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## **ServeOhio Awards Honor Recipients for Dedication to Local Service**

*Ten outstanding volunteers, groups and initiatives presented with cash award for impactful service throughout Ohio*

**Columbus, OH** – ServeOhio, Ohio’s commission on service and volunteerism, will honor 10 outstanding volunteers, volunteer groups and service initiatives across the state during National Volunteer Week taking place April 18-24. A cash award of \$1,000 will be issued to each awardee to support the organization that benefited from their service.

This year, the ServeOhio Awards, made possible through support from the American Electric Power Foundation, recognize the many contributions of volunteers and organizations that have helped their local communities recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We are proud of this year’s ServeOhio awardees who stepped up to respond to the needs of Ohioans during what continues to be a challenging time for many,” said William Hall, executive director for ServeOhio. “The impact of everyday citizens who reach beyond themselves to help their neighbors and communities, shapes who we are as a state, and we couldn’t be more honored to present the awards to these amazing individuals.”

More than 3 million Ohioans volunteer annually spending a combined 278 million hours serving in communities across Ohio. The economic value of these efforts totals more than \$6.7 billion.

The 2021 ServeOhio Award recipients include:

### **NORTHWEST OHIO**

**Helping Hands Facebook Group, Seneca County** – The Helping Hands in Seneca County Facebook group was founded in March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. About 175 people offered their help to make face masks and coordinate delivery to many organizations, and as of November 10, 2020, they created 54,240 masks and had grown their following to more than 5,600 members.

**Jim Vermilyea, Graytown** – Jim Vermilyea has spent countless hours working with and for Salem Lutheran Church and the neighborhood around this ministry in Toledo’s North End, which is an area that has a high concentration of generational poverty. From regularly contributing and serving food at Salem Lutheran Church’s Tuesday community meals to gathering furniture for the church and the Lucas County Family Council to donate to those in need, he helps engage people from Ohio’s countryside counties to join him to improve social capital in different locales. Over the summer, Vermilyea also built a pergola for a bus stop shelter and replaced window guards at Salem Lutheran Church.

## NORTHEAST OHIO

**Christine Lakus, Mentor** – For nine years, Christine Lakus has volunteered at all four campuses of Holden Forests & Gardens, accumulating 2,000 lifetime hours. Lakus has assisted in support and leadership roles for events at the Cleveland Botanical Garden; banded bluebirds, monitored trails and manned the Visitor Center and Welcome Desk at the Holden Arboretum; provided tours at the David G. Leach Research Station and enhanced HF&G's offsite and virtual campuses by offering nature enrichment activities at local libraries, making weekly phone calls to shut-in volunteers and posting weekly contributions to the volunteer Facebook group that she founded as a member of the Communication Task Force.

**Sycamore Youth Center, Steubenville** – At the Sycamore Youth Center, 250 students from all grades attend classes in art, dance, sewing, cooking, auto repair and more after school. This is possible due to the 62 volunteer staff members who provide these classes free of charge, in addition to paying for their own supplies, cleaning up the center and distributing 500 meals each week to students to have over the weekend. The staff provides more than 50,000 volunteer hours each year to help provide impoverished students with the extracurricular education and supplies they need.

## CENTRAL OHIO

**Glenn Dickey, Westerville** - Throughout 2020, Glenn Dickey creatively found a way to safely engage volunteers in the woodshop at the Furniture Bank of Central Ohio through developing a series of video instructions for coffee tables and kitchen tables that volunteers can build alone and either watch before coming to the woodshop or during an off-site build. Both methods limited the contact between volunteers and Furniture Bank staff, keeping people safe and willing to help. Since the return of volunteers, the Furniture Bank has built 200 pieces of needed furniture and engaged 41 other volunteers, due to Dickey's flexibility and 267 hours donated in 2020.

**Roni McCurdy, Dublin** – Roni McCurdy is a volunteer who selflessly champions for those in need at the Bridge Community Center. For the food pantry, she obtains and organizes food and supplies, fundraises, collects donations, cooks, guides and directs volunteers, and serves individuals and families in the community. She works closely with the Mid-Ohio Food Bank and the Sam's Club Distribution Center in Groveport to collect donations of damaged packages. During COVID-19, she has organized drive-up lines for volunteers to load pantry items into cars and orchestrated a Christmas event where 1,000 gifts were distributed to support families in central Ohio.

## SOUTHWEST OHIO

**Evan Osgood, Loveland** – When Evan Osgood recognized a need in his community to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) during the COVID-19 pandemic, he founded SOS for PPE, a nonprofit producing PPE for people in need with a 4,500-person volunteer network. To date, SOS for PPE has distributed over 150,000 items of PPE and impacted the lives of more than 175,000 people. Osgood, a high school sophomore, used his engineering skills to sew facemasks and create face shields in his 3D printer, and he founded his organization remotely by compiling volunteers to put together PPE through

assembly kits. His measurable change has saved lives and reduced the spread of COVID-19 in a year of uncertainty.

**Raye Kimberlin, Lebanon** – The Martin Luther King Coalition of Lebanon works to honor Dr. King’s vision of justice by building an inclusive network of individuals and organizations working toward empowerment for all people, and Raye Kimberlin has been an active member since it began 10 years ago. Kimberlin has held multiple positions in the organization, now serving as the elected coordinator and president. In addition, she serves on the Human Relations Commission of the Lebanon City Council, providing advisory input in the city’s “Anti-Racist Resolution,” and is the representative from the MLK Coalition to the Lebanon City Schools Parents Equity Group, the City of Lebanon and the Lebanon Police Department. Her dedication across the community to combat systemic racism and create service opportunities honoring Dr King’s legacy is important to continue education in southwest Ohio.

## SOUTHEAST OHIO

**Buckeye Trail Association, Shawnee** – The Buckeye Trail Association (BTA) is a volunteer-led nonprofit founded in 1959 that creates and maintains the Buckeye Trail, a statewide hiking trail spanning over 1,400 miles. On average, BTA volunteers from across Ohio donate 10,000 hours per year to maintain and market the trails, recruit volunteers and help run special events. BTA volunteers also host many training opportunities for conservationists and outdoor enthusiasts, including National Park Service-standard trail building trainings, first aid, and sessions that empower community members to adopt their own section of the trail and to recruit and mobilize volunteers.

**LouAnn Drummond, Clarksburg** – LouAnn Drummond has volunteered with COAD/RSVP of the Ohio Valley since June 2019 when she developed a weekend food backpack program for Adena Local Schools. This effort led to her assistance with multiple projects helping to address food insecurity in southeastern Ohio, including the Rural Delivery Meals program serving over 500 children weekly and the Farmers to Families Food Box program receiving 1,248 boxes of food per week to distribute across Ross County. Her tenacity to continue providing food during COVID-19 has resulted in a distribution of over 32,476 food boxes and bags, providing 458,444 meals to families in rural Appalachia.

Individuals interested in serving in their community this year or at any time can visit [Get Connected](#), ServeOhio’s statewide volunteer engagement platform, to be connected with organizations in need of volunteers.

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### **About ServeOhio**

ServeOhio, Ohio’s Governor-appointed commission on service and volunteerism, strengthens Ohio communities through AmeriCorps and volunteer engagement. Through programs and initiatives funded and supported by ServeOhio, thousands of Ohioans of all ages engage in and are recognized for their service. Interested participants may learn more about ServeOhio at [www.serveohio.org](http://www.serveohio.org), or on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).