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## **San Antonio volunteers honored at community-wide 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Volunteer of the Year Awards event**

**SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS** (April 9, 2019) -- The [Volunteer Center at United Way](#) hosted the 30th annual Volunteer of the Year Awards program on Tuesday, April 9, at The Tobin Center for the Performing Arts.

Over 400 people attended the celebratory dinner event to thank local citizens whose good works help improve the community. Over 67 local heroes were nominated.

At this year's Volunteer of the Year Awards, San Antonio's single-largest volunteer recognition event of the year, 14 awards saluted the feats of volunteers living throughout San Antonio and Bexar County. All nominees received recognition and a \$1,000 mini-grant was presented to each winner to benefit their charity of choice.

Local volunteers have touched the lives of thousands of children, individuals and families across our community. The winners represented individuals, families, and groups making a difference across Bexar County. Awards were given in the following categories: Children/Families, Crisis Intervention, Education, Emerging Leader (new), Employee Volunteer of the Year, Higher Education Community Impact (new), Health and Wellness, Labor Service, LIVE UNITED Achievement (new), Mayor's Youth Service, Military Service, Nonprofit Organization Service, Seniors Service, Social Media Volunteer of the Year (new).

**Chuck Cureau**, NBA in-arena host, and actor; emceed the festivities. Event chair was **Harriet Dominique**, USAA senior vice president corporate responsibility and community affairs.

"It was such an honor to serve as 2019 VOYA Chair. What a great way to recognize and highlight individuals that work tirelessly to improve lives in our community." said Dominique.

"Thank you to United Way for all you do to connect volunteers to meaningful opportunities. Volunteerism, community dollars, and United Way create the perfect synergy to drive meaningful and measurable impact," said Dominique.

The week of April 7 – 13, 2019, is also National Volunteer Week, a time for organizations across the country to honor volunteers and recognize the irreplaceable impact of their time and energy, which is one more reason to show appreciation for our volunteers' dedication and selfless contributions.

Volunteering is a unique part of the American culture. The next generation learns from the one before and multiple generations of families come together to help others. Volunteerism helps change the lives of others and improve communities. Known to have health benefits, volunteering enhances careers, provides social connections, and engenders a sense of satisfaction in the volunteers themselves.

The Volunteer of the Year Awards Premier sponsors were USAA and NuStar Energy. Other sponsors are Valero, SWBC, Shiner Beers, CPS Energy, Red McCombs, IBC Bank, Broadway Bank, Frost, Harland Clarke, and VIA.

Working in the community since 1989, the Volunteer Center at United Way is Bexar County's largest resource devoted solely to the promotion and nurturing of volunteerism and community service.

The Volunteer Center helps to engage volunteers for both United Way and non-United Way partner agencies, as well as for a variety of community projects including: the Raul Jimenez Thanksgiving Dinner, H-E-B Annual Feast of Sharing, Martin Luther King Day, volunteers for disasters (hurricanes, floods, fires), in addition to hundreds of non-profit and civic projects during the year.

Coordinated by the Volunteer Center, the 5th annual [United Way Shoebox Project](#) runs through April 26. Shoeboxes are filled with toiletries, including toothbrushes, toothpaste, lotion, deodorant, soap, shaving cream, etc. Recipients include children in emergency shelters, long-term group homes, young sex trafficking victims, wards of the state, needy families, abused women and children, veterans, local teens, lonely seniors and many others. United Way is working to create 15,800 personal care packages for clients of 61 nonprofit agencies.

In an effort to take care of our community's educators just as we take care of our students, United Way's [Write Start Project](#) will accept donations of school supplies this summer to support over 5,000 area teachers at over 100 local schools serving low-income areas. Other Volunteer Center at United Way projects include [Born Learning Trails](#), literacy kits and many other initiatives.

Reflective of a tremendous opportunity to increase the amount of good we can do in the community, [United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County](#) is strategically addressing future challenges of a changing operating environment while honoring its strong history of helping others to affect community change. Four Impact Councils: Ready Children, Successful Students, Strong Individuals and Families, and Safety Net focus on "collective impact," which

brings together groups of partners from different sectors to work on a common agenda for solving specific social problems using a structured form of collaboration, data collection, measurement and impact.

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## **2019 VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNERS**

### **CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICE AWARD**

**Winner: Jeannie Frazier**

**Contact: [Jeannie\\_frazier@hotmail.com](mailto:Jeannie_frazier@hotmail.com)**

A life time Girl Scout, Jeannie Frazier has provided invaluable professional expertise to the Girl Scouts of Southwest Texas for over 14 years in the areas of finance, governance and board management. She effectively represents the unique challenges of the 21-county council at the National Girl Scout level, debating policy issues affecting the thousands of girls and volunteers from the area. She has spent countless hours helping volunteers, attending cookie rallies, facility tours, interviews, and years of committee meetings ranging from property to fund development, from finance to risk management, from donor lunches to donor "asks." Her exceptional professional abilities enhanced the entire council and will for years to come. She is the beacon – a true example of a volunteer embracing the mission, the challenge, the demand, and the love. Dedicated and passionate, she is both the voice and advocate for girls and women and is heartfelt in her thoughts and actions. Her smile when awarding a young Girl Scout her Board Chair patch, "Bloom where you are planted," says it all.

### **MAYOR'S YOUTH SERVICE AWARD**

**Winner: Julian Mathews**

**Contact: [juliangmathews@gmail.com](mailto:juliangmathews@gmail.com)**

Julian Mathews has served over 200 hours in our community and he is still in high school! He started a car wash fundraiser as part of the auto-detailing business he founded to help other students in need, donating supplies, time and expertise to raise \$1,000 for OTHER students. During the holidays, he also collected over 300 toys for youth in the Christian Assistance Ministry. Mathews has served 170 hours with Summer of Service (SOS), serving more than 20 local agencies in San Antonio. Volunteering for the Texas Diaper Bank, SAMMinistries, the San Antonio Food Bank, and many others, Mathews is also a Silver and Black Give Back Junior Review Board member. A bright and talented young man, he is engaging and personable with a strong work-ethic. An entrepreneur, he is kind and humble while maintaining a rigorous course load in a challenging STEM magnet program. Mathews understands that he has the power to make difference. He is a global-minded and compassionate citizen. This young man is truly an inspiration. He gives back in ways that few his age have done.

### **MILITARY SERVICE AWARD**

**Winner: Paula Davidson & Burn Intensive Care Unit Greeters**

**Contact: [paulakayd@yahoo.com](mailto:paulakayd@yahoo.com) and [jodelle.m.schroeder.mil@mail.mil](mailto:jodelle.m.schroeder.mil@mail.mil)**

Paula Davidson began serving as leader of the Brooke Army Medical Center's Burn Center Intensive Care Unit Volunteer Greeters five years ago. She is a co-owner of her family's business and a PTA member and home-room mom for three children. She serves her church and donates time to the Texas Burn Survivors Society, supporting their children's camps. Davidson is mission-oriented, compassionate and hard-working. Her job as burn unit Volunteer Coordinator for a team of 19 is to ensure staffing 365 days a year and training on hospital and HIPAA etiquette with regard to the families served. It takes a very special person, and team of Greeters, to work in the burn unit, the only one in the Department of Defense. Front lines. That's where Davidson and the Greeters are. She and her team give more than facts. They humbly lead, cheer, serve, and make well all they can. They are the "best of the best." Like the Steve Wonder song, Davidson "is the sunshine of our lives." She brings a constant smile to what can be a very chaotic environment for families of burn victims. Outcomes are on a slippery slope and Greeters have to be thick-skinned, positive, and be great people navigators. Staff come and go, but the volunteers remain a constant and Davidson and her team never fail. (The oldest volunteer is an 18-year veteran at the young age of 92, who works the shifts and "subs" in a heartbeat.) Burn care never takes a day off and neither do our volunteers. Davidson is a "leader's leader" with deep empathy for others. Her strong maternal instincts allow her to nurture, protect and serve those in need. She is a giver. She is a god-send.

## **SENIOR SERVICE AWARD**

**Winner: The “Golden Diggers” of the Army Residence Community**

**Contact: [gnewton@armyresidence.com](mailto:gnewton@armyresidence.com)**

The *Golden Diggers* are a group of seniors who are dedicated to improving the lives of other seniors living at the Army Residence Community (ARC), which serves military veterans and their spouses. The *Golden Diggers* are Independent Living residents who use their talent in gardening to ensure that every resident living in long-term nursing, specialized memory care, and assisted living has a beautiful garden to visit and an uplifting view of blooms, birds, and butterflies outside their window. These volunteers dedicated over 1,000 volunteer hours in 2018 to build and maintain the gardens throughout the seasons. Their work has touched the lives of all 725 residents of the ARC. When struggling with mobility, one’s daily view of the world can sometimes be limited to four walls. *Golden Diggers* have changed this view, bringing smiles to the faces of many. The group gives of their time freely, often donating the supplies or holding fundraisers to support their projects. They have created two garden courtyards, added an honor garden, and are developing new blooming gardens along walkways and in all common areas surrounding the Health Care Center. Having a beautiful and safe area to sit, meditate, or visit with friends and family has improved the quality of life and lifted the spirits of those with limited mobility, memory challenges and terminal illness. The Army Residence Community is a community of retired military officers, their spouses, widows and widowers. Service is in the DNA of every ARC resident. They may be retired, but their duty to serve others never stops and they feel very strongly about taking care of each other.

## **EDUCATION SERVICE AWARD**

**Winner: OASIS Intergenerational Tutoring Program**

**Contact: [bschmachtenberger@oasisnet.org](mailto:bschmachtenberger@oasisnet.org)**

Over the last 25 years, the Oasis Intergenerational Tutoring Program volunteers, all over the age of 50, have helped over 4,000 children benefit from one-one- one tutoring support. Currently Oasis has 280 volunteers, with an average age of 73, tutoring students in five San Antonio school districts, totaling 43 schools. Reading is essential to success in math, social studies, science, and all subjects, and in all careers. By focusing on reading, Oasis tutors pave the way for young students. Their success in reading in the early grades empowers children to be successful throughout their school years and in their adult lives. The Oasis program focuses on campuses in high poverty areas. An evidenced-based educational program, the tutoring program focuses on children in early elementary school, kinder through third grade. Research documents that children not reading on grade level by third grade are not likely to read on grade level throughout their school years. Tutors work with students each week for 25 weeks a year. In 2018, San Antonio teachers saw 100 percent improvement in student’s attitudes towards reading and language arts, self-esteem, and academic performance. Volunteer tutors commit to working for an entire school year with the same student. They develop strong relationships with the teachers, school leadership, and children. Trust is strong. Their presence sends a clear message that education is important and students and teachers are highly valued. Their gift to the community is priceless.

## **HIGHER EDUCATION COMMUNITY IMPACT SERVICE AWARD**

**Winner: University of the Incarnate Word**

**Contact: [light@uiwtx.edu](mailto:light@uiwtx.edu)**

First ever award in this category. At the University of the Incarnate Word, service is rooted in its mission. During the 2017-2018 Academic Year, 3,666 students were in classes where the faculty had student volunteers out serving the San Antonio community—that’s a third of the UIW student body. There is a commitment to addressing community needs and contributing to the public good. Education guides students to empathy, compassion, justice, and generosity. The Sisters of Charity had been educating orphans since the early 1870’s. Today’s students are reminded that the privilege of education invites them to care for others. Serving is part of the UIW legacy from its founders. It is in the “DNA.” In the 1980’s, faculty asked that students do 45 hours of service as part of their undergraduate degree program. Each of UIW’s five health profession schools conduct volunteer activities within and beyond the local community to ensure those that are less fortunate, sick, or in poverty are assisted. The students, faculty, and staff from University of the Incarnate Word work in partnership in the economically poorest areas of Bexar County. Volunteers serve in children’s programs, feed the hungry, and manage clothes closets. Many volunteers are also come from disadvantaged neighborhoods, recognizing that we all need each other. The UIW December 2018 graduating class of nearly 1,000 professional, doctoral, graduate and undergraduate students completed 44,584 hours of service in the community. They volunteer all over the city, attend health fairs, provide tutoring, and aid with community gardens. They lead activities for the young and bring joy to seniors. They respond to emergency needs, gather resources, learn the issues, and become engaged citizens. UIW’s provides students a mission-driven experience rooted in faith and in the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word’s historic commitment to contributing to the greater good.

## **HEALTH AND WELLNESS AWARD**

**Winner: Anna Galimore**

**Contact: [ugalia@aol.com](mailto:ugalia@aol.com)**

Anna Galimore's volunteer impact has touched people from all walks and stages of life! A native San Antonian with over 25 years of public service employment, Galimore participates with the National Forum of Black Public Administrators, the Urban Management Assistants of South Texas, and is a charter member of the National Council of Negro Women. She has chaired and co-chaired the annual Red Shoe event – raising funds and awareness for HIV and AIDS in the San Antonio community. She is an active member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Galimore also has served as a United Way Loaned Executive, motivating seven City departments during its annual charitable campaign. She is an active church member, Sunday School teacher, and auxiliary member. The San Antonio Aids Foundation (SAAF) and BEAT AIDS have benefited from Galimore's leadership efforts in the Ruth Jones McClendon Section of National Council of Negro Women Red Shoe fundraiser since 2014, helping increase awareness and education. Dedicated to reducing disparities, inspiring community leaders, and influencing the masses to improve their quality of life, Galimore's energy level is contagious. She is like a magnet. Her passion and compassion easily attract others to eagerly work with her. When she says she is going to do something; you can put your last penny on it! If volunteering is helping someone in need, giving of your time, being of service, and sharing a skill or talent, then you can spell it: ANNA GALIMORE!

## **CRISIS INTERVENTION AWARD**

**Winner: Former 150<sup>th</sup> District Court Judge Renee Yanta**

**Contact: [renee.yanta@gmail.com](mailto:renee.yanta@gmail.com)**

Motivated by the mantra: "Do Justice, Love Mercy, Walk Humbly," former 150<sup>th</sup> District Court Judge Renee Yanta founded the PEARLS Court, a therapeutic court for teenage girls ages 14-18 in foster care, with her own money and her time and talents. "Judge Renee" was struck by the numbers of teenage girls in the foster care systems that were appearing in her court, seemingly with nowhere to go but down. Statistically, 70 percent of teenage girls in the foster care system have a baby while still a teen and only three out of every 10 graduate from high school. In the PEARLS Court, which stands for P (Prepared) E (Esteem) A (Achieving) R (Resiliency) L (Learning) S (Strength), these young at-risk women are paired with female mentors who serve as mother figures. The teens meet bi-monthly in the courthouse with their mentors and with district court judges to motivate the young women to achieve more. In its third year, 32 at-risk teenage girls were helped, 21 of those connected with mentors. Five seniors graduated and moved on to college--all but two were promoted to the next grade level. Beyond staying in school, these young women also "pay it forward" with over 150 volunteer hours. Now a model for courts across the country, PEARLS Court, is making a difference in this foster care crisis. Since leaving the bench in January, Judge Renee has dedicated herself to growing the PEARLS Foundation to provide sustaining funds for PEARLS Court. She truly believes that every girl deserves to know that she is a pearl of great value. The PEARLS Court--founded by Judge Renee and nurtured by her vision and spirit--is truly changing lives.

## **LABOR SERVICE AWARD**

**Winner: Wanda Longoria**

**Contact: [wanda.longrionaft@gmail.com](mailto:wanda.longrionaft@gmail.com)**

Wanda Longoria has been active with the Northside American Federation of Teachers since its beginning. She volunteered as the building representative at her campus, and by the time she retired from Northside Independent School District, her campus had one of the highest membership densities. She was elected serve as the first president of Northside AFT Local 3216 when they chartered in 2018. Her vision and leadership were instrumental to the process. She has worked with Northside AFT & AFL-CIO, Northside ISD, Alamo Reading Council, City of San Antonio and others. Spearheading a citizenship clinic that helped permanent residents in San Antonio obtain their citizenship, she is also volunteering to once again bring the "First Book" program to students at Title 1 schools in the district. Last year, over 40,000 new and best-selling books were given out to lower income families and school employees. Longoria leads by example, inspires others to get involved, and is committed to a task from beginning to end. Knowing that the impact of volunteerism has the ability to span generations, Longoria was inspired to teach and to stay involved throughout her career and into retirement. She is often recognized by those she helped in the classroom, her church, and through community involvement. She believes that there is nothing more rewarding than to see how one kind word or a simple act of kindness can change someone's life forever.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD**

**Winner: Julian Mathews**

**Contact: [juliangmathews@gmail.com](mailto:juliangmathews@gmail.com)**

First ever award in this category. A VOYA photo album was created on Facebook of each of the VOYA nominees. Our social community was invited to recognize and support their favorite volunteer by liking, sharing and commenting on their VOYA

nominee. Voting was open for 8 days. During this time, we reached 51,263 people with over 7,500 reactions, comments and shares. Julian Mathews had 208 likes, 35 comments and 32 shares, and a combined engagement of 275. Some comments include: "Such a wonderful young man." "Julian is so very deserving of this!" "Awesome young man." "Julian is such a hard worker and great community member." **ABOUT Julian Mathews:** Mathews has served over 200 hours in our community and he is still in high school! He started a car wash fundraiser as part of the auto-detailing business he founded to help other students in need, donating supplies, time and expertise to raise \$1,000 for OTHER students. During the holidays, he also collected over 300 toys for youth in the Christian Assistance Ministry. Mathews has served 170 hours with Summer of Service (SOS), serving more than 20 local agencies in San Antonio. Volunteering for the Texas Diaper Bank, SAMMinistries, the San Antonio Food Bank, and many others, Mathews is also a Silver and Black Give Back Junior Review Board member. A bright and talented young man, he is engaging and personable with a strong work-ethic. An entrepreneur, he is kind and humble while maintaining a rigorous course load in a challenging STEM magnet program. Mathews understands that he has the power to make difference. He is a global-minded and compassionate citizen. This young man is truly an inspiration. He gives back in ways that few his age have done.

### **NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION – VOLUNTEER PROGRAM AWARD**

**Winner: USO – Monica Pedraza Ingram**

**Contact: [monicaingram44@gmail.com](mailto:monicaingram44@gmail.com)**

Monica Ingram has a zest for life that lights up a room when she enters. Her positive attitude and willingness to bring joy to USO service members and families is unparalleled. President of the USO Volunteer Advisory Council, Ingram is an advocate for fellow volunteers and the USO staff. She promotes community awareness with weekly briefings at the Military Basic Training graduations at Lackland Air Force Base, informing new recruits about USO programs and services throughout the world. She speaks to the families to put their minds at ease since many of their young family members are away from home for the first time. She assures the nervous moms and dads that the USO will be there to offer a sense of home. She talks about the Bob Hope Legacy Reading Program. Any service member can read a book or send a message to their loved one while being recorded. When received by the family member, they are encouraged to record the reaction of the child, spouse or parent watching and send it back to the service member. A strong leader and passionate volunteer, you will find Ingram volunteering at the Airport, Fort Sam Houston, and downtown USO centers. She is a daughter, mom, and spouse, instilling in her children what it means to serve others with a smile and giving spirit. Her father served in the military, so she honors him every time she volunteers. She loves her country, the men and women that serve, and the USO.

### **EMERGING LEADER SERVICE AWARD**

**Winner: Ana Rivas**

**Contact: [alrivas84@gmail.com](mailto:alrivas84@gmail.com)**

First ever award in this category. In 2018, Ana Rivas served well over 300 hours in the community. If there is a United Way Emerging Leaders event, Rivas' name will be on the guest list -- if not the committee planning it! Her dedication has been a top priority as a way to get to know her new hometown since moving to San Antonio from Houston 3 1/2 years ago. As an Advisor to both the Emerging Leaders Council and Women United, Rivas also actively participates with other organizations, focusing on transportation issues, diversity and inclusion, and women's empowerment. She serves as co-chair for ELC's Volunteer Committee and is instrumental to the planning, execution, and success of more than 20 volunteer events per year. She brings great ideas and true passion for serving others. Most Saturdays you can find Rivas lending a hand at one of United Way's nonprofit partner agencies, including: the United Way HOPES and Dual Generation grant partners, the American Red Cross, and the San Antonio Food Bank. She is tireless, thoughtful, and welcoming. Her heart is as big as her smile, and her positive energy is contagious! Whether behind the scenes or working in the field, her impact is beyond measure and the value she brings to our community is priceless! Giving everything her all, whether chairing an event or handing out paletas, Rivas is truly passionate about giving her time, talent and treasures to the betterment of others. She is creative and caring; she is kind and compassionate. She knows no stranger, and her smile shines brighter than the sun.

### **EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR**

**Winner: Sarah McLaughlin**

**Contact: [sarah.mclaughlin@nustarenergy.com](mailto:sarah.mclaughlin@nustarenergy.com)**

Sarah McLaughlin serves as the liaison for NuStar Energy's ongoing volunteer programs with Meals on Wheels, coordinating weekly meal delivery routes to seniors for over 120 corporate volunteers. She also coordinates various NuStar-supported Junior Achievement events, such as "JA in a Day" and "JA Finance Park." She and her husband, Ryan, serve as lead coordinators for guest-relations check-in at the American Cancer Society's Cattle Baron's Gala events held in San Antonio, Corpus Christi, Austin, and Waco, traveling to train and help others with the success of their work. A consistent, empathetic leader, McLaughlin is a

hands-on volunteer, too. She handles her volunteer responsibilities with professionalism and efficiency. She has served Haven for Hope, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, San Antonio Sports, United Way, and the Boys & Girls club of San Antonio. McLaughlin strengthens a project with ongoing enthusiasm. Her volunteerism is far above most and she puts her heart and soul into each event she attends.

#### **LIVE UNITED ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

**Winner: Harland Clarke**

**Contact: [Lynda.andrews@harlandclarke.com](mailto:Lynda.andrews@harlandclarke.com)**

First ever award in this category. Harland Clarke just completed its 31st United Way Campaign. Their leaders and employees have been engaged with many aspects of United Way, as well as directly with many partner agencies. Through the annual campaign, agency visits, Days of Caring volunteer participation, MLK Day, Big Brothers Big Sisters and many other opportunities, their staff has shown support through monetary donations and time and commitment to boards and other advisory activities. Harland Clarke has employees and locations across the country that are all very active in the community, with United Way as a key focus of community engagement. Harland Clarke provides education about the impact of United Way in the community for employees to support initiatives that are important to them. Harland Clarke started a "Bigs at Work" program in 2018, mentoring 26 sixth grade "Littles." Employees mentor students at their corporate office and are committed to carrying on this relationship through the Little's high school graduation. With up to 20 different company-sponsored events every year in the San Antonio area, not to mention 50-75 across the country, Harland Clarke employees have made continuous impact. The company recently added eight hours of "Give Back" time to every employee, giving them the opportunity to volunteer or coordinate a group activity. The company's level of support from leadership has never wavered. Whether raising money for the Food Bank or donating socks to Haven for Hope, volunteers understand the importance of each donation. No matter how laborious the job (like clearing out tons of bamboo at the Boy Scout location), or how tedious the activity (like cleaning out storage rooms at Respite Care), Harland Clarke volunteers are smiling, laughing and thoroughly enjoying themselves as they make a difference to each and every agency and client they help to Live United.

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