

# Giving From the Heart Volunteer

## Awards: ASHLEY VANSTRY

### Category

Individual

### Nominee - Individual or Group Contact Name

Ashley VanStry

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

{Empty}

### Nominee/Group Contact Mailing Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Email Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Phone Number

### Volunteer Job Title:

Hairdresser

### Years volunteered with organization:

2.5

### Number of hours volunteered per week:

{Empty}

### Number of weeks volunteered per month:

.25

# Volunteer Organization

## Organization Name:

The Kindness Project

## Volunteer Organization Mailing Address

PO BOX 11464

Hickory, North Carolina. 28603

## Nominator

Amber Taylor

The Kindness Project

PO BOX 11464

Hickory, North Carolina. 28603

[KindnessProjectHky@gmail.com](mailto:KindnessProjectHky@gmail.com)

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

Ashley has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to serving her community through her consistent involvement in outreach events since 2024. She has volunteered her time and professional skills at seven community outreach days, showing up with reliability, enthusiasm, and a genuine desire to help others. At each event, Ashley dedicates hours to providing free haircuts to individuals experiencing homelessness or financial hardship—often serving 20 or more people in a single day.

Her commitment goes beyond simply attending events. Ashley comes prepared, organized, and ready to meet the needs of each individual she serves. She understands that her role is not just about providing a haircut, but about restoring confidence, dignity, and a sense of self-worth. Despite long hours on her feet and the physical demands of her work, she remains patient, kind, and fully present with every person she helps.

Ashley's consistency and willingness to serve whenever needed have made her a dependable and valued part of the outreach team. She continues to prioritize giving back, even while balancing her own professional and personal responsibilities. Her dedication reflects a deep compassion for others and a strong commitment to making a positive impact in the community.

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

Ashley's contributions have had a direct and meaningful impact on addressing an often-overlooked need within the community—access to personal grooming and hygiene services. Through her participation in seven outreach events, she has provided well over

140 free haircuts to individuals who may not otherwise have the means or opportunity to receive one.

These haircuts go far beyond appearance. For many individuals experiencing homelessness or hardship, a fresh haircut can restore a sense of dignity, boost confidence, and improve self-esteem. It can also have practical benefits, such as helping individuals feel more prepared for job interviews, reconnect with family, or take steps toward stability.

Ashley's efficiency and dedication allow her to serve a high volume of people at each event without sacrificing quality or care. She ensures that each person receives her full attention, creating a positive and uplifting experience for those she serves.

Her work helps fill a critical gap in services by addressing not only physical needs but also emotional well-being. By offering her time and talent, Ashley contributes to a more compassionate and supportive community, where individuals feel seen, respected, and valued.

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

Ashley brings a unique combination of professional skill, compassion, and quiet leadership to her volunteer work. As a talented hairstylist, she demonstrates efficiency, precision, and adaptability—often working in non-traditional environments with limited resources while still delivering high-quality results. Her ability to provide consistent, professional haircuts in a fast-paced outreach setting is a testament to her expertise and dedication.

Beyond her technical skills, Ashley's greatest strength lies in her compassion and interpersonal approach. She treats every individual with kindness, respect, and dignity, creating a welcoming and judgment-free experience. Her warm demeanor helps people feel comfortable and valued, which is especially meaningful for those who may be experiencing difficult circumstances.

Ashley also leads by example. Her strong work ethic, positive attitude, and willingness to serve inspire others around her. She is a team player who collaborates seamlessly with other volunteers and is always ready to step in where needed. Her presence contributes to a supportive and encouraging environment at every event.

Her humility and genuine heart for service set her apart. Ashley does not seek recognition but instead focuses on making a difference, one person at a time. Her skills, character, and leadership make her an invaluable asset to the outreach team.

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

Ashley was nominated for the Giving from the Heart Award because she truly exemplifies selfless service and compassion in action. She uses her time and professional talents to uplift others, asking for nothing in return. Her willingness to serve at multiple outreach events—and to consistently give her all at each one—demonstrates a deep commitment to making a difference in the lives of others.

What makes Ashley especially deserving is the impact she has on each individual she serves. A simple haircut may seem small, but the confidence, dignity, and hope it restores can be life-changing. Ashley understands this and approaches every interaction with care, kindness, and respect.

Ashley embodies the true meaning of “giving from the heart.” She leads with empathy, serves with humility, and makes a lasting impact on her community. It is for these reasons that she is so deserving of this recognition.

### **Volunteer Photo**



# Giving From the Heart Volunteer

## Awards: BARBARA CURTIS

### Category

Individual

### Nominee - Individual or Group Contact Name

Barbara Curtis

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

{Empty}

### Nominee/Group Contact Mailing Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Email Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Phone Number

### Volunteer Job Title:

Front Desk Volunteer

### Years volunteered with organization:

3

### Number of hours volunteered per week:

2

### Number of weeks volunteered per month:

4

# Volunteer Organization

## Organization Name:

Women's Resource Center

## Volunteer Organization Mailing Address

PO Box 1608

Hickory, North Carolina. 28603

## Nominator

Abby Selig

Women's Resource Center

125 3rd St. NE

Hickory, North Carolina. 28601

[communitysupport@wrchickory.org](mailto:communitysupport@wrchickory.org)

828-322-6333

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

For nearly three years, Barbara Curtis has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to the Women's Resource Center through her consistent service, compassion, and willingness to go above and beyond in every task she undertakes. Barbara serves as one of the first welcoming faces clients encounter when they enter the center, greeting each individual with warmth, kindness, and genuine care. Her friendly and approachable nature helps create a safe and comforting environment for clients who may be facing difficult circumstances.

In addition to welcoming clients, Barbara takes pride in caring for the center's plants and helping maintain a calm, inviting atmosphere throughout the facility. She understands that even small details can make a meaningful difference in how supported and respected clients feel when seeking services.

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

One of Barbara's greatest accomplishments is the compassionate connection she builds with clients. As someone who greets visitors and interacts with them regularly, she helps reduce anxiety and creates a sense of comfort for individuals who may be experiencing crisis, uncertainty, or emotional hardship. Her approachable personality and willingness to listen make her a trusted and reassuring presence within the organization. She was chosen as volunteer of the year for 2025.

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

Barbara Curtis brings a thoughtful blend of social work experience, interpersonal skill, and steady reliability to her volunteer service at the Women’s Resource Center. Her background in social work is evident in the way she engages with clients—she communicates with empathy, respects boundaries, and is attentive to the emotional and practical needs of those she interacts with.

A key strength Barbara demonstrates is her ability to build trust quickly. She has a calm, welcoming presence that helps clients feel at ease as soon as they enter the center. Her friendly, approachable manner makes her someone people naturally feel comfortable speaking with, especially during vulnerable or stressful moments.

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

What sets Barbara apart is that her service is entirely heartfelt. She does not seek recognition or attention; instead, she quietly steps in wherever she is needed and contributes in ways that often go unnoticed but are deeply felt. Whether she is greeting clients with warmth, maintaining a peaceful environment by caring for the center’s plants, or simply offering a friendly conversation, she consistently uplifts the atmosphere of the organization.

**Volunteer Photo**



# Giving From the Heart Volunteer

## Awards: BILLY HOWELL

### Category

Individual

### Nominee - Individual or Group Contact Name

Billy Howell, Jr.

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

{Empty}

### Nominee/Group Contact Mailing Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Email Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Phone Number

### Volunteer Job Title:

Carolina Caring Hospice Volunteer (Veteran Volunteer, Patient Support Volunteer, Greeter Volunteer)

### Years volunteered with organization:

3

### Number of hours volunteered per week:

{Empty}

### Number of weeks volunteered per month:

{Empty}

# Volunteer Organization

## Organization Name:

Carolina Caring

## Volunteer Organization Mailing Address

3975 Robinson Road

NEWTON, North Carolina. 28658

## Nominator

Sara Waugh

Carolina Caring

3975 Robinson Road

NEWTON, North Carolina. 28658

[swaugh@carolinacaring.org](mailto:swaugh@carolinacaring.org)

8288507005

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

Billy's caring nature is evident in every step of his journey with our organization. A Veteran himself, his service began after meeting one of our Veteran Volunteers at an event, honoring their military service. The two immediately formed a genuine connection, and after hearing about the meaningful work of Veteran Pinning Ceremonies, he felt called to join our team. Carolina Caring honors each Veteran who receives our care by honoring them by a simple thank you ceremony presented by our volunteers.

His kindness extends beyond his scheduled duties. He frequently brings snacks or treats to brighten the volunteer office and calls before his shifts to see if he can pick up anything for the team. His gentle, compassionate spirit touches patients, families, visitors, and staff alike.

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

As he conducted Pinning Ceremonies, his desire to serve grew even deeper. He soon expanded his role to providing companionship and support to patients, offering comfort through conversation. Wanting to do even more, he later joined our hospice house greeting team, where his servant's heart shines. He willingly steps into any role where help is needed and consistently asks what more he can do for our staff and volunteers.

When others share about Billy, some common traits that he possesses are: he is down to

earth, puts others before himself, and is kind-hearted. He can approach anyone and make a person feel like they are valued and important. When he performs Veteran's Pinning Ceremonies, he provides the utmost respect and confidence, thanking a Veteran for their military service for our county. He listens attentively and validates the Veteran's experience, offering support to the family as the Veteran shares his/her story.

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

Patients, families, and staff most value his empathy, gentle spirit, and genuine compassion. Having personally experienced loss, he understands suffering and offers meaningful comfort to those he serves. He gives caregivers time to share their struggles, validates their feelings, and brings relief through attentive listening and warm conversation. He approaches patient requests with courage, enthusiasm, and a willingness to try anything that may help. His deep commitment shows in his reliability: he always follows through, gives his best effort, and seeks guidance when needed. He demonstrates humility, consistency, and heartfelt presence to all he meets.

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

Billy's caring spirit strengthens our agency's culture of compassion. He brings warmth and support to patients, families, and visitors, whether serving as a greeter or offering comfort during difficult moments. His commitment extends into the community as he educates others about our services at fairs, church events, and outreach opportunities. He consistently uplifts those he serves and represents our organization with integrity and heart. His dedication, empathy, and willingness to share our mission make him an invaluable ambassador for our agency.

He is always offering to help others in a special way that makes a person feel like they are important and cherished. He offers warmth to our visitors that makes them feel at ease at our hospice house.

When he heard of another volunteer who had been struggling with her health and offered to take her lunch and spend time with her. This volunteer commented on how he made her smile and laugh during his visit with her and made her feel better with his presence. His generosity is deep within the work that he does for our hospice patients as well as those who are around him serving too.

**Volunteer Photo**



# Giving From the Heart Volunteer

## Awards: CHRIS ORAM

### Category

Individual

### Nominee - Individual or Group Contact Name

Chris Oram

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

{Empty}

### Nominee/Group Contact Mailing Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Email Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Phone Number

### Volunteer Job Title:

Administrative Office and Reception Volunteer

### Years volunteered with organization:

16

### Number of hours volunteered per week:

16

### Number of weeks volunteered per month:

4

# Volunteer Organization

## Organization Name:

Safe Harbor of NC- Administration

## Volunteer Organization Mailing Address

210 2nd St SE

Physical- 112 2nd Ave SE

Hickory, North Carolina. 28602

## Nominator

Corrin Smith

Safe Harbor of NC- Administration

210 2nd St SE

Hickory , North Carolina. 28602

[Corrin@safeharbornc.org](mailto:Corrin@safeharbornc.org)

828-326-7233

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

Chris Oram demonstrates a deep and consistent commitment to volunteering at Safe Harbor through her willingness to serve wherever there is a need. She faithfully shows up with a positive attitude and a servant's heart, often stepping in to fill gaps and support both staff and participants. Her reliability and flexibility make her an invaluable part of the team, and she approaches every opportunity to serve with humility, compassion, and dedication to the mission.

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

Chris Oram's service has made a meaningful impact by helping meet both practical and relational needs within our community. Through her consistent presence and willingness to serve wherever needed, she helps ensure that daily operations run smoothly, allowing staff to focus on providing individualized, person-centered care to the women and children we serve.

Her contributions create stability and support in an environment where many are seeking safety, structure, and hope. By stepping in to fill gaps, offering encouragement, and helping create a welcoming atmosphere, Chris plays a vital role in strengthening the supportive community that is essential for healing and long-term success.

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

Chris Oram brings a unique combination of reliability, compassion, and quiet leadership to her volunteer role. She has a natural ability to recognize needs and step in without being asked, demonstrating both initiative and a strong sense of responsibility. Her attention to detail and consistency help create a sense of stability, while her kind and approachable demeanor fosters trust and connection with both staff and participants.

Chris leads by example, modeling humility, servanthood, and a positive attitude in every task she takes on. Her willingness to support others, adapt to changing needs, and remain dependable makes her an invaluable part of the Safe Harbor community.

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

Chris Oram was nominated for the Giving From the Heart Award because she consistently serves with a selfless and compassionate spirit that reflects the heart of Safe Harbor's mission. She gives her time and energy faithfully, never seeking recognition, but always willing to step in wherever she is needed.

Her presence brings encouragement, stability, and a sense of care to both staff and the women we serve. Chris embodies what it means to give from the heart—serving with humility, kindness, and a genuine desire to make a difference in the lives of others.

**Volunteer Photo**



# Giving From the Heart Volunteer

## Awards: CYNTHIA MARTIN

### Category

Individual

### Nominee - Individual or Group Contact Name

Cynthia Martin

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

{Empty}

### Nominee/Group Contact Mailing Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Email Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Phone Number

### Volunteer Job Title:

Program Advocate

### Years volunteered with organization:

13

### Number of hours volunteered per week:

12

### Number of weeks volunteered per month:

4

# Volunteer Organization

**Organization Name:**

Sipe's Orchard Home

**Volunteer Organization Mailing Address**

4431 County Home Road  
Conover, North Carolina. 28613

**Nominator**

DeLane Bowman  
Sipe's Orchard Home  
4431 County Home Road  
Conover, North Carolina. 28613  
[dbowman@sipesorchardhome.org](mailto:dbowman@sipesorchardhome.org)  
828-312-2014

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

It is with deep gratitude and admiration that we nominate Cynthia “Cindy” Martin as our entry in the Giving from the Heart Volunteer Awards. Cindy is Sipe’s Orchard Home’s most dedicated volunteer. She exemplifies the very heart of service — giving generously of her time, talents, and passion to enrich the lives of the children, youth and families we serve. Over the last 13 years, Cindy has dedicated herself to advocating and spreading awareness about all of Sipe's Orchard Home's programs and resources to secure partnerships and support from other businesses and civic groups within our community.

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

Through her work with the Catawba Valley Master Gardeners, Cindy played an instrumental role in expanding and bringing to life a vibrant and educational garden for our summer camp and NCPK programs here at Sipe's Orchard Home. She continuously leads creative workshops and has a unique gift for making environmental learning come alive, sparking curiosity, encouraging questions, and creating meaningful, hands-on experiences that our youngest learners will carry with them for years to come. Cindy’s dedication extends far beyond just planting seeds. Her impact is perhaps most enjoyed when she dresses up as “Fern the Easter Bunny” and rides into Sipe’s Orchard Home on the back of a Harley-Davidson leading the pack of motorcycles each year at our annual Bunny Run fundraising event! Cindy says the smiles on the preschoolers faces as they interact with the bunny, chase down eggs at the hunt and receive their candy and

prizes is all the reward she needs for spending hours in that bunny costume. Bringing the children and youth joy is what it's all about.

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

In addition to her hands-on contributions, Cindy has supported our organization behind the scenes by donating supplies, stuffing easter eggs with candy, publishing articles about Sipe's programs and wrapping presents for our youth during the holidays. She has even helped to research and identify grant opportunities and schedule speaking engagements to spread community awareness and gain support for the important work we do ensuring that Sipe's Orchard Home can continue to expand and sustain the programs that benefit all the children and youth we serve.

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

Cindy Martin's tireless service, innovative spirit, and genuine passion for our mission make her an extraordinary volunteer. She does not simply give her time — she invests her heart. We are profoundly grateful for her unwavering commitment and dedication, and we are honored to nominate her as our entry into the Giving from the Heart Volunteer Awards.

**Volunteer Photo**



# Giving From the Heart Volunteer

## Awards: DAVID BOST

### Category

Individual

### Nominee - Individual or Group Contact Name

David Bost

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

{Empty}

### Nominee/Group Contact Mailing Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Email Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Phone Number

### Volunteer Job Title:

Volunteer Translator

### Years volunteered with organization:

3

### Number of hours volunteered per week:

15

### Number of weeks volunteered per month:

4

# Volunteer Organization

Greater Hickory Cooperative Christian Ministry  
**Volunteer Organization Mailing Address**

31 1st Ave SE  
Hickory, North Carolina. 28902

## **Nominator**

Jeanette Conley  
Greater Hickory Cooperative Christian Ministry  
31 1st Ave SE  
Hickory, North Carolina. 28902  
[jeanette.conley@ccmhickory.org](mailto:jeanette.conley@ccmhickory.org)  
8283237912

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

Dr. David Bost volunteers weekly in the medical clinic. Every week Dr. Bost checks in with me about his "hours" for the following week- or even farther out. He is a regular volunteer and essential to our daily operations. The majority of patients need a translator. As a former foreign language professor that speaks several different Spanish dialects, Dr. David Bost meets the need. He has volunteered so long that is beloved by our patients and staff. He greets every person with a smile and his joy and kindness are contagious.

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

I don't know the full list of accomplishments but here's some of the things I know of from his days at Furman: Dr. David Bost is a retired professor of Spanish and former chair of the Modern Languages and Literatures department at Furman University. Joining the faculty in 1981, he was the Carey Shepard Crantford Professor and a decorated teacher focused on Spanish American literature and vocational reflection. He served as chair of the Department of Modern Languages and Literature from 1997 to 2007. He received the Alester G. Furman, Jr. and Janie Earle Furman Award for Meritorious Teaching and the 2017 James H. Smart Award for his dedication to student mentorship

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

Dr. Bost has a way of making everyone feel comfortable. He is friendly and joy-filled and

every person is treated with respect. He has had to translate for patient's receiving devastating news and has done so with compassion and care. As a teacher at heart, Dr. Bost volunteers every Monday at noon to teach a spanish class for anyone interested. He focuses on medical terminology so our clinic and ministry staff can learn more and better communicate with patients.

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

Dr. Bost's heart is what we love most about him. He exudes patience and gentleness and we are grateful for his heart that works so hard to serve others. Thank you for considering this volunteer for the Giving From The Heart Award.

**Volunteer Photo**



# Giving From the Heart Volunteer

## Awards: DIANE CROOKS

### Category

Individual

### Nominee - Individual or Group Contact Name

Diane Crooks

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

{Empty}

### Nominee/Group Contact Mailing Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Email Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Phone Number

### Volunteer Job Title:

{Empty}

### Years volunteered with organization:

3

### Number of hours volunteered per week:

12

### Number of weeks volunteered per month:

4

# Volunteer Organization

## Organization Name:

Ashure Ministry

## Volunteer Organization Mailing Address

245 East N St

Newton, North Carolina. 28658

## Nominator

Allen Sherrill

Ashure Ministry

245 East N St

Newton, North Carolina. 28658

[a.sherrill@ashureministry.org](mailto:a.sherrill@ashureministry.org)

828-446-5418

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

Diane is one of our most dedicated and dependable volunteers at Ashure Ministry. She comes at least twice a week and stays most of the day, but she's also more than willing to come in other times when we're shorthanded or stay later if we need an extra hand. She's one of those volunteers who helps lift the spirits of our entire food pantry staff because they know when Diane's here, they've got someone who can take care of anything, and her energy is always a big boost to everyone when she walks in the door.

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

Diane is just a worker. She's always pushing herself and everyone around her to keep going and continue to push carts out the door to meet the large numbers of folks we see daily. She also helped connect us to JustServe.org. This website provides visitors with all kinds of volunteer opportunities and places to check around. Thanks to Diane and JustServe, we've managed to get quite a few new individual volunteer and several groups who've come in to help out. We even had a youth group from New Bern come in last summer, and they learned about us through JustServe.

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

Diane is incredibly versatile and does a little of everything in our food pantry. She often builds carts, but she can also input data into our client computer, take food cards and

deliver food to our clients at the door, bag produce, and so much more. Each of these tasks require a different skillset, but no matter the task, Diane is always able to perform it at an excellent level. She also is just a great leader. She's good about alerting the staff to fill in holes in the food line when something runs out. She's always checking around our grocery carts to make sure everything has been weighed and then properly stored. She lets us know when other volunteers are needing new bins, knives, or something else so that they can keep working. She's basically an extra member whenever she's in the building.

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

Diane is just incredible. Her wide range of job expertise and her energy have become invaluable to us at Ashure Ministry. There have been many days where we weren't sure how we would have made it through the day without her help. She always answers the call whenever we need her, and in some cases, she'll even answer it twice and basically work two jobs at once. She has firmly established herself as one of the leaders amongst our food pantry volunteers and a trusted voice for the staff to turn to as we try to figure out how to handle everything that's going on in our often hectic food pantry. She is truly one of a kind, and we are incredibly blessed to have her at Ashure Ministry.

**Volunteer Photo**



# Giving From the Heart Volunteer

## Awards: GLENDA VERBOS

### Category

Individual

### Nominee - Individual or Group Contact Name

Glenda Verbos, Mrs

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

{Empty}

### Nominee/Group Contact Mailing Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Email Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Phone Number

### Volunteer Job Title:

Lunch provider

### Years volunteered with organization:

14

### Number of hours volunteered per week:

4

### Number of weeks volunteered per month:

4

## Volunteer Organization

**Organization Name:**

Safe Harbor NC

**Volunteer Organization Mailing Address**

112 2nd Avenue SE

Hickory, North Carolina. 28602

**Nominator**

Pam Morrison

Safe Harbor NC

112 2nd Avenue SE

Hickory, North Carolina. 28602

[pam@safeharbornc.org](mailto:pam@safeharbornc.org)

828-326-7233 ext. 109

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

Glenda is dependable, loving, caring, kind, she has a servant's heart, and she is a great cook!

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

The ladies depend on her every week, and they look forward to her coming. She is a great example of the love of JESUS.

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

Glenda is a self starter, very compassionate with the ladies, and very inspirational.

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

Glenda is very caring, and she takes out of her time, and resources to provide for others. She deserves this award because she truly gives from her heart.

**Volunteer Photo**

# Giving From the Heart Volunteer

## Awards: JANET KEY

### Category

Individual

### Nominee - Individual or Group Contact Name

Janet Key

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

{Empty}

### Nominee/Group Contact Mailing Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Email Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Phone Number

### Volunteer Job Title:

Dental Assistant

### Years volunteered with organization:

15

### Number of hours volunteered per week:

10

### Number of weeks volunteered per month:

4

## Volunteer Organization

**Organization Name:**

Greater Hickory Cooperative Christian Ministry- Dental Clinic

**Volunteer Organization Mailing Address**

31 1st Ave SE

Hickory, North Carolina. 28902

**Nominator**

Jeanette Conley

Greater Hickory Cooperative Christian Ministry

31 1st Ave SE

Hickory, North Carolina. 28902

[jeanette.conley@ccmhickory.org](mailto:jeanette.conley@ccmhickory.org)

8283237912

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

Janet is a quiet servant that serves without complaint. As a volunteer, Janet helps coordinate volunteer providers and hygienists for the clinic, as well as assist with cleaning, sanitization, or assisting dental providers with appointments. Janet has been a loyal and devoted volunteer for almost 20 years. Her husband, Dr. Ronald Key, runs the dental clinic. He is wonderful and gets affirmation and beloved by colleagues and the dental community. Janet has been his wife for 30+ years and they are a beautiful couple. I'd love for Janet to get honored .

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

The gap in dental care and availability of coverage for the uninsured is huge. Even with insurance, sometimes a patient can't afford the additional for dental coverage. CCM meets that need and sees all uninsured people in our community. Janet has been an important part of building the team of volunteer dentists and hygienists who make up the volunteer run dental clinic of CCM. She has used personal time over and over again to share about the clinic, encourage more involvement, as well as serve herself. She recognizes the need and works hard to meet it.

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

Janet is organized, kind, calm, and careful. She speaks with compassion and uses her

words carefully. She encourages patients and laughs easily. She is ready to help CVCC students learn more about dentistry and is helping shape the future leaders in the state's dental industry.

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

I nominated Janet because her willingness to serve needs to be celebrated. Her desire to support her husband and the team of volunteer dentists stems from her heart and concern for others. She wants to make sure dental care is accessible for all people, regardless of housing or financial stability. Her quiet demeanor is a source of calm and support in our clinic and we are grateful for every minute she volunteers with us. Please help me honor her with this Giving From The Heart Award.

**Volunteer Photo**

{Empty}

# Giving From the Heart Volunteer

## Awards: JODY ECKARD

### Category

Individual

### Nominee - Individual or Group Contact Name

Jody Eckard

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

{Empty}

### Nominee/Group Contact Mailing Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Email Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Phone Number

### Volunteer Job Title:

Kitchen & Grocery Volunteer

### Years volunteered with organization:

3

### Number of hours volunteered per week:

20

### Number of weeks volunteered per month:

2

## Volunteer Organization

**Organization Name:**

The Hickory Soup Kitchen

**Volunteer Organization Mailing Address**

PO Box 1431

Hickory, North Carolina. 28603

**Nominator**

Austin Pearce and Laura Sigmon

The Hickory Soup Kitchen

110 2nd St Pl SE

Hickory, North Carolina. 28602

[hickorysoup@gmail.com](mailto:hickorysoup@gmail.com)

828-327-4828

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

Jody arrives at the Hickory Soup Kitchen daily before 8:00 am. On a normal week, not taking into account weather and holiday he usually stays three or four hours. Whether it is a request from the kitchen staff, grocery, office, or the HOPE Center Jody pleasantly does whatever is asked or needed of him. Jody's wife Natasha arranged for him to volunteer at the Soup Kitchen, because even though he is only 57 years old he has early-onset Alzheimer's. Before his diagnosis he owned a furniture manufacturing company. How he arrived at this point is not as important as the fact that Natasha knew that he was still capable of making a contribution. Like his job, The Hickory Soup Kitchen gives Jody a place to go each day. He shows up, he volunteers, he goes home, and then he comes back the next day.

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

At The Hickory Soup Kitchen we have ten staff members and with the help of our volunteers we are able to day in and day out provide for the marginalized and hungry people in Hickory. Without their help it would be an impossible task. Our volunteers aren't just a support system, they are the work force in the kitchen, dining, and grocery. Jody works in all three areas and without volunteers such as him the Hickory Soup Kitchen wouldn't be about to serve the food that we do.

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

Jody is especially good at washing windows. He takes his time and makes sure the glass doors of the Hickory Soup Kitchen as well as the windows are spotless. In our grocery he is a continual box breaker downer. It has become a part of his routine. As with any grocery, food or donations come in boxes and in order for them to be recycled they have to be broken down. Jody's taking care of this task allows the other volunteers the time to fill grocery orders. He is at his best when he is performing repetitive tasks. He is always pleasant and dedicated to what he is doing to help the staff or volunteers.

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

When people volunteer, you often hear the phrase that the volunteer got more out of the experience than the person in need. There is a lot of truth and awareness that comes from that. It is probably true for many of our volunteers. They feel good about helping others. They want to serve because that is important and their heart is in the right place. "Giving from the Heart" is the purpose. Jody's story is different. Early-onset Alzheimer's for some people is the end, but by volunteering at The Hickory Soup Kitchen he has a purpose. It is something that he looks forward to doing every day. He might not have the capability to understand and see the impact he makes to our organization. Maybe it is the other way around and in some ways that is perfectly okay. Early-onset Alzheimer's, dementia, and mental illnesses are cruel, but finding ways to make connections and build relationships can make a person like Jody live a productive meaningful life for however long it's possible.

This paragraph is from Jody's wife and it sums up why his volunteering is not just important, but also very meaningful to Jody, The Hickory Soup Kitchen Staff, our volunteers, and most definitely our guests.

"Jody has early-onset Alzheimer's, and the Soup Kitchen has truly been a blessing to him. It gives him a purpose, and he looks forward to going every day. He's always talking about his buddy Lee and their adventures together, including getting cans on Friday."

**Volunteer Photo**



# Giving From the Heart Volunteer

## Awards: KAREN BARKLEY

### Category

Individual

### Nominee - Individual or Group Contact Name

Karen Barkley

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

{Empty}

### Nominee/Group Contact Mailing Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Email Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Phone Number

### Volunteer Job Title:

Barn and events

### Years volunteered with organization:

2

### 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 Drive

Conover, North Carolina. 28613

**Nominator**

Elizabeth Wise

Walk With Me Healing Steps

[liz@walkwithmehealingsteps.com](mailto:liz@walkwithmehealingsteps.com)

8283304152

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

Karen shows up every week to learn about the horses, what is required to manage a barn, and how she can support our mission. She is willing to help with events and shows up as often as she can to help around the barn. She brings joy and conversation to each person she meets.

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

Karen brings awareness to our mission through conversations in the community. She supports us at community events by showing up, interacting with those interested in learning more, handing out information, and welcoming those who are hesitant. Mental Health can be a taboo conversation for many and Karen is able to speak about the horses, people, and facility on a personal level to decrease fear.

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

Karen brings joy everyone she turns. She is determined to learn the ropes of the barn and continues to share the good work of our organization.

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

Karen shows up in the rain, snow, and heat to help us take care of our equine partners. She comes in at 6:30 in the morning some days to make sure the horses are ready for their day of sessions! She comes full of heart and drive.

# Giving From the Heart Volunteer

## Awards: LESLIE HULBERT

### Category

Individual

### Nominee - Individual or Group Contact Name

Leslie Hulbert

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

{Empty}

### Nominee/Group Contact Mailing Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Email Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Phone Number

[828-216-5046](tel:828-216-5046)

### Volunteer Job Title:

Executive Director

### Years volunteered with organization:

2

### Number of hours volunteered per week:

50

### Number of weeks volunteered per month:

200

## Volunteer Organization

**Organization Name:**

Malorie's Place

**Volunteer Organization Mailing Address**

446 S Main Ave

Maiden, North Carolina. 28650

**Nominator**

Sarah Drummond

Malorie's Place

3011 Freida Ln.

Gastonia, North Carolina. 28054

[sarahdrummond.realtor@gmail.com](mailto:sarahdrummond.realtor@gmail.com)

704-604-8849

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

Leslie has demonstrated an outstanding level of commitment to the non-profit she founded in 2024 in memory of her daughter, Malorie. She spends nearly every day either in the office at Malorie's Place or somewhere out in the field, forging connections and learning new skills. It truly is a full-time job for her, although she doesn't receive a salary. As Executive Director, she has been responsible for both organizational programming and for recruiting/coordinating with volunteers, as well as attending speaking engagements to raise public awareness, and taking the initiative to head up fundraising events and campaigns. In addition to her many volunteer hours, Leslie has personally funded a significant amount of the daily operating expenses for Malorie's Place over the past two years, along with her husband, Garvis. Coming from a background with little to no experience in non-profits, she has made an exceptional effort to "learn the ropes" and educate herself on what it takes to be the Executive Director of Maiden's only 501(c)(3).

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

Over the course of just two short years, the Malorie's Place vision has expanded to include not only peer support groups for individuals who have experienced all types of trauma--grief, divorce, suicidal ideation, depression and anxiety--but also a Blessing Room and a Blessing Shed, both fully sustained by donations. The Blessing Room is open weekly and provides approximately 30-40 individuals in need each month with the chance to shop for essentials such as cleaning supplies, personal hygiene items, pet

supplies, and general household goods, all completely free of charge. The Blessing Shed, located in the Malorie's Place parking lot, addresses the community's issue of food scarcity, providing non-perishable food items and other household essentials on demand for over 100 area residents this year to date. Raising her grandchildren after her daughter's tragic death of an overdose has given Leslie a heart for children and youth in particular, which has inspired her to form the peer support groups Junior Warriors and Freedom Tribe, for children and teens, respectively. These groups offer support through regular meetings in which children and teens receive a meal and learn constructive ways to deal with issues of stress, conflict, and bullying, and also occasional recreational/educational outings and special functions at Malorie's Place which all area children and teens are welcome to attend.

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

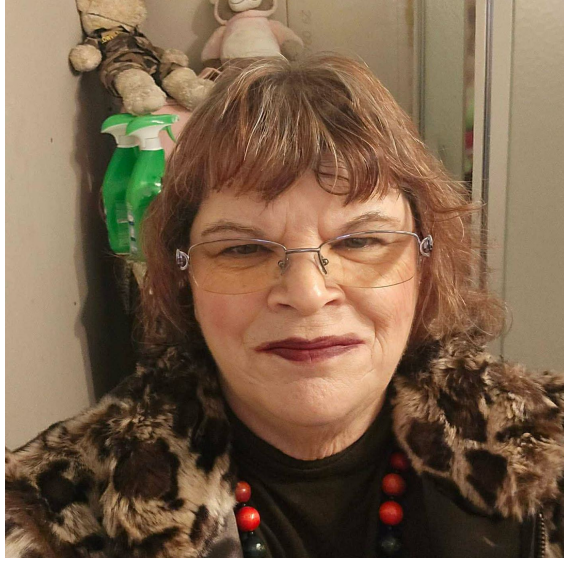
Leslie is a cycle breaker and a trailblazer, and has turned the heartache she felt from watching her daughter's 20-year battle with addiction into a passion for helping others to heal from their trauma and grief. She truly believes that no one should have to suffer or face hardship alone, and has a heart for those in Catawba County who struggle and who feel crushed under life's burdens as she once did. Coming from a background in sales in which she was an Avon representative, she has used her people skills and go-getter attitude to successfully pivot to the world of non-profits in a relatively short amount of time. She is hopeful and determined, and has come to possess, as a result of her deep faith and trust in God, a confidence in herself that makes her truly a force to be reckoned with. At the same time, she isn't rigid--her adaptability is a gift, and so is her intellectual curiosity--she has a strong desire to learn and to sharpen her skills, and has the humility to change course when needed. Her service to the community isn't coming from a place of personal agenda. She only wants to get better at service, and to help others do the same.

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

I have a very personal reason for nominating Leslie Hulbert. In 2024, she helped me through an extremely traumatic life event in which I suffered a mental breakdown. Leslie's personal support was invaluable to my recovery, and I now lead the Depression, Anxiety, and Suicidal Ideation peer support group at Malorie's Place. Leslie knows how to fight and she knows how to nurture. She's an extraordinary person and Catawba County is lucky to have her--the grandmother and former Avon lady who brought the first 501(c)(3) to Maiden, NC. If anyone deserves to win this award, it's this everyday hero who

truly lives by the Malorie's Place mantra: "We're not meant to fight this battle alone."

**Volunteer Photo**



# Giving From the Heart Volunteer

## Awards: LINDA CHURCH

### Category

Individual

### Nominee - Individual or Group Contact Name

Linda Church

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

{Empty}

### Nominee/Group Contact Mailing Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Email Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Phone Number

{Empty}

### Volunteer Job Title:

Volunteer

### Years volunteered with organization:

2

### Number of hours volunteered per week:

1

### Number of weeks volunteered per month:

4

# Volunteer Organization

**Organization Name:**

Safe Harbor GreenLeaf

**Volunteer Organization Mailing Address**

210 2nd Ave St SE

Hickory, North Carolina. 28602

**Nominator**

Liz Gales

Safe Harbor: GreenLeaf

210 2nd St SE

Hickory, North Carolina. 28602

[liz@safeharbornc.org](mailto:liz@safeharbornc.org)

8286241074

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

Linda has been volunteering as a safe friend for 2 years and has made such an impact in the lives of the ladies she is spending time with. Linda shows the ladies love, grace and the love of Jesus each time she meets with them and during phone conversations .

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

Having a safe friend is crucial to the ladies in the recovery program and shows them that there are people they can trust and wants to see them grow and succeed in life. Linda is more than a safe friend in the program, she is a safe friend for life for the ladies she mentors.

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

Linda listens to the ladies, teaches them life skills and answers any questions or teaches them whatever is needed in their life.

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

Linda has a heart for the Lord and truly loves the ladies she mentors. She impacts their lives just by being herself and showing the ladies what a Godly woman is like.

**Volunteer Photo**



# Giving From the Heart Volunteer

## Awards: MELISSA TRUESDALE

### Category

Individual

### Nominee - Individual or Group Contact Name

Melissa TRUESDALE

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

{Empty}

### Nominee/Group Contact Mailing Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Email Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Phone Number

### Volunteer Job Title:

Executive Director

### Years volunteered with organization:

2

### Number of hours volunteered per week:

{Empty}

### Number of weeks volunteered per month:

4

## Volunteer Organization

**Organization Name:**

MYAMAZINGACCESS-MAA

**Volunteer Organization Mailing Address**

36 26TH ST NW

HICKORY, North Carolina. 28601

**Nominator**

Kate Edwards

Room In the Inn at First UMC, Newton and MAA-CatCo LTRG

2090 Wellington Ave

Newton, North Carolina. 28658-8700

[katee1126@gmail.com](mailto:katee1126@gmail.com)

8283345756

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

Melissa is committed to volunteering with MAA- CatCo LTRG by showing up with consistency, care, and a willingness to support people and communities during times of crisis and recovery. Her commitment includes helping strengthen coordination, connection, and practical support so individuals and families can feel seen, supported, and better able to move toward stability.

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

Melissa has helped meet critical needs in our community by strengthening connection, coordination, and practical support for people facing crisis and recovery. Through MAA CatCo LTRG, Melissa has supported outreach, volunteer engagement, and community partnerships that help individuals and families access resources, feel supported, and move toward greater stability.

Melissa's service has also included Community Emergency Response Training, case management support, winterizing campers for people in need, and helping strengthen other local programs such as Room In The Inn and Centro Latina. Through this work, Melissa has helped meet urgent needs with compassion, practical action, and a strong commitment to community care.

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

Melissa brings a rare combination of compassion, practical leadership, and strong community insight. She has a natural ability to see both the immediate need in front of her and the larger systems that need to work together for people to receive meaningful support. That balance allows her to respond with both heart and effectiveness.

Her special skills include community coordination, relationship building, case management support, volunteer engagement, and the ability to connect people with resources in a way that feels respectful and steady. She is also skilled at bringing partners together, supporting clear communication, and helping people feel seen, valued, and included during difficult times.

Melissa's leadership qualities stand out in the way she serves. She leads with consistency, calm, and determination. She is willing to step in where needed, help solve problems, and support others without losing sight of dignity and care. She also has the ability to encourage trust among community members, volunteers, and partner organizations, which strengthens collaboration and helps important work move forward.

What makes Melissa especially effective is that her leadership is both relational and action oriented. She does not simply talk about community care, she actively builds it through service, follow through, and a sincere commitment to helping others. Her work reflects resilience, empathy, and a deep sense of responsibility to the people and communities she serves.

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

Melissa was nominated for the Giving From the Heart Award because her service reflects genuine compassion, steady leadership, and a deep commitment to meeting real needs in the community. She gives her time, energy, and care in ways that help people feel supported, respected, and less alone during difficult times.

Through her work with MAA CatCo LTRG and other local efforts, Melissa has helped strengthen community response, support families facing hardship, and build stronger connections between people, volunteers, and resources. Her service has included outreach, case management support, Community Emergency Response Training, winterizing campers for people in need, and supporting local programs such as Room In

The Inn and Centro Latina.

What makes Melissa especially deserving of this award is the heart behind her work. She serves with compassion, consistency, and a willingness to do what is needed, whether the task is large or small. She leads in a way that values dignity, encourages trust, and brings people together around shared care for the community.

Melissa gives from the heart not only through what she does, but through how she does it. Her service is grounded in love for people, practical action, and a strong belief that communities grow stronger when people show up for one another. That spirit makes her a meaningful and deserving nominee for the Giving From the Heart Award.

**Volunteer Photo**



# Giving From the Heart Volunteer

## Awards: PHYLLIS SMITH

### Category

Individual

### Nominee - Individual or Group Contact Name

Phyllis Smith

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

{Empty}

### Nominee/Group Contact Mailing Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Email Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Phone Number

### Volunteer Job Title:

Augustine Literacy Project Tutor

### Years volunteered with organization:

5

### Number of hours volunteered per week:

4

### Number of weeks volunteered per month:

4

## Volunteer Organization

**Organization Name:**

Patrick Beaver Learning Resource Center

**Volunteer Organization Mailing Address**

PO Box 255

Hickory , North Carolina. 28603

**Nominator**

Angela Lawrence & Lora Pulliam

Patrick Beaver Learning Resource Center

PO Box 255

Hickory, North Carolina. 28603

[angela@patrickbeaverlrc.org](mailto:angela@patrickbeaverlrc.org)

828-624-2012

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

Phyllis Smith trained to become an Augustine Literacy Project tutor in September 2021. After completing the 35-hour training, she has remained a dedicated tutor for the past five years. Phyllis started tutoring a child at Saint Stephens Elementary. When the child moved to Mountain View, Phyllis followed the child there, even though it was a twenty to thirty minute drive from her home. She was willing to travel because she was committed to seeing the child become a confident reader. However, he soon moved again, this time out of county. Phyllis expressed that she was willing to serve wherever we most needed her, so we placed her with a child at Viewmont Elementary. Phyllis has tutored this child for the past three and a half years.

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

Phyllis has helped her student become a confident reader. Each year her child has shown growth in her reading skills. Recently, at a pizza party that we hosted for students, parents, and tutors, her student's parents expressed that they are thankful for the extra reading support that Phyllis has provided their daughter.

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

In addition to completing the 35-hour tutor training, Phyllis regularly attends our monthly tutor enrichment sessions. She wants her student to be the best reader she can be, so

Phyllis always wants to improve her tutoring skills. Phyllis asks lots of questions to ensure that she is following the most effective practices. Our Augustine Literacy Project Coordinator comments on how Phyllis always implements new strategies into her lesson.

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

Phyllis exudes compassion and commitment to struggling readers. Because her own child struggled, she understands the frustrations of struggling readers. She tutors so that through improved reading her students can face a better tomorrow.

**Volunteer Photo**



# Giving From the Heart Volunteer

## Awards: RANDY KAUFFMAN

### Category

Individual

### Nominee - Individual or Group Contact Name

Randy Kauffman

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

{Empty}

### Nominee/Group Contact Mailing Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Email Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Phone Number

### Volunteer Job Title:

Lunch Buddy Mentor

### Years volunteered with organization:

15

### Number of hours volunteered per week:

1

### Number of weeks volunteered per month:

4

# Volunteer Organization

## Organization Name:

Council on Adolescents of Catawba County

## Volunteer Organization Mailing Address

1120 Fairgrove Church Rd SE Ste 22

Hickory, North Carolina. 28602

## Nominator

Bunny Eaton

Council on Adolescents of Catawba County

1120 Fairgrove Church Rd SE Ste 22

Hickory, North Carolina. 28602

[beaton@coacatawba.org](mailto:beaton@coacatawba.org)

(828) 322-4591

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

Randy is one of the longest-serving mentors in our program and has demonstrated an incredible commitment to supporting local students through consistent and compassionate service. In fact, I believe Randy joined the Lunch Buddy program even before it officially became a Council on Adolescents program (Lunch Buddy was incorporated in 2011), meaning he has likely dedicated at least 15 years to mentoring youth in our community.

Over the years, Randy has seen many Lunch Buddies come and go. Some matches lasted only a short time, while others developed into long-term relationships. Regardless of the student he's been matched with, Randy has remained a dependable and steady presence. Week after week, he shows up ready to share a lunch, listen without judgment, and simply show up for a student who has been identified as needing a mentor, role model, or friend.

What makes Randy's commitment especially meaningful is the consistency and quiet dedication he brings to the program. He understands that mentorship is built through trust, reliability, and showing up—even when the impact may not be immediately visible. His willingness to invest his time year after year has provided encouragement and stability to countless students who benefit from having a caring adult in their lives.

Randy is one of our most valued volunteers. He truly exemplifies the spirit of volunteerism through his authenticity, perseverance, and genuine care for others. His long-standing service has greatly impacted our program and has certainly improved the lives of many young people in our community.

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

The Lunch Buddy Program is an important source of connection and support for students in our community who are struggling socially, emotionally, academically, or behaviorally. Many of the children referred to the program are invisible or overlooked in their daily lives, and they often come from families facing significant stress, limited resources, or overwhelming responsibilities. For these students, sharing a consistent weekly lunch with a caring adult can make a meaningful difference in how they see themselves and their place in the world.

Randy's service has helped meet this critical need for more than 15 years. As one of the program's most experienced mentors, he has worked successfully with students from a wide variety of backgrounds and life experiences. Randy understands well that the program is not about "fixing" children or saving them from their life trauma. Instead, he recognizes the power of consistency, presence, encouragement, and trust in helping students build resilience. He understands exactly what the Lunch Buddy Program is designed to provide and values the unique role he plays in helping students feel seen, heard, and supported.

Because of his experience (as a parent, but also a mentor), Randy is able to connect with students who may be shy, guarded, struggling academically, dealing with family challenges, or simply in need of a dependable adult relationship. His funny, calm, patient presence creates a safe space for students to talk, laugh, share concerns, and build confidence over time. Randy's long-term dedication has strengthened our program, and over the years, he's become a terrific advocate and supporter of our work. His service has directly impacted the well-being of countless students while helping our organization continue its mission of supporting vulnerable youth through meaningful mentorship and connection.

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

Randy brings a strong combination of personal qualities, life experience, and leadership skills that make him an exceptional mentor for vulnerable youth. It only takes one

conversation with him to see that he's deeply understanding, patient, empathetic, and approachable; all qualities that help students feel comfortable and accepted from the very beginning. His sense of humor is quick and natural, which allows him to build trust and connection with students who are shy, guarded, or reluctant to engage.

One of Randy's greatest strengths is that he is a strong and confident communicator. He is a brilliant listener. When he does respond, he does so thoughtfully. For children who may struggle to express themselves or advocate for their needs, Randy is an encouraging and supportive presence that, over time, helps them to find confidence in their own voice.

Randy is also self-assured, which I think makes him especially good for students who may struggle with low self-esteem or uncertainty. He models consistency, emotional maturity, and respect in every interaction. He's a perfect example of what healthy adult support should look like.

And Randy is dedicated. There is no greater proof of that than his long-term commitment to the program. His consistency over more than 15 years has made him a trusted and valued part of our organization, and his example sets a high standard for volunteer mentorship.

It is especially meaningful to have a male mentor as dedicated as Randy. Positive male role models can be incredibly impactful for young men navigating challenges at school, home, or in their personal lives. Randy is the kind of mentor who leads by example, and he truly is an ideal role model for students who need a caring, dependable adult to look up to.

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

I nominated Randy for the Giving From the Heart Award because he embodies the true spirit of volunteer service: reliable, compassionate, humble, and deeply committed to the work. For as long as the Lunch Buddy Program has existed, Randy has faithfully shown up for our program participants, offering something many of them desperately need -- a dependable adult who listens, encourages, and cares.

The students served through our program often come from difficult, traumatic circumstances. Many feel overlooked, isolated, or unsure of themselves. Randy

understands that meaningful change doesn't happen in a week or a month. It takes moments of care and kindness, repeated over time! He is an expert mentor -- one who other, newer mentors could certainly learn something from.

What makes Randy especially deserving of this recognition is not only the length of his service, but the quality of it. He approaches every student with patience, empathy, humor, and respect. He understands the purpose of mentorship and values the importance of being a stable presence in a young person's life! He meets students where they are, builds trust naturally, and helps them feel seen and valued.

Randy also represents something incredibly important within our program: the presence of a positive, caring male mentor. His steady example and genuine character have made a lasting impact on many young people who benefit from having a supportive adult role model.

Randy's commitment has strengthened our organization, enriched the lives of countless students, and demonstrated the profound difference one dedicated volunteer can make in a community.

### **Volunteer Photo**



# Giving From the Heart Volunteer

## Awards: SALLY THROCKMORTON

### Category

Individual

### Nominee - Individual or Group Contact Name

Sally Throckmorton

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

{Empty}

### Nominee/Group Contact Mailing Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Email Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Phone Number

### Volunteer Job Title:

sorter/organizer/Sales floor associate

### Years volunteered with organization:

1

### Number of hours volunteered per week:

6

### Number of weeks volunteered per month:

10

# Volunteer Organization

## Organization Name:

Safe Harbor ReSource Warehouse

## Volunteer Organization Mailing Address

331 US hwy 70 SW unit 109

Hickory, North Carolina. 28602

## Nominator

Taylor Martin

Safe Harbor ReSource Warehouse

4655 winslow rd

Claremont, North Carolina. 28610

[Taylor@resourcewarehouse.org](mailto:Taylor@resourcewarehouse.org)

8284556693

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

Our nominee has shown an outstanding commitment to volunteering at ReSource Warehouse through their consistent dedication, compassion, and willingness to serve wherever needed. They continually go above and beyond to support both the mission of ReSource Warehouse and the women served through Safe Harbor.

Whether, sorting and processing donations, organizing merchandise, assisting customers on the sales floor, or helping maintain the cleanliness and organization of the store, they approach every task with a positive attitude and a servant's heart. No job is ever considered too small or too difficult, and they are always willing to step in wherever help is needed most.

Their reliability and strong work ethic have made them an essential part of the ReSource Warehouse team. They not only give their time generously, but they also create a welcoming and encouraging environment for staff, fellow volunteers, and customers alike. Their kindness and compassion shine through in every interaction.

What makes their commitment especially meaningful is their genuine passion for helping others. They understand that every item sorted, every rack stocked, and every customer helped directly supports women experiencing homelessness and those working toward recovery through Safe Harbor. Their volunteer service is rooted in a true desire to make a difference in the lives of others and strengthen the community around them.

Through their dedication and heart for service, this volunteer has become a valued and inspiring presence at ReSource Warehouse. Their impact is seen daily, and their

commitment continues to help make ReSource Warehouse a place of hope, support, and restoration.

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

The nominee's accomplishments at ReSource Warehouse have made a meaningful and lasting impact on both the organization and the community we serve. Through their dedication and willingness to help in every area of the warehouse, they have played an important role in supporting the mission of Safe Harbor and helping provide resources for women experiencing homelessness and recovery.

Their service has included sorting and processing large amounts of donated clothing and household goods, organizing merchandise, assisting customers, helping maintain the sales floor, and supporting daily warehouse operations. Their hard work helps ensure that donations are prepared and available for the community in an efficient and welcoming environment.

One of their greatest accomplishments is the consistency and heart they bring to volunteering. They continually step in wherever help is needed, often taking on physically demanding or time-consuming tasks without hesitation. Their positive attitude and servant leadership encourage both staff and fellow volunteers, helping create a strong sense of teamwork and community within ReSource Warehouse.

The impact of their service extends far beyond the warehouse itself. Revenue generated through ReSource Warehouse directly supports Safe Harbor programs that provide shelter, recovery support, and resources for women in need. By helping the warehouse operate successfully, the nominee is directly contributing to critical services that change lives within our community.

their kindness and compassion toward customers and donors help create an atmosphere where people feel welcomed, valued, and supported. Their commitment to serving others reflects the heart of Safe Harbor's mission and demonstrates how one dedicated volunteer can make a significant difference in meeting the ongoing needs of the community.

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

The nominee demonstrates exceptional qualities that make them a valuable volunteer and leader at ReSource Warehouse. One of their greatest strengths is their strong work ethic and willingness to serve wherever needed. They consistently approach every task with dedication, positivity, and compassion, no matter how big or small the job may be.

They possess excellent organizational skills and the ability to work efficiently in a fast paced environment. Whether sorting donations, assisting on the sales floor, helping organize merchandise, or supporting daily warehouse operations, they complete each task with care and attention to detail. Their reliability and consistency have made them someone both staff and fellow volunteers can depend on.

In addition to their strong work ethic, the nominee naturally demonstrates leadership qualities through their actions and attitude. They lead by example, encouraging others with kindness, patience, and a servant's heart. They are always willing to step in to help, guide new volunteers, and support the team wherever assistance is needed. Their positive attitude helps create a welcoming and uplifting environment for everyone around them.

One of their most meaningful qualities is their compassion for others. They genuinely care about the mission of Safe Harbor and the women served through ReSource Warehouse. This passion is reflected in the way they interact with customers, donors, staff, and fellow volunteers with respect, encouragement, and understanding. Their dedication, leadership, and heart for service have made a lasting impact on ReSource Warehouse and the community it serves. They embody the spirit of volunteerism and continually demonstrate what it means to serve others with humility, grace, and purpose.

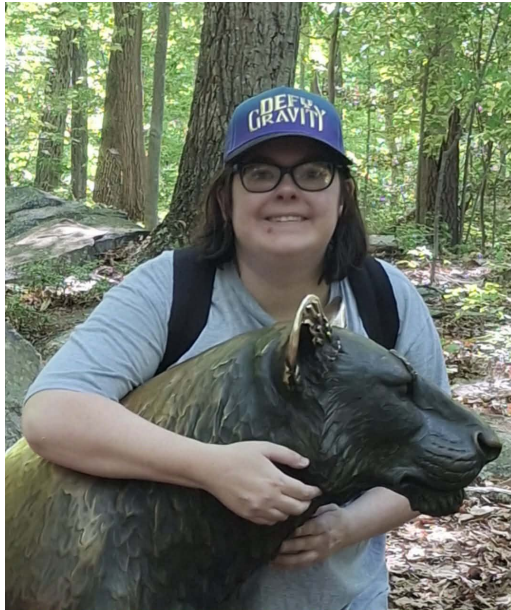
**Explain why you nominated this person(s) for the Giving From the Heart Award. (300 words maximum)**

I nominated this person for the Giving From the Heart Award because they truly embody what it means to serve others with compassion, dedication, and humility. Their commitment to ReSource Warehouse and the mission of Safe Harbor goes far beyond simply volunteering their time, they consistently give their heart in everything they do. They show up willing to help wherever needed, whether it is sorting donations, organizing merchandise, assisting customers, or supporting fellow volunteers and staff. No task is ever beneath them, and they approach every responsibility with kindness, positivity, and a servant's heart. Their willingness to step in and help at any moment has made them an invaluable part of ReSource Warehouse.

What makes this nominee especially deserving of this award is the genuine care they have for the people around them. They not only help keep the warehouse running smoothly, but they also create a welcoming and encouraging atmosphere for customers, donors, staff, and volunteers alike. Their compassion and dedication reflect the heart of Safe Harbor's mission and positively impact everyone they encounter.

Their service directly supports women experiencing homelessness and recovery by helping ReSource Warehouse continue to provide funding and resources for Safe Harbor programs. Through their hard work and selflessness, they are making a meaningful difference in the lives of others and strengthening our community every day. This nominee leads through action, generosity, and kindness, expecting nothing in return. They truly give from the heart, and for that reason, they are incredibly deserving of this recognition.

**Volunteer Photo**



# Giving From the Heart Volunteer

## Awards: SUSAN UNDERWOOD

### Category

Individual

### Nominee - Individual or Group Contact Name

Susan Underwood

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

{Empty}

### Nominee/Group Contact Mailing Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Email Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Phone Number

### Volunteer Job Title:

Safe Friend/Mentor

### Years volunteered with organization:

4

### Number of hours volunteered per week:

4

### Number of weeks volunteered per month:

2

# Volunteer Organization

## Organization Name:

Safe Harbor: Whole Woman

## Volunteer Organization Mailing Address

549 15th Ave SE

Hickory, North Carolina. 28602

## Nominator

Liz Gales

Safe Harbor: Whole Woman

210 2nd St SE

Hickory, North Carolina. 28602

[liz@safeharbornc.org](mailto:liz@safeharbornc.org)

8286241074

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

Susan has been committed to Safe Harbor for 4 years. She helps in any way is needed.

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

Susan meets with the ladies individually and takes them on outings in the community, She also helps in the front office and runs errands for the ladies.

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

She is patient and kind with the ladies and always willing to spend time just listening and talking with them. The ladies love when Susan in volunteering in the house.

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

Her love for the ladies in incredible to see. She loves with her whole heart but can and will speak the truth to them when needed.

## Volunteer Photo



# Giving From the Heart Volunteer

## Awards: TERESA SLAUGHTER

### Category

Individual

### Nominee - Individual or Group Contact Name

Teresa Slaughter

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

{Empty}

### Nominee/Group Contact Mailing Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Email Address

### Nominee/Group Contact Phone Number

### Volunteer Job Title:

Senior Nutrition Services Volunteer

### Years volunteered with organization:

10.5

### Number of hours volunteered per week:

6

### Number of weeks volunteered per month:

4

# Volunteer Organization

## Organization Name:

Catawba County Senior Nutrition Services

## Volunteer Organization Mailing Address

507 Boundary St SW

Newton, North Carolina. 28658

## Nominator

Katelyn Nash

Senior Nutrition Services

507 Boundary Street

Newton, North Carolina. 28658

[knash@catawbacountync.gov](mailto:knash@catawbacountync.gov)

828-695-5617

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

Teresa volunteers for both our Home-Delivered Meals (Meals on Wheels) program and our Seniors Morning Out program (SMO). She regularly delivers meals 3-4 times per month and leads a cooking class 1 time per month at Maiden Seniors Morning Out. The cooking program includes developing nutritious snacks, demonstrating how these items are prepared, and sharing the finished products with seniors. Additionally, these cooking programs often provide education on safe food handling, preparation, and serving practices to help seniors build confidence and knowledge in the kitchen. She will also help with the Maiden Seniors Morning Out program, if they are hosting a special Holiday party or celebration. If Teresa is available, she's almost always willing to fill in on the home-delivered meals route if we need a last-minute substitute driver.

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

Over the last year (5/1/25-4/30/26) Teresa completed 47 deliveries! This is exceptional compared to most volunteers, deliver meals approximately 12 times a year. Additionally Teresa has volunteered with our SMO program each month (12 times) to offer a cooking program. This activity offers nutritious snacks and education to our seniors. Without dedicated volunteers like Teresa, the Meals on Wheels program could not function. Teresa's commitment to not only regularly delivering a meal route but also stepping in whenever there are gaps to fill, is truly invaluable. Volunteers like Teresa help ensure that our homebound seniors continue receiving meals and wellness checks each day.

Without dedicated volunteers, these deliveries simply would not be possible. Seniors Morning Out is a crucial program to seniors in our community because the program provides socialization, nutrition, and wellness programming; all essential components for healthy aging. Volunteers at the Seniors Morning Out program are essential in providing a variety of activities and entertainment to our seniors.

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

Teresa consistently demonstrates having a giving heart. She so freely and generously gives of her time, resources, and talents. The seniors at Maiden Seniors Morning Out benefit from Teresa's delicious cooking abilities. Many have learned how to make new dishes and have tasted items they've never had before in their 60+ years on this earth. She is a consistent, friendly face to both our homebound seniors and our congregate seniors. Teresa has an eye for decorating at the site's parties. For Easter this year, Teresa placed over 130 Easter Eggs for the seniors to hunt as a part of their celebration. During the summer, Teresa will often bring her granddaughter along while delivering meals. This not only brings joy and smiles to the seniors she serves, but also teaches her granddaughter the importance of compassion, kindness, and serving others from a young age.

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

Teresa has been a dedicated and dependable volunteer with our Senior Nutrition Program for more than 10 years, consistently going above and beyond to serve older adults in our community. Her commitment to ensuring seniors receive their meals and wellness checks as well as offering programs and activities, has made her an invaluable part of our program. What truly sets Teresa apart is her willingness to help without hesitation. Whenever gaps arise in meal deliveries due to volunteer shortages, schedule changes, or unexpected circumstances, Teresa consistently steps forward and helps ensure routes are covered. She constantly puts the needs of others before her own and can always be counted on to support both staff and fellow volunteers. In the past year alone, Teresa has delivered meals 47 times; this far exceeds the typical volunteer average of approximately 12 deliveries annually. Her level of service demonstrates not only extraordinary dedication, but also a deep compassion for the seniors she serves. Through her service, Teresa helps provide much more than a meal; she provides connection, reassurance, and care to homebound older adults who depend on these visits; as well as creativity and social connection to seniors who join our SMO program. We are incredibly grateful for Teresa's unwavering dedication, generosity, and years of faithful service. She truly

exemplifies what it means to give from the heart. Through her selfless dedication, Teresa repeatedly gives her time, resources, and talents to improve the lives of seniors throughout our community. Her compassion, reliability, and willingness to step in wherever needed, make a lasting impact not only on the seniors she serves, but on the entire program. Teresa's servant heart and commitment to others are an inspiration, and our community is stronger because of volunteers like her.

**Volunteer Photo**



# Giving From the Heart Volunteer

## Awards: TERI PEPPERS

### Category

Individual

### Nominee - Individual or Group Contact Name

Teri Peppers

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

{Empty}

### Nominee/Group Contact Mailing Address

526 6th St Cir NE

Conover, North Carolina. 28613

### Nominee/Group Contact Email Address

[teripeppers@gmail.com](mailto:teripeppers@gmail.com)

### Nominee/Group Contact Phone Number

[828-455-0664](tel:828-455-0664)

### Volunteer Job Title:

Community Kitchen Volunteer

### Years volunteered with organization:

4

### Number of hours volunteered per week:

8

### Number of weeks volunteered per month:

5

# Volunteer Organization

## Organization Name:

The Corner Table, Inc.

## Volunteer Organization Mailing Address

122 N Main Avenue

Newton, North Carolina. 28658

## Nominator

The Corner Table Staff

The Corner Table, Inc.

122 N Main Avenue

Newton, North Carolina. 28658

[awatson@thecornertable.org](mailto:awatson@thecornertable.org)

8284640355

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

Teri Peppers demonstrates an exceptional commitment to volunteering through her faithful and consistent service at The Corner Table's Community Kitchen. She volunteers weekly and has become an essential part of our mission to provide meals and hospitality to individuals and families in need throughout our community.

Each week, Teri leads a cook team, helping ensure that lunch is prepared with care, consistency, and compassion. She approaches every task with dedication and professionalism while also creating a welcoming and encouraging environment for fellow volunteers. Her steady presence helps make our kitchen operations run smoothly and reliably week after week.

In addition to leading a cook team, Teri helps prepare approximately 150 sandwiches each week for our Friday "to go" bags. This important outreach extends our ability to serve guests beyond regular lunch hours and provides nourishment to those facing food insecurity.

Teri's commitment goes far beyond scheduled volunteer hours. Whenever we experience a shortage of volunteers or need last-minute help serving lunch, Teri is one of the first people willing to step in. Her dependability and willingness to serve wherever needed are invaluable to our organization.

She also supports our fundraising efforts, including our annual Christmas Candy Tin sale and Gourmet Hotdog event during the Folk Art Festival. Through every area of service, Teri consistently demonstrates generosity, reliability, and a heartfelt commitment to helping others.

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

Teri Peppers has made a meaningful and lasting impact on our community through her dedicated volunteer service at The Corner Table's Community Kitchen. Her accomplishments are reflected not only in the tasks she performs, but in the stability, nourishment, and encouragement she helps provide to those we serve.

One of Teri's most significant contributions is her leadership of a weekly cook team that helps prepare and serve dependable meals for community members experiencing food insecurity. Teri oversees the entire kitchen operation each Friday as our Food Service Manager is not here. Her consistency and attention to detail help ensure that guests receive quality meals in a welcoming environment where they are treated with dignity and care.

Teri also prepares approximately 150 sandwiches each week for our Friday "to go" bags. These meals extend our outreach beyond daily lunch service and provide food support for individuals and families who may otherwise go without. Her work directly addresses hunger and helps meet an ongoing critical need in our area.

In addition to meal service, Teri contributes to fundraising efforts that help sustain the mission of The Corner Table. Her involvement in the annual Christmas Candy Tin sale—where her homemade fudge has become a favorite—and the Gourmet Hotdog event during the Folk Art Festival helps generate important support for our programs and services.

Perhaps most importantly, Teri's willingness to fill in whenever volunteers are needed ensures that operations continue uninterrupted. Her service strengthens our ability to consistently care for our guests and support the growing needs of our community.

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

Teri Peppers possesses an extraordinary combination of leadership, dependability, compassion, and servant-hearted generosity that makes her an invaluable volunteer and

an outstanding nominee for the Giving From the Heart Award.

One of Teri's greatest strengths is her natural leadership ability. As the leader of a weekly cook team at The Corner Table's Community Kitchen, she helps organize tasks, guide volunteers, and ensure meals are prepared efficiently and thoughtfully. She leads with kindness and encouragement, creating a welcoming environment where volunteers feel supported and appreciated.

Teri is also exceptionally dependable. Whether serving in the kitchen, preparing sandwiches for outreach meals, or helping with fundraising events, she consistently follows through with excellence. When unexpected volunteer shortages arise, Teri is always willing to step in and help without hesitation. Her reliability provides tremendous stability to our organization.

Another special quality Teri possesses is her genuine compassion for others. She serves with humility and care, always mindful that the work being done impacts real people facing difficult circumstances. Her kindness and positive attitude make both volunteers and guests feel valued and respected.

Teri is also highly talented and creative, particularly in her contributions to fundraising events. Her help making the homemade fudge for the Christmas Candy Tin sale has become a beloved tradition among supporters, and her participation in community events helps strengthen both awareness and support for our mission.

Above all, Teri leads by example. Her willingness to serve wherever needed inspires others to do the same and reflects the true spirit of generosity and community service.

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

Teri Peppers was nominated for the Giving From the Heart Award for her unwavering kindness, generosity, and dedication to serving others. Through her ongoing volunteer work at The Corner Table's Community Kitchen, she has positively impacted the lives of many individuals and families, offering not only meals, but also compassion and care to those in our community.

Teri's impact goes far beyond the many hours she gives each week. She serves faithfully and quietly, never seeking recognition, but always willing to help wherever there is a

need. Whether she is leading a cook team, preparing sandwiches for outreach meals, stepping in to cover volunteer shortages, or supporting fundraising events, she does every task with kindness, dedication, and genuine care for others.

What makes Teri especially deserving of this recognition is her attitude. She approaches service with joy, humility, and a willingness to do whatever is needed to support the mission of The Corner Table. Her dependable presence brings encouragement not only to the guests we serve, but also to fellow volunteers and staff members.

Teri's service reflects the heart of true community care. She helps provide nourishment, hospitality, and hope to people facing difficult circumstances while also strengthening the programs that make this work possible. Her contributions consistently help our organization meet critical needs with dignity and compassion.

Teri Peppers is a true example of compassionate service and selfless giving. Her dedication to helping others, natural leadership, and continued commitment to our community make her highly deserving of this recognition.

### **Volunteer Photo**

