



Outstanding Senior Citizens Honored in May

July 29, 2019

Outstanding people reside in every one of our nine counties, and each Council/Coalition on Aging in our region selected and celebrated an Outstanding Senior Citizen to honor during Older Americans Month (OAM) events throughout May to recognize its older Americans and their contributions within their communities. OAM offers opportunities to hear from, support, and celebrate our nation's elders. The 2019 theme of *Connect, Create and Contribute* spotlights how sharing one's talents, skills, interests and experience can make a major impact not only within a community but within oneself.

The following individuals were selected as Outstanding Senior Citizens in their counties in gratitude for their continued giving to their neighbors, communities, and families.



Champaign County

Vicki Eckstein is well-known for relieving loneliness and providing encouragement through her regular visits and being always willing to extend a helping hand. She devotedly visits people in the area's nursing facilities, hospital, and in their homes. For those who need rides, Vicki drives them to doctor appointments as well as to the Urbana-Champaign County Senior Center for special events and activities. At the Center, she ensures that everyone feels included, involved, and special. Whenever someone loses a loved one, Vicki is among the first to stop by with food and a prayer, and always accepts requests to sing at funerals. She is very active in her church, and continues her interest through her former work at Lawnview Industries/CRSI by helping older adults who have developmental disabilities with bingo and other activities at the Center. Vicki shows warmth and welcome to everyone she meets, and exemplifies the true meaning of willing worker, friend, and person who can always be counted on.



Clark County

Barbara Matthies has been an invaluable volunteer with the United Senior Services' RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program) since returning to her hometown of Springfield in 2011. A retired instructor and professor from Iowa State University, her volunteer work included initially scanning photos into a database for the Heritage Center and running a small library at the Clark County jail. Surprised at finding no programs of classes specifically for Springfield retirees, she helped the United Senior Services start one which became today's popular Springfield Area Institute for Lifelong Learning (SAILL) that is formally affiliated with the national Road Scholar organization. Before returning to Springfield, she volunteered with the RSVP program in Ames, Iowa, where she helped to winterize homes, worked at the Red Cross front desk after 9/11/01, cleaned up small parks, and trained for emergency preparedness. She also taught some local lifelong learning sessions about language and travel. Barbara is a mover and shaker who makes good things happen wherever she goes.



Darke County

John and Sue Strawser's volunteer work with State of the Heart Care since September 2016 has made a major impact on its staff, residents, and families. They were instrumental in initiating the *We Honor Vets* program at the site and other nursing facilities, pairing Veteran Volunteers with hospice patients who served in the military. John is a U.S. Navy veteran and conducts ceremonial pinnings presenting a plaque and salute to each resident veteran, with Sue always at his side. The couple recognized the urgency of responding to the needs of our veteran patients nearing the end of life, and relate and connect with them creating an environment where life review and healing may occur. They have recruited other Veteran Volunteers to help with this Veteran-to-Veteran Volunteer Program. Sue is known for sitting with patients when families are unavailable, and both she and John help with any needs that the State of the Heart Care may have, including delivering internal mail to the site's other offices in Coldwater and Indiana. Their other activities include chairing the board for The Walk to Emmaus in Darke County, serving as 4-H advisors for more than 13 years, serving patients in the local hospital cafeterias, teaching Sunday School at their church, and baking cookies for the Kairo's prison ministries. John and Sue are true examples of sharing one's talents and passions for the benefit of others.



Greene County

Marlene Acus has been volunteering in and around her Fairborn community for many years, and increased her volunteer activities upon retirement. She is a member of the Rona Hills Women's Club, member and volunteer at the Fairborn Senior Center, and cooks meals for St. Vincent de Paul to feed our homeless neighbors. She volunteers significant time and talents to the Fairborn City Primary School by actively supporting efforts to provide winter clothing and shoes for needy students, fundraising to provide educational opportunities such as field trips to the Center of Science and Industry in Columbus, and motivating children to improve their reading skills. She is an Elder and a member of the Health Ministry Committee at the First Presbyterian Church of Fairborn, and a former member of the Greene County Council on Aging Board of Directors. These are merely a sampling of Marlene's giving nature to strengthen her community through helping others.



Logan County

Patricia Clay is well-known for operating Pat's Beauty Nook out of her house in East Liberty cutting, styling, and perming hair for more than 60 years. She is treasurer of East Liberty Methodist Church where she also helps to run its Bible school and participates in its Miriam Circle church group. She was both a Troop and District Leader for the East Liberty Girl Scouts in the 1970s and 1980s, volunteers at Caring Neighbors: North Greenfield Food Pantry, supports St. Labre Indian School, regularly donates blood to the American Red Cross, and transports clients to and from hair appointments in addition to giving home visits. Pat enjoys donating her hand-made crocheted, knitted, and quilted items to schools, organizations, and for fundraisers, and always has a piece of pie available for visitors. These activities have been maintained throughout personal health difficulties and loss over the years, yet she remains as always a cornerstone for her family and community.



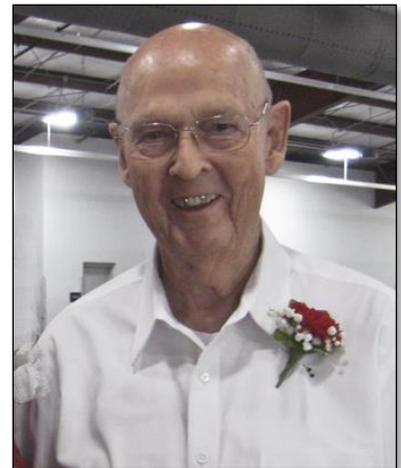
Miami County

Myrna Yoder is known as the Cookie Lady in addition to busily helping with various activities throughout her community. She is active in the First United Methodist Church, taught GED and English as a Second Language courses, serves as an elected official on the Miami Valley Technology Center Board of Education, is Director of FISH of Troy, Inc., and is Lead on the Disaster Team for the American Red Cross and has deployed to help communities during disasters. She also participates in Veteran Visits and the Pillowcase Program which educates children on preparing for disasters. Myrna was an honoree in 2018 as a YWCA Woman of Excellence.



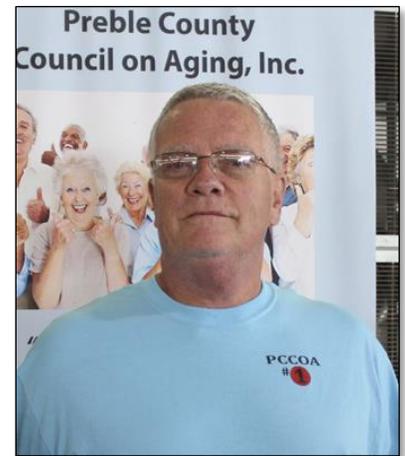
Montgomery County

Walt Kaiser has volunteered with the Ombudsman office since 2000. While most Ombudsman volunteers receive 14 hours of training for duties consistent to that amount, Walt voluntarily took more than 100 hours of training from the state at his own expense to become certified at the same level as paid staff to do even more for the program and its consumers. Walt is one of only two volunteers to achieve the Certified Ombudsman Specialist designation, and embodies the mission to advocate for excellence in long-term services and supports. He has averaged 157.8 volunteer hours annually for the past 12 years, compared with the statewide average of 49 hours per year. One week after a heart attack, Walt called his assigned facilities to check in and make sure that all was well, even apologizing for not being in. His dedication as an Ombudsman volunteer succeeded in recently discovering and getting immediate help toward a case of resident financial abuse. Walt volunteers with the Ombudsman to honor his parents who were both in nursing facilities, and to give something back on behalf of what was given to them. He truly makes a difference through his dedication and caring.



Preble County

Paul Schaeffer demonstrates compassion and kindness, and regularly goes above and beyond his responsibilities as a Home-Delivered Meal Driver for the Preble County Council on Aging. He often works behind the scenes to accomplish good deeds, whether it is alerting others to safety issues at a client's home, providing treats to his client's pets, to coordinating efforts to get a motorized scooter to the home of a client who did not have access to transportation. Paul gets help when he recognizes a client having a medical emergency, and is assertive in protecting older adults when he witnesses a situation that is neither fair nor right. He is described as a wonderful example of how everyone should treat older adults.



Shelby County

Donald and Jane Kemp contribute not just their talents but also their home to the community. Upon moving into a retirement community, they donated their home of more than 47 years to the Bridges Community Action Partnership. It will become The Path Shelter, only the second of its kind in Ohio, to house one family at a time impacted by poverty and focusing on families with children. The residence is designed to help a family get their lives together before moving on to improve their situation. Don and Jane have also volunteered at the FISH Community Thrift Shop for 20 years, and created a college scholarship available to Sidney High School seniors. They belong to the Church of Christ in Port Jefferson and do much behind the scenes to care for others.

