

Governor's Points of Light Volunteer Service Awards 2014 Honorees



The Governor's Points of Light Awards are presented *quarterly* and recognize Nebraska volunteers (youth, adult, and group) who give their time, talent and energy to help Nebraskans build stronger communities. Nomination deadlines are the 15th of each quarter (March, June, September, December). All Points of Light nominations are valid for one year.

February 2014 – Youth Award *Erin Carter, Gering*



Erin is pictured with Governor Heineman and First Lady Sally Ganem

As a sophomore in high school, Erin began her volunteer work as Peer Outreach Worker with Community Action Program of Western Nebraska and after three years has logged over 1300 volunteer hours. She has had the opportunity to have direct impact on young people's lives by helping with homework, conducting an after school program and someone who listens to their struggles. Because of her involvement with Panhandle Partnership for HHS, Erin has become a youth voice and advocate for systems change across communities and the state.

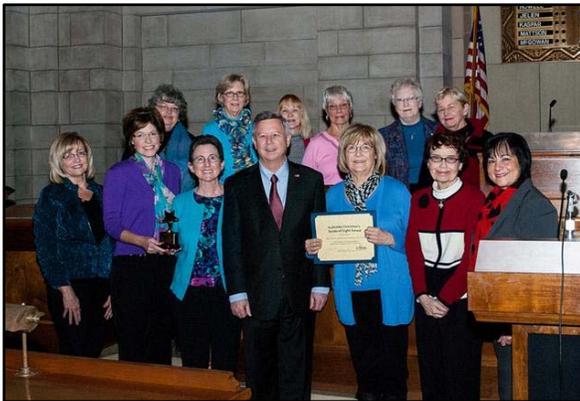
February 2014 – Adult Award *Willie Shafer, Lincoln*



Willie is pictured with Governor Heineman and First Lady Sally Ganem

After retiring from teaching, Willie started collecting donated clothing in her home 11 years ago for those occasional accidents that occur with students. "Willie's Closet" is now housed in the Saratoga Elementary School basement, it sustains 68 schools, providing 1900 service hours per year. With five volunteers, Willie opens the store twice a month for nurses and health techs to take what they need for their schools. For Willie, coordination of this effort is a full-time job from August to May but makes a positive difference in the lives of students.

February 2014 – Group Award *Alegent Creighton Health Faith Community Network, Omaha*



Pictured Front L to R, Suzi Bazata, Nicki Ayer, Ronnette Sailors, Governor Heineman, Bev Vazzano, Lucretia Danielson, First Lady Sally Ganem. Pictured Back L to R, Elizabeth Pokorny, Karen Kraaz, Cindy Hilltgen, Joy Gillinsky, Diana Bussian, Gretchen Reid

The Network unites 50 congregations and 73 active Nurse/Health Ministers. Rather than practice from a medical or home health model, they promote healthy lifestyles for all ages, advocate for those who are ill, and encourage social justice. From 2006 to 2012 they have impacted 13,000 people and saved over \$1.9 million through avoided ER visits & surgical procedures, advocating for treatment, and providing no cost fitness classes & health screenings.



Pictured with Governor Heineman are Juan Gonzalez, Mckenzie Stevenson, Katherine Mussack and Kathy Chatt

May 2014 – Youth Award
Tekamah-Herman FCCLA, Tekamah

For seven years Tekamah-Herman School's Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), Burt County Food Bank and Tekamah-Herman, Decatur Church/Community Council have partnered to facilitate a backpack program in school to help families in need of food for their children on the weekends. The program runs from October through May and started with 6 families, and to date 32 families now receive a meal and a voucher for 1 gallon of milk. The FCCLA students also raise funds to help purchase the food and hold food drives throughout the year for the food pantry and the back pack program.



Diana Failla is pictured with Governor Heineman

May 2014 – Adult Award
Diana Failla, Omaha

Diana's volunteer efforts and hours supersede several fulltime positions as she oversees numerous community programs, chairs various decision-making boards and attends countless meetings to better her neighborhood, community and the city of Omaha. Under her leadership, 450 trees have been planted as part of Midtown's ReTree Program. The program is designed to replace disease trees or loss of trees due to storms. The goal is to plant 1000 trees by 2017. She was recently appointed to the Mayor's Landmark Preservation Heritage commission and serves on the University of Nebraska Omaha board of directors for the Criss Library. Diana is an avid community development leader, always looking for ways to volunteer and engage others to enrich and beautify the community.



Pictured with Governor Heineman are Lt. Kevin Bridges and patrol volunteers

May 2014 – Group Award
Metro Area Motorist Assist Program, Omaha

The Metro Area Motorists Assist Program was launched in 1997. Since that time, the volunteers have completed more than 80,000 assists. Many recipients of this "goodwill" program were grateful out-of-state travelers who were extremely appreciative of the friendly and courteous service they received in Nebraska. The MAMAP has been so successful that similar initiatives were created for motorists in the Lincoln and Grand Island areas. Nicknamed "Highway Angels" by grateful motorists, volunteers associated with the Omaha metro area motorist assist program (MAMAP) patrol the busiest sections of the roadway system during the morning and evening rush-hour periods. They provide free service to motorists who are stranded with disabled vehicles. Services include delivering fuel and needed fluids, changing flat tires, conducting jump starts, and making arrangements for tow service.



Avni Srivastav is pictured with Governor Heineman and First Lady Sally Ganem

**August 2014 – Youth Award
Avni Srivastav, Lincoln**

As an active participant in Youth Leadership Lincoln (YLL), Avni Srivastav was dedicated to academic success and her curiosity about civic and community engagement stood out. She applied to YLL to learn more about how Lincoln functions and grow her leadership skills and experience. She sought out many different ways to engage in the community both inside and of outside school. As a student at Lincoln Southeast High School, Avni was involved in show choir, student council and one-on-one tutoring. At Lincoln Public Schools Entrepreneurship Focus Program she was the vice president of FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America) and won the state-wide business pitch competition hosted by the UNL, College of Business Administration. Avni has served on Mayor Beutler's youth advisory committee, and she volunteered as a student spokesperson for Lincoln Public Schools, routinely encouraging youth to become involved in community building through service, business and social entrepreneurship, and political involvement.

**August 2014 – Adult Award
Maggi Thorne, Lincoln**



Maggi Thorne is pictured with Governor Heineman and First Lady Sally Ganem

As the international spokesperson for Soles4Souls, Maggi Thorne has traveled across the globe to engage communities in helping to wear out poverty by the simple gift of used shoes. She initiated and led the effort of a major shoe drive called "The Greatest Shoe Drive on Earth", to break a world record for most shoes collected and partnered with the Mayor of Lincoln and the Lincoln Waste Haulers. Over 20 businesses in Lincoln and Omaha hosted a collection site. In addition, Maggi created an online presence that people engaged in nationally. To date over 10,000 shoes have been collected to benefit thousands of lives living in poverty. As Mrs. Great Plains International 2014, Maggi has helped at over 60 community events since 2013 above and beyond her work with Soles4Souls.



**August 2014 – Group Award
Southwood Lutheran Church, Lincoln**

Southwood Lutheran church members are pictured with Governor Heineman and First Lady Sally Ganem

Southwood Lutheran Church has been a very active supporter of many Tabitha programs for over 45 years. The members of Southwood have accumulated over 25,000 volunteer hours for Tabitha over that time. Every week Southwood members deliver eight routes for the Meals on Wheels program. Youth groups from Southwood decorate paper sacks and make holiday cards for Meals on Wheels clients, and church members provide minor home repair or cleaning services for clients who have limited income and ability. Continuous volunteer recruitment allows Southwood to engage its parishioners in meaningful service opportunities. The relationship that has developed between Southwood and Tabitha benefits clients, as well as the community as a whole.

November 2014 – Youth Award

Kalista Volland, Omaha



Kalista spent time this past summer volunteering at the People's City Mission Medical Clinic by greeting patients in the lobby, helping with office activities and engaging in patient safety activities such as highlighting last names on prescription bags for the visually impaired clients. Recently she won Miss Nebraska Jr. Tween at America's U.S. Miss Pageant—of which 60% of her scoring was based upon community service, academic achievement, and interview with judges. As part of her reign, she plans to visit local area hospitals in Omaha and Lincoln, to distribute coloring books and crayons to children in the PICU and children's units.

What makes Kalista unique, is that she's 8, an honors student and enjoys giving back to her community and she's an ambassador to her peers encouraging them to volunteer and give back to those in need.

November 2014 – Adult Award

Rick Pedersen, Scotia



Rick Pedersen would deny that any of his volunteer work deserves an award. 2014 marked the first year in over 32 years that Rick did not coach a baseball or softball team in Scotia. His love for the sport has been passed on to many and he still plays on the local church league softball team. For well over 25 years Rick has been a certified EMT and volunteer fireman serving the community of Scotia and surrounding communities. For over 15 years he has volunteered his time to help keep Happy Jack Peak and Chalk Mine open by serving on the Chalk Mine Association. He gives tours and helps out at the mine raking, cleaning and doing maintenance. He also volunteers for the Lions Club, Booster Club, and the local golf course. He does all this and more while running his own business Scotia Electric that has been in the family for many years. Rick has small town values and believes in giving back to his community in many ways.

November 2014 – Group Award

Mustaches 4 Kids, Hastings



Two years strong, Mustaches 4 Kids is making a positive impact on children's lives in the Hastings area. These last two years, the group raised \$57,750, donating the funds to Special Children's Fund and Camp Hot Shots. The mission of the Special Children's fund is to assure that every child receive prompt medical treatment and reduce financial stress for families experiencing a child's medical crisis. Camp Hot Shots mission empowers youth to understand and manage diabetes through self-management to live a long healthy life. Mustaches for Kids Hastings is the local chapter of Mustaches for Kids, a volunteer-run organization started in Los Angeles in 1999 to do good and have fun by growing Mustaches for children's charities. The concept is simple; you get pledges/donations to grow a mustache for one month. All the money raised during this fundraiser is donated to a local children's charity. The simple concept with a big impact and a little fun has encouraged men to give back and get involved in their local communities.