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Scot's Story

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Agency Volunteers in the Spotlight

At United Way's March 5, 2010 Annual Meeting, the following exceptional volunteers were recognized by their agencies for giving their time and talent, working at our agencies to extend our ability to reach those in need. Our thanks and congratulations to these individuals whose contribution of time and talent is so valuable and appreciated.

Achievement Centers for Children

Kevin D. Owen, 4-year volunteer

"Kevin is a true advocate – introducing many supporters, businesses and young professionals to our organization, resulting in long-term relationships," said Patricia Nobili, Executive Director. "He's very hands on, volunteering for development tasks, and making personal phone calls to thank donors. His caring and hard work enhances our ability to provide services to children with disabilities and their families."

Adoption Network Cleveland

Lisa Buescher, 7-year volunteer

"Lisa's commitment to raising the resources needed to sustain our work brought new faces and donors to our organization, increased Board awareness of the importance of fundraising and helped provide more dollars for and awareness about those we serve," said Robin Ott, Outreach Coordinator. "A new mother herself, Lisa also is mentoring a young woman in foster care, committed to the belief that every child deserves a family and someone who truly cares."

Adult Guardianship Services

Tom Stevens, 7-year volunteer

"As Ethel's guardian, Tom was on call 24/7, making medical and placement decisions. But for five years, he did much more – upholding her dignity, collaborating with doctors, helping to get her out of the nursing home she despised and being her only friend," said Barbara Matlak, Volunteer Manager. "When Ethel passed away, her friend Tom was there, privileged to be part of her funeral, and giving Ethel Shalom."

Applewood Centers

Dan A. Bragg, 20+-year volunteer

"Mr. Bragg has co-chaired our largest fundraiser – a golf outing – for the past eight years, helping to raise over \$500,000 for Applewood Centers," said Joan Griffiths, Director of Development. "Especially during these difficult economic times, these dollars are extremely valuable in supporting programs and services for the thousands of at-risk children and families served by our agency."

Arthritis Foundation – Northeastern Ohio Chapter

Rolland B. Standish, 8-year volunteer

"Our current Board Chair, Rolly has served the Foundation in many capacities. He is committed to our mission and constantly promotes our goal of improving the lives of people with arthritis," said Mary Kudasick, President/CEO. "Throughout his tenure, he's been instrumental in the oversight of chapter finances, and continues to skillfully lead us during these difficult economic times."

Bellefaire JCB

Cindy Polster, 1.5-year volunteer

"Cindy volunteers several days each week at the Monarch School. She develops lesson plans, group activities and visual supports, which help students understand lesson content and express their thoughts and ideas," said Melissa Baker, Speech Therapy Supervisor. "She works with our teachers and speech pathologists and is passionate about her profession and those she helps. She is a wonderful asset to our organization."

Boy Scouts of America – Greater Cleveland Council

Nicole L. Scipio-Bey, 3-year volunteer

"Nicole's leadership has included hosting the Pinewood Derby and managing the district Cub Scout Day Camp, as well as the Annual Recognition Ball," said Marvin Smith, Director of Field Service. "She has reached out to members of the community, businesses and sponsors to gain support and provides ongoing encouragement to both youths and adults."

Boys & Girls Clubs of Cleveland

Greg Johnson, 6-year volunteer

"Greg's leadership of our strategic planning committee led to the vision "Decade To Be Great", a plan to significantly increase our role in the community," said Ron Soeder, President. "As our new

Chief Volunteer Officer, he has encouraged his family to volunteer, and is a strong advocate for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Cleveland."

Cleveland Housing Network

Ann Miley, 17-year volunteer

"Ann is the most experienced and seasoned volunteer tax preparer for CHN and the EITC coalition. Plus, she teaches CHN's tax prep classes to prepare other volunteers to do taxes," said Lydia Balson, Resource Development Manager. "She has helped CHN clients obtain over \$4 million in tax refunds over the years."

Cleveland Rape Crisis Center

Sarah Kostick, 2.5-year volunteer

"Sarah has been an invaluable resource for those seeking the services of the Cleveland Rape Crisis Center, and she finds time in her busy schedule to address the needs of the community," said Wendy Hanna, Director of Volunteers and 24-Hour Programs. "She's a big-picture thinker with the motivation and follow-through needed to make changes for survivors of sexual assault."

Cleveland Sight Center

Patricia Nugent, 8-year volunteer

"Patti began helping in our Crafts for Sale area, and is now a radio reader on the Cleveland Sight Center Network, a radio frequency that broadcasts newspapers, publications, shopping ads and more to our clients," said Jason Washington, Manager, Volunteer Services. "She also works as a visiting nurse. And, she found time last fall to sell more Macy's Shop for a Cause fundraiser shopping passes than any other volunteer!"

Diabetes Association of Greater Cleveland

Tricia Vance, 8-year volunteer

"Tricia has been a member of our Board since 2006. She has served as volunteer chair of Camp Ho Mita Koda's annual fundraiser, Backpack Bivouac, for five years, raising more than \$200,000," said Helen Dumski, President & CEO. "She's a member of our development committee, a volunteer at the annual Swim for Diabetes and is developing a workflow plan for the camp dispensary to address staffing needs."

The Free Medical Clinic of Greater Cleveland

Cristi Zavarella, PC, 2-year volunteer

"Cristi became involved with The Free Clinic during a required externship for her master's degree. She stayed on as a volunteer, working with clients in need of mental health and substance abuse services," said Melissa Ghoston, Director of Volunteer & External Relations. "Hundreds of patients rely on us for these services each year and Cristi's contributions beyond her externship helped provide access to quality care for many of them."

Golden Age Centers of Greater Cleveland

Isabel Willis, 35-year volunteer

"Isabel, a founding member of the Lake Shore Golden Age Center, is a smiling daily presence. She arrives early at the Center to help staff, works at the snack bar, answers phones and helps seniors register for activities," said Lynn Krumholz, Center Director. "At 93 years young, she's an inspiration and living proof that commitment and responsibility to something you love is timeless."

Greater Cleveland Neighborhood Centers Association

William M. Easterling, 25-year volunteer

"As Board President for the Heights Youth Center, Bill created and helped manage programs focused on empowering young people to believe in their own capacity for creativity, good citizenship and success," said Robert Hermann, Jr., President, Board of Trustees. "He's the first to volunteer, recruit support, spread the word about community issues and to speak out on behalf of the often at-risk participants served by Cleveland's neighborhood centers."

Greater Cleveland Volunteers

Charles J. Morelli, 6-year volunteer

"Mr. Morelli considers it an honor to spend time in prayer with residents who are close to death, as this is one of the last caring services he can perform in their life," said Susan Smith, Special Project Coordinator. "He also mentors new volunteers at our facility, believing in the importance of cultivating a culture of caring and service in the younger generation."

Hospice of the Western Reserve

Peggy Toczek, 17-year volunteer

"Peggy works full-time, yet makes time to volunteer seemingly full-time at Hospice. Over the years, she has worked throughout our service area, building lasting friendships and connections with staff and volunteers, and more importantly, with patients and families," said Jeff Younger, Coordinator of Volunteers. "The time and energy she devotes to our patients is invaluable to us."

Interfaith Hospitality Network of Greater Cleveland

Dalontai Pond, 1-year volunteer

"In 2001, Dalontai and his family were homeless, and became guests of IHN for six weeks. Once

back on their feet, they stayed in touch, and when Dalontai needed to complete required high school community service hours, he chose IHN," said Regina Morris, Volunteer Coordinator. "He completed his community service, and remains a valued member of our Welcome Home crew, helping deliver furniture to newly housed families."

Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland

Julie Raskind, 3-year volunteer

"Julie volunteers as a literacy tutor in the JCF's Public Education Initiative, currently working with two students at Buckeye-Woodland Elementary School. She is supportive and encouraging, helping her students improve their reading skills while building confidence and self-esteem," said Karen Steiger, Director, Jewish Volunteer Network. "She's an especially passionate and dedicated volunteer, bringing in additional reading materials and reward prizes for her students."

Legal Aid Society of Cleveland

Kenneth J. Kleppel, 5-year volunteer

"Ken's kind and patient counseling and representation has helped many Legal Aid clients, from the 87-year-old widow who was being evicted to the newly unemployed father struggling to sort through benefits issues," said Colleen Cotter, Executive Director. "In addition, he has been a great 'recruiter' of attorneys, allowing us to expand our provision of services."

Long Term Care Ombudsman

Bob Lubecky, 6.5-year volunteer

"Bob is truly driven in his dedication to those living in long term care facilities. He visits area facilities, keeping an eye out for veterans, helping residents with problems large or small, and spends time talking and listening to those he cares so deeply about," said Nancy Kaufman, Assistant Director. "Bob is always trying to improve the quality of care and lives of those he visits."

Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry

Rev. Mark Viets, 10-year volunteer

"While undergoing cancer treatment and during his recovery, Mark's dedication to Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry remained strong, and he continued to be a weekly presence at the Lakeside Men's Shelter, listening and providing support to the homeless," said Lydia Bailey, Volunteer Coordinator. "He also oversees our 'Listening' program, and conducts continuing education sessions at quarterly meetings."

Phillis Wheatley Association

Christine Gregory, 15-year volunteer

"Christine's personal investment of time and talent has been immeasurable to the Phillis Wheatley Association. She has recruited new Board members, and used her marketing skills and belief in the agency to lead to greater solicitation and utilization of our facilities, creating an additional revenue stream," said Jacquelyn Bradshaw, Executive Director. "Her leadership on our Board has created new ideas and opportunities designed to make the agency self-sufficient and sustainable."

Project: LEARN

Melissa Lewis, 10-year volunteer

"After spending only three years in the corporate world, Melissa realized her passion is in transforming education. Trained in engineering and business, Melissa uses a unique approach to reach Cleveland's urban youth in public schools," said Nancy Sirianni, Director of Development. "Her interest in education led her to Project: LEARN, where her concentration is in promoting programs, events and working on revamping our online reach."

The Salvation Army of Greater Cleveland

Bill & Gretchen Exline, 15-year volunteers

"Bill and Gretchen have donated their time, treasure and talents to The Salvation Army, underwriting printed materials for fundraising initiatives and events, making annual donations, participating on committees, purchasing Christmas gifts for less fortunate families and lending their expert advice and leadership," said Major James Foley, Divisional Secretary. "Their involvement and philanthropy have been essential to increasing direct services to the people of Cleveland."

Towards Employment

Sara Corprew, 1-year volunteer

"Unemployed herself due to a recent layoff, Sara drew from her personal experiences when conducting mock interviews with program participants. Her ability to give selflessly to others as she faced similar struggles and roadblocks while searching for employment is nothing less than remarkable," said LaShon Sawyer, Senior Program Manager. "She used her unfortunate situation to empower program participants to remain committed to their job searches."

Transitional Housing, Inc.

Mary Easter, 6-year volunteer

"Mary exemplifies what it means to be a volunteer and to give of one's time and talent. She is an extremely humble individual and never seeks attention for her efforts," said Jane Amata, Volunteer Coordinator. "Mary's focus is solely on making the women and children of Transitional Housing, Inc. feel cared for and special at Christmas and beyond."

VNA of Ohio**Nick Scheibelhood, 6-month volunteer**

"In a relatively short amount of time, Nick has embraced a very sensitive, significant role in providing end-of-life care," said Claire Zangerle, President & CEO. "Nick states that he is honored to be part of such an intimate moment, and feels he is doing what he is called to do as a hospice volunteer."

Vocational Guidance Services**Thomas E. Hopkins, 9-year volunteer**

"Mr. Hopkins is an outstanding person who strongly believes in the mission of VGS and promotes that mission to others. He's been instrumental in assisting with staff development and is an influential and persuasive contributor to foundation and corporation funding requests," said Robert Comben Jr., President & CEO. "He supports the agency monetarily, as well as with his time, and is always humble, compassionate and caring."

Voices for Ohio's Children**Judith Ulrich, 5-year volunteer**

"Judith is a dedicated Board Member at Voices for Ohio's Children. She engages and motivates her colleagues to come together, creating a sense of excitement and optimism about opportunities and plans for the future," said Amy Swanson, Executive Director. "She has provided a steady hand, strong support and focused leadership, which will have lasting impact for years to come."

West Side Catholic Center**Polly Barrett, 8-year volunteer**

"Polly is an amazing, energetic, creative and caring ball of fire. She greets all who come to our Drop-In Center, provides information, assists with referral services and makes each person in a crowded room of 100+ feel at home," said Gerald Skoch, Executive Director. "Thanks to her outreach efforts, our art classes are flourishing and our clients are immersed in creating works of art that do much for the soul."

Youth Opportunities Unlimited**Eric Lewis, 4-year volunteer**

"To prepare for summer 2009, Eric chaired a series of meetings with staff and key volunteers to develop administrative plans for handling 3,500+ area youth in what would be our largest summer program ever," said Carol Rivchun, President. "The program was extremely successful, and he's now working with us to improve upon the plan for summer 2010."

YWCA of Greater Cleveland**Andy Balazs, 4-year volunteer**

"Andy brings a unique perspective to the YWCA. He's a champion of women and minorities and validates our mission," said Rita Kueber, Marketing/PR Coordinator. "He was instrumental in outfitting our technical center, where young women come to study, learn computer skills and prepare for the GED exam. A father of three, he believes the YWCA is making a brighter world for his children."