

Volunteers of the Year

A call to action for community service

Volunteer Spotlight



Naoko Manabe

Education & Schools
Volunteer of the Year

Naoko's background in early intervention makes her an integral part of the Early Childhood Project at First Place Family Center. She leads activities in the therapeutic classroom, attends stakeholder meetings, helps plan nutritious meals, and works with interns, among her other roles. Her other volunteer work includes for Head Start.

Volunteer hours: 500-plus in 2015

"Naoko is a mother of five children who has gone through great adversity in her own life. Despite all of this, she is committed to serving others ... it is no way a stretch to say we couldn't do what we do without her."

— Eileen Chanti, Early Childhood Project at First Place Family Center, Eugene

Education & Schools finalists: Terry Beyer, Springfield Education Foundation; Sue Brown, SMART



Meghan McMahon

Civic & Community
Volunteer of the Year

Meghan has served the Active 20-30 Club of Eugene #920 in almost every role, including as president, Buzzsaw Ball chair, and currently as treasurer. She takes on a leadership role in welcoming new members as well. In addition, she volunteers for the Junior League of Eugene and has served on its board.

Volunteer hours: 700-800/year

"She works very hard at her career, but still finds time to give back to her community, all while staying positive ... She is a role model to so many new members and others in the community. She breathes positive activity."

— Darren Cook, Active 20-30 Club of Eugene #920

Civic & Community finalists: Alayne Clark, Eugene-Kakagawa Sister City; Larena Sullivan, Altrusa Club of Eugene



Dona Clarke

Arts & Culture
Volunteer of the Year

Dona is a longtime volunteer for Willamette Jazz Society's Jazz Station. As administrative point person, she purchases food and items for sale at the venue; manages accounts payable/receivable, revenue and membership data entry; performs volunteer training; and handles "fix-it" duties. She also is lead singer for Smokey Beau, a jazz ensemble that plays at the Jazz Station and other venues.

Volunteer hours: 20/week; more than 1,000 in 2014

"She is a super volunteer in every way. Dona is always available, always willing to try new things, always looking to improve, and incredibly dependable."

— Laura Niles, Willamette Jazz Society

Arts & Culture finalists: Ellen Chace, Oregon Contemporary Theatre; Laura Niles, SHO - Hult Center

Nominate your favorite volunteer

Anyone is encouraged to invite to nominate volunteers (or teams of volunteers) for recognition. Forms are available at www.unitedwaylane.org. Or call United Way at 541-741-6000 or Bridget Baker at The Register-Guard, 541-338-2469.



From left, pastors Steve Hill of Grace Community Church & Fellowship, Brett Gilchrist of University Fellowship Church, and Rich Carroll of Emerald Bible Fellowship were honored April 14 as Volunteers of the Year for their work as police chaplains.

Police chaplains, champions

Three pastors make a big impact on the Eugene Police Department, and the entire community, as devoted volunteer police chaplains

Editor's note: A version of this story appeared in The Register-Guard Oct. 25, when EPD's Police Chaplains Program was recognized in the Volunteer of the Month team category.

By Joel Gorthy

The Register-Guard

On a national level, recent sensational cases involving abuses of power by police officers — often individuals ill-suited to the job in the first place — have done nothing to improve public admiration for the larger police community.

But by any measure, law enforcement is one of the most difficult, dangerous, complex and stressful jobs that exists, and the vast majority who choose it as a career do so for altruistic reasons. And in the process of conducting this work, now more than ever police officers themselves sometimes need comfort, counseling and guidance.

In Eugene, often that help comes from one of three pastors who comprise the Police Chaplain Program and are being honored as 2016 Volunteers of the Year. For more than three years, Brett Gilchrist of University Fellowship Church, Steve Hill of Grace Community Church & Fellowship, and Rich Carroll of Emerald Bible Fellowship have volunteered to support the Eugene Police Department and community as chaplains.

"In addition to their chaplaincy duties, each of them is a full-time pastor at a church in Eugene. That shows tremendous commitment to maintain a full-time job along with availing themselves to a 24/7 call-out schedule for critical incidents," reads the nomination submitted by EPD staff.

"The chaplains are a vital resource to the EPD community," says Sergeant Carl Stubbs, Jr. "They regularly meet with officers and other staff giving seasoned counseling ... They make themselves available for ride-alongs, public and private meetings, and act as a vital resource for senior staff. I believe this program is essential to the healthy development of our department."

The chaplains always are on call to provide comfort, crisis

EPD Police Chaplains

Volunteers of the Year
Team/Overall Winners

Team finalists: Candlelighters for Kids with Cancer; Middle School Mentors, Eugene 4J

counseling and referral services.

"The police department does a great service for our community, and it's a tough job, so it's nice to be able to support them," Gilchrist says.

"We are called out occasionally to assist in a death notification, or perhaps be available on scene at a suicide," Hill says. "Those are rare, but our main role is simply rubbing shoulders with officers and building trust-based relationships so we can be influential and helpful in a wide range of issues, from personal to professional. We want them to be successful, and anything we can do to help, we are all in."

"No one can argue how stressful our job is in law enforcement in general, even in the best of circumstances — especially in the last year and a half since Ferguson," says Captain Sam Kamkar. "That has had a ripple effect that our officers have felt even here locally. As a supervisor, it's not that uncommon for me to have employees from different ranks come into my office and close the door and want to chat. And when they do, I offer them various services."

These include Direction for Employee Assistance, a free counseling service available to city employees, and an EPD peer support group. Kamkar says some employees may avoid these services because, even with the guarantee of confidentiality, they don't want to share their problems either with strangers or co-workers.

"But when I mention our chaplaincy program," Kamkar says, "they go, 'Oh, yeah ... I see myself doing that.' There's a different response, a sense of comfort and confidence from them when they know they can reach out to someone who's not a police officer, who's a volunteer, who has their best interest in mind, and yet the conversa-

tion is confidential, regardless of their religious belief. That's a testament to how powerful this program is and the contributions that our three chaplains have made to our department."

Gilchrist, who invited the other pastors to join him in forming the chaplain team at the request of the police chief, says the trio's long combined ministry experience makes them a trusted presence in the eyes of many EPD employees.

"It does give a sense of stability, and I think when people seek us out for counsel, they walk away thinking they got good counsel," he says. "They know that we're not cop wannabes, we're here to serve them. That gives them a sense of, 'OK, these guys know their place and they're not trying to get into our business.' I think they appreciate that, too."

EPD staff also applaud the chaplains for their good humor, approachability and skill at relating to staff as well as community members. "They know how difficult police work is and their easy-going, humorous style affords them the ability to break down any barriers of communication," the nomination reads.

Collectively, the chaplains have contributed more than 1,000 hours to EPD and the community in the past three years — 501 hours in 2014 alone.

Also in 2014, all three chaplains graduated from Police & Fire Chaplains Academy, a Washington (state) Criminal Justice Training Commission program. The 59-hour course covered 12 training units specific to first-responder needs, and successful completion resulted in national certification.

The chaplains' ongoing commitment to their volunteer work and their support of the EPD's people is a blessing, staff say.

"Chaplains Gilchrist, Carroll and Hill are not only there when we need them, they interface regularly just to pray for our staff," notes Lieutenant Doug Mozan. "Regardless of one's faith, it is heartening that these men dedicate their time to better our lives and our spiritual and mental well-being."

Volunteer Spotlight



Alondra Duran

Youth
Volunteer of the Year

A high school senior, Alondra has volunteered for the Teen Court program since she was in eighth grade, demonstrating exceptional leadership skills and serving as a welcoming face to defendant families.

Volunteer hours: 3 weekly

"Alondra is truly one of the most driven youths I have ever encountered. ... She is a smart, dedicated, thoughtful and collaborative youth."

— Billy Hernandez, City of Eugene Teen Court

Youth finalists: Harris Bosworth, Kevin Shin-Wheeler, City of Eugene Teen Court



Max Skorodinsky

Children & Youth
Services
Volunteer of the Year

Max is helping Ophelia's Place develop a robust technology and coding plan for skill-building activities, including facilitating a summer camp and a weekly club. He also has provided education and training about gender identity to staff and other volunteers.

Volunteer hours: 4 weekly

"He is passionate about engaging girls and women in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math); and his personal journey as a transman all make him inspiring."

— River Aaland, Ophelia's Place

Children & Youth Services finalists: Haven Amacher, Girl Scouts of Oregon SW Wash.; Jennifer Hartley, Relief Nursery



Steve John

Senior
Volunteer of the Year

Since 2007, Steve has served the Oregon Judicial Department's Citizen Review Board, which meets monthly to review foster care cases. He is tasked with ensuring children's medical, dental, educational, therapeutic and other needs are being met. As an adoptive and foster parent, Steve understands issues faced by children in foster care.

Volunteer hours: 300 yearly

"Steve is a great inspiration for those who want to contribute and ensure children in foster care have positive outcomes and permanence in their life."

— Sam Tazumal, Oregon Judicial Department Citizen Review Board

Senior finalists: Katya Davis, OSU Extension; Jim Ott, Cascade Raptor Center



Cheris Kramaree

Health & Well-Being
Volunteer of the Year

Cheris, a retired professor, serves as a hospice patient care volunteer for Cascade Health Solutions. In addition to direct work with patients and families, Cheris enhances awareness of hospice work, encourages other volunteers to get involved, and shares her expertise and enthusiasm at monthly in-service training sessions.

Volunteer hours: 212 in 2014

"Cheris respects the value of others, is extremely dependable ... and is a joy to have on the team. ... She exemplifies what selfless service looks like."

— Shirley Kirkpatrick, Cascade Health Solutions - Hospice

Health & Well-Being finalists: Tom Klotter, McKenzie-Willamette Medical Center; Becky Stiles, LCOG Senior Services

View a video at registerguard.com/video