



OUTSTANDING SENIOR VOLUNTEER AWARDS

Columbus, Ohio

October 6, 2022

YOUR COMMUNITY — IS — OUR COMMUNITY

“Mutual” is more than part of our name.

It reflects a philosophy — people caring for people — that drives our dedication to improving the communities around us. As one of the largest health insurance companies in Ohio, we understand the vital role that economic, social and environmental factors play in the health and well-being of a community. We are committed to making Ohio a better place through our charitable giving, collaborations with community partners, and the volunteerism of our staff. We believe that by improving our neighborhoods today, we can positively impact tomorrow.



OUTSTANDING SENIOR VOLUNTEER AWARDS

MAKING AN IMPACT, LEAVING A LEGACY

For 30 years, Medical Mutual has recognized older adults in Ohio who selflessly volunteer their time and talents to help others. During the Columbus Outstanding Senior Volunteer Awards luncheon, we honor individuals age 60 or better who serve their communities in extraordinary ways, enhancing the lives of those around them.

Outstanding Senior Volunteer Award nominations are submitted by friends, family, colleagues and community organizations throughout the region that have firsthand knowledge of these exceptional volunteers. They exemplify Medical Mutual’s commitment to improving our communities through service and leaving a positive legacy for future generations.





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EILEEN BAESMANN

Nominated by
BETH SHELLEY, FRIEND

Eileen Baesmann founded Angels Persist in 2015. Based in Johnstown, Angels Persist is a secondhand shop run entirely by volunteers. The organization accepts donated items such as clothing, shoes and general housewares and resells them. Proceeds are used to help neighbors in need, including providing bill assistance, making donations to other charitable programs and organizations, and awarding scholarships to local high school seniors who embody the spirit of volunteerism. Every year, Angels Persist uses a month’s worth of profit to help local residents pay for medical procedures that may not be covered by their insurance. To date, the organization has donated more than \$411,000 through its unique giving strategy.

Eileen is an example of diligence and determination for her fellow volunteers as she handles the behind-the-scenes work needed to run Angels Persist. You can find her sorting and pricing donations, scheduling volunteers, paying bills and helping lead the board of directors – Eileen values each role she plays. She has overcome many challenges and devotes her time and talents to make the organization run smoothly.

“Angels Persist is a friendly and happy place to be,” said a volunteer who works alongside Eileen. “Many customers have stated that they love coming to the store not just for bargains but for friendship and stories. Eileen goes out of her way to make everyone feel special and important. Everyone feels her good energy as they pass through the doors.”

Words of Advice

“Don’t give up just because there’s an obstacle in your way. You can fulfill your dream.”

More People Should Know

“Angels Persist is always looking for volunteers, always in need of more shoppers, and it is 100% volunteer run with all proceeds donated back to the community.”



JANE JACQUEMIN-CLARK

Nominated by
KELLY MATTHEWS, FELLOW VOLUNTEER

Jane’s volunteer story began with her family’s cancer battles. Her mother passed away from pancreatic cancer when Jane was 10, and her father was later diagnosed with prostate cancer. In 2007, Jane was diagnosed with a rare form of thyroid cancer that typically has no symptoms. Fortunately, Jane’s case was discovered through an incidental screening. After her fight, Jane wanted to find a way to live out her gratitude for surviving cancer. She came up with the idea of opening up her home to others living with cancer.

In 2009, Jane and her husband, Kevin, founded Hope Hollow, a home away from home for those traveling to receive cancer treatment at Columbus-area health centers. In its first year, Hope Hollow provided 300 nights of lodging, both in the couple’s home and in hotels, to individuals and families. The second year, that number grew to 500 nights. By the end of 2022, Jane and Kevin anticipate they will have hosted about 2,000 nights. They personally help patients with transportation to and from their appointments, and they raise money for groceries and other needs that families might have during their visit. Jane and Kevin spend up to 60 hours every week caring for others through Hope Hollow.

Hope Hollow has grown so large that Jane and Kevin will soon need to hire staff to keep up with demand. Jane believes that being part of somebody’s cancer journey is a sacred and humbling experience. Her personal and family history with cancer has made her embrace her own mortality, and she feels comfortable emotionally walking with those going through it, too.

Words of Advice

“Always make gratitude a part of your life, because hope does spring eternal. Hope is essential to every journey, but especially ones that involve cancer.”

More People Should Know

“People tend to praise me for making a difference, but I wished more people knew just how much more I receive through volunteering. I have met so many courageous people and have gotten the opportunity to know and love them. They become family. It would be impossible to make this happen without other people.”



KAREN LANE

Nominated by
JERIA A. MILSTEAD, COLLEAGUE

From volunteering for Easterseals as a child to her decades-long nursing career to the time she now spends with her favorite charities, Karen’s dedication to caring for those in need is obvious. Throughout her career, Karen volunteered with several professional organizations, including the Ohio State University Nursing Alumni Society, the American Nurses Association (ANA), the Ohio Nurses Association (ONA) and the MidOhio District Nurses Association (MODNA). She took on leadership roles that positively impacted the trajectory of the program at each organization. As an example, Karen personally provided on-site management functions in the MODNA office during the search for a new executive director. She then oriented the new leader and assured a seamless transition for more than 4,000 MODNA members.

Karen’s impact has only grown since her retirement in 2001. Her nursing background has been highly beneficial to the organizations to which she is devoted. She has served on the boards for Grant Hospital Women’s Service and Riverside Methodist Hospital Cancer Services, and volunteered for Syntero, OhioHealth Kobacker House and the Acute Medicine Unit at Riverside Methodist Hospital. At Kobacker House, which offers hospice care, Karen stocks supplies, feeds patients and passes out snacks. She also reads to patients and lends an ear to those who just need to talk. At Syntero, she makes calls and visits patients. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, Karen worked with clients in their homes to help them better understand their medications, transported them to appointments, and taught them how take their own blood pressure and other basic skills. Karen admits that the biggest challenge in volunteering is that it’s hard to say no. “It’s easy to want to do everything because the need in the community is so great,” she added.

Words of Advice

“Be open to opportunity and ask for help if there’s something you’d like to do but are unsure about. There are so many opportunities out there; if you find something you like, just give it a try.”

More People Should Know

“The true value of hospice is not just for the patient but also their friends and families. Hospice reaches out to them to help them through the grieving process for 13 months after the patient passes.”



JOSEPH “JOE” MAROON

Nominated by
STEVE HILES, FRIEND

For more than 40 years, Joe has made an immense impact on his hometown of New Straitsville — and he shows no signs of slowing down. It all began in 1980 when Joe raised \$1,700 to brighten up New Straitsville with Christmas lights and decorations. Those Christmas lights have since grown into a yearly tradition and led to him becoming chair of the Christmas Lights Association. With the help of volunteers and local businesses, Joe personally decorates the village each season with lights that are now the length of the town’s two major highways combined.

Fast forward to the 1990s, when Joe not only brought the first of three veterans monuments to town but served as the coordinator of New Straitsville’s Memorial Day and Veterans Day observances. He continues to oversee the placement of flags on the graves of veterans at five area cemeteries. To bring even more pride to his hometown, Joe founded and leads the Keep New Straitsville Beautiful Committee, which organizes several cleanups throughout the year. He also created a community garden and a playground for families to enjoy. In recognition of his invaluable work, Joe was named Ohio’s 2015 Volunteer of the Year by the Keep Ohio Beautiful organization.

Joe’s passion for giving back comes from his deep faith and his desire to see others better themselves. He hopes that the next generation will be inspired to keep his efforts going.

Words of Advice

“Faith can help you through anything.”

More People Should Know

“Volunteering can change you in a way that is both overpowering and good.”



DORA STERLING

Nominated by
KAREN HEISER, FRIEND

Dora's career as a social worker had been truly fulfilling, so when it came time to retire, she was unsure of what to do with her free time. Luckily, Dora's Rabbi at Congregation Beth Tikvah in Worthington tapped her on the shoulder and asked her to assist in getting other older adults more involved in the synagogue. Dora dove right in by hosting focus groups to learn how they wanted to spend their time. She discovered that instead of joining the typical arts and crafts programs, this population wanted to be more engaged and continue utilizing the skills they had developed throughout their careers and lives. The focus group grew into a formal committee called Shishim, which now boasts more than 100 members.

That was ten years ago. Today, Shishim is the secret sauce that helps the elders of Beth Tikvah maintain a rich and expansive life at a time when others may feel their world is getting smaller. Shishim offers ways for members to stay connected and active through monthly lunchtime gatherings that include musical performances, field trips and educational lectures on topics such as elder care, antisemitism and climate change. During the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, Dora created the Yad Squad, a buddy system designed to help members meet new people and prevent isolation. Yad Squad members were matched with a friend with common interests who lived nearby so they could stay in touch while socially distancing. The program continued even as people began to gather in person again, and the friendships made through the Yad Squad are as strong and important as ever.

Dora has been inspired by other seniors in her community and feels that life is just as full as it's ever been. "Just wait until you retire!" she tells everyone. "You can use all the skills you've learned in life in a constructive way."

Words of Advice

"The Al-Anon Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions philosophy is a great mental health hygiene program. Following it has allowed me to learn how to let go and let God and my faith guide me."

More People Should Know

"The secret to better wellness for older adults isn't just about more nursing homes and health care. We need to connect with people and recognize their true value."

