



# New River Valley Leading Lights

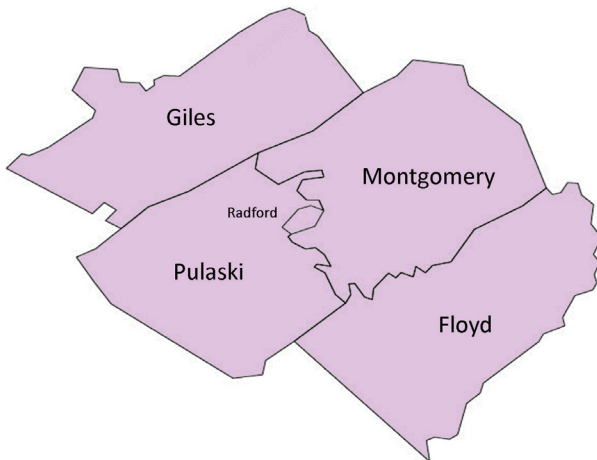


2021-22 Annual Report



## Celebrating Neighbors Helping Neighbors: Our Impact

New River Valley Leading Lights recognizes and honors volunteers across the New River Valley who are making community-changing impacts, culminating in an annual celebratory banquet.



**14** Years of Honoring Volunteers

**678** Volunteers Nominated as Leading Lights

**111** Distinguished Recognitions

**\$79,000** distributed to NRV nonprofits

[leadinglightsnrv.org](http://leadinglightsnrv.org)

*Pictured above are the high school Leading Lights present at the 2022 banquet.*

## From the Board: stories of service drive our work

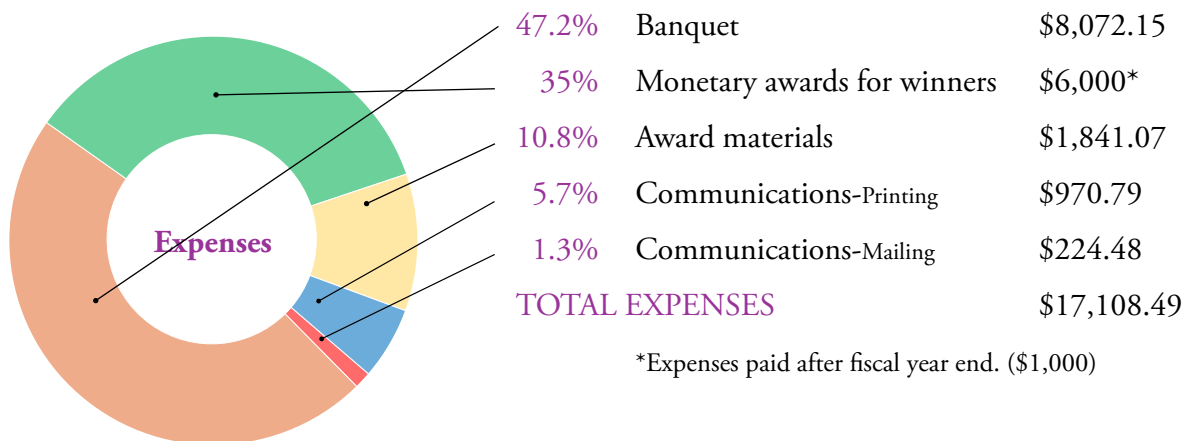
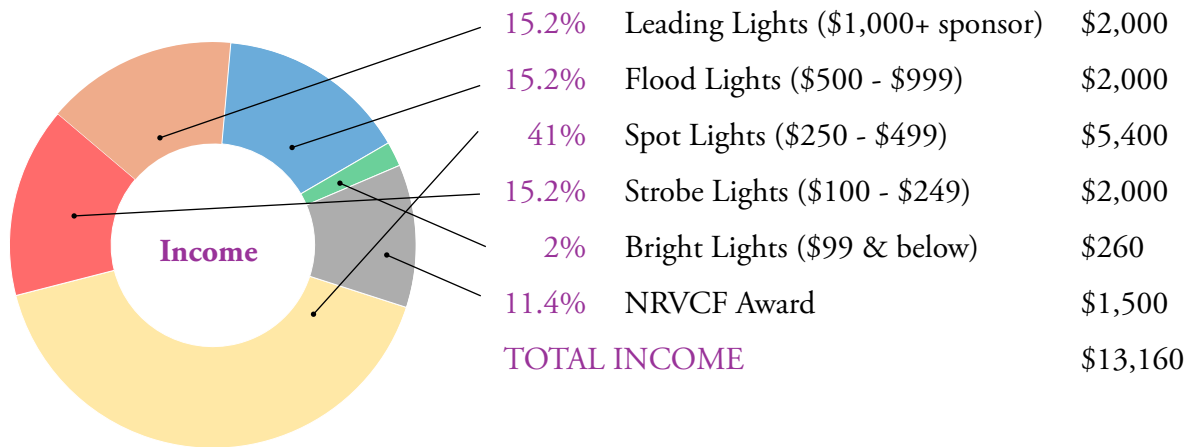
For 14 years, NRV Leading Lights has honored and acknowledged volunteers across our region, and this work continues to drive each board member. Distinguished Recognitions were given in the following categories for 2022: High School (2), Collegiate (2), Floyd County (1), Giles County (1), Montgomery County (2), Pulaski County (1), Radford City (1), and Lifetime Achievement (1).

Also this year, our volunteer board raised a total of \$13,160 from more than 40 different sources, including individuals, businesses, nonprofits, civic clubs, foundations, colleges, and universities. Our work would not be possible without your generosity and support year after year. Thank you! Our expenses totaled \$17,108.49, with our banquet making up more than 40% of our expenses. Other expenses included a total of \$6,000 in funds given to this year's Distinguished Leading Lights. Each Distinguished Leading Light chose a local non-profit meaningful to him/her as the recipient of these funds (donations).

As you read through this report, above all, we hope that you take away this: each of us owes a debt of gratitude to all those who serve our community. In 2023, please consider nominating someone at [leadinglightsnrv.org](http://leadinglightsnrv.org).

### *The 2021-2022 New River Valley Leading Lights Board:*

Bill King, <i>President</i>	Dick Arnold, <i>Past President</i>	Ryan Martin	Chris Stafford
Ann Cassell, <i>Vice President</i>	Janiele Hamden	Jen Rentschler	Terri Welch
John McEnhill, <i>Secretary</i>	Kelly Kaiser	Jill Ross	Amanda Winter
Tim Rosche, <i>Treasurer</i>	Meghan Kuhn	Amy Slone	



\*Expenses paid after fiscal year end. (\$1,000)





*Pictured above are Distinguished Recipients honored at the 2022 banquet.*

## 2022 Distinguished Recipient Snapshots

### High School

#### Grace Trent, *Narrows High School*

Grace serves on/as student council, senior class committee chair, football cheer captain, Help Save the Next Girl, National Honor Society, and Fellowship of Christian Athletes. She also volunteers with Rich Creek First United Methodist Church, Holston Conference Council on Youth Ministries, and American Heritage Girls. 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 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, she created fundraisers called "Egg Rolls for Ice Cream" and "Egg Rolls for Books" to help ensure younger students did not go without.

### College

#### Aaron Howard, *New River Community College*

Through the Access to Community College Education program, Aaron began volunteering at the Fine Arts Center for the New River Valley. 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.

#### 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.

### Community

#### Floyd County: Jean Woods

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 and Angels in the Attic.

#### Giles County: Morris Fleischer

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 has also served with the Giles County Christian Service Mission and with New River Community Action.

#### Montgomery County: Teresa Cassell

Teresa has served 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.

#### Montgomery County: Vern Simpson

Vern has volunteered with the Blacksburg Interfaith Food Pantry (BIFP) for 15 years in numerous roles including the volunteer director and assistant director. His responsibilities include food acquisition and distribution, client screening, volunteer training, facility maintenance, and compliance with Feeding America and NRCA guidelines. 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.

#### Pulaski County: Harriet Berry

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.

#### Radford City: Garnie Dishon

For many years, Garnie has walked the entire neighborhood of Forest Park, 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.

## Lifetime Achievement Award: 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 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.



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## How to Get Involved

### Nominations will open soon at [leadinglightsnrsv.org](http://leadinglightsnrsv.org)!

Do you know individuals or couples who meet the following criteria: 1) devote a significant, ongoing amount of time to service, 2) their service makes an impact and addresses community needs, and 3) they demonstrate leadership and/or show initiative? Nominate them!

### Become a board member or community advisor.

We are always looking for talented people to serve on our board and teams. Members serve three-year terms, commit to attending monthly meetings (September - May), and participate on one or more teams. Advisors have a less formal commitment where they lend their expertise to specific projects or teams.

### Donate or become a sponsor.

Every donation or sponsor helps support our efforts, and, in turn, our community. *If you are interested in donating, becoming a sponsor, or joining the board, please contact us at [leadinglightsnrsv@gmail.com](mailto:leadinglightsnrsv@gmail.com).*

## Connect with us!



New River Valley Leading Lights



@LeadingLightsNRV



LeadingLightsNRV

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*Above photos: Present 2022 Giles County  
& Floyd County Leading Lights; 2022  
Radford City Leading Lights; Present 2022  
Pulaski County Leading Lights; Present 2022  
Montgomery County Leading Lights*

**Credits:** Photos by Kymn Davidson-Hamley. Copy by Kelly Kaiser and Jill Ross. Graphic design by Lindsey Gleason.  
Front page map: Free Vector Maps retrieved from: [freevectormaps.com](http://freevectormaps.com).

