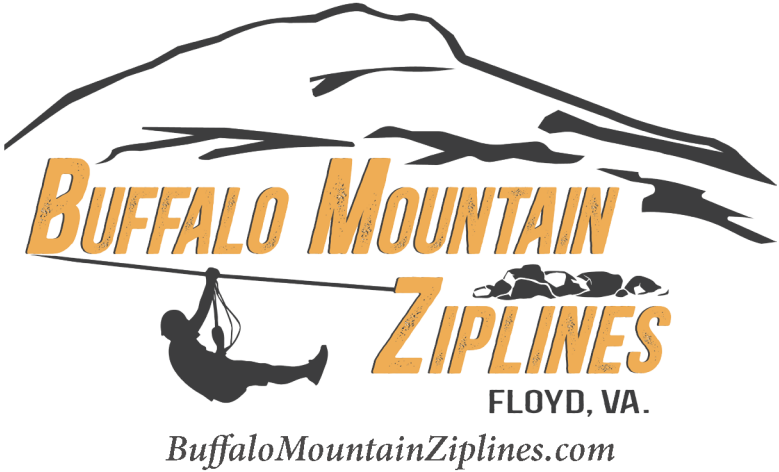
German Club Alumni Foundation
Memo line: NRV Leading Lights
711 Southgate Drive
Blacksburg, VA 24060

Donations can also be made online at leadinglightsnrv.org/sponsors.

Interested in becoming more involved with us?

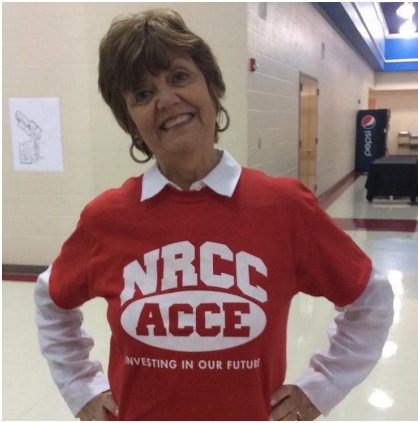
Contact us at leadinglightsnrv@gmail.com.

**Congratulations To All
Leading Lights And Distinguished Recipients
Thank You Nominators!**





Keynote Speaker



Martha Ann Stallings

Martha Ann Stallings is a Blacksburg resident who has spent her professional career in education while also volunteering throughout her community. She has an associate degree from St. Catharine Junior College, a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Eastern Kentucky University, a master's degree in education from Michigan State University, and a doctorate in education in curriculum and instruction from Virginia Tech.

Martha Ann's professional career includes work as a teacher for Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), supervisor of staff development for MCPS, and coordinator for inclusive practices for superintendent regions 7 and 8. She currently serves as the Dialogue on Race Montgomery County education chair, an NAACP Branch 7092 education committee member, a Blacksburg Baptist Church leadership committee member, a Delta Kappa Gamma member, and a New River Community College Educational Foundation board member.

She has received several recognitions that include Virginia Tech Chapter Outstanding Educator Award for Phi Delta Kappa, Distinguished Alumni Hall of Fame for Eastern Kentucky University, the Branch NAACP Community Service Award for the local NAACP chapter, and NRV Leading Lights Distinguished Recipient. Martha Ann was also a featured teacher in the HBO short documentary "Educating Peter."

Martha Ann currently spends her time volunteering as the Montgomery County Race for ACCE fundraising chair, a Blacksburg Baptist Church "Learning in Love" after-school tutor, a Dialogue on Race steering committee member, and a Montgomery County Christmas Store food team member.



High School Leading Lights



Camden Hite, Pulaski County High School

When he was just five years old, Camden began asking his family for canned food as Christmas gifts so he could collect and donate it to others in need. His heart of service continues now through his volunteerism with Radford/Fairlawn Daily Bread and Fairlawn Baptist Church. This Christmas, Camden's donations exceeded 1,400 food items. Camden is also an active member of his church and donates his time to the children's ministry helping with both the nursery and children's church. He is also actively engaged in the missions work of the church, outreach ministry or gleaning turnips, or any other project. Camden is also a role model to his peers at Pulaski County High School and leads by example.

* * *

Gabriella Martin, Pulaski County High School

Gabriella is an active student at Pulaski County High School where she is a member of Future Farmers of America (FFA) and the National Honor Society; she is also a member of the NRV Sheep and Goat Club. She helped run the first NRV Goat and Sheep Festival by bringing her own animals, setting up a petting zoo, and hosting an educational booth where she taught community members more about sheep and goats. As an FFA officer, she has completed a number of community service projects that have helped the high school, the middle school, and the community. She has also been involved with the design of the Sensory Trail at Pulaski County High School, a handicap accessible outdoor classroom space. In everything Gabriella does, she works to bring the school together, create peace, and educate others about agriculture.



High School Leading Lights



Krystal Mattson, Pulaski County High School

Krystal serves her community and her school through her work with Feeding America, Project Linus, Church of Christ of the Latter Day Saints of Fort Chiswell, SkillsUSA, National Honor Society and National Technical Honor Society. She is a Pulaski County High School senior who is very active in her community, church, and school organizations. Additionally, Krystal has worked on projects like Shoeboxes for Soldiers and Samaritan's Purse shoebox project where shoeboxes are filled and delivered to homeless shelters and often delivered across the United States and the world.

* * *

Gwendolyn Puckett, Pulaski County High School

Gwendolyn's service to her community includes efforts through Jordan's Chapel United Methodist Church, Pulaski County High School Cosmetology, SkillsUSA, and the National Honor Society. She is continually active with her church through many community service activities such as the Feed My Lamb backpack program. She also volunteers at senior centers and residential facilities with activities, assists with youth programs at her church, and collects Shoeboxes for Soldiers and seniors during the holidays. Gwendolyn also has assisted with care of hair, skin, and nails for seniors in residential homes as well as assisting students with special occasion styling. Gwendolyn is a diligent worker, true leader, joyous student, and lifelong learner.

* * *

Josiah Shrestha, Blacksburg High School

Josiah, a student at Blacksburg High School, has skills and interest in video work and recently devoted his time and skills to the YMCA in Blacksburg. He used his talents to create an outstanding video to promote the YMCA Food Program. He gave generously of his time to complete the project, and the video was shown all over the New River Valley to help foster interest in the food program. Josiah is wise beyond his years and encourages and engages others to participate in the creative process.



High School Leading Lights



Grace Trent, Narrows High School

Grace is a student at Narrows High School where she serves in numerous roles including student council, senior class committee chair, football cheer captain, Help Save the Next Girl, National Honor Society, and Fellowship of Christian Athletes. Outside of school, she volunteers with Rich Creek First United Methodist Church, Holston Conference Council on Youth Ministries, and American Heritage Girls. Grace exhibits an abundance of empathy for her peers, and she is a natural leader. She has worked tirelessly on many school and community projects to ensure that the needs of her classmates and her community are being met by planning, organizing, and leading activities that contribute to the wellness of her classmates as well as her community. Grace serves as a positive role model for younger students, a confidante for her peers, and an inspiration for others to contribute to their school community.

* * *

Thai Yuvanavattana, Floyd County High School

Thai is a student at Floyd County High School where she participates in Spanish National Honor Society, Beta Club, the gifted program, Future Business Leaders of America, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, American Welding Society, and the volleyball team. She serves her community through Project Floyd, BETA Club, elementary school PTO, volleyball team camp volunteer, cleaning up the Blue Ridge Parkway, and Spanish Week volunteer. Additionally, when Thai noticed that some elementary students were going without ice cream at school and books at home because they could not afford them, she created fundraisers called “Egg Rolls for Ice Cream” and “Egg Rolls for Books” to help ensure younger students did not go without. Her attention to detail is awe-inspiring. Thai is always the first to volunteer and the last to leave.



College Leading Lights



Aaron Howard, New River Community College

Aaron is a New River Community College student who participates in the Access to Community College Education (ACCE) program. Through ACCE, Aaron began volunteering at the Fine Arts Center for the New River Valley, where he was not only a hard worker but was also a very reliable volunteer. After a year of being closed, Aaron led the charge to help the center reopen through organizing art stock and supplies, archiving files, and inventorying gift shop items. He helped put together art kits for children and prepare the center for the first in-person classes in two years. Aaron showed initiative to recommend additional duties he and the other volunteers could support beyond his assignments. Aaron was known to work well with minimal supervision and get any assignment completed.

* * *

Abigail Ridpath, New River Community College

Abigail's volunteerism includes serving as a Glencoe Museum tour guide and a Young Life leader. As chapter president of Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) honor society at New River Community College (NRCC), Abigail took the lead for the Honors in Action Project, a fundraising effort to benefit the T.G. Howard Community Center. The project raised more than \$300 to help with center renovations. She was also highly involved with PTK's College Project, a faculty/staff appreciation event. Abigail has been an inspiring leader this academic year for the PTK officers. She is frequently coming up with new ideas about how PTK can serve the student population at NRCC. Her work ethic and positive and upbeat attitude are infectious, and others gladly follow her leadership.



Community Leading Lights



Sybil Atkinson, Pulaski County

Sybil finds time to volunteer with many organizations in her community including Friends of Peak Creek, Pulaski County Christmas Store, Town of Pulaski Board of Economic Development, and Christ Episcopal Church. Her work with Friends of Peak Creek helped to make Pulaski a more beautiful place by keeping the creek clean and vibrant as well as providing a source of pride to her community. Her work with the Pulaski County Christmas Store impacts many families during the holidays, but the volunteer work is a year-round endeavor. Sybil works to make her community a better place to live, and her involvement is a blessing to many people. She inspires others through her selfless devotion to and inclusion of others.

* * *

Kamala Bauers and Jack Wall, Floyd County

Kamala and Jack have together volunteered for many community organizations in Floyd including Habitat for Humanity, Blue Mountain School, New River Community Action, and Plenty! Jack and Kamala are supporters and advocates for everything Floyd as both volunteers and as financial supporters. They established the Bauers-Wall Foundation to support Floyd nonprofits and give back to the community in the areas of education, food access, and community development; the foundation was eventually transitioned to a fund through the Community Foundation of the New River Valley that continues to support the area. When a need arises or a project surfaces, Kamala and Jack are often the first to offer support. Their community impact has been immeasurable, and they can be counted on to assist with every project that helps the Floyd community.



Community Leading Lights



John Beasley, Montgomery County

John has volunteered with Habitat for Humanity of the New River Valley, Inc. and has worked on every Habitat build for the last eight years. He is an original member of the Builder's Club and has recruited other members to join as well. He lends his expertise in construction and building to help the organization complete homes for qualifying families. John also helps individuals in the community who need critical repairs in their homes but cannot afford them. John is committed to the mission of creating safe and affordable housing in the New River Valley. He has devoted countless hours making home repairs to ensure that local families are living in safe, warm, and dry conditions. John is a patient teacher, a mentor, and an inspiration to others.

* * *

Harriet Berry, Pulaski County

Harriet is the founder and current director of Heritage Cares Food Pantry, an organization that serves Pulaski and surrounding counties by providing USDA food to those in need. Harriet founded the pantry more than 17 years ago out of a small room in the church basement, serving only a few local families. The pantry has now grown to many rooms of the church basement and serves hundreds of families from Pulaski and surrounding counties. Harriet dedicates many hours of her time every week to making sure the pantry is stocked and prepared for the weekly food distributions to families in need; she also oversees paperwork and applies for grants to fund the pantry. Over the years, Harriet has inspired many others to volunteer their time to help those in need.



Community Leading Lights



Sherri Blevins, Montgomery County

Sherri has been involved in numerous organizations including the Christiansburg Lions Club, Virginia Chapter of the Lung Transplant Foundation, Youth of Virginia Speak Out About Traffic Safety, RSVP of Montgomery County and Radford, Living 4 Bri, Help Save the Next Girl, Montgomery County Relay for Life, NRV Wives Behind the Line, National Safety Council, League of Women Voters, Montgomery County Sheriff's Office Citizen Support Group, Republican Party of Montgomery County, and Christiansburg Baptist Church. Her service with these organizations includes serving, promoting, educating, bringing awareness, and fundraising for each organization's mission. Ultimately Sherri focuses on improving the quality of life for and giving back to her community.

* * *

Teresa Cassell, Montgomery County

Teresa has served the Montgomery County area through Valley Interfaith Child Care Center (VICCC), Luther Memorial Lutheran Church (LMLC), and 100+ Women Who Care New River Valley Chapter. Teresa has volunteered with VICCC for many years by leading fundraising efforts to alleviate co-pay costs for families during holiday seasons, and her efforts have resulted in raising thousands of dollars each year. Through the LMLC Social Ministry Committee, Teresa serves as a faithful volunteer and helps decide ways to provide financial support to local and global community organizations. Not only does she care deeply for individuals, families, and her community, but she also focuses her time and efforts on doing whatever she can to lift up humanity.



Community Leading Lights



Donna Christian, Montgomery County

Donna has served as team member, team leader, and the chair of the Montgomery County American Cancer Society Relay for Life for many years. She can often be found in her community day and night promoting Relay for Life and other great causes. She does not ask others to do what she is not willing to do herself. Throughout the pandemic, Donna has never wavered from her goal to make the Relay for Life event a success, whether the event was virtual or in person. During her time with Relay for Life, she has helped raise thousands of dollars for much needed cancer research. Donna has been able to use her positivity and assuredness to encourage others to not only donate to the cause but to volunteer as well.

* * *

Jane Cundiff, Floyd County

Passionate about nature and health, Jane's volunteerism can be seen through her service to Partnership for Floyd, Floyd Garden Club, SustainFloyd, and Floyd Flower Power. She also organized an annual health fair for networking between health professionals and the community. She is a leader and a worker. From trail building to presenting at public meetings and meeting privately with officials, Jane is always working to improve her community. Jane is an educator with 45 years of experience teaching biology and environment and uses this knowledge and experience in her work. She has taught seminars at Partnership for Floyd events on making herbal teas, plant identification, and the importance of nature and health. Jane encourages and inspires others to make Floyd an even better place to live.



Community Leading Lights



Garnie Dishon, Radford

For many years, Garnie has walked the entire neighborhood of Forest Park in Radford, sometimes twice a day, picking up trash from streets, gutters, and yards along the way. He keeps his neighborhood litter-free and attractive, and he is an icon in Forest Park because of his tireless efforts, no matter the weather. In essence, Garnie has become the goodwill ambassador for Forest Park in Radford. His generous, selfless beautification efforts in Radford demonstrate the pleasure of volunteering and giving of one's time with no expectation of recognition or reward. He has been a positive role model for all ages, and his community learns first-hand from him the value of doing something for the greater good.

* * *

Dave Dobyms, Pulaski County

Pulaski County, Friends of Claytor Lake, and New Dublin Presbyterian Church are three of the organizations that have benefited from Dave's volunteer service. In 2011 after a tornado, Dave volunteered as a construction coordinator with Pulaski County and was instrumental in rebuilding. Dave chairs the Building Committee at his church, where he coordinates repairs, building and grounds work. He represented the church on Pulaski County's Commerce Park Economic Development Board. Dave has served as a full-time volunteer clean-up coordinator for Friends of Claytor Lake (FOCL) since 2012. He supervises a full-time crew year-round, procures parts and repairs for heavy equipment, performs payroll duties, manages scheduling and calls for assistance, and coordinates with Pulaski County, American Electric Power, and other agencies. His dedication is unparalleled.



Community Leading Lights



Morris Fleischer, Giles County

At To Our House homeless ministry, Morris has served as the chair of the steering committee for many years. During that time, he has tirelessly promoted the organization through public speaking to churches, civic group meetings, and media outlets. He has also generated much of the organization's publicity, personally doing layout and design work. He is unfailing in his support of staff and quick to affirm the contributions of the churches on which To Our House depends for space to house homeless men and women. He has also served with the Giles County Christian Service Mission and with New River Community Action. In addition to volunteering, Morris promotes volunteerism to all those around him. He exudes a positive spirit which invites all to join him in service.

* * *

Jason Golden, Pulaski County

Jason's passion is bringing joy to children in his community through Hunters Helping Kids and Hunters Feeding the Hungry. He has also volunteered during Kids Fishing Day to help the smaller children bait hooks, cast, reel, and learn how to replace and remove hooks without harming the fish. Jason also donates harvested deer every year to Hunters Feeding the Hungry. He is an avid outdoorsman and uses those skills as a volunteer to take younger community members hunting on youth days for turkey and deer. Jason is very aware that families in his community struggle from food insecurity and tries to do his part to help. He has combined his love for outdoor sports and his desire to serve his community into a passion to help those around him, and in doing so, he has inspired friends and family to support the organizations he is passionate about as well.



Community Leading Lights



Karin Grosshans, Floyd County

Karin's service to the Floyd community includes work with the Floyd County Chamber of Commerce, Floyd County Tourism Development Council, Partnership for Floyd, SustainFloyd, Rotary Club of Floyd, Community Foundation of the New River Valley, and Floyd Merchant's Association. Throughout her service on the chamber, she is always willing to help businesses and individuals, and she is an advocate for tourism and supports businesses in her role as board member on the Floyd County Tourism Development Council. She has served on the Merchant's Association for more than five years and has been instrumental in organizing Floyd County's annual 4th of July celebration as well as the Floyd County Christmas Parade. Her volunteer work includes work with Warren G. Lineberry Park, eco fairs, health fairs, and more.

* * *

Sandra Hagman, Montgomery County

Sandra is a tireless volunteer who is a passionate advocate to end hunger in Blacksburg and has served on the Blacksburg Interfaith Food Pantry (BIFP) board for many years. There, she coordinates the purchase and delivery of bar soap and bulk food items distributed by the pantry to clients. She organizes and conducts community food drives to stock shelves, collaborating with Virginia Tech students, service organizations, and community volunteers. Through BIFP, Sandra also helps connect persons in need with appropriate relief agencies. She personally volunteers at the pantry to welcome clients, distribute food, take inventory, and make deliveries. She promotes the pantry in her community through speaking to churches, clubs, and civic organizations about the systemic hunger in the area.



Community Leading Lights



Andrae Hash, Montgomery County

Andrae's work includes service as an organizer, leader, teacher, activist, and lobbyist with Virginia Organizing and Fahe. Andrae has spent much of his adult life helping to empower those in the New River Valley to interact with those in power to affect positive change. Through Virginia Organizing, Andrae has helped teach people how to lift their voices for change in their communities. Andrae has led hundreds of workshops such as organizing clinics and power analysis meetings for the area to help people and organizations know what power is and how to differentiate the distinct types of power. He has helped countless people to get their rights restored. Andrae is also very active with his church group and always willing to help those around him.

* * *

Gary and Meghan Hash, Pulaski County

Gary and Meghan serve their community through the YMCA, Jubilee Christian Center, and the Women's Pregnancy Resource Center. They are specifically focused on youth success. They go above and beyond to teach the youth about God's love and mentor youth through sports. Together, they raise funds for children to have memberships at the YMCA to keep them active and off of the streets. Gary and Meghan guide the youth in their church and support them by showing up at their athletic events in the community. They also raise money to help young and single mothers with supplies and hold winter coat drives for children each year. Gary and Meghan are a constant source of support for many youth in their community.



Community Leading Lights



Pete Huber, Pulaski County

Pete has been a leader in community service projects in Pulaski County for over 30 years. Most recently, Pete volunteered to manage COVID-19 vaccination clinics in the Pulaski County community and schools throughout the New River Valley with the assistance of Martin's Pharmacy. A master of logistics and planning, Pete saw a need to quickly and broadly deliver a vaccine to all the citizens of Pulaski County. Partnering with Martin's Pharmacy, Pete and his team of community volunteers carefully guided citizens through every step of the vaccination process and created an atmosphere of incredible compassion. Pete's dedication to the health of his community is a reminder that the very core of the Pulaski community is based on selfless service to others.

* * *

Amanda Jiménez Thornton, Radford

Amanda's service includes work with the Radford City Democratic Committee, the 9th District Congressional District Democratic Committee, the Democratic Latino Organization of Virginia, The AWARE Foundation, Help Save the Next Girl, Animal Hope Alliance, Radford City Diversity Committee, and Radford City Resources. A five-year brain cancer survivor, Amanda continues to find ways to give back to the community that supported her during a difficult time. Amanda is a voice for people of color, women's rights, health care, voting rights, fair housing, and those with low income and food insecurities. She is also an outspoken advocate for fair representation, equality, and human rights to help make her community a better and safer place.



Community Leading Lights



Polly Myers, Montgomery County

Polly's faithful, consistent volunteer service includes work with Warm Hearth Foundation (Treasure Trove Thrift Store), RSVP of Montgomery County and Radford, and LewisGale Hospital Montgomery (LGHM). She has worked with Treasure Trove Thrift Store where she is a volunteer store clerk and helps with receiving and pricing donations, merchandising, cleaning, and greeting and assisting customers. The thrift store's sales support housing, health care, nutrition, personal care and pet food items for seniors living at Warm Hearth Village. At LGHM, she is a greeter and makes hospital visitors feel welcome. She has volunteered there for 11 years, giving over 2,000 hours of her time. She is also a previous recipient of the HCA Frist Humanitarian Volunteer Award.

* * *

Peggy Rasnick, Montgomery County

Peggy has been a volunteer with LewisGale Hospital Montgomery (LGHM) for more than 25 years, providing over 10,000 hours of volunteer service. During that time, she has served as a desk volunteer, a community helper volunteer, and an office volunteer, often greeting patients, visitors, and staff at the main desk. During the pandemic, Peggy was the lone volunteer, ensuring that things were done to ease the stress of the patients and the staff. She never wavered. Peggy has always been there to help those in need. She always has a smile and a hug for anyone who needs them. Beyond her selfless volunteerism, she has also encouraged friends to become volunteers for LGHM as well. Her love for the staff, patients, and fellow volunteers is endless.



Community Leading Lights



Vern Simpson, Montgomery County

Vern has volunteered with the Blacksburg Interfaith Food Pantry (BIFP) for 15 years in numerous roles including the volunteer director and assistant director of the food pantry. His responsibilities covered the spectrum of operations including food acquisition and distribution, client screening, volunteer training, facility maintenance, compliance with Feeding America and NRCA guidelines, as well as many other tasks. After assuming the role of volunteer director, Vern began taking steps to encourage community involvement. He has organized the efforts of over 200 volunteers to ensure that food is obtained and distributed to over 7,000 low-income community members annually. Particularly through the COVID-19 pandemic, Vern provided exceptional service to the community during an incredibly challenging time.

* * *

Paul Tremblett, Floyd County

Paul is a volunteer with the June Bug Center afterschool programs, where he has served for more than five years. He volunteers his time teaching between two and three different afterschool sessions every semester in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics). Along with teaching, he also helps with concession sales at events and assists with promotion, advertising, and instructional technology. Without his work, some of the center's programs wouldn't be possible. Paul is always out in the community talking about how wonderful the center's afterschool programs are, often recruiting his own students.



Community Leading Lights



Hazel Wines, Pulaski County

Hazel's volunteer service includes work with the Pulaski Pride of the Town and the Pulaski County Free Store. At these organizations, Hazel does everything from social media to keeping up with messages, emails, and calls to setting up the store and working with customers. She volunteers at the Free Store several times a week. Hazel seemingly never stops working for her community and is always willing to help in any way she can. She has helped provide free food and clothing to thousands in the New River Valley. Beyond that, Hazel has also helped to create safe spaces for LGBTQ+ people in her community.

* * *

Jean Woods, Floyd County

Jean founded The Perfect Gift Shop, a free Christmas gift shop where low-income Floyd children and developmentally disabled adults can pick out gifts for their loved ones. Over five years, 1,100 children have benefited from the shop. She also formed Floyd Flower Power, a nonprofit partnership for Floyd that initiates and promotes planting native flowers around the Floyd community. Her volunteer work includes I-81 Dog Transport, a rescue dog transport, and Angels in the Attic, a nonprofit boutique. Jean also serves on the Floyd County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors. In addition to her own volunteer work, Jean's positive, non-judgmental attitude draws diverse groups of volunteers across the county to support worthy causes.

Lifetime Achievement Leading Lights

Dora Butler, Radford

Dora is the former director of Radford Fairlawn Daily Bread (RFDB) and saw the organization through a major move to a new space in Radford thanks to a partnership with Long Way Brewing Company. Dora facilitated the partnership, which also brings in substantial donations through the brewery to the RFDB each month. Dora connected many to the mission of RFDB prior to the pandemic, but she was able to mobilize an entirely new volunteer set when most of her regular volunteers were elderly and therefore most vulnerable during the initial stages of the pandemic. She is a dynamic leader and a creative thinker, much needed qualities over the past two years. With her guidance, RFDB has also partnered with Radford City Public Schools and Unity Christian Church to ensure meals were available to children and seniors.

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Susan Icove, Floyd County

Susan's service to her community spans many organizations including Jessie Peterman Floyd Library, New River Community Action (NRCA), Floyd Initiative for Safe Housing (FISH), Habitat for Humanity, Floyd County Community Development Block Grant home repair initiative, June Bug Center, and Smart Beginnings. Susan spearheaded fundraising to support the library expansion that included an internet cafe, computer lab, genealogy room, new community room, and front desk. Susan brought FISH to the table to help shape Floyd County's vision, leading to a \$1 million Community Development Block Grant to rehab 15 homes in the county. Her fundraising efforts were also instrumental to the completion of NRCA's Floyd area office building rehab, resulting in a beautiful Head Start three-year-old classroom, new preschool playground, community room, and more.

Lifetime Achievement Leading Lights

Lester Karlin, Montgomery County

Lester is a volunteer with the Blacksburg Volunteer Fire Department, the Blacksburg Volunteer Rescue Squad, and the Villas at Peppers Ferry Homeowners Association Board. On April 16th, 2007, he received the call and responded to the tragedy at Virginia Tech. He set up triage units, cared for victims, and transported the wounded. His actions were essential in setting up the scene before additional rescue personnel arrived. Lester was also an essential part of the community effort to obtain a Burn Building, a live fire training simulator. Lester's calming presence has provided emotional stability and reassurance to many individuals over the years. His leadership style and giving of himself has inspired others to do the same.



Past Leading Lights Distinguished Recipients

High School

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

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College

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

Olivia Obertello, Virginia Tech
 Clendal Brown, NRCC
 Tanah Patel, Virginia Tech
 Danielle Kassel, Virginia Tech
 Addison Levy, NRCC
 Grace Ankeney, NRCC
 Jarrett Holmes & Erica Martin, Virginia Tech

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Community Members

Susan Sutterer, Floyd
 Ann Goette, Eggleston
 Diane Blair, Pulaski
 Jean Umberger, Radford
 Scott & Mendy Sink, Blacksburg
 Barnett Carr, Blacksburg
 Susan Icove, Floyd
 Donna & Doug Martin, Newport
 Ben Crawford, Blacksburg
 Melvin Robertson, Christiansburg
 Nancy & Bill Hudson, Fairlawn
 Keith Nunn, Radford
 Todd Fitch, Christiansburg
 Molly McClintock, Christiansburg
 Dr. Steve Jacobs, Blacksburg
 Mary Susan Vehorn, Radford
 Col. John Getgood, Floyd
 Doris Hendrickson, Radford
 Kim Schwenk, Blacksburg
 Jerry Higgins, Radford
 Rebecca Rees, Blacksburg
 Lindsay West, Blacksburg
 Phyllis Albritton, Blacksburg
 Pat Ballard, Christiansburg
 Mary Ann Hinshelwood, Christiansburg



Past Leading Lights Distinguished Recipients

John McEnhill, Floyd
Dr. Nelda Pearson, Radford
Margie Vitale, Christiansburg
Karen Cronin, Shawsville
Fran Rooker, Radford
Rador Vaden, Blacksburg
Vickie Spangler, Floyd
Lynn Hill, Giles
Archie Boothe, Pulaski
Penny Sweet, Radford
Janne Mathes, Blacksburg
John Galbraith, Blacksburg
Travis Cantrell, Floyd
Rodman Freeman, Giles
Daniel Grubb, Pulaski
Kelly McPherson, Blacksburg
Janiele Hamden, Radford
John Hess, Christiansburg
Rhonda Whaling, Blacksburg
Sharon Thompson, Blacksburg
Rebecca (Becky) Weeks, Floyd
Travis Sparks, Giles
Sally Warburton, Pulaski
Dr. Daniel Kelly, Radford
Elizabeth Warriner, Floyd
Hope Harrell, Pearisburg
Darla Bray, Blacksburg
Martha Ann Stallings, Blacksburg
Kathryn Daily, Radford

Lifetime Achievement

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



 New River Valley Leading Lights

 @LeadingLightsNRV

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*Program Production: NRV Leading Lights Public Relations team
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