

FRANKLIN TOMORROW'S 14<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
**EXEMPLARY COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER AWARDS**

November 17, 2020



## NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR AWARD

### Church of the City Award

Nominated by: BrightStone



In their many years of service the volunteer groups from Church of the City have made an immeasurable impact on the lives of individuals who have “other abilities” by holding them in high esteem, valuing them as God’s creation, and treating them with respect and genuine loving concern. The members of COTC are passionate advocates not only for these individuals but also for their families who live with a lifetime of care on their shoulders. This church wants them to know that they are not alone and that they are willing and able to make their lives and future brighter.

As BrightStone expands services to the growing population of individuals with special needs throughout Tennessee through their construction of a job training, life learning campus with housing options, COTC has chosen to partner with BrightStone in this endeavor. They provide much needed volunteer work on BrightStone’s future campus property in the areas of: cleaning, repairing fences, completing light construction and maintenance, removing brush, landscaping, and anything else we need - they are willing to lend their hands.

In addition to this service, COTC provides much needed funding to help support our general operations. They also doubled their support in 2020 due to the financial impact Covid 19 has had on BrightStone’s income.

The volunteered time and resources of COTC work crews allow BrightStone to focus on the adults they serve in this changing Covid-19 environment as they provide hybrid services in virtual classes and in-person classes at BrightStone. Brightstone continues to keep the health and welfare of their students and staff as their priority and COTC has helped them to provide a safe environment for their students.

As a church, COTC's mission is to support and strengthen non-profit organizations working towards spiritual, social, and cultural renewal. They have demonstrated this mission by volunteering and supporting the following non-profit organization: Adziwa, Begin Anew, BrightStone, Corner to Corner, Food for the Hungry, Freedom's Promise, Graceworks, Hard Bargain Association, Lifeway Missions International, Mercy Community Healthcare, Missions Development International, My Friend's House, My Life Speaks, New Hope Academy, One Generation Away, The Refuge Center, Siloam Health, YCAP, and many others

This congregation and their leadership are impacting the lives of individuals who live each day with many life challenges.

### **Danny Cotton**

Nominated by: 1st Judicial District Attorney General Kim Helper



If you have ever attended an ice cream supper in Williamson County, you have been blessed with the humor and support of Danny Cotton. Right before 6 p.m. on a hot summer Saturday night in Williamson County, Cotton arrives at local churches with his portable speaker and microphone - and the fun begins.

For close to 35 years, Cotton has auctioned cakes, pies, veggies, plants and all kinds of assorted goods - all to raise money for these churches and their programs. Cotton was always accompanied by his wife, Linda who passed away just over a year ago. Linda always brought her famous pecan pie and Danny made sure it sold for at least \$100.00. He delights in stirring up bidding wars - all with the goal of helping the cause.

Although the pandemic sidelined Cotton for much of this summer, those of us who faithfully attend these suppers would be remiss to not honor Danny Cotton.

### **GraceWorks Ministries**

Nominated by: Valencia Breckenridge, GraceWorks Ministries



GraceWorks' mission statement of "Neighbor serving Neighbor, by the power of God's grace," conveys the culture of grace and humility

GraceWorks provides our neighbors. People who seek help from GraceWorks are not called clients, but Neighbors. In turn, GraceWorks staff and volunteers are also identified as Neighbors. This semantic equality is an intentional effort to create an approachable organization where Neighbors retain their dignity and feel comfortable seeking help.

GraceWorks planned to celebrate its 25th Birthday in 2020 with many community events and parties, but a different kind of celebration came to be. In March 2020, demand for food and rent and utility assistance doubled. In the days that followed, GraceWorks referred to their struggle as a "triple whammy" - demand for services increased, income from their thrift store and fundraising events decreased, and volunteer manpower was limited until GraceWorks could safely welcome their 270 weekly volunteers back into the building to serve alongside their 35 staff members.

Yet still, the community rallied around GraceWorks and made record-breaking service possible. In the weeks to follow, GraceWorks served more Neighbors than ever before. More than 10,000 Neighbors received food in three months. Normally, GraceWorks would serve 10,000 Neighbors in a whole year. Nearly half these Neighbors were seeking help from GraceWorks for the first time - having been thrown into financial crisis because of COVID-19. Rent and utility assistance requests also spiked to double the demand in March.

Neighbors who could give, did. Carloads of food donations came every day to fill empty pantry shelves. Donations from those who still had their jobs flooded our mailbox and website. Churches brought semi-loads of food, and local businesses granted special funds for our relief work. It was a season of trial, but it was also one of the most beautiful seasons of "Neighbor serving Neighbor" GraceWorks has ever experienced. Our community came together for each other at GraceWorks.

**Dr. Dana Hardy**

Nominated by: The Westhaven Foundation



Dr. Hardy volunteers at least 20 hours per week each week or approximately 750 hours this year. Usually the first responder to any neighborhood need, it isn't unusual for her to account for many more service hours as she continues to put the community's needs as a top priority. An impactful part of her volunteer time in the year 2020 is serving on two non-profit boards; End Slavery Tennessee and The Westhaven Foundation. In addition to her time as a board member she regularly rolls up her sleeves serving on committees both large and small. Dr. Hardy is a founder of the Westhaven Foundation's Care and Compassion Committee, working full time to provide relief to neighbors in times of disaster. She started and oversees a team that provides meal delivery on rotation to The Franklin Fire Department and Westhaven Fire Station 8. She also spearheaded a fundraising campaign that not only exceeded the goal of paying for the monthly cable TV bill at the firehouse but also provided new smart TV's for the station. As leader of the Franklin group of End Slavery TN, in January of this year Dr. Hardy coordinated a songwriter fundraising event in partnership with St. Philip in downtown Franklin which raised over \$8,000. In July, Dr. Hardy coordinated the second annual "Red Sand Project". By placing red sand in the cracks of public sidewalks, this powerful message acknowledges human trafficking victims who fall through the cracks (and don't received the help/treatment needed). Dr. Hardy's humility is contagious as she constantly reflects that "my reward is in the process and the new friendships that I make". Dr. Hardy shares that her greatest volunteering achievement not only provided financial support but also something money cannot buy; hope. She has given 4 years of service to Habitat for Humanity Women Build and in the process has raised over \$75,000. Dr. Hardy's dedication to the organization is an inspiration to many as Women Build continues to be on the bucket list of many volunteers in the area. The women serving alongside her say their experience has become a source of empowerment for women ranging from teens to seniors and in the process, challenging stereotypes and breaking the boundaries of what a woman is capable of. In addition to Dr. Hardy's service to the community at large, she has also become a hometown hero in her neighborhood of Westhaven. Dana is a founder of the inaugural 5K Memory Walk in Westhaven and an active participant of the organizing committee.

As a result of COVID-19 high school seniors lost the enjoyment of graduating senior class events. Dr. Hardy did not want the Westhaven graduates to miss out on the spirit of graduation and organized a graduating senior parade of the eight high schools represented in our community. In early Spring when Westhaven Towncenter businesses were suffering, Dr. Hardy spearheaded a group of volunteers that worked to pick up and deliver food and other goods to local residents facilitating commerce when it was needed the most. Furthermore, she

worked with local marketing resources to launch a campaign that highlighted one business a week promoting services and products. When restaurants shut their doors, a vital life line for local food banks dried up with tragic results to those relying on their kindness. Dana partnered with One Generation Away.org sending out an S.O.S to neighbors for financial and non-perishable food donations. Dr. Hardy and her team sectioned off the community by streets making pickups from each house. Her effort was a huge success with a donation of \$15,000 and 7,000 pounds of food.

## **Dr. Monty McInturff**

Nominated by: Iroquois Steeplechase Race Committee & Staff



It is with community leaders like Dr. McInturff that The Iroquois Steeplechase executes its mission of producing a world class race meet and giving to beneficiaries in the community such as Monroe Carrell Jr. Children's Hospital and The Friends of Warner Parks.

Though Monty only has been on the Race Committee since 2017, he has volunteered his services for decades.

The Iroquois Steeplechase Race Committee & Staff are grateful for his commitment to not only donate his time and resources for the health and well-being of their equine competitors, but because he participates in the activities of the Race Committee, shares his wisdom, and his expertise in a well-considered manner. His ability to think creatively has enhanced our opportunities. He is a cheer leader, a supporter, an advisor, and a friend.

Two years ago, Franklin had the hottest weather ever recorded on Race day. Dr. McInturff found a way to ensure that horses were cooled by filling veterinary exam gloves with ice, tying them together and draping them across the withers of the horses to chill them for the walk back to the barn. This has become a new standard for horse care after races! This is an example of Monty's creative out of the box thinking that shows his continued compassion for the horses and their welfare.

Iroquois Steeplechase staff witness his energy for the Friends of Franklin Parks and are proud to see this historic property become available for future generations as a park. Monty's contributions in the community are vast. He has worked tirelessly to build the Harlinsdale Park into a place for community entertainment, and for equine sport.

He is a devoted family man. Monty and his family have had their own personal trials and tribulations in life and through these, he has remained steadfast in his faith and is a role model for all around him. He has led by example, and his sons have followed in his footsteps in their professional and community lives.

Dr. McInturff certainly fulfills the definition of the word volunteer - as a person who voluntarily undertakes or expresses a willingness to undertake a service without pay. There is a saying that you are blessed if you have at least one neighbor you can count on to be there and support you in your time of need. 2020 has been hard on many of us, and Monty has been that one consistent neighbor that has supported many individuals and companies in Franklin. His enthusiasm and charisma lead others to join him in his support of his community.

## **One Generation Away, GraceWorks, Williamson County Schools, and Friends of Williamson County Animal Center**

Nominated by: Williamson County Animal Center



In the first few months of the pandemic, Williamson County Animal Center identified a gap in service to residents of Williamson County and their pets. There was a quick response by the school system to get food into the homes of food-insecure families and children in the school district. As a member of Leadership Franklin, I had the opportunity to spend quite a bit of time with Chris Whitney, Director of OneGen Away. When the gap in food for these families was identified, Chris recognized that if people weren't able to afford food for their families, their pets would also suffer. Additionally, Chris knew that statistically, many people would forego eating in order to feed their pets. Neither of these options were acceptable to OneGen or the Animal Center. Chris and Williamson County Animal Center spoke and brainstormed about how they could get pet food into the most households. Knowing that Friends of Williamson County Animal Center already operated a pet food bank and knowing the many organizations (like Graceworks) depend on Friends of... to supply pet food, it was a natural partnership to join forces.

Early in April, Chris convened a group of representatives from Williamson County Schools, Friends of Williamson County Animal Center, Graceworks, OneGen, and a few other organizations to work together to not only supply food to those Williamson County students who were not able to access free and reduced breakfasts and lunches, but partnering together to feed any family in Williamson County, utilizing the schools as distribution points. The organizations were fortunate that this cooperative recognized the need to provide pet food and allowed Friends of Williamson County Animal Center to solicit large donations of food from local companies (Mars and Red Collar Pet Food both supplied large amounts of food for cats and dogs) and distribute that food as part of those distribution lines. OneGen allowed Williamson County Animal Center to deliver the food to their warehouse and they allowed their volunteers and employees to load those bags onto the food trucks to be given to any family in need, without question.

## Publix Supermarket

Nominated by: United Way of Greater Nashville



As you can imagine, school supplies are more important than ever this year due to the economic impact of COVID-19 and schools not being able to utilize shared supplies. Publix associates contribute to local education by giving to the Tools for Back to School program, which helps ensure children have access to essential school supplies such as composition books, pencils, pens, rulers, and crayons. Publix encourages neighbors to help neighbors by extending the Tools for Back to School donation opportunity to customers. Overall, Tools for Back to School raised more than \$94,000 for Middle Tennessee students. In Williamson County, the program generated over \$40,000 for area schools.

In addition, Publix supports neighbors by partnering with United Way to conduct an annual workplace giving campaign. During the campaign, leaders and associates engage with the community by learning about areas of need and investing in nonprofit agencies that foster health, education, financial stability, and basic needs for individuals and families. During the 2019 campaign, local Publix stores raised \$919,570 - with \$628,287 from direct employee gifts. The remaining \$291,283 was a corporate gift. Publix's generosity is life changing for many across our community. These funds are helping neighbors navigate an unprecedented and challenging time by providing critical supports and services that:

- improve students' literacy and math skills
- provide shelter to women and children experiencing domestic violence
- help families access healthcare, food, and other vital resources.

In Williamson County - and throughout the Southeast - Publix gives their leadership team members two Days of Sharing (a total 16 hours) each year to volunteer in their local community during work time. During our most recent Day of Action, fifteen associates volunteered for three hours at Poplar Grove Elementary and Middle schools, contributing over \$1,200 of time and talents to local schools.

In addition, Publix encourages its team members to become actively involved with local nonprofits. Carter Vaverek, District Manager of Publix Super Markets, serves on United Way of Greater Nashville's Williamson County Advisory Committee. In this role, Carter collaborates with area leaders and volunteers to help foster United Way's impact in the community. As all of the above indicates, Publix and team members are always here to serve our neighbors!

## **Becky and Tracey Spann**

Nominated by: Waves, Inc.



The impact of COVID has been difficult for many throughout our community and the persons-served within the Waves Adult Residential Program are among those affected. While it has been safer-at-home, not all of Waves residents understand why. They want to be in the community and return to their former employment. Beth Hughes, a person-served through Waves, previously worked at Our Thrift Store. At this job, she had many friends. Since the closing of the store, Beth has missed her opportunity to work and her friends. Throughout the pandemic, former co-workers have continued their friendship with Beth by visiting her (safely) at her home. Becky and Tracey Spann, a mother/daughter duo, did not want to lose touch with Beth. During their visits with Beth, they noticed one area of the home had been neglected and needed some love—the front garden. The dynamic duo rolled up their sleeves and transformed the front garden of the home all in an effort to provide a beautiful space for the residents to enjoy. In the garden renovation, Beth supervised Becky and Tracey’s work and is now tasked with watering the flowers. Becky and Tracey created a beautiful space for Beth and her housemates to enjoy in their time at home and provided work tasks for Beth to look forward to completing.

## **Catering and Events by Suzette**

Nominated by: Ondrea and Glenn Johnson



Everyone in town knows Suzette Lane. She’s a friend to so many people and she shows her love through what most people would probably consider the path to their heart... their stomachs. Suzette has a true gift in the kitchen and her culinary skills have graced nearly every event and table in Franklin in recent years.

In March of this year, our very social community came to a screeching halt. Events were being cancelled left and right and that meant that so many businesses, like Catering and Events by Suzette, were losing jobs and revenue. Nonetheless, in many of these instances, the food had already been purchased and wouldn’t keep forever.

So, what’s a business owner to do? For Suzette Lane, she decided to gift her community with surprise goodies from her kitchen. I think it started small. I saw a few of Suzette’s close friends on Facebook post about their goodie bags of meals from Catering and Events by Suzette. But then it sort of grew into a movement.

Suzette's elves (her employees) were out in full force, dropping off surprise catering to homes throughout the community.

Ondrea Johnson got a call one afternoon asking me to come to the end of her drive. She was jumping for joy when she saw her very own bag waiting to feed her family. In the midst of a pandemic, when going to the grocery was difficult at best, finding food that families were accustomed to was sometimes impossible; Suzette dropped off a weeks' worth of catered meals to different families across Franklin. The generosity Catering and Events by Suzette showed during a time of financial uncertainty, and the willingness of her employees to have contact with families to hand off the bags, exemplifies what is great about living in Franklin. As big as we are, we're still a small town and we still take care of each other.

### **Cecile Waters**

Nominated by: Avenida of Cool Springs



Cecile Waters moved to the Franklin area to be closer to her daughter and family several years ago. She has always been busy with her church life at the First Methodist Church of Franklin and jumped right in to help with Grief Counseling classes offered there. Her servant attitude bled over into the new life she created when she moved into Avenida Cool Springs.

Recognizing the need for support with her fellow widows who had also moved in to Avenida, Cecile as she is affectionately called, found time to embrace those in the grieving process and offer her support and friendship. Several of her fellow residents have openly shared how important her friendship has been as they have worked through the various grieving stages. On several occasions, Cecile has invited some to the Grief Counseling program that First Methodist has offered. Neighbor to Neighbor, you can't beat the support of someone like Cecile Waters.