



United Way of Chatham County  
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## *2018 Chatham County Outstanding Volunteers*

### *Pamela Caruso*

Pam Caruso has been volunteering at Chatham County Council on Aging for the Senior Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) for more than eight years. She has also volunteered for the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA) for over ten years. Pam has always been one of those rare volunteers who goes above and beyond what is required, but this year she has stepped up her game! In addition to the usual SHIIP client appointments, she has held informational sessions in her neighborhood to educate seniors about Medicare and to promote the services that SHIIP provides. Pam volunteered 70 hours in counseling with SHIIP clients and helped many low-income seniors get financial assistance for their insurance premiums and medications.

For the VITA program, Pam volunteered to teach portions of the three-day Tax Preparer Training for new volunteers in Chatham and Orange Counties. During the February to April tax season, Pam volunteered 138 hours of tax preparation assistance to low-income families and individuals.

Pam is the kind of volunteer that accepts assignments that other volunteers may turn down because of the time and distance required. She presents herself in a very professional manner and has a loving and sincere demeanor while interacting with seniors and adults with disabilities. Pam is truly a remarkable individual who views volunteerism as a calling.

Nominator: Rhonda Hampton

### *Kay and John Combest*

Kay and John Combest have volunteered at Galloway Ridge for many years. Kay's most active volunteer role is as the Residents' Welcoming Coordinator. She works with the Galloway Ridge staff to identify new residents moving into the community and coordinates the delivery of welcome baskets. Kay and John invite every new resident to join them for dinner and they introduce them to everyone. In 2017, Kay and John welcomed 30 new families.

Kay's second most active volunteer role at Galloway Ridge is being the assistant manager at the Turnaround Resale Shop. She spends 18 hours a month sorting donations, pricing items, arranging displays, operating the cash register and maintaining financial records.

Kay is also a member of a group called Coups for Troops. She spends 30 hours a month cutting

coupons to be sent to the troops in Guam, Germany and Japan. Kay gives of herself in many different ways, never seeking praise or recognition. She is smart, efficient and cheerful. No task is too great for her. She willingly steps in wherever help is needed.

John Combest was a member of the first Residents Council, which was charged with drafting and writing bylaws and procedures. He also started the original Volunteer Services Committee at Galloway Ridge to promote volunteerism among the residents. John helps residents solve technical problems with televisions and computers. With his knowledge, he covers the gamut in the area of technology. John is a person who goes quietly about his volunteering out of the goodness of his heart. He will step forward and offer help wherever it is needed.

Nominator: Joan Zollinger

### *Mary Dickerson*

Mary Dickerson has been a 4-H volunteer for ten years. For the past year, Mary has served as the club leader of the Chatham County Horsekateers 4-H Club. Within that club, Mary has taught numerous youth invaluable leadership and citizenship skills in conjunction with equine-based curriculum focusing on animal husbandry and care. Club members are encouraged to participate in educational contests and public speaking. When parents are unable to assist youth in the horse shows, Mary transports them, and oftentimes their horses, to competitions around the state.

In addition to coordinating monthly 4-H meetings, Mary holds weekly practice sessions and workshops for those competing in 4-H Horse Bowl and Hippology educational contests. Mary has been greatly valued in this role and recently served as the state coach for the NC 4-H team, which placed first in the national competition.

Mary is much more than a club leader to these children. She is a valued mentor and has many times been referred to as their "4-H Mom." Mary has been a solid fixture in the lives of many club members and has been able to provide them with emotional support, a warm meal, and even a place to stay when families have needed it most. Her contributions have not gone unnoticed. Last March, Mary was recognized by Congressman Mark Walker as the recipient of the Community Hero of the Month Award. She is also the hero of the 4-H program and to many youth in this community.

Nominator: Ginger Cunningham

### *Ruth and Dick Flannelly*

Ruth and Dick are residents of Galloway Ridge and they contribute to their community in many ways. Ruth is an excellent pianist and accompanies the Galloway Chorus at their weekly practices and semi-annual concerts. She selects the music for all chorus events and dedicates several hours each week to practicing with them. Ruth is also very pet-friendly and volunteers to take care of her neighbors' animals when they go on vacation. In addition, she has sponsored several programs that enhance the lives of residents at the health center.

Ruth and Dick travel extensively and Dick records their travels together. On a weekly basis, he shares his travel experiences and videos with the residents in the health center. He also puts copies of them in the library for others to enjoy. Dick invests eleven hours in the production and screening of each video.

One of the most appreciated gifts that Ruth and Dick offer to Galloway Ridge residents is transportation. When someone needs a ride to a doctor's office or urgent care clinic, the Flannelly's are always there to help. This remarkable couple truly epitomize the spirit of community.

Nominator: Robert Holton

### *Edith and Joe Hammond*

As residents of Galloway Ridge since 2007, Edith and Joe have been actively engaged in a multitude of volunteer projects there. Edith is highly involved in the work of the Residents' Council, where she invests an average of six to eight hours per month. She is also the prime organizer of the "Neighbor Helping Neighbor" program, which assists residents with basic needs. In 2012, Edith helped to persuade the Residents' Council to establish a permanent Volunteer Service Committee. She worked to organize the committee, solicit volunteers and identify projects of importance within and beyond the Galloway Ridge community.

Joe taught engineering at Georgia Tech and Clemson Universities. At Galloway Ridge, he has used his teaching skills to lead two popular groups: a Men's Non-Fiction Book Club that has more than 30 members, and a "Contemporary Religious Thought" discussion group that has more than 60 members. Edith and Joe invest more than ten hours a month leading these groups.

Joe also uses his engineering skills by volunteering with the Galloway Woodworkers Group. The woodworkers accomplish an amazing number of repair jobs for residents and staff. They build birdhouses and podiums. The selflessness of Joe and Edith make them ideal role models.

Nominator: Claude Young

### *Hilary Murray*

Hilary Murray has served as the Volunteer Coordinator at CORA Food Pantry for ten years, as a volunteer herself, during a phenomenal period of growth in the organization and in the demand for food support by Chatham County families.

Volunteers are a critical resource for CORA. The food pantry is set up like a grocery store and requires constant stocking of shelves by volunteers. They also pick up donations from local grocery stores seven days a week. Over the last decade, the number of work hours contributed by volunteers has increased from 1,500 hours a year to more than 6,500 a year. During this time, Hilary has been instrumental in recruiting, training and recognizing volunteers. In the last five years alone, she has trained almost 250 new volunteers through monthly orientation sessions.

Hilary is often the first contact that volunteers have with CORA. Her manner is friendly, open and soothing. She makes a lasting, positive first-impression on all who meet her. In addition to Volunteer Coordinator, Hilary has served in some capacity for almost every special event and open house CORA has held. From recruiting event volunteers, to soliciting items from local businesses, Hilary is always willing to lend a hand.

Hilary has made everyone's job more pleasant, fun and productive. CORA would not have been able to accomplish as much as it has in the last ten years without her.

Nominator: Beth Budd

### *Larry Ross*

Larry Ross has been on the Chatham County Council on Aging Board of Directors since September 2014. He is currently serving as Board President. Larry is an innovative leader and dedicated to the agency's mission. He is also a strong advocate for individuals in need and for aging issues.

Early in his tenure on the Board, Larry became involved with the Strategic Planning Team and worked to help the organization become more data-informed and data-driven. One example of Larry's strong leadership abilities is his contribution in securing the support of UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health for a Capstone Team of graduate students to develop the Chatham County Comprehensive Aging Plan. Larry continues to be an active Steering Committee member for this initiative.

Larry has also served as a Meals on Wheels volunteer for over three years. He excels in caring for homebound seniors. He delivers noontime meals to older adults in need every Monday. In the last year, Larry has delivered over 290 meals and driven more than 1,132 miles to bring a nutritious lunch and a bright smile to the clients on his route. He also helps his clients with small household tasks like changing light bulbs and programming television remotes.

Full throttle in his commitment to promote Chatham County seniors and the work of the Council on Aging, Larry assists with nearly all Council on Aging events. He plans events, prepares publicity, secures sponsors, solicits auction items, greets guests and even serves as a speaker.

Larry Ross brings his intellect, patience, ethics and enthusiasm to all that he does. Most importantly, he makes sure that Council on Aging decisions and actions are made with the best interests of Chatham seniors and families in mind.

Nominator: Rhonda Hampton