



New River Valley Leading Lights



2022-23 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.



15 Years of Honoring Volunteers

713 Volunteers Nominated as Leading Lights

123 Distinguished Recognitions

\$86,500 distributed to NRV nonprofits

leadinglightsnrv.org

Pictured above are the high school and college Leading Lights present at the 2023 banquet.

From the Board: stories of service drive our work

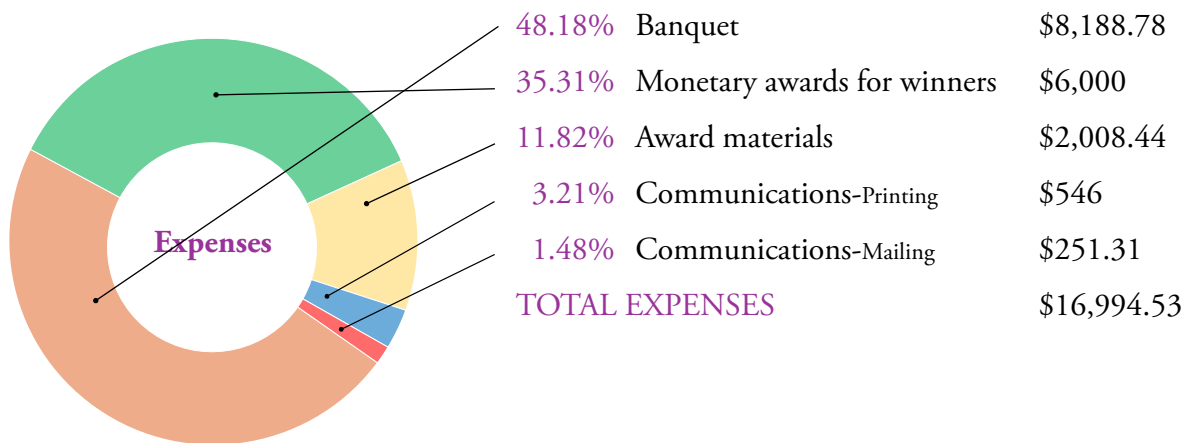
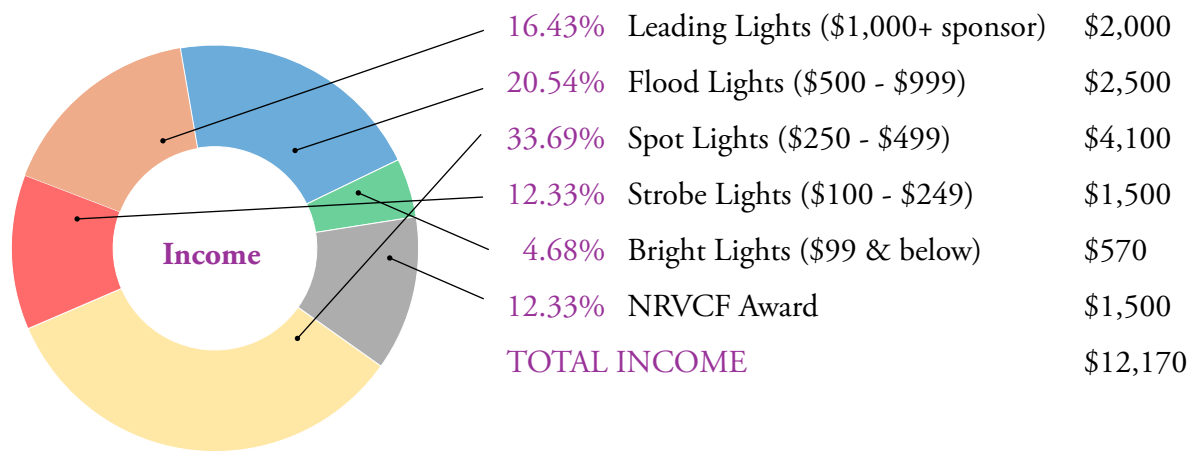
For 15 years, NRV Leading Lights has honored and acknowledged volunteers across our region, and this work continues to drive each board member. Distinguished Recognitions were given in the following categories for 2023: High School (2), Collegiate (2), Floyd County (1), Giles County (1), Montgomery County (2), Pulaski County (1), Radford City (1), Lifetime Achievement (1), and a one-time, special Founders Award (1).

Also this year, our volunteer board raised a total of \$12,170 from more than 35 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 \$16,994.53, with our banquet making up more than 45 percent 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 2024, please consider nominating someone at leadinglightsnrv.org.

The 2022-2023 New River Valley Leading Lights Board:

Ann Cassell, <i>President</i>	Rev. Morris Fleischer	Ryan Martin	Terrie Sternberg
Bill King, <i>Vice President</i>	Janiele Hamden	Jen Rentschler	Amy Webb
John McEnhill, <i>Secretary</i>	Kelly Kaiser	Jill Ross	Terri Welch
Tim Rosche, <i>Treasurer</i>	Meghan Kuhn	Chris Stafford	Amanda Winter





Pictured above are Distinguished Recipients honored at the 2023 banquet.

2023 Distinguished Recipient Snapshots

High School

Sarah Harvey, Radford High School

During her high school career, Sarah has been involved with various local community activities and organizations including tutoring, Book Buddies reading program, Mural Restoration, and Student Council Association. Some of her work includes helping with DIG PINK events doing set up, decorating, silent auction, and clean up; trash pick up in Pulaski County; volunteer babysitting; math tutoring; Bisset Park Cleanup; Bobcat Backpack Program; and more.

December Ward, Pulaski County High School

A Pulaski County High School student, December is involved in many activities including Future Farmers of America, Jaycee's bingo, and more. December has been an active FFA member and agriculture student for the past four years and has devoted countless hours to serving her chapter and program. December's major accomplishment has been the nationally recognized Sensory Trail which is an outdoor classroom space that is handicap accessible.

College

Cara Newbill, Virginia Tech

Through her work with Boy Scouts of America and Girl Scouts of the USA, Cara, designed and built two trail kiosks near the George Pearis Cemetery that help hikers and tourists understand where they are and what they are seeing. In addition to that project, she has served on Girl Scout camp staff for Rainbow's End Girl Scout Camp for at least six years. In Boy Scouts, she has served as Senior Patrol Leader, Assistant Senior Patrol Leader, Troop Guide, Junior Assistant Scoutmaster, and Chapter Chief, and currently serves as Vice Chief of Inductions.

Madison Webb, New River Community College

Madison, began her volunteer service with the Pulaski County Administration Office as a participant with NRCC's Access to Community College Education (ACCE) program. She was tasked with scanning all the active and inactive personnel files into an electronic filing system. Madison took on this task and spent more than 1,000 hours sorting, reviewing, and scanning files into a complex system that ultimately negated the need for numerous filing cabinets, creating much needed space.

Community

Floyd County: Greg Sazonov

Greg volunteers with Boy Scouts of America Blue Ridge Mountains Council as Scoutmaster, Roundtable Commissioner, and Introduction to Outdoor Leadership Skills Instructor. An Eagle Scout himself, he established the first female BSA troop, Troop 19, in Floyd County in 2019 with five girls and has since grown the troop to 24 girls.

Giles County: Larry Greene

Larry has served with Feeding America, Newport Community Board, American Red Cross, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Giles Health & Family Center, Giles County Social Services Board, and the Pembroke Town Council. His service has included delivering food boxes to senior citizens, working the free lunch program, and assisting with blood drives to name a few. Larry has even loom knitted hundreds of hats and scarves to distribute to anyone he thinks might need one or just as a kind gesture.

Montgomery County: Susan Madison

Susan's devotion to her community has been apparent through her volunteer service to many organizations including New River Community Action's To Our House (TOH), Montgomery County Christmas Store, and Blacksburg Baptist Church. She has been involved with To Our House through her church where volunteers provide meals for guests and offer on-site support and fellowship. She volunteers with the Christmas Store doing whatever is needed to assist.

Montgomery County: Debbie Sherman-Lee

A retired teacher, Debbie volunteers with Community Housing Partners, Christiansburg Institute, Dialogue on Race, The Community Group and New Mountain Climbers, Virginia Organizing, Montgomery County Christmas Store, Christiansburg High School Leadership, MC-RC-F Chapter of NAACP, 100+Women Who Care, Ashbury United Methodist Church, Appalachian Women of Action, Appalachian Women Rising, Montgomery County Race for ACCE, and the Montgomery County Education Foundation.

Pulaski County: John Ross

Through his service at the Fine Arts Center for the New River Valley, John gives countless hours of service through board leadership, facility maintenance and renovations, participation in arts education classes as teacher assistant, website maintenance/blogger, and in many other ways.

Radford City: Janell Dobbins

Janell's volunteerism in Radford has been significant through her work at Daily Bread Fairlawn, To Our House program, Radford Clothing Bank, Carilion Hospital, Project Linus and more. At Daily Bread, Janell has served in numerous ways including in the kitchen and with clean-up and serving as well as organizing food drives and delivering meals. Janell volunteered for 500 hours at the Carilion Hospital Gift Shop working in the shop and delivering newspapers to patients. Through Project Linus, she donated over 100 handmade blankets to children in need.



Above photos: Present 2023 Floyd County, Giles County, Lifetime Achievement, Montgomery County, Pulaski County, and Radford City Leading Lights

Lifetime Achievement: Judith Hess Jones, *Montgomery County*

Judith has poured decades of volunteerism into her community over the last 40 years through her work with numerous organizations including AARP Blacksburg Chapter, Lifelong Learning Institute at Virginia Tech, P.E.O. International, Virginia Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery, Blacksburg Presbyterian Church, Montgomery County School Board, Virginia Master Gardener Association, Montgomery County Christmas Store Board: Assistant Treasurer 2012-2019, New River Friends of the Roanoke Symphony, NAACP, and others.

Founder's Award: Dick Arnold, *Montgomery County*

Dick was co-founder of NRV Leading Lights and served as President of the Board of Directors for many years. He is an active lay member of the Blacksburg United Methodist Church, where he has spoken about his mission work many times, served on several committees, including Missions and the Church Council, and as a lay reader at worship services. He was President of the Blacksburg Sports Club from 2001-2005 and immediate past president from 2005-2009. He was the first Vice President for University and Community Relations as a member of the German Club Alumni Foundation Board and served on the Centennial Scholarship Awards Selection Committee. Dick is also a former President of the Board of Directors of the Virginia Tech Monogram Club. He also served as a member of the VT College of Engineering's Committee of 100 and as a member of the Industrial & Systems Engineering Department's Advisory Board.

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How to Get Involved

Nominations will open soon at leadinglightsnrv.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 leadinglightsnrv@gmail.com.*

Connect with us!

 New River Valley Leading Lights

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