

Here is the background information on the honorees from the 2009 volunteer awards, from the script by emcee Kay Miller.

Tonight's **Youth Volunteer of the Year** is described as being a hard working and reliable young person who truly embodies the volunteer spirit. She is ranked number 3 in her class of 260 at Biloxi High School, and she has found the time and dedication through out her entire school career to volunteer to help our city and those less fortunate. She began volunteering in Junior high School by serving as the secretary of the Builders Club and continued her dedication to the Kiwanis youth program by serving as the Key Club corresponding secretary and as President her senior year, she has earned 160 plus service **hours each year** as a member of the Key Club, she has organized cards & visits to the Loyalton, collected Christmas stockings for underprivileged children, participated in coastal clean up, the seafood festival, North Pole calling, Big Brother & Big Sister UNICEF, March of Dines, canned food drive for the homeless & project smile, and she has participated in many community activities such as Easter Egg hunts, parades, arbor day, festivals and many more. She is currently working hard as the Key Club's team captain for the American Cancer Society Relay for Life. She is also a member of the National Honor Society, the French Club, International Culture Club. History & Law Club, Art Club, Student Council Member. Her leadership and compassion has helped so many people. She is the type of young person who is going to make our community a great place to live, and she is going to make others realize what a wonderful city Biloxi is.

I am pleased to announce the 2009 Youth Volunteer of the Year-  
**Cindy Nguyen.**

**We would like to recognize the Youngest Volunteer** of the year. He is a first grader. Who at 6 years old on a mission to help a friend in need. He is a very kind hearted boy who has a passion for helping others. He wanted to help a friend who had cancer. He ask everyone at school to fill lots of jars with loose change for his friend. The two became buddies in gymnastics school. But when she was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma, she was too sick to tumble. He missed his friend and worried about her a lot. "I don't want her to die, cause she's only 7-years-old and she's one of my friends. During a school lesson at Beauvoir, he shocked his P.E. teacher, Coach Capers, with a surprising announcement. "'Coach Capers, I need to get 500 bucks for someone who has cancer.' Oh, okay," Capers said. "As he was talking, you could kind of tell that he had something else on his mind and he came out with that. And when you hear a 6-year-old say that, you know you've got to get involved." With help of several teachers he made a school commercial for the school news asking for loose changed from the students. He has raised over \$1000 now and is still collecting. He is a very inspiring young man that feels he can make a difference at 6 years old and he has, he is going to grow up achieving is goals in life and I am sure helping more friends in need. I am pleased to announce **Carter Wells as our Youngest Volunteer for 2009.**

The 2009 **Health Volunteer of the Year** has been a long time resident of Biloxi. She was displaced after the storm but her heart is still in Biloxi because that is where she grew up. She helped distribute important information to the local Vietnamese residents. She helped NAVASA (the National Alliance of Vietnamese American Service Agencies) and Boat People SOS provide services to the often marginalized Vietnamese community. While doing this work she saw a need for local Asian American organization on the Gulf Coast. In 2007 she and group of young Vietnamese professional started up an organization called Asian Americans for Change. She also saw a need of access to affordable healthcare, especially in East Biloxi. Because of her background as a pharmacist, she had the resources and connections necessary to put on a successful health fair. She decided to use those resources for the benefit of the community. The first health fair took place in March of 08, over 500 attended the most recent one was just this past weekend and was also very successful. What is unique about this health fair is that it was conducted in 3 different languages, English, Vietnamese, & Spanish. There were interpreters there who helped the residents as they get their free screenings, because language is one of the barriers to access to healthcare. She heads up the Health Fair annually out of the goodness of her heart and because of her genuine concern for the well-being of the community. It is with privilege that I announce the 2009 Health Volunteer of the Year, **Kaitlin Truong**.

**The 2009 Arts & History Volunteer** is a mover and shaker and has the vision to see things through. She is the owner of several century old properties with a vested interest in the beatification and redevelopment of the community. She loves to bring pieces of history back to life, while preserving the historical significance of each property. She has been on the Biloxi Main Street Board of directors for the past 6 years. It was because of her passion that the 100 year old Bond-Grant House was restored; she coordinated the efforts and put hundreds of hours of physical labor ripping out sheetrock, sanding, planting flowers and designing the landscaping, coordinating with contractors, getting donations and figuring out how finically this could happen. This was completed in June of 2008, and is benefiting the community each day. Because of her passion for Biloxi she saw the need to fill the empty buildings of the downtown area. She was able to convince several artists to open up in downtown with at pottery shop called Rue Magnolia Pottery located on Rue Magnolia. Within the past calendar year, she has initiated a new project that will have a significant impact on the vitality of the Main Street District. She located another building to open an artist co-op, this goal was achieved on February 14<sup>th</sup> when Gallery 782 opened. It is a Gallery of 40 artist located in the historic Sherer House on Water Street. She worked with Biloxi Main Street to rehabilitate the interior of this building to better meet the needs of the artist to support public and private art education programs and activities. She serves as Treasurer of the Board and is

chairing a special committee to host a major fund-raising event in May 2009 that features a book signing by a nationally known Mississippian who recently published his memoirs. This author helped raise more than \$30 Million for Hurricane Katrina relief efforts. At this time we present the, **2009 Arts and History Award Winner Laura Bolton.**

**The Sports Volunteer of the year** has been involved in the sport of swimming for the last 7 years. He has put forth endless volunteer hours to make sure swim teams have the best swimming experience available. He has been a timer at all of the meets which could not run without volunteer timers. He has grilled burgers for the teams concession stands to feed all of the hungry swimmers and visitors. He is always available to help stock the concession stand needs. He was a great help in putting together the 1<sup>st</sup> annual Santa's Best swim meet at the Natatorium in December 2008. The meet brought in over 300 swimmers from Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama and Florida. Endless hours of planning must go into the hospitality areas so we can accommodate the needs of all the swimmers. He was also responsible for organizing and coordinating all of the military volunteers for the 3 day long meet. I am pleased to announce the **2009 Sports** volunteer of the year is **Alex Aranda.**

**The 2009 Military Volunteer** has distinguished himself as a valuable force multiplier in regards to volunteer activities while serving at Keesler AFB in Mississippi. He devoted countless time and dedication to the military family and the local community. His achievements reflect the service before self concept. As a member of the Honor Guard, he was certified in 13 Honor Guard positions and performed at the noncommissioned officer level. He completed over 50 ceremonies, including 46 funerals. He showed leadership by participating in volunteer activities to raise money for base and the local community events. He participated in 81<sup>st</sup> MDG nurse and technician Booster Club Shoeshine Project benefiting more than 700 nurses and medical technicians. He shined combat boots for 6 hours. He helped raise \$ 400 for the 81<sup>st</sup> training wing annual award banquet. He directed sale of tickets as 81<sup>st</sup> Inpatient operations squadrons' point of contact. He was a team leader for Relay for Life, his motivations has led to an all time high in contributions & He reflects the service before self concept through his teamwork. At his US Citizen ship and Immigration Service ceremony in the New Orleans District office. He led the Oath of Allegiance. There were 150 new citizens from 89 countries at this event. We would like to congratulate the 2009 Military Volunteer of the year is **Airman First Class Rupert B. Laco.**

**The 2009 City of Biloxi Employee Volunteer of the Year** has been employed with the City of Biloxi since March 10<sup>th</sup> 1993. During this time she has set a high standard of achievements for City employees to follow. She has a strong work ethic which she displays every day. She is very dependable and always has the can do spirit. When she is asked to be a member of team or participate in any charitable events she always goes above and beyond of what is expected of

her. She volunteers her time to many activities. She creates flower arrangements for the Senior Center programs and well as other events helped at the Snyder Center and other city facilities. Not only does she donate her time but she also personally pays the cost of the special items. She supports all non-profit fundraisers sponsored by the city. One example of this support is the fact that she helped to personally raise over \$1000 as team leader for her city team for the Heart Walk. I am happy to announce the **2009 City Employee Volunteer of the Year who is someone that I am always happy to have on my team Rhonda Balius**

**2009 Adult Volunteer Group** are a group of that has volunteered in the community for years, they have always given their time to others , but mostly on an individual basis. In 2008 they made a decision to “Chart A Course” in the community. The first thing they did was name themselves “Way-finders” The second thing was to begin the journey of leaving their legacy. They have served food at the Black History Month celebrations, participated in the Great American Clean up, assisted with Juneteenth celebrations, they participated in Renew Our Rivers cleaning up the rivers in other cities. Building playgrounds in several locations and even volunteered to help build a house with the Jimmy & Rosalyn Carter Project. They had record numbers in being a leading force in participating in the Heart Walk. In October they participated in the Voice Volunteer Program. This week is set aside every year to “Make A Difference in the Community” The collected, filled and delivered items to the Veterans at the Biloxi VA and read books on Tape for the Biloxi Regional & Memorial Hospital Pediatric Book Library which was started in 2007. They donated Books for National Book Month that was donated to the Biloxi Public Library, food for the Salvation Army, adopt a family at Christmas over 25 children were adopted. They also purchased material and made blankets that were delivered to the Red Cross for fire victims. The journey began in 2008 and has continued into 2009. These champions volunteered over 6000 hours between 60 people. They have proven their commitment to this community and have also shown they will continue to “Make a Difference” in Biloxi. With out further to do I am please to announce the 2009 Adult Volunteer Group of the year is **The Beau Rivage Diversity Champions.**

**The 2009 Non-Profit Organizations Volunteer of the year** has been helping the Gulf Coast for 52 years in the City of Biloxi as a volunteer service organization guided by its principles of Knowledge, Fellowship and Service. Their mission is to build good citizen ship by providing a volunteer organization of clubs dedicated to serving individual and community needs with an emphasis on helping people with developmental disabilities. From providing donations to shelters in Harrison County, to volunteering with the American Red Cross and March of Dimes. They also sponsor the education of youth leaders at Biloxi High School .They most recently organized a community –wide Developmentally Disabled Children’s Egg Hunt on the Biloxi Town Green. I would like to award **the 2009 non-profit organization award to the Biloxi Edgewater Civitan Club.**

**The 2009 Education Volunteer** has been a wonderful adviser; she has stuck with the club through thick and thin. Not only has she gone out of her way to help the club achieve their goals, but she also cares for each person in the club. She always stays after school and attends most all out of school projects. She cares for her community also. She wants to make a difference for the future generations. She attends almost all of the volunteer events that the Biloxi community has hosted. She is right there with the club giving a helping hand, she has helped with Bunny day, the Heart Walk , The Biloxi Relay for Life , Coastal Clean Up, Kiwanis One Day and many others. She is an amazing adviser as well a great person overall. She finds the time and resources to enhance school activities goes beyond normal expectations. She makes everyone around her feel like part of a team working together towards a common goal. **The 2009 Education Volunteer of the Year is Kay Dunn**

**The 2009 Volunteer Business of the Year-** Raising money for charity has been a long-standing tradition. Just in the last 15 years they have raised over \$257,000.00 for 23 charities. The charity committee selects charities in June of each year and the fund raising period runs from beginning of June to the end of May the following year. All of the money raised comes from a variety of fundraisers within include ,raffles, home cooked meals, baked goods ,softball tournaments bowling tournaments, golf tournaments, cake walks , silent auctions garage sales, food/beverage booths and many more. Each employee who personally raises \$100 receives a ½ day off with pay. Employees who work for four hours for a charity organization or community service activity also, receive a t1/2 day off with pay. In 2008 Hope Haven & Pink Hearts received \$18,000 and they gave over 1000 hours in service. And in 2009 the Gulf Coast Women's Center for Nonviolence & Ocean Springs-Long Beach Interfaith Hospitality Network will be the charitable receivers. **2009 Business Volunteer of the Year is the Peoples Bank.**

**The 2009 Youth Group Volunteer** of the year currently has over 50 members and has volunteered over 1600 hours so far this year. They volunteer almost every Saturday and even on Holidays and Spring Break. Some events they have participated in are North Pole Calling, Big Brothers Big Sisters, UNICEF, March of Dimes, Can food drives for the homeless, Project Smile, giving out cards to senior citizens on special holidays, Christmas stockings for children at the shelter, parades , Easter egg hunt Grillin on the Green Crawfish Festival, arbor Day George Ohr arts festivals Movies on the green coastal clean up , Heart walk and relay for life. The services they have provided to the community leave a great impact on the community especially the children. Their motto is "Caring ...Our Way of Life" It is with pleasure I present the **2009 Youth Group award to the Biloxi High School Key Club.**

**The 2009 Community Volunteer** Has won many awards, however it is her spirit and life examples that set her apart from others. She has served on the Biloxi Main Street Board for many years serving as president in 2008 with the

accomplishments of restoration of the Bond-Grant House. She lives downtown and is focused on the revitalization renewal and rebuilding of Biloxi. She is always bringing ideas of things that can be accomplished. She has been on the Christmas on the Water committee for many years chairing the Children's Walking Parade. It is with her patience and organizational skills that are evident in the love she shows for this event.

She is an active member of Nativity BVM Parish, where she has served on the Pastoral Council and is now chairman of the Social Justice Committee. On this committee she oversees the work on Saturdays at Feed My Sheep a soup kitchen in Biloxi. She also is involved in organizing a Disaster Relief Team from the parish to travel to other areas to provide food and needed supplies to others after disasters. She is very active in all aspects of the community, but what sets her apart from others is the kind and caring attitude she has in everything she is involved. No matter how busy she is she always has time to help others. It is with great pleasure to announce the **2009 Community Volunteer of the Year-Sarah Rider.**

**The 2009 Distinguished Volunteer of the year** is a loyal Biloxian through and through. A lifelong resident of Biloxi, she lives and works, plays worships and volunteers in Biloxi.. She is a successful business owner since 1996. She has given 25+ years of service to various Biloxi organizations and events. She is presently the chairperson of her beloved Blessing of the Fleet and Shrimp Festival. This year the festival is celebrating the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary. She has been involved with this event one way or another since being crowned shrimp queen in 1975. She continues to fulfill the chairperson duty this year while planning her son's wedding which happens to fall on the same day. She has also been very instrumental in the past and presently in organizing and volunteering her time the Biloxi Maritime and Seafood Museum planning and execution of their annual drawdown and wooden Boat show promoting tourism & the seafood industry for the MS Gulf Coast., as well as the Biloxi Boys and Girls Club. For 9 years she served on the Biloxi Historical and Architectural Board where she also served as chairman. She is a graduate of leadership Gulf Coast. She is a member of St. Michaels Catholic Church where she serves on the Pastoral council and is a Eucharistic minister. And what would make a Mom more proud than to be nominated by her son; Please stand as I present the **2009 Distinguished volunteer of the year. Tanya Gollott-Swoope**