



OFFICE OF GOVERNOR ANDY BESHEAR

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

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Gov. Beshear to Bestow 28 Governor's Service Awards

*Prestigious annual event will be presented virtually for the second time in its
26-year history*

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Nov. 10, 2021) – Gov. Andy Beshear and Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) Secretary Eric Friedlander will recognize volunteerism and service contributions across the commonwealth at the 26th Annual Governor's Service Awards. This year's award ceremony – consisting of 15 individual awards and 13 group awards – will be broadcast on Serve Kentucky's Facebook page at facebook.com/ServeKY at 11 a.m. EST on Wednesday, Nov. 10

"Today we celebrate the resilient and selfless contributions of volunteers across the state. These individuals and organizations are living out their values and faith by helping others with no expectation of anything in return," said Gov. Beshear. "Congratulations to the award recipients and thank you to all volunteers for letting your light shine throughout our commonwealth. You are such an important part of Team Kentucky."

"Volunteers have stepped up in remarkable ways throughout the course of the pandemic," said Sec. Friedlander. "During dynamic times, their creativity and unwavering spirit has been a key component in Kentucky's ability to build back

better. Thank you to the many volunteers across the state for your everyday commitment to make a positive difference in the lives of Kentuckians.”

Serve Kentucky, an agency within CHFS, coordinates the annual awards. The Governor's Office launched the program in 1975; however, Serve Kentucky has managed the awards program since 1995.

“It’s our honor to lift up volunteers – such as these award winners – who have given so much to their communities,” said Joe Bringardner, Serve Kentucky executive director. “They are local leaders who assess local needs and act by tackling the matter at its core – making our communities better.”

In addition to coordinating the Governor’s Service Awards, Serve Kentucky currently administers 22 AmeriCorps program grants with more than \$9.5 million in federal grant funds along with supporting other community service programs across the commonwealth. State Service Commissions oversee the annual grant competition that awards funding to AmeriCorps State programs, determine social needs in their states, set policy and program priorities, provide training and assistance, support national days of service and promote service and volunteering.

For more information about the Governor’s Service Awards, Kentucky’s AmeriCorps programs or volunteerism, call Serve Kentucky at (502) 564-7420 or visit their website at serve.ky.gov.

A list of honorees and their hometowns follow.

2021 Governor’s Service Award Recipients

Volunteer Service Awards

Youth Volunteer Service Awards

- **Jasmine Delaney Webb** – Ashland/Boyd County

In the early months of the pandemic, Jasmine made and sold masks to address the supply shortage, raising \$11,500 for the Kentucky Children's Miracle Network (KCMN). Additionally, she organized the Ashland/Grayson COVID-19 Match Program to reduce the risk of exposure for at-risk community members by pairing them with volunteers who could bring them necessities. Her volunteerism also predates pandemic efforts with participation in the Boyd County Key Club, organizing multiple fundraising events to raise \$5,000 for Ashland Build-A-Bed. As a certified instructor for children's and women's self-defense classes, she helped develop and run the pilot of the radKIDS training program, Tough Cookies. She also helps in organizations such as Challenger League, assists with her school's field day, and acts as a mentor for her local YMCA swim team practices.

- Tara Reddy Singh – Louisville/Jefferson County**

Tara is the president and chief volunteer of The Bluegrass Literacy Project, which aims to promote and improve English language literacy in Kentucky through free etymology workshops and spelling bees in 29 counties. Since 2017, the organization has raised \$12,000 to support local literacy projects and served approximately 10,000 students through classroom and school spelling bees. Tara also raised more than \$4,000 for “Grace’s Reading Room” – a mobile literacy initiative to make reading materials accessible to children in Louisville’s underserved areas. In addition, Tara motivated others to donate books to refugee children in the “Stop Summer Slide.”
- Samuel G. Hayward III, Edward O’Neill Meiers, and John Anderson Phelps – Louisville/Jefferson County**

High school freshmen and neighbors Teddy Meiers and Sam Hayward planned a neighborhood food drive benefiting Dare to Care Food Bank, resulting in 1,700 pounds of food to donate. The pair also recruited classmate John Phelps to hold a food drive in his neighborhood, which collected more than 2,300 pounds of food and \$500 in monetary donations. After such success, the boys launched Tigers Care to encourage other neighborhood food drives for Dare to Care. From May 2020 to May 2021, Tigers Care organized more than 15 drives that collected more than 50,000 pounds of food and raised \$4,400 for Dare to Care. The students’ efforts helped feed 12,000 people.
- Aubree Hay and Abby McGuire – Ashland/Boyd County**

Aubree and Abby – both 2020 recipients of the President’s Volunteer Service Award – identified a need and learned how to sew masks. With a \$250 Power of Youth mini-grant from America’s Promise Alliance to purchase fabric, elastic, and thread, the girls launched a project to provide masks for shelters and nonprofits. In total, they donated 800 sewn, reusable masks and 200 disposable masks to nine shelter and social service organizations. In addition, the girls organized two supply drives for Shelter of Hope and Ashland Blazer Youth Services Center and sought donations to make Easter Baskets to auction off for Hope’s Place as part of the nonprofit’s “Chocolate Extravaganza.”

Adult Volunteer Service Awards

- Nancy Johnson – Lexington/Fayette County**

Nancy Johnson, RN, has shown great dedication to providing compassionate health care to each patient referred to Surgery on Sunday (SoS), a nonprofit medical organization providing free surgery to those who otherwise could not afford treatment. Her extensive duties include reviewing patient referrals, obtaining medical records, arranging surgical consultations, ordering diagnostic studies, ensuring follow-up care,

communicating with referring providers and addressing patient concerns. She has contributed at least 2,500 volunteer hours over the last four years.

- **Casey Wagner – Louisville/Jefferson County**
When COVID-19 put an indefinite hold on the construction of St. Joseph Children's Home Child Development Center's new playground, Casey Wagner stepped up to ensure the children would have an outdoor play area. He gathered a few friends and parents along the way, and in the end, the playground became a beautiful community project built by many hands. His plan to build "one element" of the playground soon became two, then three, then four. Weekend by weekend, Casey dedicated his free time from the summer of 2020 into the Spring of 2021 to build the natural playground's climbing area, two rock pits, and a large mulched exploration and building area.
- **Corey Council – Frankfort/Franklin County**
Corey is devoted to helping people get the resources they need to break the cycle of addiction. After losing his talented and beloved son David to addiction in 2017, Corey created Families Against Dangerous Drugs to share a dual message of warning and hope. Since naloxone became available for widespread distribution, Corey has carried it with him, helping save several lives. Seeking to do even more, he connected with the Franklin County Agency for Substance Abuse Policy (ASAP) Board, which collaborated with The Franklin County Health Department and a local art therapy group to put on a three-day drug prevention summit. The summit launched a multiyear \$500,000 grant process to bring prevention and awareness to school age youth in schools – just the audience Corey was trying to reach. His volunteer efforts also extends to programs such as the Angel Program and Franklin County Women and Family Shelter.
- **Eli Cooper – Owensboro, Louisville/Daviess, Jefferson Counties**
Eli, a long-time youth member and volunteer of the Kentucky YMCA, was instrumental in the organization's pivot to virtual services in 2020 due to the pandemic. He helped deliver a new virtual model of state government conferences in the fall of 2020 while also carrying a full set of college classes and working a paid job. His commitment extended into the Kentucky YMCA's spring season, helping to adapt the UN program in the same fashion – virtually. He also took over the high school Security Council program, which required everything from student officer mentoring, to program planning, to training staff in aspects of the program.

Senior Volunteer Service Awards

- Dr. William L. Tyler III and Susan Walton Tyler – Owensboro/Daviess County**
 Bill and Susie Tyler donated the original eight acres of the Western Kentucky Botanical Garden and have been deeply involved since its inception in 1993. Bill guides The Garden's design committee and Susie was The Garden's director, lending her time and talent as a volunteer in this position for almost 10 years. She currently serves as The garden's volunteer coordinator and is always involved in hospitality.
- Mark Reynolds – Lexington/Fayette County**
 Mark is a dedicated Habitat for Humanity volunteer who believes in the importance of quality, affordable housing and inspires others to support Lexington Habitat's mission of providing housing through his passion for photography. He has helped capture countless photos of the Lexington Habitat's efforts, including family portraits of those the organization serves, organization events such as the Shamrock Shuffle and Golf Tournament, and community projects throughout Lexington. Mark's volunteer service is over 3,500 hours since beginning his journey with Habitat for Humanity in 2014.
- Martha J. Crumbie – Lexington/Fayette County**
 Martha has been a consistent volunteer with the Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) of the Bluegrass for more than eight years. Under her leadership, groups cook breakfasts and dinners, make sandwiches, assemble toiletry kits, clean and organize the House, and run collection drives to fulfill the RMHC wish list. Martha has also volunteered with other organizations throughout Kentucky, including Community Inspired Solutions, African American Read In, William Wells Brown School, YMCA's back to school rallies, Me and Miss Essence Pageant, Peace Walks, Art on the Move Studio and more.

Veteran Support Service Award

- Lisa R. Mattingly – Lebanon/Marion County**
 Lisa has dedicated herself to veterans and their families for more than 19 years. As the Program Support Assistant at the Lebanon, Kentucky National Cemetery, she displays relentless dedication to Kentucky veterans and their loved ones and ensures every situation is conducted with compassion and sincerity. Lisa also offers her assistance to Kentucky state cemeteries and, in her free time, she is working to qualify as a volunteer firefighter.

National Service Awards

AmeriCorps Member Service Awards

- **Ashleigh Rufus – Bowling Green/Warren County**
Ashleigh has served two years as an AmeriCorps Kentucky College Coach at Warren East High School in Bowling Green, encouraging the pursuit of post-secondary education by helping students with career exploration, college essays, admission applications, FAFSA workshops, campus tours and financial literacy activities. To adapt to 2020's hybrid school model, Ashleigh helped lead Warren East's first-ever hybrid College Application Campaign featuring both in-person meetings and virtual appointments with college admissions representatives. As a result of all her efforts, 78% of her core seniors completed the FAFSA and 23 were offered a total of \$187,622 in scholarships for the 2021-22 academic year, not including the need-based aid she helped her students obtain.
- **Heather Keane – Pineville/Bell County**
Heather has served as a Kentucky College Coach at Bell County Area Technology Center (ATC) since October 2019, working with students from surrounding high schools to focus on career and technological post-secondary plans. As the first AmeriCorps member at her school, she built the program from the ground up and has been able to mentor 88 students all while pursuing a graduate degree in clinical psychology.

AmeriCorps Program Service Awards

- **AmeriCorps NCCC River 3 Team 26b – Louisville/Jefferson County; Richmond/Madison County**
AmeriCorps NCCC River 3 Team 26b is part of the AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps based in Vicksburg, Mississippi. For a portion of their service year, the team was assigned to serve with several organizations in Kentucky, including Louisville Grows, Cedar Ridge Camp, and Habitat for Humanity of Madison and Clark Counties.

AmeriCorps Seniors Service Award

- **RSVP Volunteers at CrossRoads Food Pantry – Owensboro/Daviess County**
The AmeriCorps Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) pairs Americans aged 55 and older with service organizations across the country. The Audubon Area RSVP addressed food insecurity by volunteering at CrossRoads Food Pantry in Owensboro where they exemplified exceptional volunteerism during the COVID-19 pandemic. RSVP volunteers at CrossRoads Food Pantry were able to keep the pantry open for the entirety of 2020, serving 2,387 hours and feeding 24,475 people, 11,515 of which were unduplicated.

Group Service Awards

Nonprofit Service Awards

- **CASA of the River Region – Louisville/Jefferson County**
CASA of the River Region (CASARR) advocates for children in Henry, Jefferson, Oldham, Shelby, Spencer, and Trimble Counties and travels throughout the commonwealth to visit children placed in distant foster homes. Spending an average of 2.5 hours per week interacting with each child, CASAs stay on one case for an average of 3.4 years to ensure their children have a voice in court, in school and in their placements. Last year, 215 volunteers advocated for 511 children.
- **Sunshine Center – Frankfort/Franklin County**
Dedicated to helping families suffering from abuse and violence, Sunshine Center staff work with community partners to develop Family Abuse Teams – offering more support and taking a more proactive approach to address family violence. Partners include Department for Community Based Services, Frankfort area police and sheriff's departments, the local hospital and high schools. Despite 2020's challenges, The Sunshine Center provided 245 individuals with case management and support services, 196 therapy sessions, 130 parenting classes, and supervised visitations for 58 families.
- **St. John Center Volunteers – Louisville/Jefferson County**
St. John Center is a nonprofit organization that provides a continuum of services to over 2,000 people experiencing homelessness each year. St. John volunteers increase capacity for service and enable staff to focus on more intensive interventions such as providing assistance with applying for and locating housing, finding employment, and obtaining documents including birth certificates, social security cards and Kentucky identification cards. As a result of the teamwork between volunteers and staff, 200 people moved into housing in 2020.

Faith-Based Group Service Awards

- **Lawrenceburg United Methodist Church – Diaper Bank – Lawrenceburg/Anderson County**
After realizing that parents of young children in Anderson County needed help obtaining diapers, Emily Spurlock and Holly Hawkins started a diaper bank at Lawrenceburg United Methodist Church. The ministry has been up and running for five years and works to relieve the cost of diapers for parents and grandparents by providing a roughly one-week supply of diapers and wipes twice per month to child residents of Anderson County. The diaper bank serves upwards of 50 children per distribution at an approximate cost of \$850 per month.

- Louisville Auxiliary – Louisville/Jefferson County**
 The Louisville Auxiliary is composed of church and community volunteers located throughout the state who care for thousands of people in Kentucky's most valuable and vulnerable population. Annually, these volunteers provide food, clothing, furniture, medical supplies, transportation, community activities and spiritual care programming to elderly residents in need. Over the course of the pandemic, Auxiliary volunteers made regular telephone and Zoom check-in meetings with residents and staff, delivered groceries and medicine, made masks, stocked a community food pantry, supported spiritual care programming, and helped purchase iPads so residents could stay connected with family and friends and attend telehealth appointments.
- Chabad of Kentucky – Louisville/Jefferson County**
 Chabad of Kentucky has changed the course of the Jewish community and the lives of many over the last 35 years. They have helped to bring Kosher foods to Kroger locations, beginning a nationwide trend, and opened the Louisville Jewish Day School. Chabad launched an array of educational options for people of all ages including Passover Matzah Bakeries, Shofar Factories, Olive Oil Workshops and held cultural and religious events including public menorah lightings across the commonwealth. Through their efforts at Fort Knox, Chabad provided religious services for those in our armed services. Additionally, their prison programming brought religion to thousands of incarcerated individuals. They also provide programs at both the University of Louisville and University of Kentucky for students far from home. Chabad has been deeply involved in community programs including Project Friendship, which has distributed over 5 million dollars of apparel free of charge to Kentuckians in need.

Pandemic Response Service Award:

- Jacqueline Teague & Amelie Beck, VaxConnect KY – Louisville/Jefferson County**
 After helping their grandparents navigate online COVID-19 vaccination registration, Sacred Heart Academy students Jacqueline Teague and Amelie Beck quickly realized many seniors would need assistance with the process. To address this need, the girls founded VaxConnect Ky in January 2021 with a mission to ensure every senior citizen in the commonwealth had a simple way to sign up for a COVID-19 vaccination. As of May 2021, Jacqueline and Amelie had personally assisted more than 1,500 people in scheduling vaccine appointments.

Disaster Response Service Award:

- Eta Gamma Chapter of Theta Chi – Morehead/Rowan County**

The group of 58 young men make it a priority to help the communities around them. When snowstorms in early 2021 left many in the Morehead community unable to leave their homes, Theta Chi spent six days shoveling the city's main street, sidewalks and many individuals' driveways. When the spring rains led to catastrophic flooding in eastern Kentucky, Theta Chi spent a day helping the Beattyville's Three Forks Historical Center lay out old documents to dry in the sun, cleaning damaged items, drying the water-damaged floors and removing items that could not be saved. In April, Theta Chi's vaccinated members helped Better Life Church return some normalcy to children by helping with the church's Kid's Carnival. In June, the fraternity helped First Church of God in Mt. Sterling put on their annual Joy Prom for community members with special needs. In addition to their people-oriented volunteer service, the fraternity also held multiple litter clean-up events and cleaned more than 20 miles of roads throughout the spring semester. In total, Theta Chi completed 1,188 service hours for the 2021 spring semester.

Business Service Awards

- **Heritage Bank – Burlington/Boone County**
Founded in 1990 by Mr. Arthur Caddell, Heritage Bank annually provides hundreds of thousands of dollars in scholarships to high school seniors, county 4-H organizations, the Kentucky 4-H Foundation, Junior Achievement, and many other organizations that work with underserved populations. Employees volunteer numerous hours on company time to support food banks, disaster relief organizations, active military support organizations, schools, and other community organizations.
- **Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives – Winchester/Clark County**
For the past five years, Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives (KTEC) has dedicated itself to taking care of those who take care of their people. KTEC's continued and expanded support of the Ronald McDonald House Charities® (RMHC) of the Bluegrass has provided critical comfort and care for children battling illnesses and their loved ones fighting alongside them. KTEC's corporate sponsorship of RMHC has continuously earned them the title of "Best Friend of the House," with grants totaling nearly \$200,000 and employees serving more than 600 volunteer hours. Additionally, the Cooperatives that comprise KTEC hold Annual Wish List Drives, donating truckloads full of critically needed items with an in-kind value totaling thousands of dollars each year. The KTEC Wish List Drives support not only the House program but also the Ronald McDonald Family Room and the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile programs.
- **Schaefer Construction – Louisville/Jefferson County**
Each year, Schaefer Construction encourages its employees and

management team to find their volunteer passion and provides each employee an annual “community service day” with pay. In addition to their employee volunteer program, Schaefer Construction has been a leading sponsor of the Generations on the Greens Golf Classic hosted by Christian Care Communities in support of senior care and Alzheimer’s disease support. Quarterly, a large team of employees volunteer at both the Ronald McDonald House and Twisted Pink to support families and patients through difficult medical situations. The company also uses its expertise in construction to support the raising of a new house each year with Habitat for Humanity. Leadership and employees agreed to volunteer and provide monetary support to additional charities in 2021, such as Blessings in a Backpack, Molly John Foundation, Kentucky Humane Society, ACE Mentor Program, and other trade school support to help youth explore careers in architecture, construction and engineering.

Lifetime Achievement Award

- **John Thomas Strada, Jr. – Richmond/Madison County**
John T. Strada, Jr. has amassed an exemplary record of service through his position as a Senior Lecturer of Communication at Eastern Kentucky University and through his involvement with Alpha Phi Omega, a national co-ed service fraternity. Since joining the faculty at ECU in 2003, he has accumulated more than 5,000 service hours to the community. From 2011-2015, John served as a Faculty Learning Partner for ECU’s Alternative Spring Break program, accompanying students to New Orleans to rebuild homes destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. His students have completed service projects for various local nonprofit organizations, including Hospice and Special Olympics. In 2019, he earned the prestigious “Distinguished Toastmaster” designation, which only 1% of Toastmasters members achieve. Additionally, he has facilitated multiple Merit Badge Universities for the Boy Scouts of America in Kentucky. For his outstanding volunteer efforts, John was recognized with the President’s Volunteer Service Award in May 2017; and in 2018, he was presented the Vernon Gantt Award for Distinguished Service by the Kentucky Communication Association.

Photos of the winners may be viewed and downloaded [here](#).

The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state's human services and health care programs, including the [Department for Medicaid Services](#), the [Department for Community Based Services](#), the [Department for Public Health](#), the [Department for Aging and Independent Living](#) and the [Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities](#).

CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government, with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.