

2018 Tribute to Women of Achievement Honorees

Women of Achievement in Arts, Education, and/or Culture

Dr. Jan Handler

Dr. Jan Handler has served admirably as the provost (highest academic officer) at Mount Mercy University for five years and as an administrator and faculty member in the education department for more than 31 years. Under Jan's leadership, Mount Mercy has strengthened its traditional academic programs and launched numerous new programs including online Bachelor's and Master's degrees in various subjects and for the first time this fall, Mount Mercy will offer a PhD in Marriage and Family Therapy and a Nurse Practitioner doctoral degree. Jan has mentored and encouraged thousands of women and men to reach higher academically and has supported countless university faculty members in scholarship, teaching, advising, and administration.

Her quiet, steady, academic leadership is a wonderful example of the difference one person can make in their community by excelling in their chosen field. Jan simply inspires people to become great K-12 teachers and expresses so clearly the difference that they can make in the lives of young people. Jan has also inspired many women to take on the highest levels of leadership in the University setting by serving as an active and encouraging role model of excellence.

Jan will retire this summer after a long and illustrious career in higher education. She has made Mt. Mercy University a better place and has launched so many teachers into the world of education who, in turn, have improved and led our schools - making our entire community better.

Ellen Kleckner

Ellen Kleckner is the Executive Director of the Iowa Ceramics Center. Since joining the Ceramics Center in 2016, Ellen has been a dynamic force in moving the Center forward at both the local and national level. She has also proven herself to be a successful leader and administrator, helping to advance the Ceramic Center's mission as a premier arts education center and cultural leader in the area.

For the past two years, Ellen has supervised summer programming in partnership with the Cedar Rapids Community Foundation, Four Oaks, and Jane Boyd, bringing in over 200 children to the center, making over 300 creations. In 2017, Ellen instituted the first clay workshop to be offered in both American Sign Language and English, designed for students of all hearing levels. The class is scheduled again for 2018. Ellen also created the Center's "Visiting Artist Program," bringing in nationally recognized artists from around the country to show off their work and conduct workshops for the community.

Ellen has also received national recognition as an artist. Her artwork has been exhibited at the Peters Valley Gallery in Layton, New Jersey and the Appalachian Center for Craft in Smithville, Tennessee. She was also invited to present at the National Council on Education in the Ceramic Arts in Kansas City in 2016.

Outside of her role with the Ceramics Center, Ellen continues to make an impact on the community. Recently, she worked with the Nassif Cancer Center to create a series of hands-on workshops for cancer survivors and their families. Ellen is dedicated to sharing her love for art with the community. She has worked hard to develop partnerships with local organizations to expand programs in the community, especially to reach underserved populations.

Marion Patterson

Marion Patterson is currently an instructor in Kirkwood's high school completion program the Kirkwood Pathways for Academic Career Education and Employment (KPACE) program. These programs allow her to work with a diverse group of adults, helping them earn their diplomas or HiSET equivalency and developing skills to further their career. Through her work, Marion motivates individuals to be excited about their future.

As a lifelong teacher, one of the accomplishments Marion is most proud of is the "Found Money" program she created. Modeled after an endowed fund at the University of Idaho, she combined refunds from bottles and cans collected by the students and staff with coins found on the ground. The funds grew and helped elementary students attend symphony concerts, theatre performances, environmental activities, and sporting events.

Marion's career in education has been focused on helping students, ranging from prenatal classes to grade school children at various Cedar Rapids schools and middle and high schoolers in Massachusetts, and finally, to adults at Kirkwood. No matter the place and no matter the role, Marion's number one focus is the students and helping them succeed. In the community, Marion also supports Indian Creek Nature Center, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, AARP Smart Driving, Outdoor Writers Association of America, and her local church.

Women of Achievement in Leadership

Lynette Bossler

Lynette Bossler is the Vice President of Corporate Operations at GreatAmerica. Prior to being promoted to this role, Lynette served as a Continual Improvement Specialist. In both roles, Lynette made great improvements to the efficiency and productivity at GreatAmerica. As the Continual Improvement Specialist, a role that came with responsibilities outside of her comfort zone, she added significant value to the company with her eye for process improvement and the development of others. She even launched a March Madness Continual Improvement competition that is still in place today! In her current role as Vice President of Corporate Operations, Lynette utilizes her leadership skills and vast knowledge to support the primary operations of the company.

Lynette inspires her team, embraces change, and champions process improvement. Using her strong communication skills, Lynette encourages her team to reach their full potential. She is well respected for her thought process and is an amazing asset to GreatAmerica.

Outside of work, Lynette is involved with her local 4-H club, the “Leroy Luckies.” By serving as a club leader, she spends time developing the next generation and modeling how to be effective leaders and contributors in their community. She encourages their involvement and role models participation in various community service events such as Valentines for Vets and making blankets for the area ambulance agency in Benton County.

Erin Brokel

Erin is the Program Developer at Kirkwood Community College. Through her work, she focuses on developing programs to enrich people’s lives. The programs she oversees help acclimate individuals who are looking to rejoin the workforce after a gap in employment, regardless of their situation. When places individuals into programs, Erin focuses on finding the right fit to increase the likelihood of success. She encourages them to reach their full potential by stressing the importance of hard work and dedication. At the completion of the program, participants have gained new skills and earned a certificate that will ideally increase their chances to find meaningful employment. In 2017, Erin’s program, the Customer Service Professional Certificate Program, won the Creative Program Award from the Iowa Association of Lifelong Learning. This award is given to outstanding credit or non-credit adult education programs that are original, innovative, and have shown great success. Erin has also developed a partnership with the Anamosa Penitentiary to bring computer and professional classes to inmates, helping them prepare to enter the workforce upon release.

Erin demonstrates great leadership by building trust with her instructors and giving them the freedom to make adapt their programs. She shares her vision, but ultimately allows them the flexibility to structure the class as they see fit. Erin includes her team in industry meetings to build rapport with the industry partners, taking a collaborative approach to her role. Outside of her role at Kirkwood, Erin supports several organizations, including: Great Plains Pointer Rescue, America Reads Day, Cedar Valley Humane Society, and her children’s schools.

Tatum Buse

Tatum Buse is the Vice President of Finance and Corporate Controller at Rockwell Collins. While serving in this role, Tatum led a team of 250 finance professionals and supported the execution of the two largest acquisitions in company history. Prior to this, Tatum led the finance optimization efforts at the company, reducing finance operating costs by 25% while improving finance service levels and business decision support.

Tatum is a founding leader of the Women’s Employee Resource Group at Rockwell Collins, serving as the forum’s first leader. She has a passion for advancing women’s leadership and has organized many events that further this purpose. In the past two years, she has organized

mentoring circles and leadership panel discussions within the finance community aimed at understanding barriers that prevent women from pursuing leadership roles with the goal to bring awareness to those issues and remove obstacles, real or perceived. Every year, she personally mentors 5-8 women pursuing leadership roles.

Outside of her role at Rockwell, Tatum is a member of the Cedar Rapids Economic Alliance Policy Board, serves at the Board Treasurer at the Catherine McAuley Center, and volunteers at her church, serving on the Leadership Council and chairing the Long-Range Planning Team.

Kara Carlson

Kara Carlson is the Community Banking Regional Operations Manager at US Bank. Her career with US Bank began early when she was selected to participate in U.S. Bank's Leader Development Program directly following graduation from the University of Northern Iowa. This is an elite and accelerated program where only a few leaders are selected across the company. During this experience, Kara had exposure to top leadership across the company, participated in advanced projects to accelerate learning, and experienced the different business lines the bank offers for employment. After completing the program, Kara fast tracked into managing branches and landed at one of the busiest and most productive branches in our region. She led a team of several levels of bankers to consistently meet sales growth goals and create an exceptional customer service experience. She was also the lead on hiring, scheduling, and coaching the team.

Proving she excelled at branch management, Kara took her career to the next level when she moved into the Regional Operations Manager role, overseeing branch operations and compliance of a region including eighteen branches and directly supervising two people. She is responsible for supporting branch growth, goals, and ensuring sound operational understanding and implementation of operational procedures. She makes recommendations to management on organization and workflow and establishes communication, training and reporting processes for the branch locations.

Kara is a woman on a mission, proving time and time again that she is passionate, driven, and goal oriented. Her collaborative and compassionate leadership style is greatly appreciated at US Bank and several community organizations, including: Big Brothers Big Sisters, the Dear Santa Program, United Way of East Central Iowa, and Professional Women's Network.

Julie Crockett

Julie Crockett's visionary leadership has focused on the progression of mission-based institutions for more than 26 years. In 2017, she was chosen as President of the Mercy Medical Center Foundation. Since taking the helm, she has applied her skills to advancing Mercy's mission – to care for the sick and enhance the health of the communities it serves, guided by the spirit of the Sisters of Mercy. In just a short time, she has fostered a culture of philanthropy that meets the needs of the organization while simultaneously helping build paths for Cedar Rapidians to access their very best health.

Julie's energetic engagement with the Cedar Rapids community continues to help secure gifts for the Family Caregivers Center of Mercy – the only center of its kind in Iowa – offering support for those caring for loved ones with chronic conditions. Her ability to build relationships and advocate for the importance of this unique, one-of-a-kind initiative helps contribute to the sustainability of its community-focused programming through donor investments. Professionally, Julie's everyday commitment and leadership helps philanthropists invest charitable gifts to create a legacy that, in turn, lives on long after they're gone. These legacies help advance the greater community. Julie experiences gratitude – personal and professional – in seeing donors help strengthen their communities through financial gifts.

Julie's passion for community service extends outside her role with the Mercy Medical Center Foundation, supporting other community organizations and encouraging her team to do the same. They have supported several organizations, such as the Catherine McAuley Center, by donating much needed supplies for individuals in our community.

Mayuri Farlinger

Mayuri (May) Farlinger is the Manager of Customer Solutions and Business Development at Alliant Energy. May started with Alliant Energy as an intern in 2004 and now occupies a key strategic growth role in the company. May is a passionate, authentic team leader. She radiates optimism, is selfless, and makes her personal influence felt around the company. Everyone who works with her finds her to be a boundless source of energy making everyone's job more professionally rewarding.

May also continues to grow her organizational leadership skills outside of Alliant Energy. For example, she's a 2017 graduate of the Corridor Women Connect (CWC) Elevate Leadership Program. This program is a development opportunity for women in CWC to foster their own professional growth through leadership and organized connections with professional and managerial women from other businesses and industry sectors. Her leadership skills have also been recognized in the United States energy industry. May is one of 35 women chosen nationally to participate in the American Gas Association's Next Level Leadership Women's Program. This program builds leadership skills by leveraging business case studies focused on current issues affecting the natural gas industry. Attendees engage with their peers to develop case solutions and network to form lasting professional relationships with natural gas utility executives from across the country.

In her free time, May also supports various community organizations, serving as a Board member for Corridor Women Connect and Domestic Violence Intervention Program; she also participates in the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society's "Man and Woman of the Year" Campaign.

Amy Geiger

Amy Geiger is the Vice President of Resource Development at United Way of East Central Iowa. Amy is passionate about creating a meaningful impact on children and families in her

community. Every dollar she raises and every volunteer hour she gives is to address the needs of children and families right here in Cedar Rapids and the surrounding communities.

In three of her past positions (CRCSD Foundation, Cedar Rapids Library Foundation and Alternative Services [now Horizons]), Amy was entrusted to be the first paid staff to establish, develop, and group the fundraising department--they didn't exist before she started!

At the Cedar Rapids Community School District Foundation, Amy developed the SAFE (Sports, Academic, Fine Arts, Enrichment) fund. Initially started at the time of the 2008 flood to help children who'd lost sports equipment, instruments, etc. in the rise of the river, this fund continues today to support children in any of the four areas.

As the Executive Director of the Cedar Rapids Library Foundation, Amy started the Mobile Book Discussion Group for seniors in the community. This group was developed to help those who were unable to attend book clubs during the winter months and gave them the opportunity to talk about books with others in their senior living establishments. What started as a winter-only program now is offered year-round!

Amy continues to stay involved in the community, supporting several organizations, including: Kennedy Foundation for Performing Arts, Volunteers in Proficiency literacy program, and the Cedar Rapids Downtown Rotary. Amy's hard work and dedication will leave a lasting impression in the community, giving children and families better lives.

Melissa Henderson

Melissa Henderson is passionate about helping others. She likes to help people or businesses reach their full potential by connecting them to what they need to be successful and helping them build momentum to achieve greater things. In 2017, Melissa left her job to pursue her dreams and started her own consulting firm.

Melissa has been a leader in her companies, her church, and her family. Many of the programs she has built have been highly successful, bringing innovative approaches to business and people. The leadership development program she helped create won awards in her industry. She is highly sought after for her expertise in business development and marketing strategy. In the process of helping companies develop their business, she also helps develop people. Melissa partners with her customers to ensure their needs are being met, both personally and professionally. They view her as a mentor and leader in the marketing and sales industry, and she has made a lasting impact on both companies and individuals in the community.

Nancy Hill-Davis

Nancy Hill-Davis is the Vice President of Human Resources at Mercy Medical Center. She has more than twenty-four years of experience as a Senior Human Resources Executive, working to achieve organizational goals while helping employees reach their full potential. Her exceptional communication style fosters trust and respect while engaging colleagues.

Mercy-Cedar Rapids welcomed her to the role of its Vice President of Human Resources in 2016, where she's become a valuable collaborator, motivator and role model. As a member of the Executive Team and advisor to the CEO and Board of Directors, she provides leadership in developing and executing human resources strategy in the areas of talent acquisition, talent management, talent development, labor resource management, change management, compensation, benefits, and employee health/wellness for nearly 3,000 employees.

At Mercy, Nancy's leadership is the embodiment of the spirit of the Sisters of Mercy. Her knack for education, proactive problem solving, and team work acts as a catalyst for engaging conversations in the organization's important staff-based Face to Face Committee that brainstorms ways to make Mercy an even more outstanding employer. Her most recent initiative at Mercy comes with her leadership on the organization's Central Safety Committee, spearheading ingenuities that strengthen the company's culture of safety, which contributes to The Mercy Touch® and makes Mercy a great place for the people of eastern Iowa to work and to receive quality healthcare.

Though new to Cedar Rapids, Nancy has already immersed herself in the Cedar Rapids community. She is a Four Oaks Board of Directors member and serves on their Sustainability Committee. During the holidays, Nancy also supports several location organizations through donations and volunteer time, encouraging her staff to do the same, even taking time off work to support His Hands Free Medical Clinic.

Jennifer Lawrence

Jennifer Lawrence is the Owner of Corridor HR Solutions in Hiawatha. The business has been in the community for 19 years, and Jennifer has been the proud owner for the last three. In all the roles Jennifer has had, she has been recognized for improving processes, uncovering areas for improvement, and leading the HR core functions including: sourcing and recruiting, benefits, payroll, HRIS, ESOP communication, and compliance.

Jennifer has been a big part of this community for the past 20+ years working in Human Resources supporting companies and people. She is a leader when it comes to helping companies grow and is very diligent when looking for areas of improvement and finding innovative solutions. She has broad human resources experience in a variety of industries and sizes of organizations. She is very passionate about two things: digging into various human resource functions and uncovering possibilities for excellence and networking, helping others find resources they need in order to be successful -- both personally and professionally.

What separates Jennifer from others is how she treats her customers. When people lose their jobs for no fault of their own, Jennifer's company is contacted to help with career transitions. However, once a paid benefit runs out, Jennifer continues to serve these individuals. She believes in building relationships to help people get where they need to be, not just finalizing transactions. Her passion for helping others achieve success is what drives her to be a leader in the community. Her philosophy is to keep people home in our community by helping them find employment here instead of other places.

Outside of her role with Corridor HR Solutions, Jennifer supports the community through various activities, including: Board President for the Eastern Iowa Human Resources Association, the United Way Human Resources Committee, Tanager Place Leadership Giving Campaign, and the Employer's Council of Iowa.

Karen McCusker

Karen McCusker is the Environmental Health & Safety Manager at KapStone Paper and Packaging Corporation. When she started in this role, she was tasked with creating a safety culture within the company. Over the past five years, Karen has been recognized for helping people see safety in a positive manner. She was successful in creating a safety committee and empowering them to help make changes at KapStone, leading to a 55% decrease in 2016 recordable injuries. Karen is also sought after for her insights and advice by local safety groups who are always interested in her approach for sharing the safety process with their companies.

As a leader, Karen makes it her job to set the vision for safety and get others to buy in. She has a way of influencing cultures and groups of people, even those who may not have been initially supportive. She does this by being consistent with her actions; by keeping communication flowing; and by holding herself and others accountable. Karen has taken a safety committee that initially met monthly and turned it into a weekly meeting, inspiring them to find solutions to safety issues at KapStone. Women of Achievement in this field are rare, but Karen has broken down stereotypes and is truly making a difference in the health at safety of those at KapStone.

Outside of her role with KapStone, Karen is involved in several community activities, including: teaching Sunday School at Marion Methodist, volunteering at her children's schools, supporting United Way's annual campaign, serving as a local Girl Scout leader, leading the annual HACAP fundraiser at KapStone, and supporting several local safety professional groups.

Deann McDonald

Deann McDonald is the Executive Vice President of Human Relations at F & M Bank. In her role, Deann has been able to create an environment in which employees are encouraged to develop personal leadership skills and are truly invested in not only the success of the bank, but the services provided to clients and the community. One of the easiest ways to see Deann's success is through the success of her team members. Through her efforts and leadership, Deann's team members are able to reach their full potential professionally. She understands that each team member brings individual strengths and expertise to the table. By focusing on and developing those strengths, she can assist team members to reach their professional goals, creating an engaged team at F & M Bank. She truly believes that her success comes from the success of the organization and its employees, and she relishes in their accomplishments rather than her own.

Deann was awarded the 2016 Human Resources Professional of the Year on behalf of TrueNorth's QRP Division. The award recognized Deann for her commitment to the employees at F & M Bank and her dedication shown to their well-being personally, professionally, and

financially. In addition, Deann was recently awarded a certificate from the Graduate School of Banking. The program is specifically designed for financial services Human Resources professionals to expand their knowledge of the banking industry and human resources management.

Outside of her role with F & M Bank, Deean is an active volunteer in the community, supporting several organizations and events such as the Castle Theater, Relay for Life, and First Friday at Five Volunteer. She is a parish provider for St. Patrick's Catholic Church and St. Mary's School, dedicating her time to assisting parish and school staff. Deean also believes in supporting youth in our community, serving as a mentor for young adults involved with the Hazel Green hawks 4-H groups, Delaware County Fair, and the 4-H Food Stand.

Jenny Miller

Jenny Miller is the Senior Director of Avionics Programs Engineering at Rockwell Collins. She is an Iowa native and has worked at Rockwell Collins for 19 years. Jenny's background in engineering and her inclusive leadership style encourages other young engineers and women across the organization to work hard so they too can be successful in their career goals while enjoying the work they are doing. Jenny is an approachable leader with a team of over 600 engineers. She was selected as a corporate winner for the "Engineer of the Year" recognition program, is an executive co-sponsor for the Rockwell Collins Friends of Asia Employee Resource Group, and was also selected to facilitate a Society of Women Engineers National Convention panel on work/life balance.

Outside of work, Jenny is a wife and mother to four young children. She balances a challenging career while also being active with her family. In the community, Jenny is the Cedar Rapids Chair for the March for Babies Walk for March of Dimes. Jenny will continue to lead and influence the future leaders and the business direction at Rockwell Collins.

Wendy Nielsen

Wendy Nielsen is the Vice President of Marketing and Public Relations at Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust. Since joining CRBT in 2001, she has been a valuable asset, drawing from her diverse background to help people connect and engage with the CRBT brand. These initiatives have ranged from traditional and digital marketing to guerilla marketing and events. Wendy recently led the acquisition of Guaranty Bank & Trust and supports the development of future leaders through CRBT's internship program.

Outside of her role at Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust, Wendy is committed to several community causes, serving on the following boards and committees: Waypoint Board of Directors, United Way Women's Leadership Initiative Steering Committee, Coe College Alumni Advisory Council, Metro North Rotary, United Way Young Leaders Society Chair, American Advertising Federation of Cedar Rapids (past chair), Iowa Bankers Association Marketing Committee (past chair), and the Mercy Women's Center Advisory Board. Wendy was also recognized as a 2011 Leadership for Five Seasons graduate and was named a Corridor Business Journal 40 Under 40 nominee in 2014.

Cara Oldham

Cara Oldham is the Human Resources Manager at RSM US LLP in Cedar Rapids. As the Human Resources Manager for the Corridor offices (Cedar Rapids, Iowa City, and Waterloo), Cara always jumps at the chance to take on a new task or challenge. She listens to her coworkers to ensure they are getting the support they need. She is not afraid to question the status quo and challenge RSM to try new things. Since Cara started with RSM, their overall employee survey engagement score has stayed steady or increased at all three locations, despite several organizational changes. This is due to her proactive approach to employee retention and recruitment.

Cara inspires others with her productivity, creativeness and willingness to train and develop others. She embodies the RSM values of respect, integrity, teamwork, excellence, and stewardship and helps to build leaders of the future. Cara believes her role is to have a deep understanding of the industry and to assist RSM employees to help them serve their clients better. She believes there isn't a one size fits all solution and always brings creative ideas to the table. She takes an innovative approach to achieve her goals and solve problems in an effort to do what is right for RSM and its clients.

Outside of her work at RSM, Cara serves on the PTO for Prairie Crest Elementary School and is very involved in her church, Holy Trinity Lutheran, teaching Sunday school, participating in small groups, and serving as a team captain for their annual Meals from the Heartland volunteer event.

Whitney Pino

Whitney Pino serves as a National Accounts Specialist at Van Meter, Inc. (VMI), where she supports the local divisions of National Customers through their partnership with supplyForce. Whitney excels at building relationships with leaders at key local industrial plant leaders to ensure that their needs are met and they stay a strong component of their communities. Whitney has helped 29 different National Accounts Contracts that account for 19% of VMI's business with a gross profit of \$53M/year.

Whitney can always be counted on to VMI and its community initiatives. She serves as chair of United Way's Young Leader Society and will chair Van Meter's company campaign. She regularly donates her time to Habitat for Humanity, Big Brothers Big Sisters, the Especially for You Race, and Young Parents Network, just to mention a few. She is a strong proponent of the VMI Employee-Owner culture, organizing educational events, leading a bone marrow registry drive, and serving on the Employee Ownership and Women of VMI Committees. Whitney is also leading efforts for Van Meter's first bring you child to work day this spring.

Whitney models the commitment of VMI and Cedar Rapids to the Blue Zones project. She continually finds new and challenging endeavors to keep herself, coworkers, and family healthy and fit through races, workouts, and challenges. Whitney makes the most of each day balancing family, career, education, community & health. She is tirelessly committed to serving and

improving the town she calls home. As a lifelong learner, she recently achieved her goal of completing her MBA degree in 2017. Whitney is well respected for her knowledge and expertise within her role and is a highly regarded as a member of her community, bringing her leadership skills to everything she does.

Caitlin L. Slessor

Caitlin Slessor, Attorney and Vice President with Shuttleworth & Ingersoll, specializes in family law, which means helping people through what may be one of the most difficult times in their life. It is not unusual for Caitlin to help her clients through high-conflict custody cases or divorces further complicated by business division matters. Those who know Caitlin know that she is driven to make positive change in everything she does. In her work as an attorney, Caitlin has outlined an innovative vision for how to serve her family law clients more effectively. She has assisted many women who have been victims of domestic violence and is proud to work with organizations like Waypoint and Iowa Legal Aid to ensure people in need of legal help don't fall through the cracks. She believes in helping those in need, which is exemplified by her exceeding the Iowa Bar's annual aspirational standard of 50+ hours of volunteer legal services, leading to Caitlin's multiple appearances on Iowa Pro Bono Honor Roll, published by the Iowa Lawyer Magazine.

A recent major professional accomplishment is Caitlin's election to the Sixth Judicial Nominating commission, a group of citizens and attorneys that nominates judges to serve Linn, Johnson, Benton, Iowa, Jones, and Tama counties. Caitlin has been elected to a six-year term. When there is an opening on the local bench, the job of the commission is to interview applicants and select two finalists, one of which will be selected by the Iowa governor.

Caitlin also volunteers her time as President of the board for New Pioneer Food Co-Op. She believes in the mission of the organization to provide environmentally and socially responsible food while supporting local agricultural production of natural and organic foods. Caitlin has also been involved with Leadership for Five Seasons and has served as a past president for the Linn County Bar Association.

Women of Achievement in Service to the Community

Teri Cople

Teri Cople is the Senior Benefit Specialist and Partner at TrueNorth Companies. Having been in the insurance field for more than twenty-five years, Teri knows communication is the essential benefit she can provide to her clients. Her goals are to meet and exceed expectations shares her knowledge and experiences with everyone True North.

Overall, Teri loves to give back to her community because she is passionate about people! As the chair of TrueNorth's annual United Way Campaign, the company was able to reach their largest fundraising goal to date in support of United Way! Teri is also the past chair of United Way's Women's Leadership Initiative (WLI) and has served on the committee for seven years.

As chair of the committee, Teri led the group through their 10th anniversary celebration with record fundraising numbers and recruiting a record number of new members.

Teri also supports several other community organizations, serving as a mentor for the Metro Economic Alliance Stay Here Campaign and supporting the Go Red of Women initiative through the American Heart Association. Teri also sits on the Board of Directors at Trees Forever, the Kirkwood Alumni Advisory Council, and is the incoming President Elect for the Waypoint Board of Directors.

Betty Ehlinger

Betty Ehlinger is a community volunteer and a short-term project employee with United Way of East Central Iowa and Linn Area Partners - Active in Disaster (LAP AID). As the project lead, Betty was tasked with developing various communication materials for LAP-AID and organizing meetings with community leaders to review communications strategies from the 2016 flood. Some of the communications materials included outreach and recruitment materials as well as the LAP-AID "Book of Knowledge." This is a reference book to be used by LAP-AID representatives serving in the Linn County Emergency Operations Center. This reference will streamline response to LAP-AID support agencies in the event of an emergency.

Through her work with LAP-AID, Betty increased the organizations efficiency by creating references to dictate disaster response in specific situations and bringing together skilled leaders to strengthen disaster response teams in the community.

Outside of her work LAP-AID, Betty is an active member of Rotary West and has been volunteering with Van Buren Elementary School. She is also an active member at St. Mark's United Methodist Church and supports United Way through their Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program and the Volunteer Center.

Vicki Hughes

Vicki Hughes is the Volunteer Coordinator at First Lutheran Church. In everything she does, Vicki exudes the spirit of compassion and sincerity. She is described as a tireless advocate for meeting people's basic human needs and does not seek recognition or praise for her accomplishments, but simply enjoys knowing she has made a difference in someone's life and in the community.

Vicki brings her passion into everything she does. From her work as the Department Director for Usher's Ferry Historic District to her time on the Eastern Iowa Tourism Board, she puts her heart and soul into supporting the community. Vicki currently serves on the board for the Community Overflow Winter Shelter System and has coordinated free community dinners at First Lutheran Church for the last twenty-seven years. She also serves as a volunteer for Willis Dady, providing overnight coverage at the shelter and helping connect volunteers to the agency.

Amy Keltner

Amy Keltner is the Coordinator at the Jones County Volunteer Center. In her role, she is responsible for coordinating and leading volunteers to serve in impactful ways to meet the various needs of the community. Amy has developed invaluable partnerships with organizations, schools and businesses in the community, resulting in a 300% increase in the number of volunteers in Jones County. She is a dedicated advocate and an agent of change throughout the rural communities of Jones County. Amy is dedicated to helping others connect their skills and interests to impactful volunteer opportunities. Amy builds meaningful relationships and values her volunteers and supports them by providing training, guidance, and resources.

Amy focuses on finding ways to better serve clients and help improve their lives. She actively seeks funding, grants, and resources to make sure services are available to support programs. Amy coordinates and connects volunteers to various opportunities, such as providing rides to individuals 60+ years old to non-emergency medical appointments outside of Jones County, helping them remain healthy and living independently; preparing taxes for individuals in low to moderate income levels, bringing earned income tax credits back to clients; providing health insurance information to those that qualify for Medicare; and increasing capacity for local nonprofits, enabling them to provide additional critical services.

Though her work is not always easy, Amy takes on challenges with energy and passion. She is dedicated, compassionate, resourceful, and demonstrates positive influence in service to others. Along with her role as Coordinator of the Jones County Volunteer Center, Amy serves as the Vice President of Volunteer Centers of Iowa, engaging in regional and state-wide volunteer programs. She also leads a group of disaster volunteers who are prepared to respond and mobilize in the event of a future disaster, and she is active in her own volunteer efforts through her children's school and various community activities.

Cindy Sale

Cindy has a personal connection to cancer. When her brother was diagnosed, she served as his caregiver while he received stem-cell transplant treatment. After this experience, Cindy wanted to find a way to support those who were experiencing what her family had gone through. Along with her two friends Sheila Harman and Beth Hammell, who had been diagnosed with breast cancer, the three women launched Gems of Hope, Inc. to support men and women during their cancer treatment.

When Sheila and Beth were diagnosed with cancer, they knew first-hand what support (emails, texts, visits, notes and phone calls) from family, friends and community could do for their spirit. At that time, the three of them saw patients who didn't have any of this support. The concept was delivering a simple card adorned with a "gem" could lift a cancer patient's spirit and hopefully help with the healing process. Without hesitation, Cindy agreed to jump on board, lending her support in the founding of Gems of Hope.

Founded in July 2005, Gems of Hope began with a simple idea of providing simple inspirational cards to cancer patients during their treatments. Unfortunately, Sheila lost her battle with

breast cancer in April of 2008, nearly three years after the start of Gems of Hope. Thirteen years later, their mission remains the same, but the results have been anything but simple. The organization's major fundraiser is Hope Blooms, created in 2014, after the American Cancer Society stopped their daffodil sales. The Gems program delivered more than 400 daffodil bouquets to area cancer patients, more than 300 Lion Hugs gifts to children being treated at U of I Hospitals and Clinics, and nearly 2,500 daffodil bunches throughout the community.

Cindy possesses compassion, dedication and blind faith. Now more than ever, Cindy is convinced that all of the volunteers at Gems of Hope are making a difference in the lives of individuals effected by cancer.

Julie Schneekloth

Julie Schneekloth is the Vice President – Director of Training at United Fire Group. As a community volunteer, Julie gives 100% to everything she is involved with. Within a year of being asked to join United Way's Women's Leadership Initiative, she was named Vice President of the Steering Committee. The following year, Julie took over as Chair of the Steering Committee and drastically increased the amount of funds raised, allowing the group to support medical care for underinsured women in the community. She also led the charge to create centerpieces for the annual Women's Leadership Initiative Luncheon, creating them out of items, such as diapers and hygiene products, to later be donated to local organizations supporting women in need.

Julie is very involved at St. Ludmila Church, volunteering at various events and serving as a sponsor, along with her husband, for engaged couples as they prepare for marriage. She also continues to volunteer at Jefferson High School, even though her children have since graduated. Julie also volunteers with the Cedar Rapids Police Department and serves on their board while also supporting Iowa Jobs for America's Graduates and the American Heart Association as a Circle of Red member!

Dara Schmidt

Dara Schmidt is the Director of the Cedar Rapids Public Library. She is a passionate advocate for early literacy, lifelong learning, and access to information. She works tirelessly to find ways to improve the lives of those around her, including looking for new ways to provide library service to those who are most in need in Cedar Rapids. She has brought a new vision to the Cedar Rapids Public Library and through her leadership, the Library has been launched into the national spotlight, being honored with the Institute of Museum and Library Service National Medal in 2017.

Even with receiving this national recognition, Dara remains focused on the local impact made by the library. She helped transform the library's traditional summer reading program into an intergenerational summer learning program, which is now nationally recognized. The program sees hundreds of participants of all ages and last year, the Cedar Rapids community read nearly

2.5 million minutes in June and July as a result of the program! She continues to advance the Library's mission and to connect the community to the many resources available.

Along with her amazing contributions to the Cedar Rapids Public Library, Dara was also selected as one of 28 public librarians from around the country to participate in the Public Library Association Leadership Academy and is a member of the Iowa Library Association Executive Board, serving as the Communications Chair. Dara serves as a board member for the Meth-Wick community in Cedar Rapids and is active in the Downtown Rotary Club. She was also named a Corridor Business Journal's 40 Under 40 award in 2015 for her work in Cedar Rapids.

Cindy Theilen

Cindy Theilen is known for caring much more about helping, serving, and assisting others than working for awards or honors. In fact, when she was presented with this honor, it took quite a bit to convince her she was truly deserving of this nomination.

In 2015, Cindy received the coveted Farmers State Bank Leadership Award, presented by President and CEO, Gene Neighbor. This award is given to an employee who inspires other employees to volunteer for a specific cause which, in turn, makes a significant impact in the community. The recipient must lead the event for three consecutive years, which Cindy has done -- and continues to do -- with Farmers State Banks's Meals on Wheels delivery program. More than 20 employees serve in a weekly rotation to deliver meals each Wednesday to seniors located at three different assisted living complexes in Marion. Cindy also coordinates the bank's participation in Bowl For Kids Sake, organizes the annual FSB blood drive, arranges for physical therapists to come to the office and provide free chair massages for employees, and teaches in the ABA's Teach Children to Save event held each April. FSB hosts or sponsors more than 20 community events each year, and Cindy is always the first to volunteer.

Lonnie Viner

Lonnie Viner is the Executive Director of the Cedar Valley Humane Society. With previous experience in the business world, Lonnie is able to use her business knowledge and apply it seamlessly to the nonprofit world. She is recognized throughout the Midwest as a leader of animal shelter best practices and programming. She also focuses on mentoring her staff, encouraging them to grow, and provides guidance as needed.

After taking on the role of Executive Director, Lonnie implemented several new programs, program updates, and partnerships that have had an amazing impact on the shelter. In the past, the Cedar Valley Humane Society's retail outlet historically did not produce much revenue. However, under Lonnie's direction, new pet owners are encouraged to purchase supplies to transition their pet into their new life and continue to care for them for years to come. The retail outlet now produces enough revenue to cover one month of operating expenses!

Lonnie has grown the shelter's transfer program, partnering with local and out-of-state shelters to take in animals that otherwise would be euthanized. She also recently managed the shelter's largest rescue in history, taking in over 1,000 animals in partnership with other local shelters.

Lonnie's unwavering passion and dedication to the organization has afforded the Cedar Valley Humane Society with the ability and opportunity to plan for the future, creating a strong and growing organization for generations to come.