



**MetLife Foundation  
Older Volunteers Enrich America Awards**

2011

*Sponsored by MetLife Foundation in partnership with the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a)*

**MetLife Foundation**



# MetLife Foundation

Message from Dennis White

President and CEO, MetLife Foundation

I am pleased to welcome you to this celebration honoring recipients of the 2011 MetLife Foundation Older Volunteers Enrich America Awards.

This year, we honor twenty–six outstanding older volunteers, who range in age from 52 to 92 years. Their stories, told in the following pages, illustrate the many ways older volunteers are meeting local needs, from mentoring young people at risk of failing in school to helping other older adults lead healthy, productive lives. These volunteers are vital resources to their communities and inspire individuals of all ages.

Please join me in congratulating the award recipients and celebrating the many older volunteers nationwide who embody the true spirit of civic engagement.

MetLife Foundation was established in 1976 by MetLife to carry on its longstanding tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. The Foundation is committed to building a secure future for individuals and communities worldwide, through a focus on empowering older adults, preparing young people and building livable communities. More information is available at [www.metlife.org](http://www.metlife.org).



Message from Sandy Markwood  
Chief Executive Officer, n4a

“Volunteering is a way of life” is a recurring motto of the 2011 MetLife Foundation Older Volunteers Enrich America honorees.

Each of the 26 older volunteers that we honor today has made, and continues to make, an impact on the lives of hundreds of children, families, and seniors throughout our nation. They bring a wealth of talent, abundance of passion and unending dedication to serve others to each of their organizations. These honorees represent the best example of living and aging with grace and purpose.

As we honor these outstanding older adult volunteers here today, we also want to recognize all volunteers who serve throughout our country in a myriad of ways. We encourage each person who has been touched by the generosity of a volunteer to take time to say “thank you.” It is a simple gesture to acknowledge your appreciation for helping rebuild your home, driving you to the doctor’s office, or providing you with a meal. Volunteers are essential to ensuring the quality of so many people’s lives and sustaining the essence of our communities.

Now more than ever, it is crucial to demonstrate the role of volunteers and volunteer programs in our country. As you read the stories of our honorees, you will learn how each one improves the lives of individuals and communities throughout our nation. Yet, no matter how diverse their volunteer efforts, at the core of each of these award recipients is their conviction that each person, regardless of age, is valuable and worthy of respect.

Also recognizing the essential value of older volunteers is MetLife Foundation. We applaud their continued acknowledgement of the worth of older volunteers and their vital role within our nation. With their generous support, n4a is able to promote the diversity of adult volunteers and their incredible work on a national level.

As we congratulate this year’s 26 incredible older adult volunteers, I would encourage everyone to recognize and celebrate the many ways that older volunteers strengthen your community. Take this opportunity to explore new ways to cultivate the time, talent and wisdom of older volunteers to benefit your community in new and expanded ways. The possibilities for older volunteers to enrich America are truly limitless!

n4a is the leading voice on aging issues for the Area Agencies on Aging across the country and a champion in our nation’s capital for Title VI Native American aging programs. For more information visit [www.n4a.org](http://www.n4a.org).

# Community Champion Awards

Honoring older volunteers  
who use their time and talent  
to make their community a  
better place to live



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

JAMES LANKFORD  
FIFTH DISTRICT  
OKLAHOMA

June 1, 2011

Mr. Pendleton Woods  
Oklahoma City, OK 73118

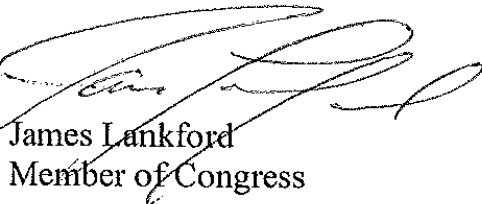
Mr. Woods,

Congratulations on being named a gold honoree at the 2011 MetLife Foundation Older Volunteers Enrich America Awards. This honor is well-deserved for you, and I am very encouraged by your commitment to better your community in Oklahoma City and beyond.

I was informed of your volunteer involvement and was inspired by your lifelong dedication. Whether you were serving Boy Scouts and veterans, helping preserve Oklahoma's history, or volunteering at health centers, you have proven to be someone who makes a difference in the lives of others. I was especially impressed by your concern for epilepsy in Oklahoma and, as a result, helping found the Epilepsy Association of Oklahoma. Your contributions to your community have been tremendous, long-lasting, and worth celebrating.

Again, congratulations on receiving this award. I am grateful for the difference you have made and will continue to make in your community.

Sincerely,



James Lankford  
Member of Congress



Community Champion  
Gold Honoree

Pendleton Woods  
Oklahoma City, OK

**Pendleton Woods**, 87, is one of the original founders of the Epilepsy Association of Oklahoma and the only founder still serving the Association as secretary of the board. He was a volunteer leader of the organization's weeklong outdoor camp for many years, until his mobility became impaired. His commitment to the Association over the past 31 years has not been limited to leading the outdoor camp and has included fundraising and public relations duties. In addition to his work with the Epilepsy Association of Oklahoma, Pendleton has served many other service organizations. As a 42-year veteran of the armed forces, he assists his fellow veterans by providing bedridden patients with equipment that allows them to view Sunday chapel services in their rooms and visiting with patients. In recognition of his commitment to the military in 2005, Col. Woods, a German Prisoner of war during World War II, was honored with the Most Outstanding Ex-prisoner of War Award by the National Society of Ex-Prisoners of War for his public service. His dedication to senior citizens and the issues affecting them is demonstrated by his twenty years of service with the Oklahoma County Senior Nutrition Development Foundation. Pendleton also celebrates his 75th year with the Boy Scouts of America and devotes time to youth through the scouting movement. He served as a scoutmaster for 16 years. Last year, he chaired the Council's Centennial of Scouting Project where he successfully solicited a donation of 1,500 trees that were planted in 24 counties and are now maintained by local scout troops. His unending commitment to service his has left an indelible mark on the residents of Oklahoma.

The Epilepsy Association of Oklahoma was incorporated as a nonprofit health agency with a mission to help Oklahomans with epilepsy and their families by providing education about seizures to schools and the community; providing emergency seizure medication assistance; facilitating support groups in as many locations as possible within Oklahoma; operating the Epilepsy Youth Camp annually; producing and disseminating a quarterly newsletter and conducting statewide Association meetings.

## Community Champion Silver Honorees

**Joel Becker**  
Hauppague, NY

**Joel Becker**, 77, is a former business consultant who has volunteered for the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) of Suffolk County, NY since August 2006. He proposed to bridge the digital divide and help low-income families access new technologies by having tech-savvy senior volunteers refurbish donated computers and then distribute these refurbished computers to low-income families in Nassau and Suffolk Counties. Since he founded the program four years ago, the Community Computer Connection Program has refurbished 1,700 PCs that were distributed to over 800 families. Joel single-handedly recruited over 40 volunteers and devotes over 125 hours of his “free time” monthly to the project. Thanks to this program, seniors interested in civic engagement are able to make a difference in the lives of their neighbors.

RSVP's mission is to provide diverse volunteer opportunities for people age 55 and older and supports older Americans who wish to remain active and make a difference in their communities. The Community Computer Connection Program provides free refurbished computers to financially challenged families on Long Island. These computers are an essential tool to enhance job skills, promote academic success, and for the homebound, provide a means of communication with the outside world.

**Karen Dahl**  
Viroqua, WI

**Karen Dahl**, 65, is a member of the Vernon County Board of Supervisors and has served the Vernon County Unit on Aging for the past five years. Karen studies the issues affecting older people in the county and advocates for the resources and services that low-income seniors require, such as meal delivery, transportation, caregiver services and emergency management. Karen also hosts a “Senior Saturday” radio program that includes guest speakers that provide information on caregiving, benefits programs, and more. She teaches a “Breakfast for the Brain” class at local assisted living centers and independent housing with the goal of improving participants’ mental health. Karen coordinates the annual “Memory Walk” benefiting the Alzheimer’s Association and the Salvation Army’s Kettle Campaign, and serves as the neighborhood chair for the American Heart Association’s fundraising efforts. Karen, whose husband has multiple chronic medical conditions including Alzheimer’s disease, is a role-model for caregivers with her development of a system of care for her husband that allows him to remain at home.

The Vernon County Unit on Aging’s mission is “to facilitate programming and advocacy to assure that older people have the opportunity to realize their full potential to participate in all desired areas of community life to the greatest extent possible.” Due to limited county resources and a large population of older low-income adults, volunteers are integral to reaching those in need and to advocate to legislators and community members to continue funding these services and to develop a “livable community” for the elderly in Vernon County.

## Community Champion Silver Honorees

### Isha Salas-Desselle Houston, TX

In 1998, **Isha Salas-Dessele** 54, convinced her husband to sell their communications company and their home in Trinidad to found the Turning Point Center Homeless Shelter (TPC) in Houston, Texas. TPC is the only center in Houston specifically designed for the elderly homeless population and is operated entirely by residents. Isha began her work with three homeless men who lived in one apartment and who worked to repair the TPC complex one apartment at a time. Through Isha's tireless efforts, TPC has served over 10,000 homeless individuals who have moved on to self-sufficiency. In creating TPC, Isha focused not only on providing shelter, but also on empowering each resident to become self-sufficient. Through her extraordinary dedication, Isha has changed the lives of thousands of elderly homeless people in the Houston area.

Turning Point Center (TPC) is the only homeless shelter exclusively designed to care for elderly individuals aged 50 and older in the nation's fourth largest city. For over twenty-two years, TPC has assisted over 10,000 elderly, homeless men and women. Our goal is to provide services within a caring and structured living environment, and to empower them to re-enter society as self-sufficient individuals.

### Lawrence Hills Penney Farms, FL

**Lawrence "Larry" Hills**, 80, established Personal Energy Transportation (PET) Florida, a provider of hand-cranked vehicles to help individuals in developing countries who have lost their legs to regain mobility. Larry and his wife Laura lived in Africa for 33 years, where they saw the handicapped become "forgotten," and they focused their efforts on assisting disabled people throughout the world. After designing and testing many PET prototypes, they found partners in the U.S. who helped design the simple, sturdy three-wheel model vehicle that is now produced. In 2001, the first PETs were sent to Mexico and Honduras, and by the end of the year an additional 260 PETs were sent to six additional countries. PET-FL offers volunteers from the retirement community and surrounding areas an opportunity to perform practical, meaningful volunteer work. Thanks to Larry, hundreds of physically challenged citizens in the developing world have received the gift of mobility and can now actively participate in society.

Personal Energy Transportation (PET)-FL is a faith-based, volunteer-powered, worldwide humanitarian organization that provides free adult or junior hand-cranked, three-wheel vehicles to persons in the most rural parts of the world who have lost use of their legs due to disease, accident, natural disaster, or land mines. PET is operated entirely by volunteer seniors who are encouraged to use their talents, skills, time and creative energy in meaningful and useful work.

## Community Champion Silver Honorees

### Norman Moeller Missoula, MT

**Norman Moeller**, 71, has been a Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) member since 2002 and joined the RSVP Community Task Force (CTF) in 2007. CTF leaders, all adults over the age of 55, provide local nonprofits with volunteer management expertise. In 2009, when the county health department needed help with H1N1 pandemic flu prevention efforts, Norman responded immediately. He stood out among an incredible group of citizens, working many long hours helping the public, staff and other volunteers with a professional, considerate demeanor. This group effort allowed the county to immunize more than 22,000 high-risk individuals. Norman, a former veteran, has also organized the donation of truckloads of military surplus for the Homeless Men/Women Veteran's Stand-Down and directed unloading activities. This effort distributes crucial winter provisions to more than 300 homeless veterans, up from 100 in 2010. Through RSVP, Norman has served more than 20 nonprofit organizations that address hunger, housing, disaster prevention and veteran support. For Norman, volunteering is "a way of life."

The Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) of Missoula is the gateway to community service for adults 55 years of age and older. RSVP volunteers use life experience and skills to address critical community needs in the areas of hunger, housing, health care, public safety, homeland security, youth or education. Acting as a volunteer clearinghouse, RSVP matches the volunteers' interests and skills with over 120 nonprofit organizations, schools or government agencies.

### Don Moreland Seattle, WA

**Don Moreland**, 75, has served on the Seattle-King County Advisory Council for Aging & Disability Services for over six years. He also serves on the State Council on Aging, which advises the Governor and other state agencies on issues related to seniors with disabilities. Don, whose older brother was born with developmental disabilities, regularly visits and monitors the activities of the Washington State Legislature where he communicates the needs and concerns of the aging community. In addition to advocating for older disabled adults in Washington State, Don serves as a founding board member of Mature Friends, a social organization for older lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender adults and was advocate for the King County Veterans and Human Services Levy, designed to serve veterans, military personnel and their families in need. Don is compassionate, a gifted communicator and a well-admired team player who does everything he can to advocate for the aging community.

The Seattle-King County Advisory Council for Aging and Disability Services is a volunteer citizens group that represents older adults and individuals with disabilities within King County, Washington. The Council's mission is to identify the needs of older people and adults with disabilities in the community, advice on services to meet these needs, and advocate for local, state and national programs that promote quality of life for these populations.

## Community Champion Silver Honorees

### Marie Mosby Arlington, VA

**Marie Mosby**, 69, has served the Volunteer Guardianship Program (VGP) of Arlington County for 24 years. Volunteer guardians are appointed by the court to speak for persons whom the court has determined unable to manage and make decisions about their lives. In her role as legal guardian and conservator, Marie has successfully cared for nine county residents since 1987 and was their advocate during their most vulnerable years as incapacitated adults. Marie manages her wards' day-to-day affairs such as paying bills, managing property, determining appropriate medical treatment and deciding where they will live. She reports regularly to the court and others to account for the decisions made on her wards' behalf. Marie's strong advocacy allowed one of her clients to receive mental treatment that kept him in an assisted care facility, amongst friends, and out of a nursing home. She realized that if he was placed elsewhere his quality of life would be jeopardized. This kind of dedication makes Marie the gold standard by which all incoming guardians measure their service.

The Volunteer Guardianship Program of Arlington County provides trained volunteers who are appointed by the court to serve as guardians or conservators, or both, for persons whom the court has determined to be unable to manage and make decisions about their lives. The volunteer manages the day-to-day affairs for the incapacitated person such as paying bills, managing property and choosing appropriate medical treatment. These services are crucial for those vulnerable older adults who have been determined by the court to be unable to make their own decisions.

### Lois Ruppel Vincennes, IN

**Lois Ruppel**, 67, has volunteered with the Knox County Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) for over 12 years, in which she has given 6,092 hours of community service. Lois works at the B.A.B.E. Store, where new or expecting mothers obtain baby supplies using vouchers earned by keeping pre-natal and well-baby appointments. Lois also processes applications for the Senior Commodity Supplemental Food Program and distributes 425 food boxes each month. She coordinates RSVP's Little Elves Workshop, a program where 3-5 year olds shop for and wrap gifts for their adult caregivers. The program began with 85 shoppers and has grown to over 700 shoppers. Lois also participates in vision screening for children. In 2010, 844 children were screened for lazy eye and depth perception problems and 34 were referred to ophthalmologists. Lois also contacts elementary school social workers annually to obtain the names of children needing Christmas assistance. In 2010, 249 children and 78 homebound seniors had their Christmas wishes fulfilled. Lois also coordinated the Higher Bound program, which helps junior high students in foster care or those with incarcerated parents by organizing holiday meals and parties throughout the school year. Although she has serious health problems, Lois continues to work hard and is an inspiration to others.

Knox County RSVP invites adults of age 55 plus to use their life experience and skills to strengthen their communities. Involvement is the key to RSVP and volunteers usually receive back just as much as they give. Annually, more than 350 active volunteers donate over 70,000 service hours to their communities.

## Community Champion Silver Honorees

### Judy Wunsch Los Angeles, CA

**Judy Wunsch**, 72, is a former school teacher and has volunteered full-time for the Alzheimer's Association of Los Angeles for 31 years. Judy, whose mother died of Alzheimer's disease, has been the Director of Volunteers since 1993. As director, she oversees more than 20 volunteers who staff the 24-hour Helpline and answer nearly 4,000 calls per year. She has recruited, trained and supervised over 400 volunteers, and remains the organization's only full-time volunteer. Judy has served on the National Alzheimer Association Board of Directors, as well as the Public Relations, Public Policy, and Patient and Family Services Committees. She also developed "Just for summer," a film for teenagers about Alzheimer's disease that is widely used as an educational tool.

Even before the Alzheimer's Association initiated a national call-in helpline service to assist persons who were dealing with Alzheimer's, the California Southland chapter recognized this need and made this invaluable assistance available to families in the Los Angeles area. Through the vision of founder Judy Wunsch, the Helpline has grown to 20 volunteers and is now part of a national service of the Alzheimer's Association.

## Mentor Awards

Honoring older volunteers  
whose energies are devoted  
to working with youth and  
their families

ROBERT A. BRADY  
1ST DISTRICT, PENNSYLVANIA

COMMITTEES:

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RANKING  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS  
RANKING

JOINT COMMITTEE ON PRINTING  
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ARMED SERVICES  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-3801

National Association of Area Agencies on Aging  
1730 Rhode Island Avenue, NW, Suite 1200  
Washington, DC 20036

June 3, 2011

Dear Friends:

It is with great pleasure that I extend a much deserving congratulations to Ida Odom, a gold honoree in the 2011 MetLife Foundation Older Volunteers Enrich America Awards. Ms. Odom's long and distinguished record of service has greatly improved the lives of those in his community.

The MetLife Foundation presents the Older Volunteers Enrich American Awards gold honoree to someone performs exemplary work in three categories: Community Champion, Mentor, and Team Spirit. Ms. Odom has served for 25 years as a Foster Grandparent mentor to at-risk elementary school children at Toby Farms Elementary School. During this time, she worked with nearly 500 children. Her commitment to the students as a Foster Grandparent has always been apparent to the numerous teachers, students, and parents who have repeatedly given her excellent evaluations and appreciate her kindness, dedication and wisdom. In addition to her volunteer work with Toby Farms, she is also active the St. Luke Christian Church. In short, Ms. Odom is truly a model of a Foster Grandparent.

Once again, I want to congratulate Ms. Odom on being named a gold honoree by the MetLife Foundation Older Volunteers Enrich America Awards, and thank her for the important work she has done for her community.

Sincerely,



Robert A. Brady  
Member of Congress

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[www.brady.house.gov](http://www.brady.house.gov)



## Mentor Awards Gold Honoree

Ida Odom  
Chester, PA

**Ida Odom**, 89, has been a member of the Delaware County Office of Services for the Aging (COSA), Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) and has served at Toby Farms Elementary School for the past 25 years. She has faithfully and enthusiastically committed over 26,000 hours as a friend, tutor, mediator and motivator for the children in the Chester Upland School District. Students in the district are required to meet the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) standards. Ida helps the children most in need of academic assistance increase their AYP scores. Beyond the numbers, Ida also improves the self-esteem of each child she meets by offering encouragement and friendship. Ida has worked with over 450 children and each year has received an evaluation of excellent, the highest possible accolade. Ida is proud of the difference she makes in the lives of the children, but adds that the children also make a difference in her life.

The Delaware County Office of Services for the Aging (COSA) Foster Grandparent Program provides intergenerational volunteer opportunities for low-income seniors. The mission of the program is to have a positive effect on the next generation by helping one child a time. This program helps children prepare for the future by sharing wisdom and life experience. Their volunteers assist children to improve their educational and social skills in an atmosphere of love through encouragement and friendship.

## Mentor Awards Silver Honorees

### Ruth Dodds Jamestown, NY

**Ruth Dodds**, 60, has been a volunteer at the Lutheran Social Services Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) and served at the Gustavus Adolphus Learning Center (GALC) for two and a half years. GALC is a specialized school for emotionally disturbed youth. "Grandma Ruth" began her volunteer service with music teacher Kathy Coyle, where she found that her gift for music could calm agitated students. She added piano instruction during class and after school began teaching choral music. She leads a small group of young women who sing at special events throughout the area. When Ruth discovered that the music classroom was cold, she helped students learn how to make hand-sewn quilts to keep warm. During Mrs. Coyle's prep periods, Ruth visits study labs, helps students with math and history homework, and mentors elementary reading students. Every Monday she escorts students to the nursing home on campus to visit with the residents and to encourage conversation between students and residents. Her partner teacher says that most of her students prefer Grandma Ruth's help to hers.

Lutheran Social Services Foster Grandparent Program enables low-income persons aged 55 and over to remain physically and mentally active and to enhance their self-esteem through continued participation in needed community services. Foster Grandparents give assistance, support, love, and companionship to children with special or emotional needs. They assist in the development of basic learning skills, teach simple tasks and self-care skills, and help children to grow physically, socially, emotionally and academically.

### Clarie Miller Marshalltown, IA

**Clarie Miller**, 76, has been a volunteer in the Mid Iowa Foster Grandparent Program for seven years. During that time "Grandma Clarie" has volunteered more than 6,500 hours at Hoagland Elementary School in K-2 classrooms. She also recruited and trained over half of the 103 Foster Grandparents in the program, who have provided more than 61,000 hours of service. Grandma Clarie has helped countless children learn the alphabet, arithmetic and writing. Additionally, she provides the children with a sympathetic ear, offers them hope and assures them they can be anything they want to be. Grandma Clarie also provides clothing to neighborhood children without a warm coat or sweater in winter and says she is not giving out "anything but love."

The Mid Iowa Foster Grandparent Program allows low-income individuals aged 55 years and older to give back to their community through service to children in schools, day care centers and Head Start programs. The program removes normal barriers that may prevent low income individuals from volunteering, including transportation, supplemental accidental insurance, and annual physical exams. The program also provides each foster grandparent with a small stipend to compensate for their time.

## Mentor Awards Silver Honorees

### Tim Wingard Los Angeles, CA

**Tim Wingard**, 69, has been a volunteer at the Youth Mentoring Connection (YMC) for seven years. YMC awakens at-risk youth to their power, unique gifts and purpose by matching them with caring adult mentors. Tim, who still surfs, volunteers his time for the surf program and brought his mentee, Govani (Gio), surfing every weekend. At 13, Gio weighed 285 pounds and was struggling in most areas of his life in South Central L.A. Tim taught Gio how to eat healthfully, to surf and to be a proud, responsible man. As a result of Tim's mentoring, Gio lost 120 pounds. Gio is now president of his high school's debate team, an honor student, surfer and basketball player who has been accepted to several universities. Tim and Gio remain extremely close five years after first meeting.

Youth Mentoring Connection has a vision of a community where young people are truly seen and not just watched, where society understands and accepts its responsibility in meeting the needs of all young people and where young people bring their gifts back into their communities as productive members of society. At-risk youth are matched with caring adult mentors that provide the resources youth need to reach productive, conscious adulthood.



## Team Spirit Awards

Honoring older volunteers who assist other older adults

228 Cannon HOB  
Washington, DC 20515



1981 Broadway, Ste. 220  
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

**John Garamendi**  
10th District, California

June 17, 2011

Ms. LaVerne Gordon  
Area Agency on Aging  
400 Ellinwood Way  
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

Dear LaVerne:

Congratulations for being honored as a Team Spirit gold honoree by the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging and the MetLife Foundation. Your leadership and commitment to the AARP Tax-Aide program in Contra Costa is truly admirable. During your fifteen years of service, you have been an immense resource to hundreds of low and moderate-income adults. You are a true inspiration for generations to come.

I applaud your success and recognition. On behalf of the people of California's 10<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, please accept my sincere thanks for your volunteer work, and my best wishes for your continued success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Garamendi".

JOHN GARAMENDI  
Member of Congress, CA-10



## Team Spirit Gold Honoree

### LaVerne Gordon Pleasant Hill, CA

**LaVerne Gordon**, 92, has volunteered at the Contra Costa Area Agency on Aging's Tax-Aide program for 15 years. Tax-Aide helps low- to moderate-income taxpayers by providing tax services and ensuring that these tax payers maximize their tax credits and deductions, resulting in more discretionary income for everyday essentials, such as food and housing. LaVerne, a retired Chevron Corporation Supervisor, began with 25 volunteers in 1997 and propelled Tax-Aide Contra Costa into a well-organized team of technicians, trainers, screeners, greeters, tax counselors, file-transmitters and site supervisor personnel. Tax-Aide Contra Costa has more than 100 trained volunteer tax and office professionals all under LaVerne's supervision. She steered the program into the computer age and trained volunteers in online tax filing. She also assists elderly residents who may not be able to complete their returns. County staffers who work alongside her cubicle and overhear her are amazed by her keen business acumen and persistence. LaVerne finds great joy in helping others and expects and delivers nothing less than excellence.

Tax-Aide helps low- to moderate-income taxpayers by assisting with tax services and ensuring they maximize their tax credits and deductions. The free Tax-Aide service contributes to a healthier economy by returning money to local communities via tax refunds. This increase in discretionary income contributes to the goal of aging in the community and continuing self-sufficiency.

## Marjorie Bronk Burnet, TX

**Marjorie Bronk**, 72, has been a volunteer with the Alzheimer's Association Caregiver Support Group for 13 years. The Caregiver Support Group Program hosts free community-based meetings for caregivers of persons with Alzheimer's disease and related dementia (ADRD). The program provides peer-led, supportive intervention and focuses on creating a warm atmosphere where members can encourage each other, talk about their challenges and exchange ideas and strategies. Marjorie's work has provided a vital service to area caregivers and her support group is the longest running group in the entire program. Marjorie is also a hospice volunteer and a second grade reading and math mentor. She also provides desserts weekly for her local community kitchen and fundraises for Seton Care-a-Van which provides daily on-site care for uninsured children in the community.

Alzheimer's Association Capital of Greater Texas operates a Caregiver Support Group program of free, community-based meetings for caregivers of persons with Alzheimer's disease and related dementia (ADRD). The program provides a peer-led, supportive intervention with a focus on creating a warm, non-judgmental atmosphere where members encourage each other, talk about life challenges without embarrassment, and exchange ideas and strategies.

## Claude Brown Bonney Lake, WA

**Claude Brown**, 66, has become an incredibly important volunteer in his first year of service at the Bonney Lake Senior Center. His efforts have been instrumental in enabling older residents of Bonney Lake to remain safely in their homes. Using his own vehicle, tools, and even his grandchildren's labor, Claude has installed safety equipment and wheel chair ramps in homes. He organized work parties to cut and deliver firewood for senior women who would otherwise have no heating fuel for winter. He set up a team to replace a leaky roof and crawled under a house to fix leaky pipes. Twice a week, Claude gets up early to pick up donated bread, dairy products, and other items from the local grocery store and delivers it to the senior center. Claude's organizational, home repair and improvement efforts are helping many seniors remain in their homes.

The Bonney Lake Senior Center is a drop-in center for the senior community. The center provides referrals for health and social services, giving local residents an unparalleled network of local resources. Hot meals are served daily and there are a variety of activities seniors can participate in, including seminars, day trips, parties, card games, bingo and computer classes. About 250-300 people visit the center on a weekly basis. In 2008, the center partnered with the Kiwanis Club of Bonney Lake to assist senior citizens with small home repairs. Services soon expanded to include cutting and hauling firewood and building wheelchair ramps.

## Team Spirit Silver Honorees

### Arthur Budnik Arlington, MA

**Arthur Budnik**, 60, began volunteering in 2009 after retiring from a corporate career in computers. He currently volunteers as a counselor for Minuteman Senior Services, where he has helped hundreds of at-risk seniors meet Medicare/Medicaid deadlines and assisted them with transportation needs. Arthur founded the first “Friends of the Arlington Council Aging,” serves as President of the Board of Directors and raises funds and awareness for the Council. He recently led and ran in a 5k race attended by hundreds of local residents that raised \$5,000. Arthur’s colleagues say he “consistently exceeds high standards of service for our clients.”

Minuteman Senior Services helps seniors and their caregivers find practical solutions to long-term care needs. Our 550 volunteers enhance and leverage the work of paid staff by making critical connections as visitors, shoppers, medical transport drivers, meal deliverers, long-term care facility ombudsmen, money managers and health benefits counselors.

### Rev. Ronald Chochol St. Louis, MO

**Reverend Ronald C. Chochol**, 73, founded the SGSM Network (formerly the South Grand Senior Ministries) in 2000, which began with a small grant and a partnership between two churches. Fr. Ron noticed that his congregation was getting older, and decided to encourage them to use their talents in service to the community. Eleven years later, there are over 30 churches serving more than 7,000 older adults in the greater St. Louis area. The majority of their 500+ volunteers are older adults themselves, and they provide transportation and home repair and disseminate health promotions and staff social programs throughout the area. As the Secretary/Treasurer of the board, Fr. Ron has overseen the growth of the annual budget from \$10,000 to over \$500,000. He has also been the organization’s most prolific volunteer and recruiter.

South Grand Senior Ministry (SGSM) began in 2000 as a partnership between two Catholic parishes. Today, this small ministry has grown in to SGSM Network, an organizations that organizes individual faith communities in building dynamic partnerships that coordinate, cooperate, and collaborate to improve the quality of life of older adults. The ministries enable older adults to remain safe, secure and healthy in their own homes and to engage in their local neighborhood and church communities. Their 500 volunteers have provided over 2,300 units of home repair and over 4,000 round trip rides to doctor visits since its inception.

**Robert Clarke**  
Palm Harbor, FL

**Robert “Bob” Clarke**, 72, has been a volunteer at Suncoast Hospice for over 10 years. Bob began volunteering 10 years ago after the death of his wife, a patient at Suncoast Hospice. Last January, he was named Volunteer of the Year, which is no small feat at an organization with over 3,300 volunteers. Bob has dedicated over 1,900 hours of service supporting hospice patients and their families. He is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and also mentors and orients new volunteers through training and sharing his experiences. He has been an inspiration to his peers and a source of comfort to those under his care. One colleague said Bob “is the type of person you would want taking care of you if you were a hospice patient.”

Suncoast Hospice was founded by volunteers and, as such, retains a deep commitment to its volunteer services program. Today, over 3,300 volunteers remain an integral part of their organizational soul, providing approximately 300,000 hours of service annually. Volunteers touch the lives of more than 19,000 patients and families per year and provide companionship, respite, errand running, and transportation support for patients and caregivers. The volunteers also provide administrative support to all services; raise community awareness and education; participate in fundraising and special events; and support palliative art programs.

**Ralph and Charlene Getz**  
Monroeville, PA

**Ralph and Charlene Getz**, 76 and 71 respectively, have been volunteers with the Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers (IVC) for over 12 years. The IVC serves the aging population of the greater Pittsburg area by maximizing independence and overcoming the isolation of the frail elderly of Allegheny County. Ralph and Charlene are coordinators for the Helping Hand volunteer group of their congregation, the Monroeville United Methodist Church. They coordinate IVC referrals to volunteers, recruit new volunteers and seek new avenues for volunteers to serve. They average 17 hours per week working directly with seniors and served a combined 870 hours during 2010. The Getz’s are currently involved with at least 20 seniors; in their many years as volunteers, they have driven care receivers to hospitals and stayed the night with those too afraid to be alone. Colleagues say that “they go above and beyond the expectations of IVC and have arguably even saved several lives.”

Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers (IVC) of Southwestern PA, a Faith in Action program that is part of Family Services of Western Pennsylvania, serves greater Pittsburgh’s aging population. The mission of IVC is to maximize the independence and overcome the isolation of the frail elderly in Allegheny County. Volunteers provide critical in-home, non-medical services that assist frail seniors with the tasks of daily living. IVC recruits, trains, mobilizes and supports these volunteers and enables frail older adults to remain independent in their own homes. In 2010, over 400 volunteers contributed 5, 250 hours of service, directly impacting the lives of seniors in their communities.

## Team Spirit Silver Honorees

### Mary Frances Oliver Spartanburg, SC

**Mary Frances Oliver**, 85, has been a hospice volunteer for the Spartanburg Regional Hospital since 1996. She has served on the Spartanburg Regional Hospice Board of Directors and her efforts have increased charitable donations and fundraising revenue. The opening of the Spartanburg Regional Hospice Home in 2006 was the realization of a dream, a place where patients and their loved ones can receive excellent end of life care and support. Mary Frances was chosen to represent the volunteers as a ribbon-cutter and has contributed more than 1,200 hours of volunteer work since the home opened. Mary Frances trains new volunteers, requests private donations and provides support for fundraising events. The monies raised provide medication, food, medical supplies and other support not covered by the patient's insurance. Her colleagues say Mary Frances' volunteer work is equivalent to that of four full-time employees.

The Spartanburg Regional Hospice Volunteer Program is designed to provide respite care and companionship during illness and bereavement. Volunteers are trained to assist staff with administrative duties, serve as companions to patients, relieve caregivers and work with clinical staff.

### Tom Grgurich Lakeland, FL

**Tom Grgurich**, 64, has volunteered with ElderPoint Ministries of Greater Lakeland for eighteen months. ElderPoint strives to meet seniors at their point of need. The organization offers grocery delivery, arranges for home improvements, provides housekeeping and gardening services and transportation for seniors. Tom volunteered because his job search was not going well and he wanted to be productive on a daily basis. The day he showed up to volunteer, the organization's receptionist resigned. He has faithfully served as receptionist ever since, and in that role, has continually improved ElderPoint's services and the impact the program has in the community. Tom contributes to the organization by providing bookkeeping services and assisting with the budgeting process. He also organized the ElderPoint Day fundraiser at the Lakeland Tigers ballpark. With his help, ElderPoint reaches over 500 seniors in the area and continues to grow every year.

ElderPoint Ministries provides a continuum of free home-based services to support healthy, safe and independent living for our older adult neighbors through interfaith volunteers. We are dedicated to faithfully serving the elderly at the point of their need. Our volunteers are dedicated to serve each senior until the need is met.

## Team Spirit Silver Honorees

### Margi Miller Venice, FL

**Margi Miller**, 69, of Venice, FL, has volunteered more than 300 hours over two years at Tidewell Hospice, in Sarasota Manatee, Charlotte, and Desoto counties. Margi took classes through Harp Therapy International with the intention of providing harp music at the bedside of terminally ill patients. Her harp music meant so much to one hospice patient in her final days that the family invited Margi to play at her funeral. Margi and her dog are also a certified pet therapy team. Additionally, Margi is a mentor volunteer and accompanies new volunteers on visits, answers their questions and ensures that they feel confident in their roles as they complete volunteer training. She is also a vigil volunteer, and sits at the bedside of patients who are in their last 24-48 hours of life and have no family with them. Margi speaks fluent Spanish, and often bikes to her assignments and meetings.

Tidewell Hospice was founded thirty years ago by volunteers. Currently, there are 1,200 volunteers serving terminally ill patients in Sarasota, Manatee, Charlotte, and Desoto counties. Volunteers provide respite care, transportation, pet therapy, companionship, humor, bedside music, and numerous other services to patients and families under hospice care. The primary goal of the program is to increase the quality of life for patients and families. Last year, volunteers served 97,000 hours-the equivalent of 46 full-time employees and a value of \$1,749,951.00.

### Mary Nellis Madison, WI

**Mary Nellis**, 63, has been a volunteer for Catholic Charities Aging Services for four years. She has been a member of the Respite Care Team Ministry (RCTM) of Catholic Charities, where she provides non-proselytizing, client-focused, quality services to older adults in need. The program's goal is to provide respite to desperate family caregivers, assist elders to safely remain independent in their homes, and to provide a link to community resources for isolated, under-served families. Mary's spirit of volunteerism is unparalleled and she is a "sustaining presence" in the homes and lives of the many people she has served through the RCTM. Her colleagues say her contributions truly are "above and beyond the call of duty."

Respite Care Team Ministry (RCTM) is a collaboration of Catholic Charities (CC) and Oakwood Lutheran Homes Association (OLHA). RCTM volunteers improve the quality of life for others by providing easily accessible, non-proselytizing, person-centered, quality services. The goals are threefold: to provide needed respite to desperate family caregivers; to assist elders in remaining safely independent in their homes as long as possible; and to provide a link to community resources for isolated, under-served families.

## Past Honorees

### Community Champion Awards

2010  
Barbara and Ira Smith  
Household Goods Recycling  
of Massachusetts  
Acton, MA

2009  
Frank Iszak  
Silver Age Yoga  
San Diego, CA

2008  
Nolene Breen  
Ada County Guardian  
Monitoring Program  
Boise, ID

2007  
Richard A. Kloc  
DAV Van Transportation Program  
Buffalo, NY

2006  
Fran Heitzman  
Bridging Inc.  
Bloomington, MN

2005  
Victoria Thornton-Lucas  
RSVP  
New York, NY

2004  
Josephine Cooper  
San Diego Food Bank  
San Diego, CA

2003  
Donald Maxstadt  
Volunteer Home Maintenance  
Program  
Muncie, IN

### Mentor Awards

2010  
Don Bend  
Big Brothers Big Sisters of  
the Midlands  
Omaha, NE

2009  
Robert Burtwell  
PALS Partners in Education  
Venice, FL

2008  
Frank Bittick, Ed.D.  
Teen Aid Project  
Coeur d'Alene, ID

2007  
Mary Hopkins  
Foster Grandparent Program  
Sacramento, CA

2006  
Ora Rakestraw  
Foster Grandparent Program  
Sacramento, CA

2005  
Edward Jagen  
Good Knight Child  
Empowerment Network  
Beltsville, MD

2004  
Katherine (Kay) Schosger  
Foster Grandparent Program  
Corning, NY

2003  
Charles Fernandez  
Portage County RSVP  
Plover, WI

### Team Spirit Awards

2010  
Jack Scudder  
Peninsula Agency on Aging  
Newport News, VA

2009  
Beatriz Marino  
SHIBA  
Portland, OR

2008  
Andrea King  
Foss Home and Village  
Seattle, WA

2007  
Ann Williams  
CO-AGE  
Atlanta, GA

2006  
Sol Goldstein  
Rebuilding Together  
Massapequa, NY

2005  
Lucille Brock-Thomas  
Faith in Action – Caregivers  
“REACH OUT and TOUCH”  
Agency  
Jessup, GA

2004  
Arthur Nichols  
RSVP  
Kalamazoo, MI

2003  
Lillian Embick  
Audiences Unlimited  
Fort Wayne, IN

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[www.n4a.org](http://www.n4a.org)



### **Acknowledgments**

n4a is deeply grateful for the significant contributions made to the MetLife Foundation Older Volunteers Enrich America Awards program by the members of the Blue Ribbon Panel and Advisory Board.

### **Blue Ribbon Panel**

Donna Butts, Generations United

David Nelson, AARP

Jan Newsome, Senior Service America, Inc.

Dawn Simonson, n4a Board President

### **Advisory Board**

Deborah Adler, Easter Seals Greater Washington-Baltimore Region

Dianna Benaknin, York County Area Agency on Aging

Marla Bush, U.S. Administration on Aging

Sally Myers, Hawkeye Valley Area Agency on Aging

Sheri Steinig, Generations United

Jeanette Wojcik, Faith in Action Caregivers, Inc.

