

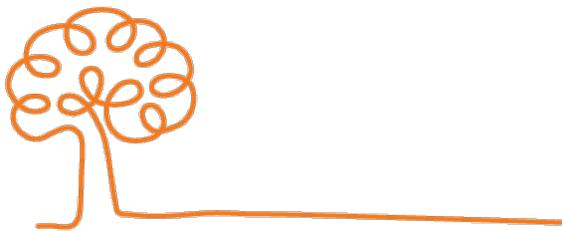
Celebrate Service

National Volunteer Week
April 10-16, 2016

Community Involvement Awards Presentation

Tuesday, April 12, 2016

Washington County Government Center
Stillwater, MN



community thread



Recognizing Outstanding Volunteers in Washington County!

2016 Community Involvement Awards

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Elise Hendrickson, Outstanding Youth Volunteer Award

Elise Hendrickson is a very active senior at Stillwater Area High School. In the words of Sara Pennebecker, Volunteer Center Program Manager at Community Thread, Elise stands out as a person who “is passionate about community service, using her skills to better her community and put others first.” Elise had the heart of a volunteer at a young age, holding her 10th birthday party at Feed My Starving Children to volunteer with her friends. Then, she began her volunteer career in 7th grade with her service hours for confirmation and the Stillwater National Junior Honor Society.

Today, Elise is involved with Community Thread, Stillwater Area High School National Honor Society, St. Andrew’s Lutheran Church, and Fellowship of Christian Athletes to name a few. Since her sophomore year, Elise has played an important role at Community Thread, helping recruit youth volunteers and regularly participating in almost all of the organization’s events—including Rake a Difference Day, Holiday Hope, Spring into Service, and Stuff the Bus. In 2015, she contributed over 30 hours recruiting an average of five to fifteen high school volunteers per event. According to Sara Pennebecker, “She is a compassionate leader who uses her infinite enthusiasm, organizational skills, and communication abilities to benefit her community.”

In addition, Community Thread partners with Stillwater Area High School to offer students the opportunity to earn a Varsity Letter in Community Service. In 2014-15, Elise earned her Varsity Letter and obtained the President’s Volunteer Service Gold Award for volunteering more than 300 hours in one year. She is working diligently to once again earn the awards this year.

One of the organizations Elise contributes most of her hours with is St. Andrew’s Church. Elise has been instrumental in helping increase the number of high school volunteers willing to teach Sunday School. Her “attitude of leadership is contagious with whatever she does,” says Ellen Skaja, the church’s Elementary Education Minister. Elise leads by example teaching her own group of 3rd graders and volunteering at Vacation Bible School. Ellen continues, Elise has “a huge heart and thinks about others and their feelings....It encourages others to try, and she has such a warm demeanor that everyone feels welcome.” The Reverend Brian Norsman identifies her as “real and authentic....Her faith guides her to be a caring servant in the trenches of many places and spaces in her life.”

According to Elise, keeping an open mind is important when volunteering. She says, “Community service and volunteering aren’t always as rewarding as they look. The difference you are making doesn’t happen right away.” She encourages new volunteers to be patient and work with people without judgment. It is important to her to always set a positive example no matter where she is volunteering. Elise does admit that “seeing the difference you make is awesome!” She cherishes those moments when people she is serving recognize her efforts and the energy she is putting forth. Elise loves “encouraging people to be involved and be there when people need you.” Her extensive resume of volunteer experiences can attest to that.

Elise Hendrickson is a caring young woman with a bright future ahead of her. As Sara Pennebecker asserts, “She can achieve anything she puts her mind to and will surely thrive as a college student next year to continue her education and passion for community service.”



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Dennis McCarthy, Outstanding Male Volunteer Award

Dennis McCarthy is a man of passion, and it is this passion that motivates him to volunteer in the many organizations in which he serves. It all started back when he was pushing wheelchairs at the local nursing home for a confirmation service project. Dennis discovered he loved helping people in need, and he loved how it made him feel when he did it.

Fast forward a few years, Dennis was now in the military serving as a material controller. It was there he became involved in Special Olympics, an organization where he continues to enthusiastically volunteer today. "I get more out of it than I actually give," Dennis affirms. He says the camaraderie and sportsmanship between athletes of varying abilities is heartwarming and inspiring to all participants.



Today, the city of Bayport is another place that benefits from Dennis's volunteer time. He has been involved from the start with Dane's Place helping to maintain the shelter and planning their annual fundraiser. In April 2015, he also helped form the Afton, Bayport, Lakeland (ABL) Lion's Club, becoming a charter member, board member and the official "tail twister." His multiple roles offer opportunities to make sure the club is financially sound and follows the code of ethics while also instilling enthusiasm and good fellowship in meetings. He has been instrumental in creating a partnership between the ABL Lions Club and the Bayport Community Action League, helping promote and run Bayport's annual Derby Days.

In his spare time, Dennis is also active in his church, and has participated in Community Thread's Holiday Hope, packed Christmas boxes for Minnesota military serving overseas, and participated in the Walk for Life. Kim McRunnel, ABL Lions Club President, states, "Dennis is always the first person to offer help, whether as a member of the many organizations he's involved with or as a friend....He is the perfect volunteer."

Dennis finds each volunteer experience special. "If you enjoy what you're doing you never have to work a day in your life," he reflects. To those considering volunteering Dennis encourages starting small like helping a neighbor snowplow a driveway or mow a lawn. He encourages community members to branch out from there and work to your passion. By volunteering, one is rewarded personally along with the individual or organization being served, but there are other benefits, too. Volunteering builds camaraderie and teamwork; it is a bonding experience that brings awareness to the needs of others while providing examples and motivation to individuals and organizations to join in and serve. Dennis cites the example of the ABL Lions Club service to Bayport's Derby Days. Their participation supported the community but also exemplified the importance of volunteerism as men, women, and students served in different capacities creating an extremely successful event.



According to his friend and colleague, Bob Johnson, "To his community, Dennis is an invaluable contributor." Thanks to his unwavering example and dedication to helping others, many individuals and organizations have been touched. His way of life is a true celebration of volunteerism at its best.

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Sharon Dockstader, Outstanding Female Volunteer Award

Walking into Valley Outreach on any given Monday morning, Tuesday evening, or Thursday night, you are likely to find volunteer extraordinaire Sharon Dockstader. She is a regular at Valley Outreach and credits her family with how she got so involved. Sharon says, "I think I inherited the volunteer gene!" She remembers the many ways she observed her grandmother and mother volunteering as she was growing up. Often, Sharon found herself accompanying her mother on volunteer missions and grew to love being with people and helping them along the way. Her early experiences helping others also influenced her career choice as she became a nurse and spent many years taking care of patient needs in hospital settings.



In retirement, Sharon has participated in a variety of volunteer opportunities over the years, including running blood pressure clinics, volunteering at the Breast Care Center in Prescott Valley, Arizona, delivering Meals on Wheels, and helping in several different capacities at Community Thread. Currently, she volunteers regularly with Valley Outreach. At Valley Outreach, Sharon has served over 754 hours since 2013; 351 of those hours in 2015 alone. Sharon is a mainstay in both the Food Shelf and the Clothing Closet, working with clients as well as planning and organizing behind the scenes. According to Suzanne Lindquist, Volunteer Manager at Valley Outreach, Sharon "serves in a variety of areas and always with a smile for the client (or another volunteer or staff member), and with the energy of someone much younger....She listens with a gentle spirit and generous patience."

Sharon is quite emphatic about encouraging others to join the ranks of volunteers, but she also says volunteering should be done "because you like it! Enjoy yourself, and get to know the clients." It is heartwarming for her to see the thankful responses from clients as they leave knowing someone cares about them and their family. For Sharon, the reward comes from being able to provide the help people need and showing them they are wanted. Sharon sends them on their way feeling nurtured with hope restored.



Sharon's volunteer work in the community is a tribute to her commitment to the people she loves as she generously gives from her heart. As Sharon states, "I like people!" The world is a brighter and better place because of her kindness and dedication to helping others.

2016 Community Involvement Awards

Mahtomedi National Honor Society, Outstanding Group Volunteer Award

The 57 seniors who are members of the Mahtomedi High School National Honor Society (MNHS) are not only top scholars but also movers and shakers in the world of volunteering. During the course of the school year, members are constantly stepping in to help both the community and the school district, serving for more than 20 different volunteer opportunities. Some projects are specifically for raising money while others are purely to serve without reward. MNHS sponsors 2 blood drives during the school year, serves as hosts and guides during parent/teacher conferences, assists at the middle school book fair, makes blankets for patients at the Children's Hospital, bakes cookies for snack packs for children at Solid Ground, and the list goes on and on. Not only do members volunteer, they also creatively raise the funds for many of their projects, all while maintaining impressive GPAs!

One of the group's biggest projects of the year, Box Out, occurs in October when the members commit to spending a night outside sleeping in boxes to create understanding and empathy for peers who may be struggling with homelessness. According to nominators Melonie Allyn-Scherin and Julia Yach, the event is used to raise funds for Canvas Health's Homeless Youth program but "during the night the student participants also create care kits to give to people who use St. Andrew's Community Resource Center." The project was started 3 years ago and to date has raised over \$11,000.

Students who participate are exposed to the reality of homelessness through the experience and by hearing from speakers who have experienced homelessness themselves. The combination of experiences throughout the night helps students understand the seriousness of the issue and creates great empathy for those struggling to find permanent lodging. As MNHS President Kelsey Halverson reflects, "There is nothing like waking up freezing cold in the morning in a cardboard box with a sore back to help a person understand the seriousness of the situation." MNHS staff advisor, Elisabeth Haen, notes the entire event is coordinated and supported by the students. The willingness of students to take on such a challenging task shows their commitment to making a difference for their peers who face difficult circumstances.

According to President Halverson, the 2016 Group Volunteer Award is a great honor for students in the society. Since it is such a large group doing many different things throughout the year the students are not always aware of the impact they are making on individuals and the community, even though they often see the results in the form of dollars. Being recognized by Community Thread and the Washington County Board of Commissioners gives credibility to their tremendous efforts and acknowledges their commitment to service.

The members of the Mahtomedi National Honor Society view volunteering as a way to create awareness and understanding of the world around them. This intelligent, curious group of students is willing to ask questions and wants to help. By creating awareness these teens focus their energy to accomplish great things.

As President Halverson states, "It's amazing what we can come up with when we are motivated." Through their multitude of volunteer projects, MNHS members have put their caring into action raising awareness of important issues with their families and friends. Members have donated precious time, energy, and funds to provide hope and assistance to people and organizations who value their desire to make the world around them a better place.



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Kingwood Management, Exemplary Employer Award

In 1989, Jeff Skogen graduated from the University of Minnesota and took his first job at Kingwood Management. As the years passed and the company grew, Jeff took on more and more responsibility. Then, in 2008, he purchased the company—becoming the sole owner.

In his spare time, Jeff is a long-time community volunteer, serving as a mentor to prisoners at the Washington County Jail and volunteering with Relay for Life and the American Cancer Society to name a few. He is a person who knows the value of committing time to help where needed and the satisfaction of giving back to others and the community. It was a natural step for him to encourage his staff to join his example and begin volunteering, too.

In order to get everyone started, Jeff approached Valley Outreach and arranged for his entire staff to have paid time off to volunteer there regularly. Every third Thursday of the month, half of the Kingwood staff arrives at 10:00am at Valley Outreach Food Shelf. For two hours, the team shops and packs individual client orders. The other half of the staff replaces them at noon to finish up and make deliveries to client homes. According to Valley Outreach Volunteer Manager Suzanne Lindquist, "It's been a great partnership as the skills they bring as property management specialists translate well when entering a client's home, remaining professional, checking in on the client, making observations about wellness and security, and providing a smiling connection in what can be a lonely day."

Jeff knows the value of volunteering and is excited to see how his staff has become so enthusiastic about their Valley Outreach commitment. Several staff members have been motivated to expand their volunteer time at Valley Outreach or serve in other organizations as well. The reward for Jeff is seeing and hearing the reactions of his staff when they return from their food shelf experience. Staff return motivated and fulfilled with a better understanding of the challenges some people face in daily living. Their volunteerism creates awareness and molds their outlook as to what is important in life—something Jeff identifies as important for a strong community as well as the business.

Jeff would strongly encourage any business to participate in community volunteering. In Jeff's words, "It's needed and benefits everyone." He finds it is important to get more people involved

without looking for praise. According to Jeff, the way one feels inside is

the best part of volunteering. He says, "Just go ahead and get involved. It's good for the heart and soul and passes down from generation to generation."

Jeff Skogen is a man who leads by example and inspires his colleagues to make a difference in the community. Because of his leadership at Kingwood Management, people have been led to discover the joy of volunteering and are making a significant and positive impact in the St. Croix Valley.



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Roger Green, Lifetime Volunteer Award

Roger Green has devoted his life to volunteering from the time he was a young boy to the present day. According to Roger, volunteering is an "important dimension of everyday life.... People can be examples to encourage others to become involved." Like so many dedicated volunteers, Roger's role models were his parents. They made sure he learned at an early age that volunteering was "part of the growing up experience."

As a new resident to the area in 1984, Roger decided to volunteer with Face to Face, phone counseling youth who needed a listening ear. From there, he became a board member with the Dayton's Bluff Multi-Services Center, and the rest is history. His dedication and experience both personally and professionally as the retired vice president of Health East Care System has provided him the opportunity to serve on many boards over the years, including Great River Greening, Legacy Senior Services, Memorial Blood Center, Maplewood North Lions, and the North Star Council Exploring Advisory Board to name a few. According to fellow



volunteer Margaret Wachholz, Roger "demonstrates the epitome of the Lifetime Award and what it stands for. He has volunteered while he was actively working and now full time in his retirement."

Today, Roger dedicates many of his volunteer hours to the city of Woodbury. His colleagues describe him as "a tireless defender of equality and solidarity....His contributions have given life and breadth to the message and vision of our city's mission." Roger has served on the Woodbury Housing Task Force, Woodbury Community Land Trust, the Woodbury Economic Development Committee, the Woodbury/Cottage Grove League of Women Voters, and the Woodbury Chamber of Commerce as past president and a member of the board of directors for several years.

Currently, he is creating a Culture of Health Program surveying various professionals and lay citizens to determine how the community is meeting the needs of citizens. Roger also finds time to volunteer with the Woodbury Athletic Association, the American Cancer Society, and Transfiguration Catholic Church. He has even been known to read to kindergarteners, perform as a "dancing dad" at the Woodbury Dance Center, and rappel down the side of the US Bank Building in Minneapolis for the North Star Council of the Boy Scouts of America!

Working in a hospital setting has given Roger the opportunity to see firsthand the incredible difference volunteers make. As he puts it, volunteers provide the "human touch." There is also great economic value as volunteers save organizations many dollars by performing tasks and services that would not necessarily happen without them. Volunteering encourages people to get out and help those in need, which gives them individual value while contributing to the fabric and success of the community.

Roger Green's life of volunteering has not gone unnoticed by friends and colleagues. In her nominating letter, Margaret Wachholz shares that when people reflect on the volunteer work of Roger Green they see him as a "wonderful mixture of authentic idealism, intense intellect and mischievous good humor. He is committed to SERVING." The community is in good hands and the lives of citizens are enriched by the commitment Roger Green makes daily.