passionate caring generous inspiring welcoming kindVolunteer. tirelessCommunity compassionate supportive service



Celebrating Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Recognition Ceremony

April 23, 2024

mentor loving vital eaderdriven enthusiastic supportive go-todevoted 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

Keynote Speaker

Jessica Wirgau

Chief Executive Officer of the Community Foundation

of the New River Valley

2024 Leading Lights Recognition

Distinguished Recipients

Robert "Bob" Job High School Award • High School Award

College Award

Community Awards: Floyd • Giles • Montgomery • Pulaski • Radford

Jim and Lenna Moore Memorial Award

German Club Alumni Foundation 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.

This program includes 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

Ann Cassell, *President* Tim Rosche, *Treasurer* Montgomery County Christiansburg Lions Club

Rev. Morris Fleischer Jill Ross
Giles County Pulaski County

Janiele Hamden Chris Stafford
City of Radford Pulaski County

Kelly Kaiser Terrie Sternberg
New River Community College Pulaski County

Rev. Bill King, *Vice President*Montgomery County

Amy Webb

Pulaski County

Meghan Kuhn Terri Welch Virginia Tech Montgomery County

Ryan Martin Amanda Winter YMCA at Virginia Tech City of Radford

Award Selection Committee

Morris Fleischer Bill King Janiele Hamden Terrie Sternberg



2024 Leading Lights



High School

Naisha Hudait Alexandria Woodward

College

Sydney Hardwicke

Lifetime Achievement

Dr. Richard Harshberger

Community Members

Dr. Wendy Baldwin Ruth Grene

Velva & Gordon Groover Gunin Kiran

Marsha Langston Smith

Melvin Lester

Maxine Lewis

Sally McCarthy

David McEwen & Amy Winkler

Holly McFall

Dr. Florence H. Mogen

Amanda Morgan

Andrea Muscatello

Steve Rapp

Clara Taylor

Paul Tremblett

Anthony Woodyard



A Special Thank You



This evening was made possible by our generous sponsors and donors.

Thank you so much for supporting NRV Leading Lights!

Special Contributions

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

Flood Lights
Table Sponsors (\$500 - \$999)

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Gail Billingsly
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Randy & Barbara Crockett
Floyd Rotary Club
Kerry Gillispie
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National Bank of Blacksburg
Earle Spruill

Bright Lights (Up to \$99)

Bob Dickerson Virginian Leader Corporation Mark B. Wigginton

In-Kind Contributions

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Our Impact



16 years of honoring volunteers

734 individuals nominated for awards

131 awards presented to distinguished volunteers

\$85,500 distributed to NRV nonprofits of

distinguished volunteers' choosing

We are honored to recognize 21 Leading Lights this year. Tonight, nine distinguished recipient awards will be honored: two High School, one College, along with Community Members for residents in the city of Radford, the counties of Floyd, 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 next 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/donations.

Interested in becoming more involved with us? Contact us at leadinglightsnrv@gmail.com.



Keynote Speaker



Dr. Jessica Wirgau
Chief Executive Officer of the Community Foundation of the
New River Valley

Dr. Jessica Wirgau began volunteering with the Community Foundation of the New River Valley (CFNRV) in 2005, working with numerous community members to read and score grant and scholarship applications. She later joined the CFNRV staff and became Chief Executive Officer in 2011. Serving the counties of Floyd, Giles, Montgomery, Pulaski, and Wythe and the City of Radford in Southwest Virginia, the CFNRV is a placed-based foundation that invests in the region by encouraging charitable giving, supporting innovative programs, and nurturing collaboration. Since 1997, the CFNRV has awarded more than \$8.4 million in grants and scholarships and led regional collaborations focused on early childhood education, food access, and health, among others. Jess earned her bachelor's and master's degrees from Duke University and the University of Virginia, respectively, and earned her doctorate in public administration and policy from Virginia Tech with a focus on organizational behavior and change management. Jess has served on numerous boards and committees including the Advisory Board for the Engagement Center for Creative Aging at Virginia Tech, the Renaissance Music Academy Board of Directors, the Blacksburg Partnership Board of Directors, the Oversight Board for the New River Valley's Regional Housing Trust Fund and more. She lives in Blacksburg with her husband and their two sons.



High School Leading Lights



Naisha Hudait, Blacksburg High School

Naisha, Blacksburg High School student, volunteers with Warm Hearth and Letters for Rose and serves on the BHS Student Council Association. She is passionate about caring for the unique needs of the elderly and cultivating a vibrant and engaging culture in the later years of life. At Warm Hearth, she has organized bingo games, birthday parties, and other activities, as well as helping the community stay fit with fitness and yoga classes. As the organizer for Letters for Rose, she focuses on reducing loneliness of the elderly population by creating and distributing personal letters, artwork, and more to local nursing homes. Through SCA, she helps raise money for the American Cancer Society and puts together Thanksgiving food baskets for those in the New River Valley.

* * *

Alexandria Woodward, Floyd County

Alexandria, a resident of Floyd, has been volunteering with June Bug Center for 20 hours a week each week for the last three years. Her responsibilities include cleaning, setting up programming, assisting instructors, and helping with the reception desk. Her upbeat attitude is contagious as she greets everyone with a smile. She is genuine and kind, and her dependability and patience are much appreciated by the center's staff and students. Alexandria is a positive, motivated leader with great potential, and she is truly a critical part of the daily operations at the June Bug Center. Her work dramatically enhances the lives of the children who attend the center.



College Leading Lights



Sydney Hardwicke, New River Community College

Sydney Hardwicke, a student at New River Community College and a resident of Radford, has recently provided more than 170 hours of service to her community. She has volunteered at local schools helping clean, move furniture, and prepare for school renovations. She serves at churches and daycare centers to help give back. She also seeks donations for a local animal shelter. At NRCC, she is a member of the Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Honor Society and serves as an ACCE Student Ambassador, representing the college locally. She has also served as a student advocate to the Virginia General Assembly. Sydney is a dependable, natural leader and sets an example to her peers through her actions.





Dr. Wendy Baldwin, Montgomery County

Wendy's service to her community includes work with Mount Tabor Ruritan Club, AARP Blacksburg chapter, Imagination Library of Montgomery County, Pan Jammers Steel Drum Orchestra, and a regional health fair event. She has been responsible for organizing and connecting volunteer efforts in the areas of organization, development, funding, community outreach, and more. In all of her leadership roles, she has inspired other volunteers while creating and leading current efforts and creating new opportunities for the future, even taking Spanish classes to help better communicate with local Hispanic families regarding literacy.

Ruth Grene, Montgomery County

Ruth devotes her time and skills to supporting Literacy Volunteers of the New River Valley, Dialogue on Race, Virginia Organizing, Interfaith Food Pantry, Montgomery-Radford-Floyd NAACP branch, Justice Advocates in the Roanoke Valley and New River Valley, and the Jewish Community Center. Her passion includes addressing injustices and inequities in housing conditions, education, food insecurity, and literacy. She spends countless hours behind the scenes to help make connections with others to support community causes.





Velva and Gordon Groover, Floyd County

Velva and Gordon generously spend their time serving their community through their work at Plenty!, Floyd Flower Power, Blacksburg YMCA, Habitat for Humanity, and the Perfect Gift Shop. Together, they plant and maintain the flower planter boxes in downtown Floyd to help improve the warm and welcoming aesthetic of the downtown area. They inspire others to join in volunteerism and are always joyful in their work. They go above and beyond to respond when help is needed and always serve with kindness and joyful smiles.

* * *

Gunin Kiran, Montgomery County

Gunin volunteers with numerous organizations in her community including the League of Women Voters of Montgomery County as president, Montgomery-Radford-Floyd NAACP, Dialogue on Race, Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library Board, Rotary Club of Blacksburg, the NRCC ACCE Program for Montgomery County, and the YMCA at Virginia Tech. She is also a former member of the Montgomery County School Board and continues to be passionate about public education. She steps up unselfishly to assist, encourage, and lead when needed, even reading to elementary school students throughout the school year. She has a unique ability to quietly lead and engage others.





Marsha Langston Smith, Montgomery County

Marsha's service to her community includes work with the Wonder Universe Children's Museum, Montgomery County Retired Educators Association, Montgomery County Race for ACCE, Delta Kappa Gamma, the Montgomery County Christmas Store, and Micah's Backpack. Marsha is always willing to help in any way she can to make the world a better place. As a school librarian with a heart for children and education, she endeavors to enrich the lives of local children and their families. Much of her work focuses on such causes. She is committed to volunteering whenever and wherever possible.

Melvin Lester, Pulaski County

Melvin has volunteered for over a decade with living history groups at Historic Smithfield, where he serves as a dependable volunteer who interprets history for visitors with an inspirational zeal. He has a passion for local history and takes any opportunity possible to share his knowledge with school children, college students, and visitors across the country and throughout the world. His volunteerism and dedication to his craft have inspired others to also volunteer at Smithfield. Melvin has developed a wide variety of historical programming and has become an ambassador for the New River Valley.





Maxine Lewis, Floyd County

Maxine has served with Plenty! for 15 years to help meet the needs of atrisk and low-income families in her community who are experiencing food insecurity. She helps make the organization a warm and welcoming environment for patrons. Through her kindness and service, she inspires others to be more considerate and helpful. She treats everyone she meets with respect and is loved by staff, volunteers, and patrons, making everyone feel at ease.

* * *

Sally McCarthy, Pulaski County

Sally serves as president of the Pulaski County Christmas Store board. Through the organization, she helps bring dignity to families living in poverty by helping supplement holiday shopping for their children. She works tirelessly for the upbuilding of her community through the Christmas Store by aiding those in need. Through her guidance and supervision, the Pulaski County Christmas Store has been able to brighten the holidays of thousands of children and families in Pulaski County. Her many gifts, including cultivating personal relationships, have led to recruiting additional volunteers and donors over her 20 years with the organization.





David McEwen & Amy Winkler, Montgomery County

David and Amy are two very dependable volunteers who put in countless hours volunteering at Historic Smithfield's gardens and grounds. They volunteer multiple times a week outdoors, often in rain, heat, or cold. They inspire others with their seal for making the gardens and grounds welcoming to visitors. Their work also helps produce fresh vegetables for the foodinsecure population in the local community. Their dedication and hard work are contagious, and they've been able to encourage other projects and additional volunteers. David and Amy are appreciated for their welcoming nature and kindness and all their accomplishments and investments in Historic Smithfield.

Holly McFall, Montgomery County

Holly has volunteered with the Montgomery County Christmas Store, BHS Athletic Boosters, Blacksburg Junior Women's Club, and To Our House through Blacksburg United Methodist Church. She has a genuine heart for service to her community and is an example of selfless service to others, inspiring her friends, family, and fellow community members. Over the last 20 years, she has served in leadership roles in various organizations and helps out behind the scenes, often coordinating quiet efforts to help those she knows are in need of assistance, whether it be serving the homeless in her church or volunteering in a more formal position.





Dr. Florence H. Mogen, Radford

Florence spends time volunteering with Necessities Pantry and the Angel Tree, sponsored by the Presbyterian Church of Radford. She also volunteers for the Elf Shelf, the Free Clinic, the Radford Clothing Bank, and the Bobcat Backpack Program. Florence's suggestion to create the Necessities Pantry and bring the idea to fruition has impacted more than 9,000 community members since 2019 by providing cleaning supplies and personal hygiene items to those in need. Though her work as a pediatrician requires much of her time, she still finds time to prioritize community service. She quietly and humbly inspires others to volunteer their time and pay it forward.

* * *

Amanda Morgan, Floyd County

Amanda spends her time volunteering with Plenty!. Through her work, she inspires others to share their time and energy in the community. She is energetic, team-oriented, and open-minded. As a board member at Plenty!, she is involved in all aspects of the operation, from picking up food to inspecting food to clean-up efforts and more. She always takes time to check in on staff members and pitches in whenever something needs to be done.





Andrea Muscatello, Montgomery County

Andrea is the director of the Interfaith Food Pantry in Blacksburg. Her time includes weekly efforts to coordinate 25 churches to serve hundreds of families each month. She works early mornings and late nights to secure food and serve the community. After retiring from her job as a certified public accountant, she now uses her financial background to help bring a strong and sustainable focus to the daily operations of the pantry. Keeping the organization financially stable ensures that it can continue to serve hundreds more families in the years to come.

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Steve Rapp, Pulaski County

Steve volunteers as president of the Friends of Claytor Lake board of directors. Steve has patience and the ability to think critically, which makes him the epitome of a leader. Steve has consistently stepped up in areas that need attention within the organization, while always continuing to promote the mission of the organization. Steve not only helps manage the organization that helps keep Claytor Lake clean of debris, but he is always taking time to show up to extra meetings that ultimately help the environment of Claytor Lake and its constituents.





Clara Taylor, Montgomery County

Clara's volunteerism focuses on the organization she created, From Me to You. For the last five years, she has been collecting children's items and donations to create bundles for families in need. The supplies include infant formula, diapers, wipes, clothes, toys, and other infant- and child-related needs. She personally delivers the supplies to each family. Through her efforts, she has helped hundreds of families in need. Her work and dedication to helping others is inspirational.

Paul Tremblett, Floyd County

Paul has been a volunteer with the June Bug Center in Floyd for nearly a decade. He volunteers at the center weekly, teaching STEAM programming such as robotics. He is kind, genuine, and well respected. His work with both the students and staff he encounters each week dramatically enhances their lives, and his dedication to education has helped bring confidence and selfesteem to the students in his classes. He has proven to be a dedicated, patient, and motivated instructor who truly enjoys teaching his students.





Anthony Woodyard, Montgomery County

Anthony serves as director of the New River Voices Choral Society and works with the ALS Association. Through his work with choral society music, he helps to bring healing and inspiration to audiences at local events throughout the New River Valley. He is a charismatic leader who is always available to support his choir members. He is always welcoming of any new members and makes each one feel welcome and supported.

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Dr. Richard Harshberger, Radford

Richard serves with numerous organizations throughout the New River Valley including the Radford Noon Rotary Club Co-Chair, Radford University/Radford City Joint Commission, Radford Child Development Center, Inc., City of Radford Tourism Commission, Radford Heritage Foundation, Fairview District Home Community Advisor, Community Foundation of the NRV Advisory Committee, NRV Agency on Aging, Radford Sesquicentennial Committee, Radford University Arts Society Leadership Committee, Community Foundation of the New River Valley, Bring Mary Home Committee, and Radford University Arts Council Leadership Committee. His dedication, leadership, and service are a model for servant leadership. Both his professional career and his volunteer service have been centered around helping others achieve their goals for the good of both their neighbors and community. He is a kind and caring gentleman who is quick to give support and praise to others to brighten their day. Not only does he help forge pathways in the areas of tourism, economic development, and childcare, but he also creates opportunities for others to step up and serve by training and encouraging new leaders.





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 Grace Trent, Narrows Thai Yuvanavattana, Floyd December Ward, Pulaski Sarah Harvey, Radford

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
Aaron Howard, NRCC
Abigail Ridpath, NRCC
Cara Newbill, Virginia Tech
Madison Webb, NRCC

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





Past Leading Lights Distinguished Recipients

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 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
Jean Woods, Floyd
Morris Fleischer, Giles
Teresa Cassell, Blacksburg
Vern Simpson, Blacksburg
Harriet Berry, Pulaski
Garnie Dishon, Radford
Greg Sazonov, Floyd
Larry Greene, Giles
Debbie Sherman-Lee, Christiansburg
Susan Madison, Blacksburg
John Ross, Pulaski
Janell Dobbins, Radford

Lifetime Achievement

Catherine Vaughn Pauley, Floyd
Don Mullins, Blacksburg
Merilyn & Dave Armstrong, Dublin
Dr. George Smith, Shawsville
Tom Sherman, Blacksburg
Carol Smith, Draper
Dave Roper, Blacksburg
Bill Ellenbogen, Blacksburg
Susan Icove, Floyd
Judith Hess Jones, Blacksburg





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