

# Giving From the Heart Volunteer

## Awards: Submission #83

### Category

Youth

### Nominee - Individual or Group Contact Name

Emma Pierce

### If a Group - List all members here:

{Empty}

### Nominee/Group Contact Mailing Address

Hickory, North Carolina

### Nominee/Group Contact Email Address

{Empty}

### Nominee/Group Contact Phone Number

{Empty}

### Volunteer Job Title:

Volunteer

### Years volunteered with organization:

1

### Number of hours volunteered per week:

2

### Number of weeks volunteered per month:

1

## Volunteer Organization

**Organization Name:**

The Kindness Project Inc

**Volunteer Organization Mailing Address**

PO BOX 11464

Hickory, North Carolina. 28603

**Nominator**

Amber Taylor

Kindness Project

**Describe the nominee's commitment to volunteering with the agency/organization they serve. (300 words maximum)**

Emma Pierce has been engaged in volunteer work with the Kindness Project for just over a year. What began as a weekend activity to fulfill Beta Club requirements has evolved into a genuine passion for assisting others. The Kindness Project is an organization dedicated to providing support for homelessness and various crisis assistance services within Catawba County. The organization is operated by five core volunteers and is supported by individuals like Emma, who are committed to fostering positive change within the community. No task is too large or too small for Emma, as she consistently seeks opportunities to contribute. While some weeks may not appear as remarkable as others, Emma remains poised to participate with an optimistic mindset. Over the past year, she has contributed to preparing snack bags for the Sunday Outreach program, which provided over 4,600 meals last year, as well as wrapping Doughnuts from Krispy Kreme and assembling PBJ sandwiches. Following the impact of Hurricane Helene last fall, she promptly reached out to inquire how she could assist the organization with hurricane relief efforts. Despite attending college classes (as a junior in high school), the week after the storm, she still managed to dedicate time to preparing sandwiches for first responders and volunteers in affected areas, in addition to aiding in the loading of supplies collected for the mountain regions.

**Describe nominee's accomplishments and how their service has helped meet critical needs in our community. (300 words maximum)**

Emma dedicates her time to assisting the Kindness Project by preparing snack bags and

distributing meals for the Sunday Outreach Program, which offers vital support to individuals experiencing food insecurity by providing a warm meal. These meals not only address immediate hunger but also serve as a foundation for building trust and encouraging individuals to seek further assistance.

Emma not only dedicates her time to volunteering with the Kindness Project but also engages in various community activities whenever she is available. In November of last year, Emma joined Shurtape Technologies employees and their families for the inaugural WHKY Turkey Drop. This event, which spanned the entire day, involved the collection of turkeys, canned goods, and other non-perishable items for the benefit of the Second Harvest Food Bank of Hickory. Thanks to these efforts, Emma and the team successfully gathered 52 turkeys, three pallets of non-perishable food items, and \$2,000 in cash contributions to assist those in need within the community.

During the 2023-2024 academic year, Emma provided her support to the First United Methodist Church in Hickory by assisting with their Cub Camp program. Throughout this period, she worked with K-2 students from Southwest Elementary, which is recognized as one of the most economically challenged schools in Catawba County, contributing over 30 hours of her time on Wednesday evenings. Emma offered homework assistance, reviewed new learning materials, facilitated outdoor activities to ensure student safety, engaged in games after homework completion, read to the children, and more. The time she devoted to these students not only made them feel valued but also helped to enhance their confidence. The students expressed their enthusiasm upon seeing Emma each Wednesday, and the Program Coordinator remarked, "Emma has been a tremendous asset to their program."

**Describe nominee's special skills, qualities and/or leadership qualities. (300 words maximum)**

Emma is a driven, passionate, and dependable individual. She is driven to create a positive impact in her community, passionate about providing support to others, and dependable in her commitment to lend a helping hand when needed.

**Explain why you nominated this person(s) for the Giving From the Heart Award. (300 words maximum)**

Overall, Emma's selfless nature and her kind and caring instincts shine through everything she does.

**Volunteer Photo**



# Giving From the Heart Volunteer

## Awards: Submission #66

### Category

Youth

### Nominee - Individual or Group Contact Name

Kyra Ryhal

### If a Group - List all members here:

{Empty}

### Nominee/Group Contact Mailing Address

Hickory, North Carolina

### Nominee/Group Contact Email Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Phone Number

### Volunteer Job Title:

{Empty}

### Years volunteered with organization:

2

### Number of hours volunteered per week:

2

### Number of weeks volunteered per month:

2

## Volunteer Organization

**Organization Name:**

Ashure Ministry

**Volunteer Organization Mailing Address**

245 East N St

Newton, North Carolina. 28658

**Nominator**

Allen Sherrill

Ashure Ministry

**Describe the nominee's commitment to volunteering with the agency/organization they serve. (300 words maximum)**

Kyra started volunteering with her grandparents at Ashure a couple years ago. She's now developed something of a passion for it. She comes as much as she can within her busy schedule. Kyra is a very talented athlete and plays on different teams throughout the school year at Bunker Hill High School. Even with all of that, she still finds time to come to Ashure Ministry to volunteer. Most of the time she's coming with her grandparents and her little brother, but she also finds times to come on her own as well.

**Describe nominee's accomplishments and how their service has helped meet critical needs in our community. (300 words maximum)**

Kyra is a member of our inaugural class of S.E.E.D. interns. The Ashure Ministry S.E.E.D. Internship (Service, Engagement, Experience, & Development) is a new initiative we started this year. It is a yearlong program designed to give the interns a firsthand view of inner workings of Ashure Ministry, nonprofits, and the community service sector. Kyra was actually the first intern to sign up. For this program, our interns have to complete at least 50 hours of volunteer service (15 in the Pantry, 15 in the store, and at least 1 with our Case Managers). They then must write an Impact Story that we can use in one of our publications, and write a reflection paper at the end of the year.

Our interns are also required to do a special project. Kyra did a food drive at her school. She set it up as a competition between upper class men (Seniors & Juniors) and lower class men (Sophomores & Freshmen). She designed her own flyers. She organized things

with the school. And she put out barrels to collect the food donations. Kyra managed to bring in a very impressive haul at a much needed time as Ashure Ministry is seeing more food clients than ever before.

**Describe nominee's special skills, qualities and/or leadership qualities. (300 words maximum)**

When Kyra comes to work, she comes to work. Many teenagers will be fairly lackadaisical when they come to volunteer, but not Kyra. She tears through any task she's given. She also tries to stay on top of those she's working with. You can hear her encourage her little brother to stay on task anytime they're put together or joke around with her grandpa about keeping up.

Kyra has also proven to be quite versatile. It seems that she excels at any task she's put on. Whether in the Pantry or in the Store, it doesn't take her long to master whatever it is she's doing, no matter how complicated. This is incredibly valuable to us because we know that we can plug her in wherever we need her anytime she comes. Volunteers with Kyra's mindset and ability are such an asset to a workplace like Ashure Ministry.

**Explain why you nominated this person(s) for the Giving From the Heart Award. (300 words maximum)**

When we started the S.E.E.D. Internship program at Ashure Ministry, we really weren't sure what we were going to get. We had high hopes, but you also never know. Kyra proved how successful this program could be. She's been an excellent volunteer. She's learned and grown a lot during the experience. And her project provided us with food that we absolutely needed. It was everything we could have hoped for.

Moreover, throughout all of this, you could tell that Kyra was just happy to be here and apart of this. She wasn't doing this for a certificate or to add something to her college applications. She was doing this because she genuinely wants to help others and be of service to her community. It's young people like Kyra who should give us all hope for the future. And we are so glad that she has been a part of Ashure Ministry over the past couple of years, and we hope this relationship will continue for many more!

**Volunteer Photo**





# Giving From the Heart Volunteer

## Awards: Submission #71

### Category

Youth

### Nominee - Individual or Group Contact Name

Layla Bandy

### If a Group - List all members here:

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### Nominee/Group Contact Mailing Address

Conover, North Carolina

### Nominee/Group Contact Email Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Phone Number

### Volunteer Job Title:

Event Volunteer

### Years volunteered with organization:

8

### Number of hours volunteered per week:

5

### Number of weeks volunteered per month:

4

## Volunteer Organization

**Organization Name:**

Walk With Me Healing Steps

**Volunteer Organization Mailing Address**

4170 LB Propst Dr.

Conover, North Carolina. 28613

**Nominator**

Elizabeth Wise

Walk With Me Healing Steps

**Describe the nominee's commitment to volunteering with the agency/organization they serve. (300 words maximum)**

Layla has been volunteering for our organization since it was founded in 2017. She has attended every event and has been a huge support in helping with horse handling for pony rides, parades, and serving food. She has volunteered countless hours working with new horses that arrive on property to get them ready for our therapeutic program. She has helped set up and tear down for events and has stepped in on numerous occasions to help with anything that is asked of her.

**Describe nominee's accomplishments and how their service has helped meet critical needs in our community. (300 words maximum)**

Layla has successfully helped transition several rescued horses from the local kill pens. Horses who were dumped by their owners due to injury or conformation now have a new purpose at our nonprofit. She has given over 200 pony rides in a given season to help raise money for scholarships and sliding scale opportunities.

**Describe nominee's special skills, qualities and/or leadership qualities. (300 words maximum)**

Layla is an assertive and soft hearted young woman who is a force to be known. She commands a room and has a passion for horses. Her energy is well known on the farm and most people who come to the farm and watch her, aspire to work with the horses as she does.

**Explain why you nominated this person(s) for the Giving From the Heart Award.  
(300 words maximum)**

Layla is graduating this year and will be stepping into a role as our lead lesson and trainer. She deserves this moment to be recognized for all of the hard work that she provided over the past 8 years.

**Volunteer Photo**

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# Giving From the Heart Volunteer

## Awards: Submission #69

**Category**

Youth

**Nominee - Individual or Group Contact Name**

Zaira Mendoza

**If a Group - List all members here:**

{Empty}

**Nominee/Group Contact Mailing Address**

HICKORY, North Carolina

**Nominee/Group Contact Email Address****Nominee/Group Contact Phone Number****Volunteer Job Title:**

{Empty}

**Years volunteered with organization:**

4

**Number of hours volunteered per week:**

{Empty}

**Number of weeks volunteered per month:**

{Empty}

**Volunteer Organization**

**Organization Name:**

Catawba County Juntos 4-H Program

**Volunteer Organization Mailing Address**

1175 S Brady Ave

Newton, North Carolina. 28658

**Nominator**

Holly Ellwanger

Catawba County Juntos 4-H Program

**Describe the nominee's commitment to volunteering with the agency/organization they serve. (300 words maximum)**

Zaira has demonstrated a commitment to serving her community through volunteering with Juntos in a variety of service projects with the Catawba County Library, Ashure Ministries, Challenger Early College, and Tyndall Preschool. However, her greatest impact has been through her service at The Corner Table. Zaira was first introduced to the work of The Corner Table through Juntos, but through her own passion and desire to serve the community, she has put in more than 250 hours of service at The Corner Table since last summer.

**Describe nominee's accomplishments and how their service has helped meet critical needs in our community. (300 words maximum)**

During her time at The Corner Table, Zaira built strong relationships with the staff, guests, and fellow volunteers. These connections inspired her to give her best every time she volunteered. Zaira takes great pride in mentoring new volunteers and offering them the same advice and support she has received, which she has found incredibly rewarding. So much so, that this school year, Zaira took the initiative to set up several volunteering opportunities at The Corner Table for her fellow Challenger Juntos 4-H club members. These opportunities allowed other youth to learn about the work being done to serve those affected by hunger in our community with compassion, respect, and dignity.

**Describe nominee's special skills, qualities and/or leadership qualities. (300 words maximum)**

Zaira's work ethic and efficiency make her an invaluable asset to any team. She is creative and comes up with ways to be inclusive of others. Her ability to complete tasks with minimal guidance allows others to make the best use of their time, and her friendly, welcoming demeanor makes her a favorite among those she works alongside and those she serves. These qualities have led her to several leadership roles within the Challenger Juntos 4-H Club and 4-H County Leadership Council.

**Explain why you nominated this person(s) for the Giving From the Heart Award. (300 words maximum)**

Zaira Mendoza is a remarkable young person whose dedication to serving others has made a lasting impact on our community. It is in her nature to give back and to lead others to do the same by following her example.

**Volunteer Photo**

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