

THE INFORMED DEMOCRAT OF SWFL



Volunteers of the Month

Our Texting Team

May 1, 2025

This month we're recognizing the incredible work that Debbie Rooney, Cindy Skiles, and Cathy Cohen accomplish for the Democratic Party of Lee County. Not only do they develop messaging to voters, and schedule and quantify the results, they also dig deep into the data, finding missing pieces to help reach voters who were previously unreachable.

They play a critical role in verifying whether inactive voters still reside in Lee County, helping individuals with voter registration information, polling destinations, and much more. Their hard work truly translates into significant returns on donor investments for Lee Dems.

Debbie and Cindy met Lee County Dems Vice-Chair Karyn Edison at a Blue Shirts Gathering about a year and half ago. They had backgrounds in engineering, and Karyn steered them to the texting team. Dave Waks and Renard Biltgen helped get them up to speed.

What do they do? They send the text message campaigns from Lee County Dems and support other counties and groups as well. They have run Vote by Mail and Ballot Chase campaigns for Glades and Hendry counties in addition to their work with Lee Dems.

Cindy is "technically" the team leader, but they function as a unit. All are cross trained, so if one is unavailable, another can step in. Cindy writes the texting scripts and submits them for review to the Leadership Team. She loads the scripts and manages the campaign until it is released. Debbie usually generates the list of people to text, create and runs the campaign. They process the responses and Debbie and Kathy do data analysis and upload the data to VAN.

Kathy, who joined the team last summer, tells us that she finds her fellows on the data team to be the hardest-working group of volunteers that she has ever had the pleasure to work with. Cindy and Debbie took the time to train her and were very patient with her learning curve. She now works on post-campaign data download and analysis in addition to texting. She has also created a survey that went out to voters after the April 1st special elections to collect opinions on voting by mail.

Debbie says she wasn't sure she would like the engagement with the voters while processing the texts but has found it very rewarding. They've helped a lot of people between straightening out their vote-by-mail ballots, explaining issues, and telling them why to vote Democratic.

Cindy notes that "being a working Democrat in SWFL can at times seem akin to climbing Mt. Everest, but given the amazing team I work with, I can see blue on the horizon. Last year, we

sent over 1 million texts. It was a lot of work, but honestly, I wanted to feel that I did everything I could to stop Trump from being elected. Even though we fell short, I feel like I made a contribution.”