

# Celebrating the 2021 Older Adult Volunteer Award Winners



This year marks the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Older Adult Volunteer Awards from the New Hampshire State Commission on Aging and EngAGING NH. This award is built upon 58 years of Governors of the State of New Hampshire celebrating the contributions of older adults through an award for their volunteerism in the Granite State during the nationally recognized Older Americans Month.

Older Adults are a resource for our communities. The people being honored for their service through this award have demonstrated that any one of us can make a difference at any point in our lives. They have shown outstanding leadership or demonstrated meritorious achievement as volunteers in New Hampshire. Through engaging themselves and others they have woven connections that contribute to and strengthen our communities.

## Program

- Welcome** - Chair of the New Hampshire State Commission on Aging, Polly Campion
- Opening Remarks** - Governor of the State of New Hampshire, Chris Sununu
- Comments** - Chair of the New Hampshire State Commission on Aging, Polly Campion
- Comments** – Volunteer Representative of EngAGING NH, Roger Vachon
- Celebration of Award Winners** – Members of the Award Committee
- Closing Remarks** – Exec. Dir. of the NH State Commission on Aging, Rebecca Sky

## 2021 Honorees

### Mary Strong

An avid member of the Alton Senior Center, Mary is beloved not only by staff and volunteers but by her fellow patrons of the center. Mary is the “go to” person for getting things done. She is the raffle-person, she helps in the kitchen; she is good with crafts and gets others involved. She volunteers almost every day and is always seeking ways to get a new group together. For Mary, it’s all about building community and engaging others.

### Belknap

### Chele Miller

It all started with elastic that was needed by volunteers who were fabricating masks for caregivers and home-bound individuals. When someone ran out of elastic one day, Chele Miller became the Mask Maiden. Within one week, she was the courier and coordinator of the entire operation. She orchestrated for the operation to also benefit the Farmers Market of Tamworth and by turning it into a fundraiser, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and the Tamworth Community Nurse Association. She was the glue that held it all together.

### Carroll

### Barbara Rockwell

This past year, Barbara saw a need and filled it by securing space at the Stoddard firehouse and organizing volunteers for a food pantry from 9 to 12 every Saturday to make food boxes available for pickup or delivery. On most Saturdays at least 25 boxes are distributed. Barbara also initiated and organized the Friendly Meals Grab & Go program for anyone over 60 years of age. All a person needs to do to arrange a weekly delivery of five meals is to call Barbara. Barbara’s dedication to her town of Stoddard is a role model for others.

### Cheshire

### George Sanschagrin

George is a full-time volunteer with an admirable spirit, dedication, and positive attitude when it comes to volunteering. The Coos County Retired and Senior Volunteer Program and the Senior Meals/Senior Center of Coos County appreciate his full-time volunteer activities whether it be in the Senior Meals kitchen or unloading Food Bank deliveries or working as Mr. Fix-it in their various offices. During his more than 2,000 hours of volunteer service George has also helped the City of Berlin and the local American Red Cross among others.

### Coos

### **Larry Steigleman**

**Grafton**

Even though the Littleton Area Senior Center was shut down to all indoor visitors and volunteers, Larry stepped forward assisting with the Foodbank delivery at the nearby drop site to bring it to the Center. Each month Larry borrowed a vehicle from nearby car dealerships, loaded the delivery, and help unload it. When 100 more boxes were added to a regular delivery, Larry simply arranged to borrow a bigger truck and made additional trips. When Grab & Go weekly lunches began, requiring outdoor tent and table set up and distribution of food, Larry jumped in with tireless energy. He is a quiet, continual presence with an uncanny ability to predict when his community might need help.

### **Beverly Cotton**

**Hillsborough**

Beverly Cotton was nominated by AARP to recognize her volunteer work in Hillsborough county and statewide. She is as an impactful and enthusiastic volunteer voice for AARP's more than 215,000 members. Bev has said of her volunteer work: "Through this work, I am able to feel that sense of fulfillment and accomplishment that is very much like what I got from my work before retirement. It has filled that void and it has also brought me a large group of wonderful new people in my life that I have come to call friends.

### **Yvonne La Garde**

**Hillsborough**

Yvonne La Garde always goes above and beyond in her service supporting older adults. She is the current chair of the Pelham NH Council on Aging, growing its membership and expanding its sponsorship even during the pandemic. At the local senior center her push to think outside the box transformed programming to continue during the pandemic. She has led many programs herself. And she has gotten involved in town planning, working to secure support and funding for efforts based on surveys of older adults she help orchestrate.

### **Kathy Conk-Ryder**

**Merrimack**

Part of ServiceLink's mission is to empower individuals to age in the place of their choosing. Kathy is an integral part of that mission. In 2020 Kathy logged over 350 hours and 198 separate contacts with consumers, all of which were Medicare related. She trained to become an instructor and has made an everlasting difference by going the extra mile for those she helps. She has become the trusted face of ServiceLink and Medicare. She has also become our conduit to the New Hampshire Insurance Department and suggested some consumer-friendly improvements that would be helpful. She is motivational and inspirational to those around her.

### **Claire Ruocco**

**Rockingham**

Energetic Claire Ruocco has been a stellar and dedicated volunteer with Society of St. Vincent de Paul Exeter Food Pantry and Cleo Castonguay Community Assistance Center since 2011. Claire is currently a co-chair of our Senior Delivery program as well as (pre-pandemic) our exclusive Senior Food Pantry. Volunteering 20 to 25 hours each week, Claire serves as an inspiration to our staff and our 130 volunteers alike, making clients feel respected and welcomed. She has also led numerous fundraising events and organized food drives.

### **Norm Sanborn**

**Strafford**

Norm, a World War II Navy Veteran, is an extremely active volunteer who genuinely cares for fellow veterans and civilians. For many years he served as President of the Veterans Council of Rochester arranging many social, educational and other offerings. His 92 years have not reduced his energy, involvement, and commitment even during the Pandemic. Norm assisted the NH Veterans Home in ensuring adequate supplies of personal protective equipment by arranging a grant donation from the Rochester Elks Lodge for COVID-19.

### **Linda Smith**

**Sullivan**

Who walks two miles at 5:30 in the morning, five days a week, rain or shine, daylight or dark, in hot or freezing weather to do her volunteer work for a minimum of 35 hours per week? Who does that? Linda Smith does to get to the Newport Senior Center where she works in the kitchen doing many things. Beyond her 35 hours per week with food preparation, Linda will often extend her hours to help clean and set up and organize space for exercise programs, fundraisers, health clinics, and other activities that promote socialization and independence for older adults.

