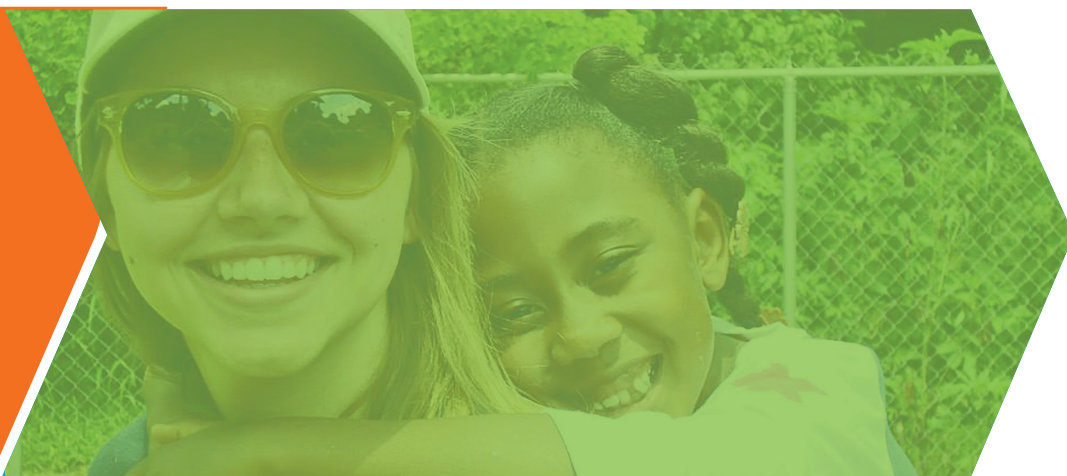




GIVE AWARDS 2014

**GOVERNOR'S INITIATIVE
FOR VOLUNTEER EXCELLENCE**

APRIL 14, 2014 • MISSISSIPPI MUSEUM OF ART



**Volunteer
Mississippi**

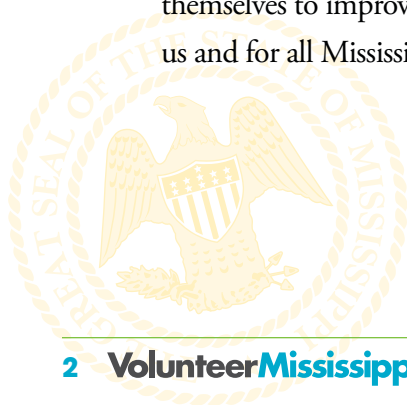
FIRST LADY DEBORAH BRYANT

HONORARY CHAIR, VOLUNTEER MISSISSIPPI



Mississippi is known as The Hospitality State, and I believe that runs deeper than just social graces. The Spirit of Mississippi lies in the important work of our hearts and hands in service to our communities. This is the lifeblood of our state's faith-based and nonprofit organizations, educational programs, and civic associations. Today, we highlight the extraordinary accomplishments and service of fifteen GIVE Award recipients and we salute the countless other Mississippians who selflessly give their time and talents to make our communities stronger, safer, and healthier. Time and again, the people of our state demonstrate a shared passion for service that bridges all social, economic, and cultural differences. Mississippi volunteers of all ages tutor and mentor children, serve meals to those who are hungry, offer companionship to the sick and elderly, coordinate after-school programs, assist in disaster response and recovery efforts, build and rehabilitate homes, support veteran and military family services, and restore the environment. We are "doers," finding innovative, creative ways to use our skills to meet unmet needs statewide.

The Governor's Initiative for Volunteer Excellence, or GIVE, Awards were established through the Office of the Governor and Volunteer Mississippi to recognize those individuals and organizations that have made an outstanding impact through their gifts of service, advocacy, and outreach on behalf of the citizens of Mississippi. Phil and I proudly congratulate the 2014 GIVE Award recipients, and we are pleased to celebrate the achievements of these extraordinary individuals and groups who give of themselves to improve lives and communities across our great state. Their stories serve as inspiration for us and for all Mississippians.



GIVE AWARDS

EVENT OFFICIALS & CONTRIBUTORS

W. DAVID MALLERY

Executive Director, Volunteer Mississippi

TOM LORD

Chair, Volunteer Mississippi Board of Commissioners

FIRST LADY DEBORAH BRYANT

Honorary Chair, Volunteer Mississippi Board of Commissioners

MARSHALL RAMSEY

2014 GIVE Awards Emcee and 2012 GIVE Award Recipient



A cartoonist, writer, and speaker, Marshall Ramsey spent his formative years in Marietta, Georgia. He accepted a scholarship to the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. While at the University of Tennessee, Ramsey served as the editorial cartoonist for *The Daily Beacon*, the University of Tennessee's daily student newspaper. Ramsey also won The John Locher Memorial Award, awarded to the top collegiate cartoonist in America.

Since his graduation from UT Knoxville in 1991, Ramsey's cartoons have appeared in *The USA Today*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News and World Report*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *The New York Times* and 450 other newspapers. His work has also been seen on CNN and CSPAN.

He's currently the radio host of "Now You're Talking with Marshall Ramsey" on Mississippi Public Broadcasting and the part-time cartoonist for *The Clarion-Ledger*. His work is also syndicated nationally by Creators Syndicate. He owns Tiny Wheels Media, a company that provides humorous and inspirational content. Ramsey was named a Pulitzer Finalist in 2002 and 2006.

Ramsey has also illustrated seven children's books for his cousin, financial expert Dave Ramsey (five of which appeared in Chick-fil-a kid's meals) and has illustrated *Nobody's Poet* for chef and author, Robert St. John. He has published two cartoon collections, *Marshall Ramsey's Greatest Hits* and *10! A Ten-Year Celebration*. His current books, *Fried Chicken & Wine* and *Banjo's Dream*, are local bestsellers.

Marshall is a melanoma survivor and has been honored by the Melanoma Research Foundation (2003 Winds of Hope Award) and the American Cancer Society for his work with promoting skin cancer screening. He is co-founder of Run from the Sun, a 5K race that raises money and awareness to cure melanoma. Ramsey recently ran The Marine Corps Marathon and raised \$13,000 for melanoma research. He has been honored as an Accomplished Alumni by the University of Tennessee and was awarded a 2012 GIVE Award for Outstanding Achievement by a Media Personality.

Ramsey, his wife, and three sons live in Mississippi, the greatest state for politics and raising a family.

WILLIAM "QUINT" WITHERS, V

Chair, 2014 GIVE Awards

Commissioner, Volunteer Mississippi

BETH FISHER

Judge, 2014 GIVE Awards

Commissioner, Volunteer Mississippi

BILLY CAMPBELL

Judge, 2014 GIVE Awards

Commissioner, Volunteer Mississippi

RONNIE AGNEW CLAUDIA MORRIS

Judges, 2014 GIVE Awards

Mississippi Public Broadcasting

DENISE and MIKE UPTON

Judges, 2014 GIVE Awards

Upton Tire Pros

PINKS DUDLEY

THE MARSHA MEEKS KELLY AWARD FOR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT IN VOLUNTEER SERVICE



Serving others seems to be a part of Pinks Dudley's DNA. She does not keep track of the hours, days, months, or years that she has served her community because she cannot distinguish it as a separate part of her life. Now in her 80s, her on-going volunteer activities have spanned decades and show no sign of slowing down. Pinks has many causes that are near and dear to her heart, but there are three organizations that seem to be getting most of her attention these days: Trinity Presbyterian Church PC (USA), Starkville Area Habitat for Humanity, and Starkville Bridges Out of Poverty.

As a charter member in 1973 for Trinity Presbyterian Church PC (USA) in Starkville, Pinks has served the past 41 years on Trinity's Service Committee, alternating between committee chair and committee member. Trinity's Service Program has grown to include local and international opportunities, with Pinks coordinating or participating in many events, including: Living Waters for the World, where members install water purification systems for small communities in El Salvador; Helping Hands Ministries of Oktibbeha County's Adopt-A-Family holiday donations drive; Casserole Kitchen, where twelve community churches share responsibility in serving a hot meal each Tuesday and Thursday to people in need; a biannual blood drive on church premises; Trash Angels, volunteers with the Adopt-A-Highway program; and the Salvation Army's Red Kettle Campaign.

Pinks was a founding member of the Starkville Area

Habitat for Humanity, and has served as a member of its board for 28 years. She and other board members spent the first several years securing land, fundraising, and selecting recipient families. Now that the chapter is able to employ full-time leadership, Pinks now attends monthly board meetings, visits with families throughout the building process, and advocates for Habitat's mission wherever she can. She is also a member of the Habitat Family Selection Committee and the Habitat Family Nurture Committee. There are many personal and difficult questions and conversations that take place during the Family Selection and Family Nurture processes to ensure each family is truly ready to embark upon home ownership; however, Pinks always acts with the utmost compassion.

Pinks has also served as a Steering Committee member of Starkville Bridges Out of Poverty since its inception in 2013, where she helps develop, implement, and facilitate programs; serves as an advocate for the nonprofit's mission; and builds awareness of services it provides to Starkville residents. Starkville Bridges programs are designed to empower those living in poverty who want to enact personal change and see the possibility of a better life.

Pinks Dudley wholly embodies the "Spirit of Mississippi." She does not serve to receive recognition, but rather believes service is the right thing to do. We thank her for the many lives that have been changed by her kindness and the shining example she provides to us all through her lifetime of serving others.



LAWRENCE R. ABRAMSON

OUTSTANDING SERVICE IN PUBLIC SAFETY

Larry Abramson began serving others 18 years ago with his decision to become a volunteer firefighter for the Summerhill Fire Department, ultimately becoming an Olive Branch Fire Department Board Member.

Recently, Larry began volunteering with the DeSoto County Emergency Management Agency, and joined the DeSoto County Sheriff's Department Search and Rescue Team (SAR). SAR is responsible for searching for lost and stranded boaters on the waterways within DeSoto County, searching for lost or missing persons, and assisting the Sheriff's Department in searching for weapons and other items in criminal cases. In late 2013, Larry assisted the Tunica County Sheriff's Department in a successful search for an elderly gentleman.

Larry also has a great love for animals. Since 2012, he has been a member of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) Field Investigations and Response Team. As requested, the team assists in sheltering animals displaced by disasters, as well as animals seized by law enforcement

in fighting, abuse, neglect, and/or puppy mill cases. Sometimes Larry's assistance is needed beyond our state borders. This winter, he was called to Florida to assist in sheltering and training over 200 pit bulls seized by the FBI in a five state fighting ring and to Kentucky to shelter 43 dogs seized from a puppy mill. Larry is also a member of the American Humane Association's (AHA) RedStar Rescue Team and the Mississippi Animal Response Team. He currently serves as the webmaster for the West Tennessee Therapy Dogs organization.

Larry volunteers for Make-A-Wish® Mid-South as a "Pre-Flight Captain," meeting families at the airport and making sure they get on their way smoothly. He is also a Wish Granter: a volunteer who meets with potential recipients, learns their wish, and later - through an elaborate surprise celebration - tells them their wish has been granted. Larry has already granted three wishes and helped seventeen Wish Kids and their families at the airport.

Larry is a devoted, skilled volunteer, and is always ready to jump in to help wherever needed.



CATHERINE BUFFINGTON

OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP BY A YOUTH



As a Girl Scout in Starkville's Troop 320, Starkville High School's Student Body Vice President, and member of the Starkville Mayor's Youth Council, Catherine "Cat" Buffington sets an impressive example of service. She began her commitment to volunteerism early by providing meals for needy families and individuals at the Community Casserole Kitchen at her church, First Presbyterian Church.

Cat has also participated in two mission trips to Honduras, teaching English in Santa Clara, feeding hungry children at Tejas, and providing preventive medications to over 500 children. Upon her return home, she helped raise thousands of dollars to help build a medical clinic in Santa Clara, and purchase books and supplies for their school.

At Starkville High School, she is a member of the Key Club, Fellowship of Christian Athletes and National Honor Society. She's also a varsity athlete, but when an injury landed her on the bench, Cat became an active support to her teammates. Her volunteer spirit earned her the Ben Bailey Leadership Award for Cross Country.

Currently, Cat is spearheading the establishment of UNITY, a concept she developed while participating in The William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation's Summer Youth Institute (SYI). Cat saw that young

people in her hometown are often divided by socialized boundaries, such as race and class. She has committed herself to engaging students from public and private schools in Starkville and Oktibbeha County for relationship-building through community service. UNITY is currently developing a community garden where students will work together to manage, maintain, and distribute their harvest at the Casserole Kitchen.

UNITY also brings students together to volunteer in community programs and projects as the organization builds its membership. UNITY's mission is especially significant, as her community prepares for the historic consolidation of city and county schools. Relationships forged before the transition between students at the affected schools will hopefully help to ease tensions as the students adjust to a new environment.

Cat also finds time to volunteer at the Oktibbeha County Humane Society, and is serving her first term with the Governor's Youth Advisory Council for Healthy Teens for a Better Mississippi.

Cat has learned to use leadership skills to bring others in her community together to serve—not only because they can accomplish more together, but also because they can improve the quality and character of their own lives through the relationships formed while serving together.



AL COLLINS

OUTSTANDING SERVICE BY A NATIONAL SERVICE PARTICIPANT

After years serving his country in the Navy and Air Force, it seemed natural for Al Collins to continue his service through volunteering. He joined the Harrison County RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program) Handyman Brigade, knowing his expertise in construction would benefit the organization. The Brigade offers handyman resources free of charge for seniors and people with disabilities in Harrison County, making homes handicap accessible, improving citizens' living conditions, and saving them thousands of dollars.

As a Handyman, Al has repaired homes and led volunteers to complete large-scale projects. Repairs are diverse, ranging from installing ceiling fans to fixing leaky faucets. He also makes safety improvements by installing ADA compliant ramps, shower bars in bathrooms, and flashing emergency porch lights. Recently, Al negotiated with the local Sheriff's Department to purchase shower bars, deadbolt locks, and front door peepholes. Al even installed angled peepholes for people in wheelchairs. Local law enforcement identifies high crime areas, and engages Al to install these safety features for citizens living in those areas.

Al has installed hundreds of reflective house number signs, which assist first responders in locating the

address, saving valuable time during emergencies.

Al goes beyond just home repairs, trimming trees, cutting lawns, and repairing computers for seniors. Al also volunteers to repair furniture at the Gulfport USO when needed.

Al is a driven volunteer who never loses sight of his mission. When a salvage yard offered to donate supplies as a going-out-of-business gift, Al worked all day in torrential rain salvaging wood for wheelchair ramps.

Al also coordinates with law enforcement to ensure seniors aren't caught up in the latest scams. He educates his peers, and offers his services as a liaison between seniors and the Sheriff's Department. The Harrison County Sheriff was so impressed with Al's outreach efforts, he deputized him!

Ever the patriot, Al convinced his local Sam's Club to let him set up a drop point so customers can dispose of old and torn American Flags. Al then picks up the flags and uses them to teach hundreds of Boy Scouts how to properly dispose of them with respect.

It's not all work for Al: he fosters play, as well. He built bean bag baseball toss games for local senior centers, and the best teams will compete in April's Senior Games. With a smile on his face and a humble heart, Al says he loves to serve others in any way he can.

CHARLES DWYER

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN DISABILITIES SERVICE



Two years ago, Charles Dwyer walked away from a lucrative career for a cause and a dream of devoting all his time to training dogs for a greater purpose: helping those who can't help themselves.

Charles is the founder and co-President of Retrieving Freedom, Inc. (RFI), a nonprofit organization headquartered in Senatobia, MS. Retrieving Freedom places individually trained assistance dogs with disabled veterans and autistic children. As their slogan says, "Where some see limitations, we bring opportunities."

Charles is passionate about dogs, and is a gifted trainer, ensuring each dog is ready to fulfill their owner's needs. Each dog that he places helps make a disabled veteran or a family living with Autism have a daily life that is easier to manage. Charles is always "on the job," whether that means training dogs, assessing individuals' needs, or hosting or attending fundraising functions to grow RFI's capacity to train quality service dogs.

Over 3,000 military veterans are diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome. With the military suicide rate reaching epidemic levels, the need for therapeutic service dogs is dire. Thousands of veterans have applied for service dogs, but it often takes

two to four years for them to receive these special companions. The dogs Charles trains will become the hands, legs, and friends of these veterans, providing aid and companionship while their owner copes with an emotional overload.

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Autism are both general terms for a group of complex disorders of brain development. These disorders are characterized in varying degrees by difficulties in social interaction, verbal and nonverbal communication, and repetitive behaviors. ASD can be associated with intellectual disability, difficulties in motor coordination and attention, as well as physical health disturbances such as sleep and gastrointestinal issues. Assistance dogs for children with autism are trained to retrieve on command to build teamwork through repetition, track their child by scent in case of separation, and to comfort their charges when they show signs of high anxiety or panic.

A service dog is more than a companion to these individuals: a well trained dog can make a tremendous impact on an individual's ability to independently interact in the world. In Retrieving Freedom, Inc., Charles has found a way to bring together his passion and his compassion for others.



**LYNDA
FAVRE**

**OUTSTANDING
HUMANITARIAN
SERVICE**

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Lynda Favre provided structure and support to the volunteer response, delegating work assignments for U.S. and Canadian volunteers. She assisted Pass Christian Police Officers, diligently supporting recovery and rebuilding efforts. It was during this time, in the face of overwhelming loss across all demographics, that Lynda found her calling to serve the needs of the local homeless population.

Hundreds of the Gulf Coast's homeless, many of them veterans, camp in the woods. While the people of the coast are generous in offering their time and donations, not many would venture into the woods overladen with supplies. Having no such reservations and seeing the overwhelming need, Lynda formed an organization whose mission is to help these campers survive. Shepherd of the Gulf, Inc. is a nonprofit organization providing the homeless with blankets, food, household items, and other needed supplies. Working with nonprofits, community organizations, and the Veteran's Association, Lynda helps many of the homeless find permanent homes.

Lynda's caring, compassionate nature has earned the trust of homeless campers. She packs necessities- many of the supplies purchased with her personal funds- and hauls them into the woods herself to distribute at the camp sites. Some individuals will not seek out traditional

homeless shelters because they have cherished pets they cannot leave behind. So, in addition to food for the human campers, Lynda carries pet food to the woods so that no one needs to choose between feeding themselves and feeding their companion animal.

Through community participation and donations, Lynda sponsors annual events for this underserved, often invisible population, including Picnic in the Park, Thanksgiving in the Woods, and Campers' Christmas. At each of these events, Lynda and other volunteers distribute food, clothing, and other items, and provide music and fellowship.

For many of these people, Lynda is their only communication outside of the woods. During this uncommonly brutal winter, Lynda has undoubtedly saved many lives by communicating weather alerts and open shelter locations to campers, as well as recruiting volunteers to build emergency heaters made of coffee cans and candles.

Lynda is also a member of the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), where she volunteers with the Disability Connection, and acts as a "Parent Partner" for an organization providing information, education and resources for children with disabilities. In all things, Lynda advocates for the less fortunate, and has done without to provide for others.

JEFF GOOD

OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SUPPORT BY A BUSINESS OWNER



Jeff Good is such an active source of leadership in the Jackson-metro area, his gift for community building often overshadows his entrepreneurship.

Jeff is President of Mangia Bene Restaurant Management Group, the owner/operator of three distinctive and beloved Jackson restaurants. The restaurants themselves are deserving of civic engagement awards: many Jacksonians have forged great ideas and partnerships over plates of fantastic food at the tables of Jeff and his best friend and business partner, Dan Blumenthal.

Jeff has authentic pride in his city. He serves as the Chair for the Greater Jackson Chamber Partnership's Vision 2022 Core City Committee. Vision 2022/ONE Voice is a long-term plan to transform the Greater Jackson Region into a destination, attracting businesses, families and tourists for its quality communities and economic opportunity. Due to the efforts of the Vision 2022 Core City Committee, Jackson was chosen as one of eight cities to attend the 2014 Community Progress Leadership Institute (CPLI). CPLI is a training program at Harvard University that focuses on equipping leaders with the skills to address large-scale areas of blighted and vacant properties for the benefit of the communities.

Jeff has served multiple terms on the Fondren Renaissance Foundation board, where he was instrumental in reorganizing the Fondren Central District retail

businesses into The Fondren Association of Businesses. A vocal advocate of marketing Jackson as a tourist spot, Jeff has been awarded the Jackson Convention and Visitor's Bureau "Friend of Tourism" award on four separate occasions.

Jeff is an outstanding community advocate, with a bullet list of accolades and achievements as long as a restaurant menu. He has served in leadership, board, or committee roles for many Jackson-based civic, nonprofit, and cultural organizations, including Metro Jackson Safe City Watch, Jackson Police Foundation, Mississippi Children's Museum, St. Dominic's Hospital, Metropolitan Crime Commission, Capital City Convention Center Commission, Fondren North Renaissance Board of Directors, Greater Jackson Partnership, Ballet Mississippi, and the International Ballet Competition.

Most recently, you may have seen Jeff as Master of Ceremonies at the third annual Sal & Mookie's Street Carnival, a part of the Zippity Doo Dah Parade® Festival Weekend, where he served as Lead Organizer. In the three preceding years, the event has raised over \$260,000 benefiting the Blair E. Batson Children's Hospital.

Jeff's expertise has been invaluable to the many organizations he serves, and his work inspires leaders of all backgrounds. Jeff empowers everyone around him to rise up and build the city they want to see.



JUDIE GRANDERSON HOLMES

OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO VETERANS & MILITARY FAMILIES

When Judie Holmes' son, Richard E. Holmes II, 28, lost his life to an overdose, Judie and her husband were determined to try to prevent other veterans from suffering similar fates.

An eight-year U.S. Army veteran, their son had difficulty acclimating to life back home. Prior to his death, he told his parents that his years in the service, his divorce, and the death of his own child had taken a toll, and he was struggling with addiction. After four months in a substance abuse rehabilitation program, he enrolled in film school, made new friends, and seemed upbeat. A year passed, and Judie and Richard thought he was recovering. Unexpectedly, Holmes took his own life.

The Veterans Administration estimates approximately 18 U.S. veterans take their lives each day—a statistic that has increased since the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Holmes Family believes their son may have lived if more resources to help veterans reintegrate into civilian life had been available. That is why The Richard E. Holmes II Memorial Foundation was founded on Veterans Day, two months after Holmes' death, to connect veterans with the personal and financial resources to transition back to civilian life. The Foundation is committed to addressing the mental, physical, and emotional needs

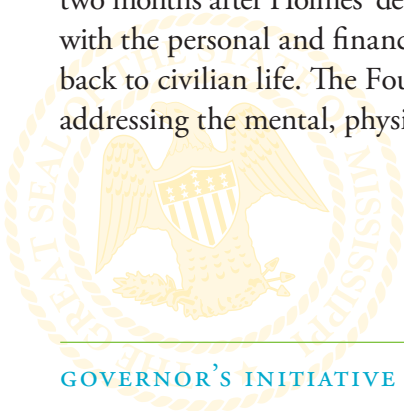
of veterans with a special emphasis on mental wellness, homelessness, and readjusting to society.

Currently, there is an eight to 12 month delay in monetary compensation from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for returning veterans. The Foundation hopes to provide a safety net for these patriots during this critical transition.

To raise awareness and community support of the Holmes Foundation, Judie pushed to establish a Memorial Day Walk/Run for Veterans' Causes held in Columbus. This year's proceeds benefit veterans of Lowndes, Oktibbeha, Clay, and Noxubee counties.

Despite her tireless efforts to grow the Foundation, Judie has also taken time to volunteer elsewhere in the community. She is a regular volunteer at the Loaves and Fishes Community Soup Kitchen and the United Way, sits on the board for the local Boys and Girls Club, and is a member of the Women's Council at Kingdom Vision International Church. She volunteers for annual events such as the Columbus Spring Pilgrimage, the Veterans' Health Fair, and Fireworks on the Water.

Dedicated to others needs, Judie Holmes has borne great tragedy, and through it, found purpose in the wake of terrible loss.



JOAN NICELEY

OUTSTANDING SERVICE IN THE PROMOTION OF HEALING



As a hair stylist, Long Beach's JoAn Niceley was used to her clients sharing their private thoughts and wishes with her, but she never expected that hearing one would change her life forever. Before friend and client Lynn Morrison died in 1996, she told JoAn it was her dying wish that affordable wigs would be made available to women and children battling cancer, as many wigs are expensive and take months to receive.

As a tribute to her friend's wish, JoAn founded the volunteer-powered organization, Pink Heart Funds. Pink Heart Funds is a ministry and outreach organization providing a variety of products and services, free of charge, to cancer patients and survivors. The organization provides wigs for those who are suffering from cancer or other disorders, post-mastectomy bras and lymphedema sleeves; as well as head-wrap demonstrations, eyebrow and eyelash application, wig styling classes, and inspirational support groups. Cancer patients are often understandably overwhelmed and depressed at the time of their diagnosis, so

Pink Heart Funds' cheery, whimsical decor and the supportive, caring environment help to lift their burdens for a while. The children's room is colorful and bright, while the women's areas are appointed in boutique furnishings and color schemes. Often, laughter erupts in the wig fitting area, a direct reflection of the joyful spirit JoAn brings to this work. It is a heartwarming, empowering moment for everyone when a woman happily and proudly models her new wig.

Surgeons, oncologists, nurses, and other medical professionals smile when asked if they know JoAn. They prominently display her brochures in their offices and will recommend her, knowing they are putting their patients into "good hands."

In 2006, JoAn herself was diagnosed with Breast Cancer. She underwent a six-year struggle involving surgeries and treatments. She believes cancer came into her life to teach her the value of living life to the fullest, so she uses her experiences as an opportunity to promote the healing of others going through the same emotional and physical stresses.





JOHN W. PACE

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN COMMUNITY BUILDING INITIATIVES

According to his family, John Pace has been championing causes and fundraising since grade school, but has honed his natural skills in the workplace and the community to everyone's benefit.

While working at East Mississippi State Hospital (EMSH), John chaired their annual United Way pledge drive, making it the facility's most successful pledge event to date. Wowed by his success, EMSH asked him to spearhead its March of Dimes campaign, which set a state record. That year the campaign was so successful that he was chosen as the area March of Dimes Walk Chairman. He was also honored as Outstanding Young Man of the Year by the Meridian Jaycees, and selected as the Meridian Moose Lodge's International Rookie of the Year award.

John is a creative, talented individual and uses his talents in art and music for good as well. John held fundraising concerts for worthy causes, including an annual concert to benefit the Baptist Children's Village. After a dying friend urged him to volunteer for a cancer charity, John painted two large canvases in tribute to his friend's life. He went on to donate these paintings to the Simpson County Relay for Life and Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure. Further inspired by his dear friend, he painted portraits of several Simpson County citizens who lost their battles with cancer.

From 2000-2010, he volunteered with the Mississippi Association for Healthcare Quality (MsAHQ), sometimes working alongside First Lady Deborah Bryant. Under his leadership, MsAHQ rocketed from the bottom of the nation to the top earning the Silver Award for State Associations.

John spearheaded a local LSU Alumni Association food drive to benefit Jackson's Stewpot Community Services. He also collected 66 cases of care items to send to a forward base in Afghanistan, selling his art to pay the shipping costs.

John's "flagship project" began in 2012, when he was approached to run the annual Mississippi Highway Patrol Toy Drive for Batson Children's Hospital. This particular effort yielded over \$30,000 in funds and toys. Last year, the campaign expanded to include a car show, auction, and raffle. These additions raised over \$43,000 in cash and auction items. With 400 donation locations in 73 counties, 3,000 volunteers collected more than \$25,000 in cash and 40,000 toys for Batson.

John's most recent initiative is working on an outdoor kitchen and recreation pavilion project at Sunnybrook Children's Home, and securing sponsors for "Team John Boy" a fundraising group who will raise money for charities while meeting personal fitness goals.

LINDSEY M. PELLITTIERI

OUTSTANDING SERVICE BY A COLLEGE STUDENT



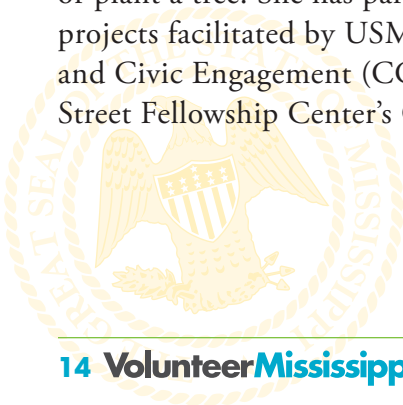
In Lindsey Pellittieri's three years at the University of Southern Mississippi (USM), she has thrown herself into her academic pursuits, as well as serving others. Some might see her future in early special education as service enough, but Lindsey has devoted upwards of 2,000 hours in service since arriving at USM.

Lindsey is a second-year AmeriCorps member with USM's Campus Link AmeriCorps program. Campus Link aims to lower the high school dropout rate in the state of Mississippi through tutoring and mentoring children in grades four through eight, preparing them for the rigors of high school and beyond. Lindsey is an enthusiastic tutor for children at Hawkins Elementary School, a local low-performing school with over 97% of the students on free or reduced lunch. Outside of AmeriCorps, Lindsey also puts in hours at the Dubard School for Language Disorders, preparing for the day she will stand at the head of a classroom.

While education is clearly her passion, Lindsey has been cheerfully willing to hammer a nail, paint a wall, or plant a tree. She has participated in several service projects facilitated by USM's Center of Community and Civic Engagement (CCCE), including Edwards Street Fellowship Center's Garden Project and

four "alternative break" programs. "Alternative Break" programs allow students to travel regionally and internationally to complete service activities. Individually, Lindsey has traveled to the Dominican Republic to volunteer with Project HOPE. In these service-learning scenarios, Lindsey has demonstrated an ability to think critically about the project at hand and its relationship to the "bigger picture." Lindsey is considered to be a gifted communicator and team builder; she puts these skills into action, defusing potentially volatile situations and ensuring there is clear communication between all teammates. As a sophomore, Lindsey was named to the USM Community Service Hall of Fame: at the time, she was the youngest student to ever receive that recognition.

Clearly, Lindsey has a bright, service-oriented future ahead of her, and will become an encouraging, positive force in the classroom. USM CCCE Director, Joshua DuPlantis writes, "It is rare to find a student who is willing to work as hard as she does on service project sites as well as in the academic arena. Lindsey is a gifted, practical, self-motivated person who works extremely hard and adds resources to any organization that she joins."





CYNTHIA MINTON WALKER

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN EDUCATION INITIATIVES

Cindy positively influenced hundreds of students during her long career as an educator; but her volunteer efforts as a leader and knowledgeable advocate for early childhood development and education may be the thing that shapes Mississippi's future.

Cindy co-founded MS Building Blocks, an initiative to provide school-readiness resources—mentors, classroom lessons, parent resources, business consulting—to pre-existing child care centers. She also became involved in several organizations, raising awareness, sharing her professional experiences, and creating lasting change. She served on the Gulf Coast Business Council's Education Committee and the Mayor's Preschool Initiative of Gulfport, secured funds as Chair of the Gulf Coast Collaboration for Early Childhood, and has worked with Excel by 5, an innovative community program to support young children and their families. Cindy also completed a Gulf Coast Business Council's Masters' class.

These collaborative and complementary efforts paved the way for Cindy to found the South MS PreK4Ward Initiative, a privately funded venture to establish free, high-quality preschools for four year olds on the Coast. The program has grown from one class of 20 in 2010, to five classes of 100 students today. Cindy

spearheads hiring staff, placing students, and fundraising for the initiative. She even serves as a substitute teacher, all on a volunteer basis. Her passion for school readiness has led her to meet with coastal legislators, where she shares research, program outcomes, and the documented benefits of early childhood development and education efforts. Cindy was instrumental in working with others in the Assembly to introduce and pass legislation that funded \$3 million in grants for preschools across our state.

Cindy still finds time to serve her community outside the initiative. She serves on several boards and committees, including the United Way of South Mississippi, the Education Vision Council, the Women's Initiative Steering Committee, the Coast Chamber of Commerce, the Disabilities Connection Advisory Council, Seashore Highlands Project for Elder Care, and the Women's Center for Nonviolence. She also volunteers with the Salvation Army, the Gulfport Rotary Club, the Heart Association, the First Methodist Church, and serves as a trainer for the Interfaith Disaster Task Force.

Cindy's efforts in early education are a gift to Mississippi's future, ensuring generations to come will be prepared to succeed on every level.

SPRINGHILL HISTORIC MEMORIAL GARDENS

OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY COLLABORATION INITIATIVE



The volunteers of Springhill Historic Memorial Gardens each have a similar goal: to bring beauty to Hernando's once forgotten Springhill Cemetery. The Springhill Historic Memorial Garden is an important piece of history, and a place of learning for the community. For some community members, it is the burial place of their ancestors. Over the last six years, a group of more than 300 volunteers has endeavored to establish DeSoto County's oldest cemetery, established in 1836, as a "museum without walls."

The Friends of Springhill fastidiously undertake all grounds maintenance tasks, but also plant spring and summer flowers to brighten up the cemetery. They carefully clean headstones and monuments and decorate for holidays. They have righted overturned tombstones and planted trees to halt erosion. Volunteers have organized many fundraisers and events to draw residents to the Memorial Garden, including a benefit concert, an Earth Day observance, and an annual All Souls Lamplight Tour. Year by year, the work of Springhill's volunteers reassert the cemetery's original purpose: a place to remember the dead, and a place of beauty and reflection for the living.

Many Northwest Mississippi Community College students, staff, faculty, and alumni are volunteers.

The college made a concerted effort to ensure Springhill's success, with several departments tackling large projects. The Art, Welding, and Technology departments collaborated to design and erect an iron works sign that will welcome visitors for years to come. Advanced Surveying students (led by faculty) mapped the cemetery, and students from the Botany department catalogued the trees currently growing in the cemetery. Recently, Drafting students designed a bike rack, so cyclists could visit without taking their bikes into the Memorial Gardens.

Given its small budget, the group's success is remarkable. While their efforts have received financial support through several generous community organizations, the group of volunteers ultimately aims to secure funding to restore monuments, indicate unmarked graves with Victorian ornamentals, plant native and exotic gardens that represent an aspect of Mississippi's history of great gardens, and essentially return the cemetery to its original state. This engaged collaboration of volunteers from businesses, schools, and civic groups has proven that it can transform a once-forgotten cemetery back into a beautiful, revered place of remembrance, reflection, and community pride.



ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY OUR LADY OF FATIMA CONFERENCE

OUTSTANDING NONPROFIT VOLUNTEER OUTREACH

The St. Vincent de Paul Society (SVDP) – Our Lady of Fatima Church Conference has been in operation for 30 years, staffed and operated exclusively by volunteers, with 100% of incoming donations funneled directly to the people they serve. Its mission is to reach out to the poor and needy within the Our Lady of Fatima parish area with material aid, encouragement, and spiritual support. More than 50 volunteers provide case management, assist the homeless, stock and organize a food pantry, staff the distribution center, make lunches, serve hot meals, and assist with day to day operations of the organization. Every week, SVDP volunteers collectively put in upwards of 283 hours of service caring for people in need.

The SVDP House of the Good Shepherd Office provides confidential emergency assistance to its clients such as rental assistance, utilities assistance, and access to items from the food pantry. It provides bus passes for those in need of transportation to job interviews, medical appointments, or meetings with state assistance offices. Clients may also receive vouchers for use at the SVDP distribution center, allowing them to select from donations of clothing, furniture (when available), and household goods.

The office also maintains a wealth of valuable resources to help clients seek additional assistance such as

medical care, state food assistance, and counseling. The SVDP Pharmacy provides over \$1.4 million annually in free prescriptive medicine to 4,000 medically needy individuals.

SVDP treats its homeless clients with dignity. They are given a bagged lunch and a hot meal to tend to their immediate needs. They are offered the opportunity to shower and wash their clothing. SVDP will also receive mail for the homeless clients, which is a great service: a permanent address lends stability to homeless individuals seeking employment.

SVDP works closely with many other agencies along the coast in an effort to help clients become self sufficient. Collectively, these coastal partners provide vital services to those down on their luck, training clients to be financially responsible, and helping them obtain affordable housing for themselves.

SVDP has served the community for decades and is well respected for its work for coastal residents. It is often easy to forget that these services are wholly rendered by volunteers acting with professionalism, compassion, and grace. Their efforts to care for those less fortunate embody the SVDP mission to reach out in the name of Christ.

SHAW PIT BULL RESCUE

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT BY A GRASSROOTS VOLUNTEER INITIATIVE



Since July 2012, Shaw Pit Bull Rescue (Shaw PBR) has found loving homes for 100 dogs, operating under the motto “American Pit Bull Terriers: love them, or leave them alone.”

Pit Bulls are the most abused breed in America—in great part due to lack of public education and sensationalist media. Since pit bulls are often the victims of abuse and neglect, many wind up homeless or abandoned.

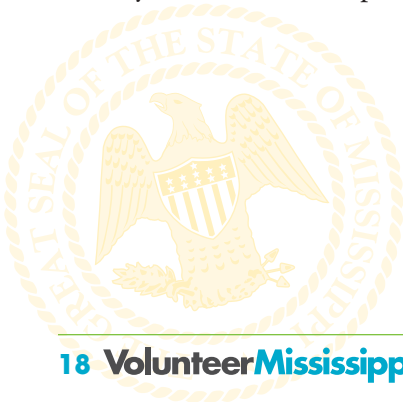
Kenneth and Aimee Shaw founded this grassroots rescue organization with the intention of helping save one or two dogs at a time. They worked alone for a few months, but quickly realized the need was larger than the two of them. Shaw PBR’s “PitCrew” now has Leslie Bailey as a third partner along with a faithful board of directors. They also have a new mission: to provide abused, abandoned or homeless pit bull dogs with the medical attention they need; as well as the love and attention they deserve to heal—both emotionally, and physically.

Sadly, for every pit bull successfully adopted, there are many more waiting for “forever homes.” For every success, 20 more “adopt-a-bulls” are waiting for their special person. Shaw PBR’s board and volunteers actively seek to foster responsible pit bull ownership

through low-cost veterinary spay/neuter programming, education, adoption, and breed advocacy. Aimee Shaw’s humorous, edgy T-shirt and sticker slogans raise funds while keeping the organization, and the cause, in the public eye. The rescue group and their fans engage others via social media and a positive presence at community events.

In June 2013, Shaw PBR was involved in the rescue of five horses, along with 23 pit bulls and four other dogs at a single location. The animals were found in poor shape, emaciated, and severely flea infested. As a result of this rescue, they were awarded a \$1,500 grant from the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to be used toward housing and care of the animals at the PBR facility in Columbus.

A vast amount of volunteer time, effort, and love is required to meet the daily needs of these animals, as well as the fundraising events and grant writing necessary to sustain this organization. Collectively, Shaw PBR volunteers commit to a minimum of 1,200 volunteer hours annually. Their services have been invaluable to the forgotten, neglected, and abused pit bulls in our region.



HONORABLE MENTIONS

MICHELE ANDERSON

Michele Anderson has occupied nearly every volunteer leadership role at the Oktibbeha County Humane Society (OCHS) for the past seven years. Her contributions include creating a volunteer manual and orientation program, re-establishing a short/long-term foster program, facilitating the area's first low-cost spay/neuter event, grant writing, and several fundraising events. In 2013 alone, more than 1,200 animals entering the Starkville Animal Shelter managed by OCHS found their "forever" homes. A full-time employee at Mississippi State University, Michele shares her volunteer time and expertise as a mentor to first-year students through MSU's Day One Leadership Program, and has served as chair of the Work-Life Balance (WLB) Committee at MSU for the past three years.

VIRGINIA LEE CORA

Virginia Lee Cora shuns recognition, preferring the satisfaction of dirt under her fingernails. As one of the "Cereus Weeders," she is an indispensable volunteer with the Eudora Welty House and Garden. Virginia Lee, a Master Gardener, has assisted Garden Consultant, Susan Haltom in creating a thorough inventory of the garden's plants, and has written a comprehensive garden tour script in time for the 10th anniversary of the garden's opening. Virginia Lee has held several roles at the Welty Garden: she served on the garden strategic planning committee; helped write a grant which will develop family and school programs; volunteers at special events year-round; and cares for the famous Night Blooming Cereus plants over the winter. She is currently studying Welty's life and work so that she may become an official Welty House and Garden docent.

MARTHA HUCKINS

After retiring to Oxford, former elementary school librarian Martha Huckins immediately got involved with RSVP (Retired & Senior Volunteer Program). As an RSVP member, Martha volunteers at the information desk at Baptist Memorial Hospital-North MS, leads tours and staffs the gift shops at William Faulkner's home, Rowan Oak and the University Museum. She also offers companionship at North MS Regional Center, provides training and expertise for the Lafayette Upper Elementary library, and volunteers with special events like Dr. Seuss "Read Across America Day", the Oxford Film Festival, and the Double Decker Fun Run. Martha feels that the time she spends volunteering is actually "like putting money back into the community."

RENEE LEE

As a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) volunteer, Renee Lee provides a voice for abused and neglected children in the Jackson County Youth Court System. CASA volunteers are sometimes the only constant adult presence in the lives of these children, and Renee not only advocates for her appointees, she empowers them. She has personally assisted two young people in acquiring their GEDs, and, with Renee's steady support, one is enrolling in college this year. She also finds time to serve other Jackson County youth as a Girl Scout Troop Leader, a Boy Scout Merit teacher, a Sunday school teacher at Family Life Church, and a Membership Chairman for L.E.A.D., an organization for underprivileged children.

BRUCE MATHES

Bruce Mathes has freely given his leadership, skills, and financial support to CLIMB CDC, an organization that provides housing and financial counseling, education, and on-the-job training for low-income, at-risk youth. Bruce secured \$100,000 in supplies and tools to allow the organization to rebuild or repair 700 homes damaged by Hurricanes Isaac and Katrina: he personally facilitated 50 of these projects. He has also provided repairs and maintenance to CLIMB CDC vans and the youth's personal vehicles, empowering them to seek on-the-job training or work to support their families. Bruce can often be found at Café Climb on Pot Roast Tuesday, enjoying the results of renovation projects he directed, and the delicious handiwork of the youth his work has supported.

ALLEN MCBROOM

Allen McBroom has honored his Scout's oath to "help other people at all times." He has volunteered with a local Cub Scout program for 27 years, including a decade as Scout Master for Boy Scout Troop 45 in Starkville. In January 2014, Allen retired as Scout Master, only to become the Vice President of Programs for the Pushmataha Council. In addition to Scouting, he is a volunteer firefighter, the Emergency Coordinator for the local Amateur Radio Relay League (ARRL), President of the Magnolia Amateur Radio Club, and teaches Taekwondo to area youth. Allen also runs a "Strings for Food" food drive where volunteers restring guitars for citizens who bring in nonperishable food items to be donated to charity.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

ANTHONY M. MCINTYRE

Anthony M. McIntyre, a decorated Iraq War veteran, returned home and began a new sort of campaign: fundraising and advocacy for veterans, heritage groups, and other underserved populations. For more than two years, Anthony has funded and organized major events to raise funds for his brothers and sisters in service. As Veterans Liaison for Mississippi M.O.V.E., he registers veterans to vote, and organizes food drives for homeless veterans and those enrolled or seeking case management from the state Veterans Hospital. Anthony has also spearheaded highly successful donation drives for veterans living at Grace House, an HIV/AIDS residency program. In addition, he co-chaired the 2013 Latin-Fest event and advocates against domestic violence and bullying.

MATTHEW MONROE

Matthew Monroe's service as an AmeriCorps VISTA and as a community volunteer is making an impact in the fight to reduce poverty in the Lafayette-Oxford-University (LOU) community. Matthew has served as a VISTA with the Luckyday Program-University of Mississippi and the Lafayette County Literacy Council, where he has recruited and trained volunteers, developed an adult literacy program, recruited university leaders to train at a local tutoring program, and raised awareness about food insecurity and homelessness. To bolster the work he does as a VISTA, Matthew gives a significant amount of his own volunteer time and expertise to the North-Central MS Medical Reserve Corps, Mississippi United to End Homelessness (MUTEH), the Ole Miss Food Bank, the Springfield M.B. Tutoring Program, and Interfaith Compassion Ministries (ICM).

MAYOR STEVE ROSENTHAL

Indianola Mayor, Steve Rosenthal throws himself into his job as a public servant, particularly in his support of the local school district. As a member of the P16 Community Engagement Council, he has personally campaigned for school district improvements, including the "Safe Routes to School" project, investigating safety issues, and ensuring schools are disaster resilient. The mayor visits area schools and recruits young leaders for the Indianola Youth Council and his Mayoral Youth Council. Mayor Rosenthal has led community and faith-based dialogues on reducing discipline problems at school and in the community. He has tackled other big issues like early childhood development, and secured funding and resources for safe play spaces. He chairs the Excel by 5 Coalition, and is a member of the SPARK Local Children's Partnership, and Sunflower County United for Children.

ROBERTA WEEKS

Roberta Weeks was selected as the 2013 Mississippi Parent of the year by the MS Department of Education for making a significant impact on school improvement efforts in the Lowndes County School District. Roberta's fluency in both Spanish and English has been a tremendous boon to teachers, non-English speaking students, and their families. She has served as a translator and cultural ambassador, helping build common ground between English as a Second Language (ESL) students and their peers in the classroom. Roberta also helps Spanish speaking families complete vital paperwork, find affordable health care, and obtain clothing when needed. She has also served many other community causes, including her role as a beloved "House Mother" to a home for at-risk young women for five years.

JUNIOR AUXILIARY OF RANKIN COUNTY (JARC) "CARING FRIENDS"

For nine years, the Junior Auxiliary of Rankin County (JARC) "Caring Friends" Volunteers have provided companionship and socialization activities for 60 youth with severe disabilities from Methodist Specialty Care Center. JARC spearheads several events, including "Operation Clean Sweep" (a day where the residents have one-on-one time with volunteers to discuss their goals for the New Year while they clean out their closets); an annual Mardi Gras ball; and a Summer Cool Down Social, which gives volunteers, residents, and their families a chance to mingle in a home-like, family environment. JARC also offers peer support from the Rankin County Crown Club, shopping trips, sports and cultural activities, and assistance in GED attainment, while never missing a birthday.

THE RETIRED AND SENIOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM (RSVP) OF MERIDIAN

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) of Meridian is an integral part of the community, with 150 members offering upwards of 36,000 hours of service each year. RSVP members provide peer support through calls and visits to nursing homes, hospitals, and the homebound. Just as many members are trained for disaster response through the Red Cross, and the same vast network is used to ensure the safety of isolated seniors and people with disabilities. RSVP of Meridian is seemingly everywhere: mentoring youth, collecting produce from local growers and distributing it to low-income families, serving and delivering food to those in need, notarizing Living Wills and other legal documents, coordinating mass mailings and toy drives, greeting visitors to our state, and much more.

VOLUNTEER MISSISSIPPI



Volunteer Mississippi engages and supports Mississippians of all ages and backgrounds in service to their communities. Volunteer Mississippi is the state office of volunteerism. Since its establishment as the Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service (MCVS) in 1994, Volunteer Mississippi has worked to encourage a culture of citizenship, service, and responsibility to our state and nation. In partnership with the federal Corporation for National and Community Service, and a wide range of Mississippi state and local agencies, nonprofits, educational institutions, and faith-based organizations, Volunteer Mississippi fosters community engagement and builds volunteer capacity throughout the state.

Volunteer Mississippi helps individuals rise to their potential by offering opportunities to strengthen our communities. The bulk of Volunteer Mississippi's national service programs support and enhance Pre-K and K-12 education initiatives, teaching students vital skills they will carry with them throughout their lives. National service opportunities also contribute heavily to Mississippi workforce development, offering participants practical experience and on-the-job training.

Our story—the story of volunteerism in Mississippi—is about service as a way of life. It's about leadership in our communities, our schools, and our churches. And it's about results statewide. In 2013, our AmeriCorps programs and the Volunteer Mississippi Network engaged 60,163 volunteers serving 396,496 hours, an estimated value of \$8,778,421.44.

Learn more about Volunteer Mississippi, AmeriCorps programs, and find volunteer opportunities in your community at www.volunteermississippi.org.

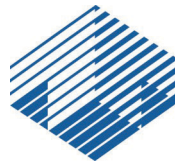
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