

2011 Governor's Outstanding Volunteer Award Winners

Paul Wilkinson Lifetime Achievement Award

John Kerns

Nominator: Lee Anderson, Ph.D

John Kerns has dedicated more than 30 years to educating people, improving the environment, and donating countless hours of personnel, equipment, and funding in support of community service projects. From participating in Arbor Day activities to offering free landscaping to organizations such as Christiana Hospital and Habitat for Humanity, there is nothing John will not do to improve the environment and community for future generations.

Individual Winners

New Castle County

Lonnie Dobbs

Arts and Culture

Nominator: Margaret Jenkins, Winterthur Museum

For the past 30 years, Lonnie Dobbs has served as an integral member of Winterthur's volunteer staff in the garden and registration departments. She is the go-to source for garden information and was even a co-curator for last year's exhibit *Lost Gardens of the Brandywine*. Since 2005, Lonnie has given more than 4,000 hours of service.

Roberta Headley

Education

Nominator: Alyssa Almond, Literacy Volunteers Serving Adults

Since 2008, Roberta Headley has used her extensive experience as a teacher by serving as an English literacy tutor for Literacy Volunteers Serving Adults (LVSA). In conjunction with promoting awareness about adult illiteracy, Roberta is an evaluator for the program and is responsible for assessing learners' skills. Roberta goes far beyond tutoring her students; she is also their cheerleader and supporter at citizenship exams. She cares about her students and it shows in all she does.

Marie (Chris) Stranahan

Public Safety

Nominator: Sarah Gilmour

For more than 45 years, Chris Stanahan has exhibited her commitment to our community by being a Red Cross health and safety instructor. She teaches four to five health and safety courses a month in areas such as CPR, water safety, and blood-borne pathogens. Additionally, Chris represents the Red Cross at outreach events, open houses and health fairs. For this work and more, Chris won a 2011 New Castle County RSVP Outstanding Senior Service Award.

Michael Waite

Social Justice and Advocacy

Nominator: Sara Funaiock, Ronald McDonald House of Delaware

For the past 15 years, Michael Waite has lent his trusted voice as a former WJBR personality to help advocate the mission of the Ronald McDonald House. Most recently, Michael has served two successive terms as board president, was a board member for the Ronald McDonald House for nine years prior, and also chairs the marketing committee.

Karen Wenner-Pedersen

Environment

Nominator: Julie Bartley, Tri-State Bird Rescue

For more than 15 years, Karen Wenner-Pedersen has assisted in raising and releasing hundreds of baby birds, in addition to providing much needed care for adult birds during the fall and winter. Over the years, Karen has taken on the tasks of restructuring the volunteer training workshops, training others on proper habitats, and transporting birds. For all this and more, Karen won the 2003 Pat Wolters Wild Bird Stewardship Award.

Kent County

Herbert Konowitz

Community Service

Nominator: Walter Bagley, Dover Interfaith Mission

Since retiring, Herbert Konowitz has devoted his time and energy to the Dover Interfaith Mission for Housing, an organization dedicated to providing assistance to more than 400 homeless men in the Dover area. Herb is the go-to person in managing our transition homes and obtaining employment for guests. Additionally, he is directly responsible for funding and the daily running of the center.

Sussex County

Cheryl Blackman

Human Needs

Nominator: Melinda McGuigan

Cheryl Blackman is KINfolk's most ardent and loyal supporter. Since 2002, Cheryl has sold more than 31,000 raffle tickets -- that is 95 percent of all sales -- to support this organization. Cheryl's efforts allowed KINfolk to install and maintain laptop lending programs at hospitals in each county. The programs reach more than 70,000 pediatric patients, siblings, and parents each year.

Ernest Colwell, 1SG (RET)

Human Needs

Nominator: Judith Pelkey, Camp Colwell Volunteer

Ernest Colwell founded Camp Colwell, a Delaware National Guard Youth Camp in 2000 after identifying a recurring need of support for youth with a family member in the Guard. Ernest, or Mr. Ernie as he is affectionately known throughout the camp, is involved in every aspect of the camp, donating more than 1,100 hours of service a year. Since its inception, the camp has grown from 25 youth to 80 campers, 50 junior counselors and 66 volunteer camp staff.

Norma Connelly

Community Service

Nominator: Karen Lloyd, Milford Senior Center

For the past 27 years, Norma Connelly has given her time, money and heart to volunteer at the Milford Senior Center, Heritage at Milford and never misses a day visiting at the Milford Memorial Hospital. She donates more than 1,100 hours a year and impacts more than 150 people a day. Days, evenings, and weekends, you will find Norma doing everything from bringing little gifts to those in the hospital to assisting with meals at Heritage. There is nothing she will not do to help those in need.

Kay Herrman

Community Service

Nominated by: Kevin Gilmore, Sussex County Habitat for Humanity

Kay Herrman is a key player in Sussex County's Habitat for Humanity (SCHFH) fundraising and land acquisition activities. During the past four years, Kay has spent more than 400 hours writing or gathering supporting information for grant requests, as well as identifying and negotiating the purchase of lots for homes. In addition, she chairs the Fundraising Committee, the Board of Director's Resource Development Committee, and the Advisory Committee Development subgroup.

Kate Hungerford

Community Service

Nominated by: Christina Motoyoshi, SPCA

For over five years, Kate Hungerford has donated 25 hours a week, serving as the volunteer coordinator for the Georgetown SPCA. There, she coordinates more than 100 volunteers and trains approximately 25 new volunteers each month. Additionally, she assists with fundraising, maintains the Facebook page and leads dog training sessions.

Reber Whitner

Health

Nominator: Jo Wilkins, Cancer Support Community of Delaware

Reber Whitner knows the healing power of yoga and enjoys sharing it with others. Reber first came to the Cancer Support Community as a participant. Soon thereafter, Reber came forward with an idea for a yoga program for men. Every week for the past three years, Reber has volunteered his time and talent to teach dozens of men the healing practice of yoga.

Group Winners

New Castle County

Ashland Lenape Longhouse Volunteers

Education

Nominator: Christy Belardo

Several years ago, a group of seven dedicated volunteers undertook a project to construct two Native American longhouses at the Delaware Nature Society's Ashland Nature Center for use in educational programming. Within eight months, this group had the first longhouse completed and had logged 1,100 volunteer hours. Several longhouses are now open for groups and school children to enjoy.

Project Consultants for Nonprofits

Community Service

Nominator: Jessica Feinberg, Newark Senior Center

Project Consultants for Nonprofits (PCN) began five years ago at the Newark Senior Center as a way to engage older adults in meaningful service. The PCN team approaches new projects as if they were paid professional consultants, meeting with organizations to develop plans, timelines, and to see how to best work together. The projects taken on by the PCN team are varied -- from running focus groups to developing marketing plans -- their service is priceless.

Supporting Kidds

Health

Nominator: Lewis D. Schiliro

For more than 20 years, Supporting Kidds has counseled hundreds of grieving children and their families throughout Delaware. The organization and its volunteers provide support groups, therapy sessions, group programs and more. These programs help children feel they are not alone by giving them support throughout the grieving process. In 2010, 28 volunteers donated almost 1,000 hours of service to 43 children and their parents.

Sussex County

The Sisters

Community Service

Nominator: La Esperanza, Inc.

The Sisters, known individual as Sister Rosa Alvarez, Sister Ascension Banegas, and Sister Maria Mairlot are an integral part of the Hispanic Community in Sussex County. The work they began almost two decades ago has resulted in the establishment of La Esperanza Community Center, La Red Health Clinic, and Gardenia House, a shelter for Hispanic women and children, many of whom were victims of domestic abuse.

The Talking Books Repair Team

Community Service

Nominator: Sherrie Stanley

For the past 30 years, the Talking Book Repair Team has lent its time and talents to repair audio cassette players for the Delaware Library Access Services. In the last year alone, this amazing team has repaired 66 cassette players, logging more than 300 volunteer hours.

West Seaford Elementary Foster Grandparents

Education

Nominator: Bonnie Cannon

Every morning, the Foster Grandparents at West Seaford Elementary greet each of the 75 first-graders they mentor and assist with a smile. These volunteers give their students attention and support with homework, which they may be lacking at home. Combined, these three ladies have given 40,000 hours of service to the 1,000 students they have worked with over the years.

Statewide

Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program of Delaware

Human Needs

Nominator: Crystal Baynard

Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Volunteers represents and advocates for abused and neglected children in court proceedings. Each volunteer spends approximately 20 hours a month, per child, being the “eyes and ears” of the court. Last year 225 CASA Volunteers brought hope to 559 children throughout Delaware.

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute- University of Delaware

Education

Nominator: Ruth Flexman

Since 1980, the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute has provided people age 50 and older opportunities for intellectual development, cultural stimulation and personal growth. All of their 350 plus courses are taught by volunteers. In just the past year, these volunteers have positively impacted the lives for more than 3,000 members.

Corporate Group Winners

New Castle County

FuturTech Consulting, LLC

Education

Nominator: Lucy O'Donnell. The Delaware Adolescent Program, Inc. (DAPI)

In 2009, The Delaware Adolescent Program, Inc. stood on the brink of closing due to financial issues such as technical support. FuturTech stepped in and volunteered its full staff support statewide in order to eliminate that line item from DAPI's budget. Since that time, FuturTech has provided countless hours of pro bono work, allowing DAPI to keep its doors open.