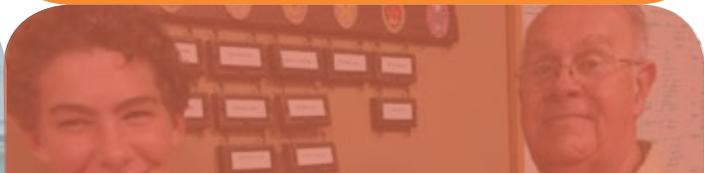




GIVE AWARDS 2016



**GOVERNOR'S INITIATIVE
FOR VOLUNTEER EXCELLENCE
MISSISSIPPI MUSEUM OF ART
APRIL 11, 2016**





FIRST LADY DEBORAH BRYANT
HONORARY CHAIR, VOLUNTEER MISSISSIPPI

Mississippi is known as The Hospitality State,

and I believe that runs deeper than just social graces. The Spirit of Mississippi lies in the important work of our hearts and hands in service to our communities. This is the lifeblood of our state's faith-based and nonprofit organizations, educational programs, and civic associations. Today, we highlight the extraordinary accomplishments and service of fourteen GIVE Award recipients, and we salute countless other Mississippians who selflessly give their time and talents to make our communities stronger, safer, and healthier.

Time and again, the people of our state demonstrate a shared passion for service that bridges all social, economic, and cultural differences. Mississippi volunteers of all ages tutor and mentor children, serve meals to those who are hungry, offer companionship to the sick and elderly, coordinate after-school programs, assist in disaster response and recovery efforts, build and rehabilitate homes, support veterans and military families, and restore the environment. We are "doers," finding innovative, creative ways to use our skills to meet unmet needs statewide.

The Governor's Initiative for Volunteer Excellence, or GIVE, Awards were established through the Office of the Governor and Volunteer Mississippi to recognize those individuals and organizations that have made an outstanding impact through their gifts of service, advocacy, and outreach on behalf of the citizens of Mississippi. Phil and I proudly congratulate the 2016 GIVE Award recipients, and we are pleased to celebrate the achievements of these extraordinary individuals and groups who give of themselves to improve lives and communities across our great state. Their stories serve as inspiration for us and for all Mississippians.



**Volunteer
Mississippi**

VOLUNTEER MISSISSIPPI engages and supports Mississippians of all ages and backgrounds in service to their communities. Volunteer Mississippi is the state office of volunteerism. Since its establishment as the Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service (MCVS) in 1994, Volunteer Mississippi has worked to encourage a culture of citizenship, service, and responsibility to our state and nation.

In partnership with the Corporation for National and Community Service, and a wide range of Mississippi state and local agencies, nonprofits, educational institutions, and faith-based organizations, Volunteer Mississippi fosters community engagement and builds volunteer capacity throughout the state.

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

Our story — the story of volunteerism in Mississippi — is about service as a way of life. It's about leadership in our communities, our schools, and our churches. And it's about results statewide. In 2015, our AmeriCorps programs and the Mississippi Volunteer Center Network engaged 79,050 volunteers serving 560,694 hours, an estimated value of \$12,935,226.49.

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

For more information or to receive this publication in an alternate format, contact us at 601.432.6779 (Toll-free: 888.353.1793/TTY: 601.432.6970).

This publication is also available online at www.volunteermississippi.org.

2016 GIVE AWARDS EVENT OFFICIALS & CONTRIBUTORS

PHIL BRYANT

GOVERNOR, STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

FIRST LADY DEBORAH BRYANT

HONORARY CHAIR, VOLUNTEER MISSISSIPPI BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

DR. RICHARD L. CONVILLE

CHAIR, VOLUNTEER MISSISSIPPI BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

W. DAVID MALLERY

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, VOLUNTEER MISSISSIPPI

WILLIAM "QUINT" WITHERS, V

CHAIR, 2016 GIVE AWARDS & COMMISSIONER, VOLUNTEER MISSISSIPPI

MARSHALL RAMSEY

2016 GIVE AWARDS EMCEE & 2012 GIVE AWARD RECIPIENT

Known for his award-winning cartoons, entertaining radio program and engaging short stories, Marshall Ramsey has been living his childhood dream for 46 years. But that dream hasn't always been easy. When Ramsey graduated with honors from the University of Tennessee in 1991, his first job was as a night custodian at Pope High School in Marietta, Georgia – not exactly a planned destination on his career path. But Ramsey quickly learned that the "worst moments" in life are the seeds for the best moments.

Ramsey is a two-time Pulitzer Finalist (2002 and 2006). His editorial cartoons are syndicated nationally by Creators Syndicate and have appeared in The New York Times, USA Today and The Clarion-Ledger. He is the author several successful books including two cartoon collections, the short story collection, *Fried Chicken and Wine* and the delightful children's

book, *Banjo's Dream*. Ramsey's cartoons, photos, stories and posts are frequently shared on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram. He's also the host of the weekly statewide radio program, *Now You're Talking with Marshall Ramsey* on Mississippi Public Broadcasting.

Ramsey's also a cancer survivor. Diagnosed with malignant melanoma in 2001, he has been honored by both the Melanoma Research Foundation and the American Cancer Society for paying his survival forward. He actively promotes skin cancer awareness and sun safety through cartoons, speeches, skin screenings and a 5K race. He even ran the Marine Corps Marathon to raise funds for melanoma research. (He completed the race, raised \$13,000 and developed some wicked leg cramps).

Ramsey, his wife Amy, their three sons and precocious dog Pip live in Mississippi, the best state for politics, storytellers, sweet tea and raising a family.



2016 GIVE AWARD JUDGES

COMMUNITY JUDGES

MARLA GUASTELLA

ROSS GUASTELLA

RITA WILLIAMSON

COMMISSIONER JUDGES

DR. KRISTI HENDRIX

JANIS LANE

LINDSEY PELLITTIERI

ROBIN ROBINSON

MAGGIE WADE-DIXON



VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Service is the heart of the Junior League of Jackson (JLJ). JLJ is an organization of women committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women, and improving communities through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. The organization boasts 749 active members who engage in more than 30 community projects annually. In addition to its active members, JLJ has a network of more than 1,500 sustaining members who support the organization's fund development activities and community services projects.

In 2016, JLJ is celebrating its 75th anniversary. With more than 284 chapters nationally, the Junior League of Jackson is currently the 6th largest and one of the oldest Leagues in the United States. With more than 2,400 total Provisional, Active and Sustaining members, JLJ invests more than 53,000 volunteer hours in the Jackson Metro Area.

JLJ's healthcare projects range from teaching children to make healthy lifestyle choices to caring for critically-ill premature babies. This project area includes JLJ's longest running project, Rockin' Mamas. In 1980, JLJ purchased and donated an ambulance designed for neo-natal care, called the Neo-natal Cradle, to the City of Jackson in conjunction with the start of this project. JLJ Rockin' Mamas volunteers have rocked and provided stimulation to premature infants for over 35 years at the University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC). In 1986, JLJ initiated a \$2 million fundraising campaign to build the Children's Cancer Clinic at UMMC. This goal was reached in just three years, and the League's first signature project broke ground in 1989.

Early literacy projects primarily benefit elementary school students. These volunteers expose children to vital language arts and reading skills to assist them in achieving grade-level reading. The League partners

with the Jackson Public School District to provide support to teachers, which ranges from tutoring students to awarding grants for classroom needs.

The League's second signature project, the Mississippi Children's Museum, broke ground in 2008. JLJ members volunteered countless hours raising money, planning exhibits, marketing the new museum, and raising awareness in communities throughout the state. In 2010, the Mississippi Children's Museum celebrated its grand opening with JLJ members helping to plan and staff the celebration. JLJ continues its support of both signature projects by providing volunteers, community projects and additional financial support.

In addition to the countless hours spent on community projects, volunteers also serve on fund development projects to raise money to support JLJ's community efforts. Bringing in more than \$1 million, JLJ's fund development businesses – the Junior League Jumble, Touch A Truck® Jackson, Junior League of Jackson Publications, and Mistletoe Marketplace – continue to grow and provide the fuel to fund and further the organization's mission.

For more than 75 years, Junior League of Jackson volunteers have given their time and resources to make a difference in the lives of children and families. Their phenomenal efforts have significantly impacted the quality of life for people in the Jackson Metro Area and the entire state. We are honored to present the inaugural *Volunteer Organization Award of Distinction* to the Junior League of Jackson for pinnacle achievement in building sustainable community initiatives through a robust volunteer workforce.





OUTSTANDING EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Atmos Energy is the largest pure natural gas distributor in Mississippi with 360 employees serving more than 260,000 customers in 113 communities. These employees, including supervisors, managers, and officers, work, live, and raise their families in the areas they serve. The company has received numerous accolades and awards for its work in the community, being recognized as one of the "Best Places to Work" in Mississippi on two occasions, named "Business of the Year" by the Greater Jackson Chamber Partnership, and received the "Outstanding Leadership Award" from the United Way.

At Atmos Energy, a community is more than a place to do business. Atmos Energy strengthens communities through its support for community development, civic programs, health and welfare, education, and arts and culture. Atmos seeks to be a caring neighbor as part of its responsibility as a Mississippi company.

According to Chief Executive Officer Kim Cocklin, the heart of the Atmos Energy culture is AtmoSpirit, a belief system that emphasizes five values: be at your best, bring out the best in others, inspire trust, focus on the future, and make a difference.

Atmos Energy encourages all of its employees to live these values at work and at home. Their true commitment is demonstrated through the 3,000+ volunteer hours recorded by employees in 2015, serving at hundreds of organizations, a few of which included Meals on Wheels, United Way, Chambers of Commerce, regional economic development groups, school boards, Habitat for Humanity, Scouting, and so on.

Their contributions to the March of Dimes Walk America, the Make-A-Wish Foundation, Habitat for Humanity, Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, Relay for Life, and Outdoors Without Limits have earned employees awards, and their engagement with Adopt-A-School programs earned them recognition by the Mississippi Legislature and national honorary societies for promoting education at the high school and community college levels.

Atmos Energy was nominated for this award by the Baddour Center, a Senatobia-based organization dedicated to providing a model residential community for adults with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities. Although Atmos employees volunteer at many organizations throughout the year, for the past four years Atmos sent a crew of volunteers to the Baddour Center on the United Way Day of Caring to support an array of service projects, including re-roofing the ballpark dugouts; repairing the greenhouses at the garden center; refurbishing the Welcome Center, building a safe; enclosed space for Daisy, the Baddour Center's campus pet, to live; and painting the interior of the development department building.

Atmos Energy displays a strong commitment to their values and has earned a wonderful reputation for providing excellent community and customer service. The company's unique spirit, caring employees, and philosophy of giving back makes it truly worthy of this *Outstanding Employee Volunteer Program GIVE Award*.



MICHELE BAKER, CVA

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT BY A VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL

As a lifelong volunteer and nonprofit professional, Michele Baker understands the critical leadership role that a volunteer manager plays in creating an environment where volunteers can be successful in meeting serious community needs. That's why, in addition to volunteering for causes benefiting women and children, the environment, health, and the arts, she similarly devotes her time to championing the Volunteer Management Profession.

Michele's paid professional life has always focused on community enrichment, volunteering, and leading volunteers. As the coordinator for the Crossroads Film Festival, she uses her exceptional leadership skills to juggle multiple venues, creating an event that is welcoming, inviting, and organized to give participants an amazing experience of Mississippi. As a licensed massage therapist, Michele mentors budding healers, offers therapeutic massages to mothers and babies, and coordinates chair massage sessions for "the Seeders" at Mustard Seed.

Since 1999, Michele has been one of the driving volunteer forces behind DOVIA Mississippi. DOVIA, which stands for Directors of Volunteers In Agencies, is a networking group of volunteer management professionals who meet monthly to share resources about volunteer management and other nonprofit topics.

The group provides volunteer managers with the people and resources they need to increase the capacity and effectiveness of those providing service in the community. Michele has served as President, Vice President of Programs, Secretary, Treasurer, and as a DOVIA Session Presenter. In addition to leadership roles, she creates partnerships with member agencies and has created and maintains the organization's digital properties, including the website, social media profiles, and monthly newsletter and member notice distributions.

Always seeking excellence in the field, Michele encouraged her colleagues to undergo a professional certification process to become credentialed volunteer administrators. The Certification in Volunteer Administration (CVA) program is the only internationally recognized professional certification in the field of volunteer resources management. The CVA credential reflects a mastery of the knowledge required of practitioners in this field as measured through an exam and peer assessment process.



It was Michele who got the ball rolling for her Mississippi colleagues to work on this process. She became the liaison between the registrants and the executive office, organized a study group, secured a meeting place, and arranged for a proctor and test site when applicants were to be tested on the required core competencies. After the examination, Michele arranged for her Mississippi colleagues to continue study group meetings so that all could prepare their CVA portfolios.

Michele finds joy in the connections between people and the activities that inspire them and tries to always keep in mind the myriad ways people can work together to improve the human condition. Through her expertise as a certified volunteer administrator and dedication to uplifting people through the profession, Michele has become an inspirational leader in the field of volunteer management.



LOUIS BOURGEOIS

OUTSTANDING HUMANITARIAN ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH THE LITERARY ARTS

Louis Bourgeois is a writer and executive director of VOX Press, Inc. However, when he is not publishing books or hosting cultural events, he volunteers his time teaching writing and reading to men incarcerated at Parchman and women and youth offenders incarcerated at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility.

Three years ago, Louis Bourgeois, an Oxford-based writer and former professor, founded the Prison Writes Initiative. The project was inspired by his passion to serve marginalized groups and spread the love of literature and writing to one of Mississippi's most underserved populations. His ultimate goal is to reduce recidivism by offering inmates the opportunity to explore the arts — an opportunity not readily available for the often impoverished individuals in the Mississippi prison system.

Bourgeois' classes help his students develop creativity and healthy forms of self-expression, as well as practical writing and critical thinking skills. Students are able to work on memoirs of their own, stories which often reveal heartbreaking life situations that contributed to their decline into criminal behavior. During each two and half hour session, Louis inspires the participants to find their voice, to find peace, and to find knowledge through their writing.

Most of his students, who range from teen-aged to adult offenders, will re-enter public life at some point in the future with skills that will be invaluable in helping them adjust to life outside of prison. Although many other states have some sort of prison writing program in place, the Prison Writes Initiative is the first of its kind in Mississippi.

Bourgeois' ultimate goal is to have a writing program in every Mississippi prison. In the past few years, he has managed to teach sessions in the Marshall County Correctional Facility, Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman, and the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility (CMFC). In addition to helping inmates write



their own life stories, Bourgeois is working to make these stories heard by a larger audience — in December 2014, the nonprofit VOX Press published a collection of memoirs from his students at Parchman. The anthology is called *In Our Own Words: Writing from Parchman Farm*.

Where most people see only the inmates' past failures, Louis Bourgeois sees the potential they have to recognize their own humanity and become more-informed members of society.



OWEN ONASSIS BROWN, II

OUTSTANDING EDUCATIONAL MENTORSHIP BY A YOUTH

Owen Onassis Brown, II realized the importance of serving his community during his formative years as a Cub Scout at Pearl Street African Methodist Episcopal Church. Participating in National Service Projects such as Make A Difference Day, Martin Luther King Day, Jr. of Service, Souper Bowl of Caring, and Scouting projects laid the groundwork for Brown's dedication to service.

His desire to volunteer while in middle school led him to partner with the America Reads - Mississippi AmeriCorps Program. Owen served on a committee that recruited more than 35 middle school student volunteers to work on the Martin Luther King, Jr. project sponsored by America Reads-Mississippi Jackson State University Region.

During his Freshman year in High School Owen began reading to Isable Elementary School kindergarten students. It was then that he realized what a difference one-on-one tutoring made for his students and decided to choose Elementary Education as his career.

The following year, after convincing the school's new leadership to keep the tutoring program, he helped fifth grade students with English and Language Arts on a daily basis. Owen has continued tutoring children in summer school and on into his senior year. Many of the students Brown tutored became first-time Honor Roll scholars.

In addition to his passion as a volunteer tutor, Owen has volunteered in several leadership roles. He is a graduate of the 2014-15 Class of Youth Leadership Jackson, was chosen as a member of the National Youth Advisory Board for the Souper Bowl of Caring, and serves as President of the City of Jackson Mayor's Youth Council.



Owen Brown's enthusiastic leadership and passion for helping children learn has made him an inspirational role model and offers hope for the future of education.



JULIE CANNON

OUTSTANDING SERVICE IN CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY

Julie Cannon is a full-time nurse, wife, mother of three, and "Juju" to her precious granddaughter. In addition to all of those roles, Cannon is an advocate of abused and neglected children with Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Hancock County, a role she has played for more than six years. Day in and day out Julie works tirelessly to advocate for up to 29 children and five families at any given time.

As an advocate, Cannon makes sure children who have been abused and/or neglected are kept safe and are checked on while they are in the foster care system. Julie meets with children and families, familiarizing herself with their home situation, monitoring their progress, and becoming an important and necessary voice for children during their journey through the court system. She makes sure to see her children in person no matter where her they are placed, sometimes driving for up to three hours to ensure that all of their needs are met.

One of the most critical parts of her service is going to court on behalf of children and providing recommendations to Youth Court Judges, literally serving as the voice for the child in court. Beyond the courtroom, Cannon attends meetings at the Mississippi Department of Human Services and Foster Care Reviews, advocates for children's educational needs in school or daycare settings, and assures that the children's mental health and medical needs are adequately addressed.

In addition to her advocate service, Cannon has played a large role in helping CASA of Hancock County grow by recruiting numerous volunteers to become advocates for children and volunteering at community awareness events and fundraisers.

A positive role model with a kind heart, Cannon is a constant in the life of children as they experience the turbulence that can sometimes accompany entering the foster care system. Though she has had different outcomes in her cases, Cannon makes sure each child



has a safe and permanent "forever" home. Julie Cannon goes above and beyond to make sure the children in her community have a voice. She truly is the light for children during their darkest hours.



JAMES PHILIP CARANNA

OUTSTANDING SERVICE BY A NATIONAL SERVICE PARTICIPANT

James Philip “Phil” Caranna joined the Harrison County Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) 15 years ago, amassing more than 23,800 volunteer hours over that time. His dedication and service have saved Harrison County over \$5.5 million, and that’s just the value of hours recorded after becoming an RSVP member. Unhindered by a physical disability, Phil Caranna has a long history of giving back to the people of Harrison County.

At the age of 24, Phil Caranna was hospitalized for an illness that left him legally blind. Caranna never considered his blindness as a disability, and learned to adapt during his time at the Addie McBride School for the Blind.

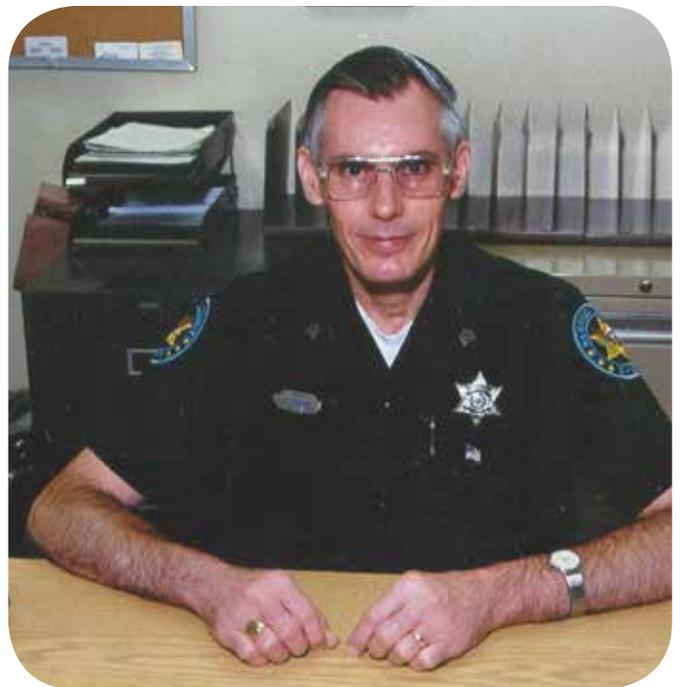
Interested in Law Enforcement, Caranna began volunteering with the Harrison County Sheriff’s Department in 1976 as a switch board operator, proudly donning his uniform each day. While sheriffs have come and gone, Caranna remained a constant at the Sheriff’s Department. For years, Phil would catch the bus to “work”. He was serious about volunteering and considered it his job. Though he never received a paycheck for his service, he always put in for his vacation time or when he needed time off, just like paid employees. Day after day, law enforcement officers looked forward to his greetings and huge smile. Phil always had a kind word to share.

Due to health issues, Caranna decided to retire from the Sheriff’s Department at the age of 67. He was considered a “Brother in Arms,” and upon his departure, he was named an honorary Lieutenant with the Harrison County Sheriff’s Department.

Although retired from his first job, Caranna is not finished serving others through RSVP. He has now joined the Harrison County RSVP Handyman Brigade as an assistant carpenter.



An inspiration to everyone he meets, Phil Caranna has made an impact in the lives of many and has never let his disability stop him from serving others.



Z. ROSE COFFEY-GRAHAM

OUTSTANDING SERVICE IN STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

Born and raised in Oktibbeha County, Z. Rose Coffey-Graham has been making a difference in her community since she was a young child. She recalls watching over community children during the day while their parents were working in the cotton fields. Throughout her childhood, Rose was involved in various good deed efforts and clubs that focused on service projects to better the community and help others. In the ninth grade, she led a fundraising effort enabling her class to visit the State Capitol in Jackson. In the summer of her ninth grade year, Rose volunteered through her church, helping with the summer reading program and conducting a book drive to stock the church's library. That summer, she also began playing the piano as a volunteer for her church, a role she still fills today.

In 1984, while enrolled at Mississippi State University, Rose saw a need to engage youth in service and activities, and worked with others to charter the Controllers Generation 4-H Club. She served as a 4-H Club Leader, leading the monthly meetings and planning activities for each along with chaperoning the club members during their monthly activities.

A decade after the original 4-H Club dissolved, she established the Controllers Generation II 4-H Club to meet the needs of community youth. As club leader, Graham organizes and engages 4-H members in community service activities, such as monthly visits to Starkville Manor and the Carrington Nursing Homes, community beautification projects, activities to promote the Mississippi Tobacco Coalition, and bell-ringing for the Salvation Army's Red Kettle Campaign.

Graham also served as a Troop Leader for Girl Scout Troop 91 in Maben, Mississippi for nine years, organizing activities for members, accompanying scouts on campouts, helping with fundraising through Girl Scout cookie sales, and engaging the scouts in community service projects. More than a decade later, Rose reengaged with Girl Scouts and again began serving as a Girl Scout Troop Leader.

In 2014, Graham began volunteering at Community Counseling Services (CCS), Parent Café, and Family Centered Programs' Building Strong Families. As a



volunteer at CCS, Rose hosts workshops teaching life skills for the residents in the Caring Days program and interacts one-on-one with the residents in various activities. She assists as a volunteer with Parent Café twice a month helping with set up and preparing for the discussions.

Rose's service is not limited to all noted here; her community engagement encompasses so much more and is a part of every aspect of her life. We applaud Rose Coffey-Graham for her service in enriching the lives of children, her dedication to strengthening the family unit, and her life-long commitment to the community in which she lives.





CONTACT THE CRISIS LINE

OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER INITIATIVE IN CRISIS INTERVENTION

CONTACT the Crisis Line, a 24/7 interfaith telephone ministry for troubled callers, has been dedicated to crisis intervention since 1971, having just celebrated its 45th anniversary on March 15, 2016. CONTACT is accredited by CONTACT USA, and is a partner with the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

CONTACT's efforts are fueled by a cadre of committed volunteers whose diligence and compassion allow the program to operate with limited staff. Currently, there are 72 volunteers serving in the capacity of crisis line counselors, support workers, fundraising committee members, and board members.

Crisis Line Counselors must complete an extensive 40-hour training, meeting weekly for 14 weeks, and then have at least three observations before beginning their volunteer commitment. This extensive training enables them to handle an array of circumstances for individuals in crisis. Volunteers are asked to work two shifts a month but most work much more than that, and no shift has been missed in many, many years. Counselors never know who may be on the other end of the line -- it could be a person feeling lonesome, a family that has been evicted and

needs to be connected with resources, or an individual that is feeling that they have no other choice than suicide and needs a caring person to listen and intervene on their behalf.

CONTACT also operates the Reassurance CONTACT program, in which the Crisis Line Counselors make daily outbound calls to people in need and to seniors living alone. The Reassurance Program is statewide, and referrals are received from local law enforcement, churches, home health agencies, and individuals. In addition to taking calls that come through the crisis line, volunteers also take calls that come through the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and 1-800-Suicide portal, the Mississippi Department of Health's 24/7 HIV/AIDS hotline, the Episcopal AIDS Committee, Compassionate Friends, weekend calls for the Mississippi Department of Mental Health, and two Catholic Charities programs: the Rape Crisis Center in Jackson and the Guardian Sexual Assault Center in Natchez.

The support workers, a seasoned group of volunteers, assist and provide emotional support and advisement to the crisis line volunteers. Their shift is for a week at a time, and they meet monthly to discuss the calls received in the previous month.

The CONTACT Crisis Line allows other programs to operate around the clock, extending their availability and meeting people's needs at their most critical hour. Through active listening and assertive communication, the dedicated, committed, and caring volunteers of CONTACT the Crisis Line have been improving and saving lives for 45 years!



MATTHEW GALLARDO

OUTSTANDING DISABILITIES SERVICE BY A YOUTH

Despite a schedule packed with classes and extracurricular activities, high school student Matthew Gallardo participates in a volunteer or service activity nearly every week. During the summer he volunteers at the Abbie Rogers Civitan Camp for children and adults with significant disabilities, among other service activities.

Last summer, Gallardo successfully completed a 300-hour inclusive TRIAD (Training, Resources, and Information for the Advancement of Disability) AmeriCorps Program that focused on financial literacy training, mentoring, and tutoring for people with disabilities. Matthew matured and blossomed in his understanding of the disability community during that service period, which led him to co-present at the 2015 disAbility MegaConference, a national conference focusing on individuals with disabilities.

Gallardo has been a member of Starting Today Empowering Peers through Uniting and Participating (STEP UP) Council since 2014, which focuses on issues facing all young people, with and without disabilities. Council members discuss leadership, self-advocacy, transition, health care, education, employment, and recreation. Matthew has also assisted with STEP UP Nights, where council members and others participate in monthly community leisure events, and has attended several peer member celebrations.

In addition to his volunteer work with children and adults with disabilities, Matthew has served as a member of the Social Justice League, a school club that helps the homeless population in Hattiesburg and supports feeding programs in foreign countries. He is a counselor and tutor at the Surehouse Learning Center afterschool program, a coach for the Mississippi Special Olympics softball team, a host of the Future Business Leaders of America Charity Golf Tournament, was a leader of events for the Make-A-Wish Foundation, and served with the Society of St. Vincent De Paul feeding those in need during the Thanksgiving holiday season.

Matthew Gallardo is a role model and inspiration to his peers. He has truly demonstrated that he is a leader



and that he has a passion to serve others, with a strong focus on serving and supporting those with disabilities.



JIMMY JOHNSON

OUTSTANDING SERVICE BY A PUBLIC SERVANT

For Mississippians like Jimmy Johnson, service is part of life. The 71-year-old retired Captain served the public for years during his career at the Harrison County Sheriff's Department and has continued his service to the community through committed volunteerism.

Every year, Johnson serves at the National Night Out Against Crime because he believes law enforcement should connect with the community. His dedication to law enforcement and his community are evidenced through his role as a volunteer reserve officer for the Gulfport Police Department.

Johnson has served as president of TRIAD, a program that addresses the safety of seniors. TRIAD has distributed thousands of medical information reflector address signs and blinking light bulbs to help first responders locate victims more easily, saving time and lives. While serving as president Jimmy also secured funding from the sheriff to purchase deadbolt locks for seniors in high crime areas and shower grab-bars to prevent falls.

Working with youth is also very important to Johnson. As a Boy Scout leader he volunteers at the yearly Jamboree where hundreds of young boy scouts come together. He has educated countless people about the dangers of drinking and driving through the Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) program, and taught foster/adoptive parents how to communicate with their teens. Johnson also volunteers at the National Day of Adoption Celebration each year, celebrating with families who have adopted children.

Jimmy serves on the Board of Directors for Youth 4 Christ, Boys and Girls Club, March of Dimes, Vision 20/20, Harrison County Sheriff's Seniors and Law Enforcement Together (SALT) Council, and is currently President of the Gulf Coast Exchange Club.

Cooking is another passion that Jimmy shares through his service. He cooks for hundreds of foster children



each year at the Foster Family Fun Day events, and prepares breakfast for five schools to honor and welcome teachers to kick off each new school year. He also cooks for hundreds of first responders when they work the streets for the local Mardi Gras parades. His stint as volunteer concession director for Long Beach Softball has exceeded 15 years, working five days a week during softball season.

Jimmy serves as a Deacon at his church, and has been a Sunday School teacher for more than 40 years. He is involved with the church youth activities and has traveled on many mission trips.

Ever the Public Servant, Retired Captain and Reserve Officer, Jimmy Johnson is ready to help at any time, supporting the families of fallen officers, assisting those with cancer, and improving the lives of many.





OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO THE ARMED FORCES

Every Thursday night from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. people know where to find Rickey Pope and the volunteer staff of Mid-South Project Package. For the past 11 years, Mid-South Project Package volunteers have come together for three hours every Thursday to assemble care packages for Mid-South troops stationed overseas.

Rickey Pope established the organization 11 years ago while working as the Family Assistance Center Supervisor for the National Guard. As a result of hearing daily inquiries as to how to support troops overseas, Pope began to develop a plan to meet this growing need. Initially, Pope sent letters to local churches to get names of servicemen and women serving overseas. It didn't take long for the National Guard office, churches, and community members to begin contacting the Mid-South Project Package with names of servicemen and women they wanted to support.

The Mid-South Project Package sends out more than 400 packages each month to servicemen and women from the Mid-South. Each package includes toiletries, snacks, and a letter from Project Package volunteers. These supplies are gathered from the community and all costs of shipping are paid through donations. As one soldier noted in a thank you note, "I have witnessed some soldiers actually brought to tears when they receive these packages, especially when it has a taste of home."

Pope and his core volunteers have amassed nearly 26,000 volunteer hours since the organization's inception, and that number doesn't include other volunteers who participate throughout the year. Many of those volunteers are former service members and remember what it meant to them when they were deployed and received packages.

The number of volunteer hours cannot truly capture the impact of this program that sends a "taste of home" to Mid-South troops, providing "light" in a "place of perpetual darkness." We thank Rickey Pope and his team of volunteers for this tremendous service to the men and women fighting to protect our freedom.





OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER INITIATIVE IN HUNGER RELIEF

"Where do all these people eat when there is not a storm?"

Kristen McClendon, founder of South Rankin Food Resource Center, Inc. (SRFRC), posed that question to her mother while volunteering in a Richland, Mississippi shelter in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

So Kristen and her mother, Mayoung McClendon, started a food pantry in a closet of First United Methodist Church in Richland. That food pantry eventually grew into the nonprofit organization that has provided more than two million pounds of food to nearly 72,000 people in need in the Rankin County area over the past eight years.

Effective collection and storage, as well as distribution of these goods on the first, second, and third Thursday of each month, takes a well-planned process and many volunteers. SRFRC is blessed to have 40 to 50 core volunteers and another 150 that can be called upon whenever there is a need.

Volunteers travel to the Mississippi Food Network each Tuesday morning to pick up canned and packaged food. Volunteers await the truck's return to unload and stock the pantry, as other volunteers collect donations from other locations. The Gleaners visit local farms to collect fresh produce, sometimes digging or picking goods from the field.

Food drives sponsored by local businesses and schools are only one method by which the community is involved with SRFRC. The Richland Mayor's Youth Council members work Wednesdays and the Richland Special Needs Class members volunteer Tuesdays and Thursdays. And on

Thursdays, there are usually 20 or more volunteers working at the small house in Richland that houses SRFRC to prepare for distribution.

In addition to providing more than 100 boxes of food to needy individuals and families each week, SRFRC participates in the "Back Pack Program" started by the Mississippi Food Network. This program supplies school-aged children with backpacks of food to ensure these youth are not food-deprived on weekends.

The South Rankin Food Resource Center, Inc. has provided food security to thousands of Rankin County families because of the insight and determination of Kristen McClendon and the phenomenal efforts of dedicated volunteers.



JENNIFER YANCY

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN SERVING THE NEEDS OF SCHOOL CHILDREN

Tireless effort that seeks no recognition. That is the definition of a committed volunteer and the perfect way to describe the selfless acts of Jennifer Yancy.

Yancy supports several charities and schools in Lafayette County. She serves on the board of the Literacy Council and is an active member the Lafayette County School District Parent Teacher Association. Jennifer organizes Teacher Appreciation breakfasts and helped secure Lafayette County Public Schools' car tags to provide sustainable funding for special school projects. But these activities are only a small part of Jennifer's volunteer contributions.

Jennifer is a passionate volunteer for Lovepacks, a nonprofit organization that provides food to local school-aged children in need in the Lafayette-Oxford community. The organization packages and distributes "lovepacks," bags of shelf-stable, easy-to-open food, to approximately 150 children each week. With no paid staff, Lovepacks relies heavily on volunteers to be Lovepack Coordinators - volunteers like Jennifer Yancy.

Lovepack Coordinators usually pick up "lovepacks" and deliver them to the school's counselor. But as Lovepack Coordinator for Lafayette County Elementary School, Jennifer doesn't do things the usual way. She picks up her "lovepacks" and personally delivers them to each child, which has earned her the moniker, "The Lovepack Lady."

Jennifer's passion for helping school children led her to approach the Lovepack Board and commit to helping secure manpower and donations to extend services to other schools. Lovepacks began in 2010 serving one elementary school, and now, thanks to Yancy's leadership and determination, has expanded to every school in the Lafayette County school district.

Yancy not only kept her word, enabling expansion to all schools, but has also strengthened the organization along the way. Week in and week out, Yancy is consistent and



steps up to every challenge that is presented. From packing the bags to helping with fundraising to taking out the recycling, Yancy has supported every aspect of Lovepacks.

Jennifer's selfless actions have provided comfort and sustenance to many of her community's smallest citizens. The school children of the Oxford-Lafayette community know they have found a true friend in Jennifer Yancy - The Lovepack Lady.



2016 HONORABLE MENTIONS

ARTHUR MITCHELL AVANT

Arthur Avant has committed his life to the betterment of society through interpersonal relations and fitness advocacy, impacting thousands of people in Mississippi and across the nation. After a sixteen-year career as a Drug Abuse Resistance (DARE) Officer, Avant realized he needed to go beyond the conventional methods used to educate youth about the dangers of drugs. Through his original songs, writing, and community service, Avant has reached thousands of children and become a mentor to many, helping them stay focused on the skills they need to avoid involvement in drugs, alcohol, gangs, and violence.

WADE BISHOP

Wade Bishop embodies a spirit of volunteerism, giving back in countless ways. He contributes hundreds of hours every year serving on medical/dental and construction teams for missions in Honduras, Mexico, and Costa Rica, and helping the homeless on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. When Hurricane Katrina destroyed the only homeless shelter in Harrison County, Bishop worked with a group to open the doors of First Methodist Church in Gulfport as a temporary shelter. Bishop's behind the scenes contributions are often underestimated, but they make a very big difference to many who are underserved or forgotten.

JERNEKA LAIRD

Jerneka Laird has been a Girl Scout since the second grade. Now in her senior year at Prentiss High School, she leads girl scouting projects and serves as a mentor to younger girls. Last year, she completed her Girl Scout Gold Award project, which consisted of updating the Jefferson Davis Cemetery Record Book - a record that had not been updated since 1989. She and her team set out to record every grave site in the Beat 4 area of Jefferson Davis County. Her Gold Award project started as a search for military members to honor on Veteran's Day, Memorial Day, and other national celebrations of service. In the end, she developed a valuable resource for everyone in her community.

LELAND HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

Jodi Scheffler has led the Leland Habitat for Humanity project for nearly 10 years, and along with her dedicated team of volunteers, has provided housing for her neighbors in need. The Leland Habitat program not only offers housing for families in need, but also combats the neighborhood blight challenge in the small Delta town of Leland. The program has constructed and provided 32 homes for eligible families in a community with a population of only 4,200 — a feat that makes the Leland Habitat program one of the most prolific in the state and nation.

MELVIN SMITHERMAN

Every Friday, Melvin Smitherman dedicates four hours of his day as a volunteer for Mississippi Public Broadcasting's Radio Reading Service. Smitherman, a legally blind listener of the Radio Reading Service of Mississippi (RRSM), has volunteered there since 2003. He assists the program director by downloading, labeling, and transferring audio files into the broadcast automation system through which the material is broadcast to others. He is a shining example of the generous volunteer spirit that is so prevalent among Mississippians of all abilities and professions.

RUTH M. DE LA CRUZ

Volunteering is truly a way of life for Ruth de la Cruz. Originally born and raised in Ozamiz City in the Philippines, Ruth made Starkville her home in 1970, and began serving as an Auxiliary Volunteer at the Oktibbeha County Hospital in 1971. While employed with Security State Bank, she volunteered to teach financial literacy to international students attending Mississippi State University (MSU). In addition to her work for students, Ruth's volunteer involvement has included volunteering at arts festivals and symphony chorus and orchestra performances, as well as helping the American Red Cross and OSERVS with disaster relief.

PAUL CUICCHI

Paul Cuicchi has been described as the "most faithful" and "most skillful" volunteer for Starkville Habitat for Humanity. As a team leader, Cuicchi works with groups of five to 15 unskilled volunteers providing direction and supervision in construction projects. Cuicchi goes beyond just building homes by offering support and encouragement to student volunteers, ultimately building their confidence and self-esteem. He has worked on more than 20 Habitat houses, forever improving the lives of the families who reside in them.

THANKS TO OUR 2016 GIVE AWARDS SPONSORS

GOLD SPONSOR



SILVER SPONSORS



Pascagoula Refinery



**MADDOX
FOUNDATION**

*Signature Investments
Creating an Indelible Legacy*

BRONZE SPONSORS

**Richard & Mozella Conville
Josie S. Shumake
Trustmark**

BENEFACTORS

**Roktabija Abdul-Azeez
Boyles Moak
Rankin First Foundation
John W. McGowan**

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

FIRST LADY DEBORAH BRYANT, *Honorary Chair*

DR. RICHARD L. CONVILLE, *Board Chair*

RENE DUNGAN, *Vice Chair*

TOM LORD, *2nd Vice Chair*

JOSIE SHUMAKE, *Board Chair Emeritus*

ROKTABIJA ABDUL-AZEEZ, *Ex Officio*

BRIG. GENERAL, DURR BOYLES

BILLY CAMPBELL

PATTY CAPPAERT

MAYOR LES FILLINGAME

LINDA "LL" GATES

DR. KRISTI HENDRIX

JANIS LANE

LINDSEY PELLITTIERI

ROBIN ROBINSON

LEE TUCKER

MAGGIE WADE-DIXON

CAROLINE WICKER SIMS

RODGER WILDER

WILLIAM "QUINT" WITHERS, V

COMMISSION STAFF

W. DAVID MALLERY
Executive Director

ADRIAN AUSTIN
Fiscal Officer

DANNY BLUE
Deputy Director/Chief Financial Officer

CAITLIN BROOKING
Director of Program Development

OLA CUPSTID
Senior Financial Analyst

KRISTA ESTES
Volunteer Network Officer

SUZANNE SCALES RUTHERFORD
Director of Operations

KATHRYN REPLOGLE
Disaster Preparedness & Response Coordinator

JUDY STEIN
AmeriCorps Program Officer

SADELLE SWEET
Systems & Special Projects Manager



Former First Lady Marsha Barbour with
Vivian & Charles Haddad
2011 GIVE Awards

A tribute to my wife...

I only wish I could nominate someone posthumously, and I would nominate my late wife. She volunteered for eight years rocking babies till she was too sick with Parkinson's and afraid she might drop the child. The nurses loved her for her love and compassion, in fact one time they knew a child was dying and asked Vivian to rock the child who died in her arms. Vivian was that kind of person.

I only wish the day I received the Award that it went to her instead. She deserved it. The picture of us with the Governor's wife was taken on her birthday — April 11, 2011.

Charles Haddad

2011 GIVE Awards Recipient
Outstanding Humanitarian Service