



**2014**

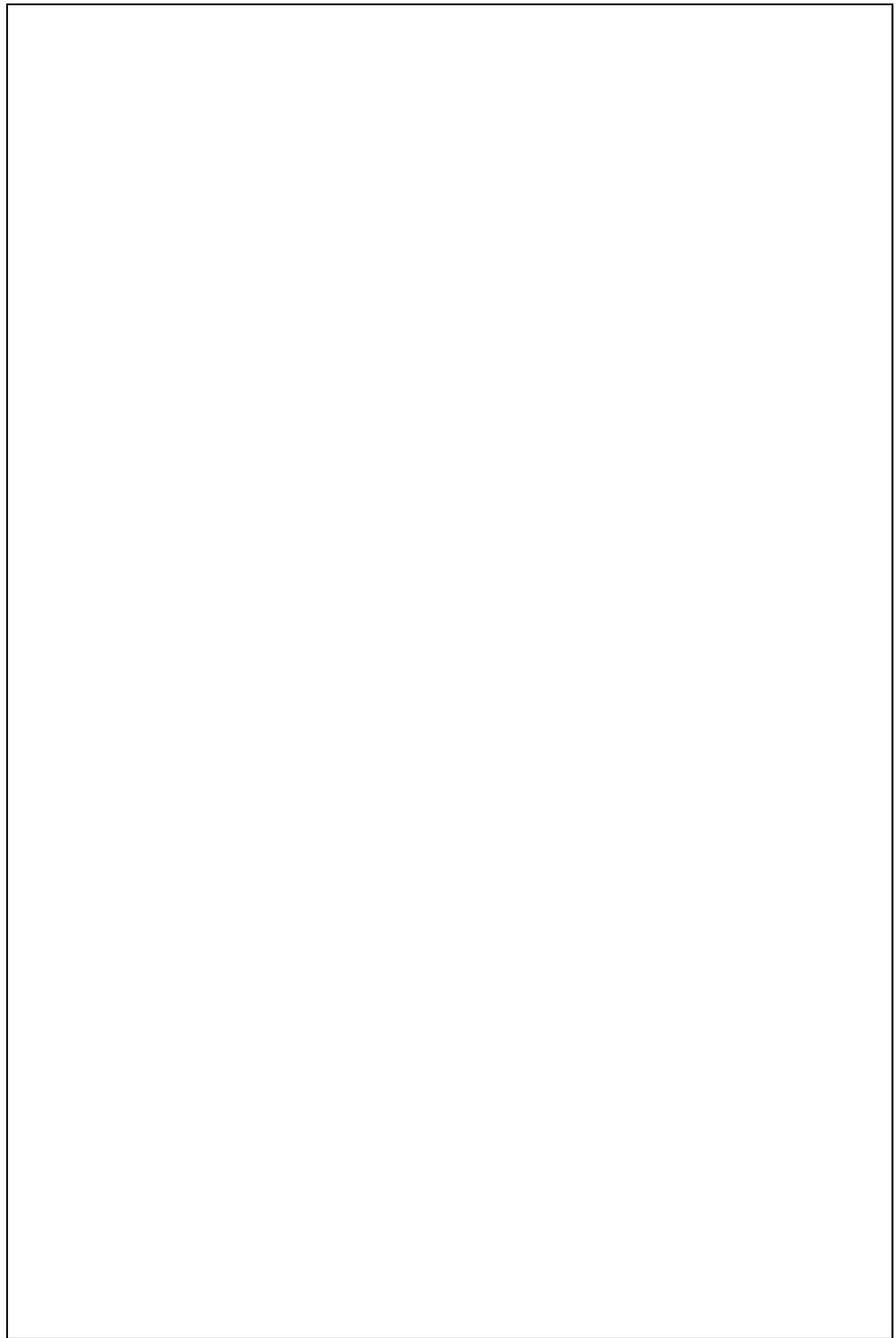
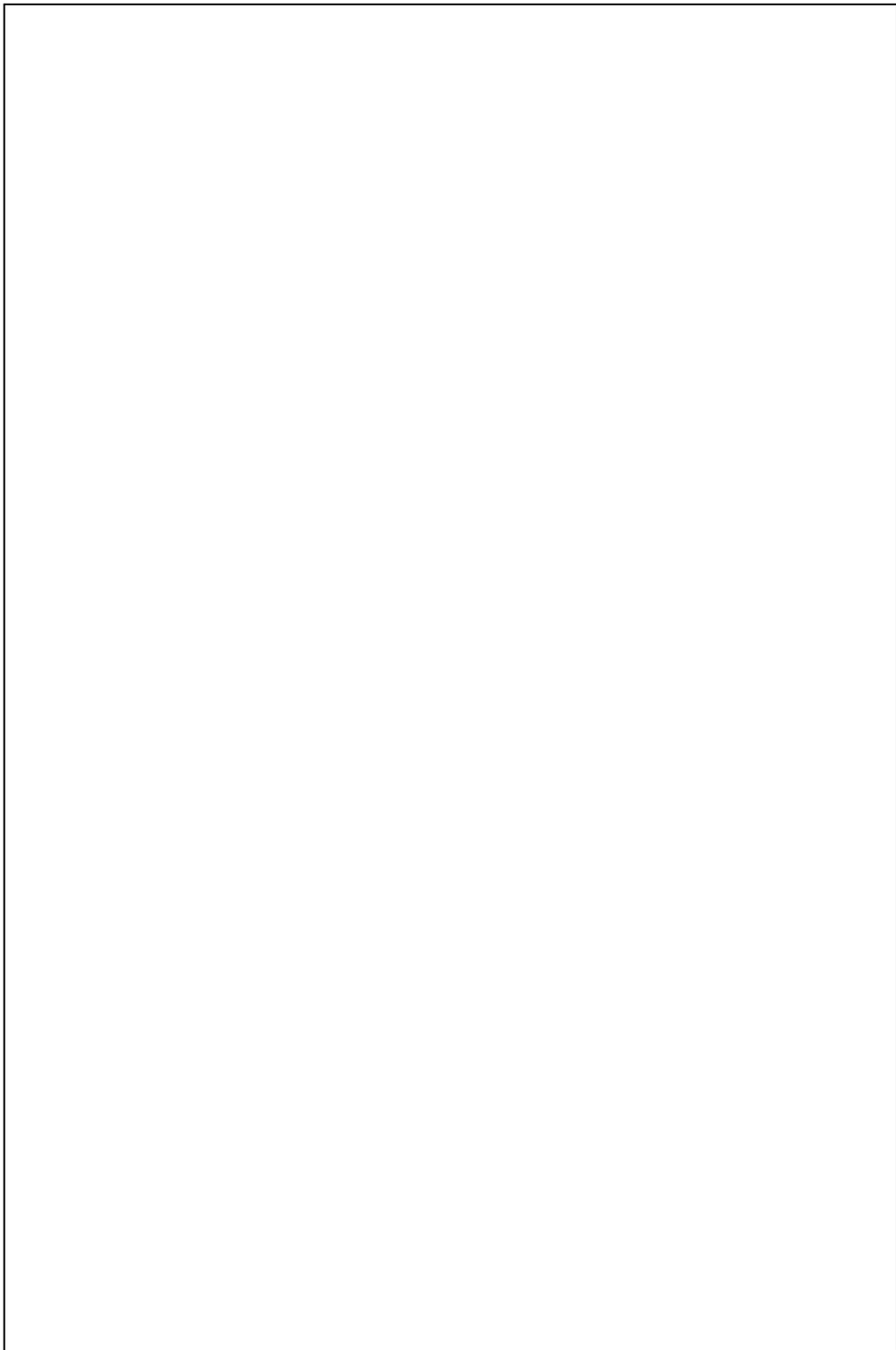
**First Lady's Outstanding  
Community Service Awards Luncheon**

*Celebrating Nebraska's Volunteer Spirit*



**Nebraska First Lady  
Sally Ganem**

Presented at the  
The Thompson Alumni Center on the  
University of Nebraska Omaha campus  
6705 Dodge St.  
Omaha, Nebraska  
April 11, 2014





## Nominate Your Favorite Volunteer!

ServeNebraska accepts award nominations year round

- ◆ Quarterly Governor’s Points of Light Awards
- ◆ First Lady’s Outstanding Community Service Awards

To learn more or nominate an individual or group, visit us online.

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*ServeNebraska Mobilizes Nebraskans to Strengthen Their Communities Through Volunteering, Collaboration and National Service Programs.*

## 2014 FIRST LADY’S OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS

### PROGRAM CEREMONY

#### WELCOME

*JAMESENA MOORE  
COMMISSION CHAIR, SERVE NEBRASKA*

#### GREETINGS

*FIRST LADY SALLY GANEM  
HONORARY CHAIR, SERVE NEBRASKA*

#### MISTRESS OF CEREMONIES

*JAMESENA MOORE*

#### PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

*FIRST LADY SALLY GANEM  
GERRY OSBORN, SERVE NEBRASKA AWARDS CHAIR*

#### SPECIAL RECOGNITION

\* \* \* \* \*

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*To Our Award Ceremony Sponsors*

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**Vinnie Krikac - Agent**

## FIRST LADY'S COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD JUDGES

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NANCY FABER, SERVENEBRASKA AWARDS VICE CHAIR, ELKHORN  
JERRY SELLENTIN, SERVENEBRASKA AWARDS COMMITTEE, LINCOLN

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DALE HAFFER, DUNNING  
PATRICIA HOEHNER, KEARNEY  
SHARON JOSEPHSON, SEWARD  
JO LOWE, LINCOLN  
KORLA KELLER, BASSETT  
MITCH KUBICEK, DORCHESTER  
KYLE MCGOWAN, CRETE  
MATTHEW MCLAUGHLIN, BAYARD  
CAROL PLATE, AINSWORTH  
AMY SHANE, O'NEILL  
DWAYNE STRASHEIM, HASTINGS

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TAMARA BAILEY, SOUTH SIOUX CITY  
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JERRY SELLENTIN, LINCOLN  
KEVIN WARNEKE, OMAHA  
ROSE WHITE, OMAHA  
LISA WILLMAN, GRAND ISLAND  
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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
GREG DONOVAN  
SENIOR PROGRAM OFFICER  
KIMBERLE HALL  
TRAINING PROGRAM OFFICER  
JANET SCHMIDT, CGMS  
FISCAL/OPERATIONS OFFICER

## 2014 OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER NOMINEES

TASIA ADEN  
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CEDORA BARNETT  
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MIRIAM BLAIR  
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GROUP  
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PROGRAM  
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WEEK AT HASTINGS COLLEGE  
JESSICA HUNT  
HYVEE SHADOW LAKE  
HYVEE 96TH & Q ST.  
I-HELP/TEKAMAH-HERMAN SCHOOLS  
P J JACOBSON  
KIRSTEN JOHNSON  
CATHERINE JONES-HAZELDINE  
JOSLYN ART MUSEUM EDUCATION &  
OUTREACH PROGRAM  
KENSINGTON ASSISTED LIVING

JASMINE KHAMOUNA  
DONNA KLOPNIESKI  
CHRISTINE KOSLOSKY  
PAUL KUNNEMANN  
KATHERINE LANGLEY  
LINDSAY LIMBACH  
LINCOLN TRACK CLUB  
SHANNON LINEHAN  
MAIN STREET THRIFTIQUE  
STEPHANIE MANESS  
ARCHIE MARTINEZ  
MENTORS OF THE NGPC'S MENTORED  
YOUTH ARCHERY PROGRAM  
MILLARD BUSINESS FOUNDATION'S  
PROJECT WEE CARE  
NEBRASKA CAMPUS COMPACT –  
AMERICORPS SERVICE SCHOLARS  
NEBRASKA STATE FAIR VOLUNTEERS  
RHONDA O'BRIEN  
JOYCE O'NEIL  
PAPILLION-LA VISTA SCHOOL DIST  
COOPERATION BEST  
PARTNER UP RODEO/ESU 16  
TEENA REDFERN  
MARY LYNN REISER  
JENNETT ROBINSON  
ROTARY CLUB OF OMAHA WEST  
DALE ROTSCHAFFER  
SABRINA SALRIN  
SAND HILLS DISCOVERY EXPERIENCE  
CHRIS SCHLEICK  
MARLISS SHEARER  
ARTHUR J. SPENNER  
SOUTHERN PUBLIC SCHOOL SPEECH  
CLASS STUDENTS  
JEREMY STANISLAV  
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MADDIE THURSTON  
UNMC-SERVICE LEARNING ACADEMY  
A. CARL VLECK  
BARB YLLESCAS VORTHMANN  
MATTHEW E. WICKHAM  
WINDS OF CHANGE  
JULIA WOLFE  
CONSTANCE WOODS-BROWN  
RUSS ZEEB

## PRESENTING

### NEBRASKA FIRST LADY SALLY GANEM

Nebraska First Lady Sally Ganem is the Honorary Chair of Serve Nebraska, a member of its Executive committee and an inspiring leader for community service and service-learning in Nebraska. She is an enthusiastic ambassador for ServeNebraska.

The First Lady is the former principal of Howard Elementary School in Fremont, Nebraska. She was born and raised in Omaha and graduated from Omaha South High School. She later received both her bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Nebraska Omaha.

Sally is active in the Fremont community as a member of the Low Income Ministry Board and the Social Sciences Advisory Board of Metropolitan Community College. She is a past president of both the Fremont Area United Way and Big Brothers Big Sisters. She has been an American Heart Association volunteer and a John C. Fremont Days volunteer, where she started the children's activities portion of the celebration. In February 2013, Sally received the Voices for National Service State Leadership Award, for leadership and innovation in leveraging national service to meet state needs.

Since 2009, she has served on the National Board of Mothers Against Drunk Driving. Before that, she worked directly with the Nebraska Affiliate of MADD to help eliminate drunk driving and prevent underage drinking in the state.

Sally is involved in several educational organizations, including serving as an officer and on committees in the Nebraska Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and the Nebraska Council of School Administrators (NCSA). She also participates as a member of the Read Aloud Nebraska Board of Directors, and regularly spends time traveling around the state to read aloud to school groups.

**2014 FIRST LADY'S OUTSTANDING  
COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD HONOREES**

**NATIONAL SERVICE AWARD:**

**ARDITH M. MORSE, CHADRON**

**OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER GROUP OF THE YEAR:**

**THE GIVING BEE, LEWELLEN**

**OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR:**

**DONNA MOORE, CRAWFORD**

**PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENT TO SERVICE—**

**DEBRA HARTMANN AWARD:**

**KARI RUMBAUGH, LINCOLN**

**OUTSTANDING SERVICE-LEARNING PROGRAM:**

**COLLEGE OF SAINT MARY**

**OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PROGRAM, OMAHA**

**OUTSTANDING STUDENT LEADER:**

**CARTER FANGMEYER, OMAHA**

**OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP IN EDUCATION:**

**TEKAMAH-HERMAN FAMILY, CAREER AND COMMUNITY  
LEADERS OF AMERICA, TEKAMAH**

**OUTSTANDING SCHOOL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM:**

**OPS/UNO AQUAPONICS SERVICE LEARNING  
PROGRAM PARTNERS, OMAHA**

**OUTSTANDING BUSINESS SUPPORT FOR EDUCATION:**

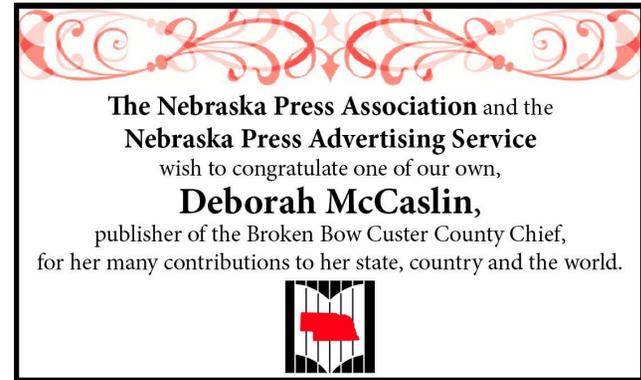
**NEBRASKALAND NATIONAL BANK, NORTH PLATTE**

**OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT:**

**CORNHUSKER COUNCIL-BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA, WALTON**

**LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT IN VOLUNTEER SERVICE:**

**DEBORAH MCCASLIN, BROKEN BOW**



\* \* \* \* \*

**CONGRATULATIONS!**

*To All Honorees & Nominees*



**ServeNebraska Is Supported By**



*Congratulations*  
to College of Saint Mary's  
Occupational Therapy Program  
for receiving the  
Outstanding Service-Learning  
Program Award!



Throughout the past year, CSM's OT program has volunteered over 2,700 hours in the greater Omaha community.

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**NATIONAL SERVICE AWARD**  
**ARDITH M. MORSE, CHADRON**  
**NOMINATED BY: RACHEL JOHNSON**

Ardith Morse travels 22 miles every day to be a Foster Grandparent at the Pine Ridge Job Corps. She volunteers in the Education Language Learning Program teaching English to youth from Burma, Thailand, Sudan and other countries so they may have a bright future here in the U.S. Many of these students have lived in refugee camps most of their young lives and have witnessed the destruction of their villages and the slaughter of family members. Principal Brian Kizer believes Ardith is the perfect fit. Her quiet, gentle manner is reassuring to these students who have lost so much. To the kids, she's just "Grandma." When asked if he could use another Foster Grandparent, Brian said, "Yes, if you could find me another Ardith!"

Ardith is also a loyal RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program) volunteer. In her "spare time", she donates many hours to the Dawes County Historical Museum, greeting visitors and taking them on tours. She is knowledgeable about the history and excited to show what's new. Ardith is also a doer behind the scenes, taking care of daily museum duties and promoting it on local radio stations. She even got the museum highlighted in the magazine "Journey", much to the delight of the museum's board members.

Ardith's service doesn't stop there. She enjoys people and has a wonderful sense of community. She volunteers at the Chadron Art Center, is active with the Dawes County Fair, volunteers at Northwest Community Action Partnership, helps out at the senior center, and gives time to her church. Since raising her family, Ardith has devoted the last 19 years to community service. Though Ardith admits she sometimes forgets to record her hours, records that go back 13 ½ of her 19 years show her volunteer hours total at over 8,050. Ardith is 74 and despite health issues, she continues to make a pivotal impact in her community.

***Congratulations!***

**2014 Outstanding School Volunteer Program**

**OPS/UNO Aquaponics Service Learning Program Partners**



## OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER GROUP OF THE YEAR

### THE GIVING BEE, LEWELLEN

NOMINATED BY: **ROSE BRASSFIELD**

The "Giving Bee" is a group of quilters whose heartstrings were tugged by the stories of foster care children. Previously in western Nebraska black trash bags were used to scoop the child's clothing and possessions (if they had any) when they moved. In February 2003, Barb Webster, whose love for both children and quilting was well known, drew local women into an organized effort to provide colorful, sturdy bags and quilts for those children being removed from homes.

Obstacles encountered included the need for a location and financial difficulties. Barb Webster provided a building for the quilters with room for cutting tables, sewing machines and stacks of fabric. Later they moved into the basement of an empty Lewellen school. When the Volunteers of America preschool moved to the Oshkosh Elementary School, the empty sunlit room met with their approval. Financial needs also hindered progress. Buckley Trust has provided 3 sewing machines and supplies, U.S. Aprons of Sidney have provided sturdy fabric for bags and donations of fabric, and supplies are from those no longer sewing or through estate closures.

The quilts are as varied as the fabric and the quilters. Pink "fairy" quilts, horse quilts, and brightly colored car/truck quilts fill the table, only to be emptied once again with a call from the Department of Health and Human Services.

As of January 2014, a total of 1,027 quilts and 516 bags have been provided to foster children in the Nebraska Panhandle as well as North Platte and McCook. The quilt and bag travel with the child when he or she is moved to a different home. The Garden County ladies currently committed to this project are Barb Miller, Sue Read, Ruby Rittenhouse, Norma Stokey and Donna Willenberg. In 2013, a total of 3,040 hours was donated to this project. Previous years had similar time donations.

## LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT IN VOLUNTEER SERVICE

### DEBORAH McCASLIN, BROKEN BOW

NOMINATED BY: **ALLEN J. BEERMANN**

Deborah McCaslin is the current publisher of the Custer County Chief and the third generation of her family to hold this position. She learned early-on that everyone can have an impact in their community. This held true for all of her careers. Her first was music with a degree in oboe performance. Her marriage to Norman McCaslin, an Air Force officer, gave her the opportunity to perform with orchestras in Taiwan, Germany, Arizona and Washington, DC.

With all of her traveling, Deb was able to see the world through different eyes and become an active person in a variety of communities. As an Air Force spouse she published newspapers in Taiwan and Germany to pass on information the families could use while a member of their family was away in combat. Deb did all of this while raising three children.

When her husband retired, they returned to Broken Bow. Deb immediately became involved in the community. Everything that she does is with the idea of giving back and helping one person at a time. As a member of the Episcopal Church she plays the organ on Sundays, and for weddings and funerals. As publisher of the Custer County Chief she promotes community projects to raise awareness of needs.

Here are just a few of Deborah's community volunteer activities where she's made a difference:

- Organized a Hero Flight to take WWII veterans to Washington, DC
- President of TeamMates Board and is a mentor for a 5th grade girl
- Chaired the Children's Christmas Fund to provide to 500+ people
- Served as Secretary for the Custer Economic Development Corp
- Serves at Healing Hearts & Families, helping victims of domestic violence
- Past president and active member of Rotary; thru Rotary works with Alliance for Smiles, and travels worldwide to write stories for them
- Co-chaired Broken Bow community Thanksgiving dinner for 11 years, feeding over 400 annually.

**OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT**  
**CORNHUSKER COUNCIL-BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA, WALTON**  
**NOMINATED BY: JASON ANDERSON**

The Mission of the Boy Scouts of America is “To prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetime by instilling in them the Values of the Scout Oath and Law.” Scouting works to equip the youth of today to “Be Prepared...For Life.”

In the fall of 2013, the Cornhusker Council, Boy Scouts of America (BSA) served the community through the Big Idea Event. The Big Idea was all about two major areas Scouting stands for, Service & Leadership.

Through this event, the Cornhusker Council, BSA collaborated with City of Lincoln Parks and Recreation, the Lincoln Parks Foundation, and several other community partners to put on a large scale service project.

Through this project more than 750 Scouts and adult leaders came together on Saturday, October 12th and planted 300 trees at Pioneers Park in Lincoln. Project participants provided nearly 3,000 service hours in that one day. The trees that were planted will work to replace the large number of trees in the park that have died in recent years due to disease and drought.

Scout units within the Cornhusker Council provided more than 35,000 hours of community service in 2013. Service to Community has always been a key element of the scouting program, teaching youth to give back to their communities and provide service to others. The Big Idea was designed to build up a significant act of service and highlight the ongoing efforts of Scouting throughout the year.

**OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR**  
**DONNA MOORE, CRAWFORD**  
**NOMINATED BY: NANCY FISHER & SUSAN VASTINE**

Small towns are dependent in many ways upon volunteers who keep the community alive, volunteers like 80 year-old Donna Moore who has volunteered countless hours over a 25-year period. Her most recent accomplishments include the following:

At United Blood Services, she calls donors to make appointments; finds contributors for orange juice, homemade cookies; and bottled water; finds workers to help and writes article for the Crawford Clipper summarizing the day’s efforts and thanking those who help.

Donna also keeps busy at the Post Playhouse at Fort Robinson. She arranges for volunteer ushers for 75 performances every summer, often ushering herself when people forget; gets to know all the actors personally and arranges birthday parties for them while they’re away from home; and shares her produce with them.

She additionally mans the Crawford RSVP office, organizes the toy drive, assists with the food pantry, and coordinates the giving tree at Christmas, including pick-up, distribution, and delivery to needy families.

Donna also volunteers at the tourism information booth—putting in twelve hour days in the summer. In addition, to all of this, she visits and plays cards with the residents at the nursing home; volunteers at the Crawford Historical Museum; and helps with activities at the Senior Center.

Donna has always volunteered generously and consistently, taking minimal time off to deal with cancer and the chronic challenges of lupus. Without Donna’s dedication, dependability, and commitment, many of these activities would cease to exist in Crawford. RSVP Volunteer Extraordinaire, Donna recently called from her hospital bed after having some serious health issues, and said to the RSVP Director: "You will have to make your own coffee for the coffee social on Friday, but you can leave the trash...I'll take care of it when I get home."

**PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENT TO SERVICE—  
DEBRA HARTMANN AWARD  
KARI RUMBAUGH, LINCOLN  
NOMINATED BY: TYSON JENKINS**

Kari started the Rural Improvement for Schooling and Employment (RISE) program in 2007 through a grant provided by ServeNebraska when evidence demonstrated that poor engagement in educational and employment pursuits create a risk factor for ongoing criminal behavior by those on probation. This program, is unique to Nebraska and AmeriCorps. As the program director of RISE, Kari oversees RISE Specialists who currently serve probationers in 28 counties located in 10 rural probation districts in Nebraska. These RISE Specialists facilitate groups for adults and juveniles by teaching employment and educational skills, along with networking and building relationships with local businesses, community organizations, and schools. The goal is to increase the probationers skills in regards to education and employment to keep the probationers from returning to the probation system, resulting in safer communities and individual success.

Through Kari's efforts, the RISE AmeriCorps program has served over 5,105 juvenile and adult probationers in need of employment and educational skills. Since its inception in 2007, RISE has successfully graduated 832 adult and juvenile probationers, with 603 of those probationers having not returned to the probation system one year after completion, accounting for a 73% success rate much greater than the success rate of probationers not in RISE. All successes the RISE program has achieved can be directly related to the commitment to service and belief in the program that Kari instills on a daily basis.

The RISE program is in its seventh year of existence, and in that time Kari has committed her time and efforts to countless hours of service, project coordination, and collaboration. In 2014, the RISE program was selected as one of the TOP 52 Most Innovative AmeriCorps Programs in the United States.

**OUTSTANDING BUSINESS SUPPORT FOR EDUCATION  
NEBRASKALAND NATIONAL BANK, NORTH PLATTE  
NOMINATED BY: TAMI ESHLEMAN**

North Platte Public Schools serves 4200 students. The district free and reduced lunch program is approximately 45% of the student population. NebraskaLand National Bank is a proven partner with North Platte Public Schools.

NebraskaLand National Bank continually invests in the local education system. North Platte Public Schools has been the recipient of numerous awards to help students in the classroom and on the field. Without the bank's support, North Platte Public Schools would not be able to maintain its current high level of educational opportunity for all of its students. NebraskaLand National Bank recognizes that investing in the education system improves students' and North Platte's futures.

There is not a school in our district that has not been positively affected by NebraskaLand Bank. A few of their support activities include:

The bank has served tailgates at back to school nights, athletic events, employee appreciation lunches, and summer program events.

They've donated \$345,000 to the district through the Foundation over the past ten years for key projects such as:

- Field Turf – The Bank was a huge contributor to the funding efforts for new turf at North Platte High School.
- Middle School Athletic Support – NebraskaLand National Bank donated uniforms and scoreboards for middle school athletic support. They also held a free BBQ for the first home football game for parents and fans.
- Elementary School Air Conditioners – specifically Buffalo Elementary was the only elementary school without AC.
- An account was created with an opening balance of \$2,000 to help families in need.
- The Bank also provided math flash cards for every single student in grades 3-5 to keep for their own.
- Steppin' Out for Education Walk
- Education After Hours Foundation Fundraiser

**OUTSTANDING SCHOOL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM**  
**OPS/UNO AQUAPONICS SERVICE LEARNING**  
**PROGRAM PARTNERS, OMAHA**

**NOMINATED BY: LUCY GARZA WESTBROOK**

The Omaha Public Schools and University of Nebraska Omaha Aquaponics Service Learning Program represents the very best of school, campus community, collaborations, and is an Outstanding School Volunteer Program supporting service learning. OPS/UNO classrooms support the program through dedication exemplified by expansion of the program in OPS (35) and UNO (12) classrooms. This program includes elementary, middle school and college students working collaboratively with Whispering Roots, an urban-farming nonprofit providing locally grown food for socially and economically disadvantaged communities. In Omaha, 34,570 children are food insecure, including 40% of North Omaha's families, according to Feed America. Live Well Omaha reports over half of all children in food insecure areas of Omaha "rarely" eat fresh fruits and vegetables. OPS/UNO partners support the mission of Whispering Roots by addressing food insecurity while furthering their curriculum objectives and teaching STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) principles in the classroom.

Commitment to the program is demonstrated by the collaborative partnership built on trust and respect for shared knowledge. Partners contribute to the design of the learning approach while supporting the mission of Whispering Roots with in-school aquaponics systems. The adaptability of the program is evident in the variety of programs and classrooms involved in OPS along with the social issues, environmental chemistry, environmental geology, biology, and teacher education-science classrooms at UNO.

The program began in fall 2011 with additional classrooms joining the program each semester since. To date, 193 UNO students and 1042 students have participated, serving countless hours to build and maintain school aquaponics systems, harvest produce for donations to food pantries or homeless shelters, and teach STEM concepts to new classrooms joining the program. Students also serve their own school's afterschool community as those students are now "able to eat (lettuce) everyday."

Program partners are: OPS - King Science, McMillan, Monroe, Lothrop, Bancroft; UNO - Biology, Chemistry, Geology, Social Issues (Goodrich Program), Teacher Education

**OUTSTANDING SERVICE-LEARNING PROGRAM**  
**COLLEGE OF SAINT MARY**  
**OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PROGRAM, OMAHA**

**NOMINATED BY: DR. ERIC KYLE**

The Occupational Therapy (OT) Program at the College of Saint Mary (CSM) is setting a new gold standard for how service is integrated on campus and in the community. This program has incorporated service across its curriculum in a developmental way from 100-level courses, where students receive an introduction to service-learning and its benefits, through graduate 500-level courses, students take full ownership of developing service projects that have long-term benefits for the community. Currently, 100% of OT students participate in service opportunities before they leave CSM with their degree, thereby helping to meet the challenge of preparing these future leaders for compassionate service in our community.

For students, these classes allow them to practice leadership skills in complex social settings, engage in systematic reflection, develop critical thinking, and build their capacities in cultural competence. 90% of CSM OT graduates also have had articles published in professional trade magazines or other publications, many of which come directly from these service projects. For our community partners, OT projects help to educate students and faculty about their assets and needs. They also receive assistance on projects they identify as priorities. By sustaining these relationships over time with our campus, our OT faculty are building lasting and positive partnerships with these organizations.

Since tracking service-learning projects began in the fall of 2007, OT service-learning courses have provided more than 139,400 hours of service through their many projects. Finally, each semester an average of 10-20 community organizations benefit from this exemplary program helping our service-learning program to both continue with the long-term relationships that we have as well as to continually reach out to new organizations.

## **OUTSTANDING STUDENT LEADER**

**CARTER FANGMEYER, OMAHA**

**NOMINATED BY: NANCY WILSON**

“One of the over 6,000 students I have taught at Andersen Middle School in Omaha whom I will long remember is eighth-grade student Carter Fangmeyer, an extremely purposeful, responsible, and selfless young man. Two of Carter’s most prominent passions that evolved into helping MANY others are; 1. developing a way to keep children more connected to their deployed military parents and 2. educating the public about diabetes and advancing its research,” reports Nancy Wilson.

Carter’s father recorded a message that was sewn inside the teddy bears he gave to Carter and his brother before he was deployed. Both young boys raked leaves at area churches and began a fund-raising effort to purchase/make bears for other children in the same circumstance. CNN picked up this story and helped extend Operation Voices and Love (OVAL) across the nation. By 2012, this grass-roots organization had provided nearly 3,000 bears for military families far and wide.

Carter was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes at the age of nine. He has been a great role model (especially for newly-diagnosed patients) in taking personal hardship and turning it around to help others. He has been instrumental in raising \$30,000 for the American Diabetes Association through recruitment, individual, and large group efforts. He has spoken to an audience of over 600 people at the ADA Father of the Year “Carter’s Challenge” Gala.

Other volunteer programs Carter has helped include “Operation Christmas Child,” “LemonAide for Africa,” canned food drives through his church and student council, and peer mediation teams within his school. This year he was spotlighted as his school’s exemplary model of its 40 Assets program, and several times he has been featured by local media for his efforts and the awards he has received. Carter is truly a very deserving teen for the Outstanding Student Leader Award.

## **OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP IN EDUCATION**

**TEKAMAH-HERMAN FAMILY, CAREER & COMMUNITY  
LEADERS OF AMERICA (FCCLA), TEKAMAH**

**NOMINATED BY: KATHERINE M. MUSSACK**

For seven years Tekamah-Herman School’s 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. Thirty-four and one half percent of the 531 students live below the poverty level. This translated to 1680 free lunches and 421 reduced cost lunches served during the month of December 2013.

The backpack program aims to fill the gap in family needs by sending non-perishable food items and a milk voucher home with children weekly. This effort includes filling and delivering the backpacks, which takes 15-20 minutes for three to five of our 31 FCCLA members, in grades 9-12. Volunteers contribute approximately 1 hour per week throughout the 40-week school year.

High school students other than FCCLA members often ask to help, stating that it makes them feel good to know they are helping someone else. This is very welcome and allows more students to be involved.

These partnerships have made students more aware of the challenges that their community faces. It has inspired them to consider other ways to volunteer. For example the FCCLA sponsors a coat drive every year to collect warm outerwear for distribution not only locally but also through the Salvation Army in Omaha. A relationship has been built with the Salvation Army’s Night Watch program by volunteering with them for the last six years.

The Tekamah-Herman School backpack program emphasizes the family and the community of FCCLA to our members.