

Volunteer Awards Recognition ceremony script

By Kay Carter, Downtown Services Manager

I would like to welcome everyone to the 31st annual volunteer of the year awards ceremony 2014. I am Kay Carter Downtown Services Manager for the City of Biloxi and I will be your MC this evening. I ask that you please rise as the **Biloxi Police Honor Guard** present colors and remain standing for the National Anthem sung by, **Cheryl Thomson** and invocation delivered by **Rev. Eric Dickey** First Missionary Baptist Church, Biloxi MS.

I am pleased to have some special guest with us tonight and at this time would like to introduce them Mayor A.J. Holloway and his wife Macklyn.

Brig. General Patrick Higby Commander, [Keesler Air Force Base](#), &

Chief master Sgt Ferrell Thomas, command Chief of the 81st Training Wing(Applause)

Also, with us tonight is some honored guests, Councilmen, David Fayard, Dixie Newman, Felix Gines, Paul Tisdale, Kenny Glavan, Robert Deming. & George Lawrence

VIP's and previous Volunteer of the year winners please stand.

Tonight we are here to celebrate you, the volunteer. You have voluntarily chosen to undertake a service or duty and for that you have made a difference. Whether it be helping provide for the homeless, helping keep our cultural traditions strong and thriving, making sure our youth in the community has proper mentors, volunteering in schools, keeping arts & our history alive in our city, standing up for causes you believe in, helping a friend or neighbor, being a mover & a shaker & a motivator, teaching a child how to throw a ball or building back homes, you have made a difference. It does not matter how great or how small, you have made a difference in our city. Volunteers continue to be the Biloxi the HAPPY place to BE!

At this time I would like to introduce a man who has made a difference to our city, Mayor of Biloxi, Honorable A.J. Holloway.

Mayor's speech

Thank you mayor.

AT this time we would like to present a short Power Point

At this time we would like to present all 2014 Volunteer nominees with a

Certificate of appreciation, Please come up when your name is called:

Groups first:

Biloxi High School Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps., Biloxi High School Student Campus Security, Biloxi High School Key Club, Biloxi Lions Club, Biloxi Regional Medical Center Auxiliary Volunteers, Center for Naval Aviation Training Unit, Coastal Women for Change, Fishbowl Student Ministry Center, The White Rope Program, Visions of Hope

Individuals

Dan Baker, Jemina Ballard, James Edwards Bates, Gail Baxter, Publio & Terry Casillas, , Bill Collins, Ethel Curry, Christine Davis, Katherine Doyle, A1C Mikayla Dunne Wendy Fayard, Holly Gibbs, Eddie Irwin, Jerrod Jenkins, Thomas Joseph, Barbara Kimble, Lauren Koops, Shirley Lovelace Roy Matthews, Jean

McGrury, Frank McKeny, Katie Miller, Sonya Miller, Jaylyn Pratt, Amy Pullen, William Raymond, Sr. Mary Riordan, Ken Rutter, Mary Schmedicke, Romy Simpson, Lou Soldo, Chasity Sorrels, Tom Stanley, Sharla Starks, Chadwick T. Stradling, Harold Windom Jr., Harold Windom, Sr.,

This year's committee faced a very difficult decision process because all nominee's were so very worthy. To all the friends & family members that are here tonight with someone that was nominated, please feel very honored to be connected to such special people. Volunteers make this world a better place and we are so fortunate to have them in Biloxi.

Tonight's **Youth Volunteer of the Year** has been a voice for raising awareness about charitable issues not only among her peers but also the community. She has a unique ability to empathize with those in need. Most of the time empathy just leads to people thinking something such as: "How terrible, someone should do something about that", and she is that someone who does something! She creates a resolution to the problem. She has become aware of the increasing homeless population in our Community, for the past 2 years she has collected donations for the homeless. She has also spoken to students at local elementary schools and with members of the civic clubs to encourage them to become involved with her project. She truly makes our city a better place. Her spirit of volunteerism is a natural part of her life. She has volunteered with Camp Wilkes and the Seafood Museum's Sea and Sail Camp, a bell ringer for the Salvation Army, Angel Tree project, Cruisin the Coast volunteer concession stand worker, children's foster home Christmas party. For 3 summers she went on a mission trip she witnessed poverty first hand, she realized we forget that poverty and hunger are right here in our own backyards, and with hard work and faith in God that anything truly is possible. Everything she does it is with love and care and from her heart. She lives by the beautiful quote of Mother Teresa, "Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love." I am pleased to announce the 2014 Youth Volunteer of the Year- **Katie Miller**.

The 2014 **Health Volunteer of the Year** are a group of individuals who continue to donate many hours of service to our community. They have been devoted to health care and the citizens of Biloxi for over 107 years. They assist the hospital not only in their presence but also in giving of their individual talents and time, and also in monetary assistance to improve patient and family comfort, provide support with community events, and awarding scholarships to staff members to assist them in furthering their educations. This group of volunteers works diligently by completely managing the hospital gift shop, holding raffles and other fund raising events throughout the year to provide their source of income. They also provide support roles by assisting in the surgery waiting room, information desk delivering patient mail, and help patients get gift shop items needed when unable. They provide 4 \$500 healthcare scholarships a semester to employees further their education and training. This group is made up 31 volunteers they are very dedicated and cumulatively given 288 years of volunteer service. During 2013 more than 7800 hours were donated by this group. It is with great pleasure that I announce the 2014 Health Volunteer of the Year, **Biloxi Regional Medical Center Auxiliary Volunteers**.

The 2014 Arts & History Volunteer has supported the performing arts and telling Biloxi's history through re-enactments of our historical past. He gives un-selflessly of his time with sparkling good humor. He began volunteering here in Biloxi about 5 years ago. He mentors youth and older actors with equal amounts of patience and love. Biloxi Little Theater has been enriched beyond measure by him, you can find him at Biloxi Little Theater building sets, helping the young & old with their line, and acting. Some of the history he has brought to life in the Cemetery Tours were Tony Ragusin, Anson Holly, Charles Albert Blessy, and most recently George Ohr. In these roles he went above and beyond by spending many hours researching each character personally. He is the consummate professional he knows his lines. Additionally he has been a part of Beauvoir's Fall Muster, he loves local history and makes it so much fun for everyone. All of this he does as a volunteer, and gives of his time. He is a veteran and works also at the Veterans Administration, and always finds time to give. At this time I would like to present the, **2014 Arts & History Award Winner Bill Collins**

The Sports Volunteer of the year has been involved with the Biloxi high School Track Team for the 2014 season. She contacted the Track Coach for Biloxi High School Track team and volunteered to help with coaching and track practices. She let the coach know they she and her husband were moving to Biloxi because her husband had to attend a class at Keesler Air Force Base, and would only be in Biloxi for a few months, but she was interested in lending a helping hand while she was here. Sadly, before the track season began, her husband was running on Pass Rod, and was hit by a car; he was hospitalized for a short while. They expected her not to be able to help, but she said she still wanted to be a part of the team, she showed up on the first day of practice and since been a HUGE help to the coaching staff and to the girls. She attends practice on a regular basis and has attended every meet. She works with middle distance/long distance runners and she has greatly helped improve these girls. She has built a positive rapport with everyone. She catches times, supervises practices, gives constructive criticism, and motivates and manages the girls daily; all while taking care of her recovering husband. She has been a blessing the Lady Indians track team this year and a great role model for the youth of Biloxi. I am pleased to announce the **2014 Sports** volunteer of the year is **Lauren Koops**.

The 2014 Military Volunteer has done an outstanding job as a key volunteer within the Biloxi Community through a variety of volunteer services. She has touched people and organizations throughout Biloxi. She had volunteered 96 hours of her off duty time to provide safe transportation to Airmen through the Airman Against Drunk Driving program (A2D2). She has been the lifeline for those Airmen who need to call for a ride home after consuming too much alcohol to be safe to others. She has also committed herself to help end child neglect and abuse throughout her community. She is trained and serves as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) aiding children in domestic abuse cases by serving as a child advocate. Another one of her passions is ending animal cruelty and suffering. She volunteers at the Gulf Coast Human Society assisting with the animals and trying to find homes for abandoned pets. She has also helped with Feed Families food drive campaign, and Operation Project Cheer to help with Holiday meals and gifts for families in need, and aided the Union Rescue Mission by serving meals to the homeless throughout the holidays. She helped raise money for Biloxi JROTC for uniforms and has judged high school drill competitions. She has also raised money for the Leukemia /Lymphoma society and spent time at the Veterans Retirement home helping entertain the Veterans. Her presence is felt community wide reaching over several cities, she embodies the volunteer spirit and is always the first to lead or volunteer for those in need. We would like to congratulate the 2014 Military Volunteer of the year **SrA Sharla L. Starks**.

The 2014 City of Biloxi Employee Volunteer of the Year Has worked for the City for the 11 years. He approached the Parks & Rec director and offered to help out anytime they needed it and he was really glad to help. One of his volunteer jobs is most rewarding; he is one of the fortunate ones to be able to help Santa out around Christmas time, He not only volunteers as stand in for Santa but brings Mrs. Clause around as well. For the past 3 years he has been in the big red suit for Christmas at the Town Green, Christmas on the Water Children's Parade, the Special Needs Christmas Party and Excel Come Learn with Santa. He spends his own money to provide candy canes and stayed in the rain because he did not want any child to leave without talking with Santa. He also has bought toys for the Special Needs Christmas Party, which has been giving 75 to 100 special needs children and adults. He also volunteers at several churches and stores during the holidays. He exemplifies a true volunteer, his love for kids of all types touches everyone's heart. In his words "ALL CHILDREN SHOULD KNOW AND SPEAK TO SANTA CLAUS. I am happy to announce the **2014 City Employee Volunteer of the Year Roy Matthews**.

2014 Adult Volunteer Group is a group that has a mission and it is "In Biloxi We serve". This Organization is celebrating its 90th Anniversary. Each Year this organization puts on the annual Camellia Queen Pageant, this is a program that recognizes young women who are focused on professional development, poise and character, the winner receives a college scholarship. Each year the sponsor Sea and Sun Camp the state's only camp for the blind and visually impaired. At this camp is a host of physically and mentally challenged youths and adults are given opportunities for recreation and fellowship in a positive environment and its held at Camp Wilkes. They also walk to raise money for diabetes, they fund eye and ear surgeries and hearing aids, they work with the Biloxi School system to identify individuals who need these treatments. They provide scholarships for nursing students and band members identifying future leaders through sponsorships of local Boys and Girls State delegates, and sponsoring local All State Lions Club Band members. Members from this organization work at local craft fairs to help raise money to

support all of these projects Each year this organization seeks out the Citizen of the Year , the Father of the Year, and the Mother of the Year, they host a luncheon for the nominees and their families, past recipients and city leaders. And now it is my pleasure to announce **The Biloxi Lions Club** as the 2014 Adult Volunteer Group of the Year.

The 2014 Non-Profit Organizations Volunteer of the year has been a non-profit in January 2006. This group began out of concern that there were very few instances where the residents of Biloxi came together as a community to discuss and take part in the long range community planning and rebuilding. Knowing that in every community there are lots of concerned women who want a vibrant, healthy and safe community for their family to live in. This group of women came together after Hurricane Katrina to talk about what was happening in the community and how problems could be addressed. They sought to seek out seats on as many committees and subcommittees through out the community. They come together and plant community gardens and make each community proud. This group is led by a strong virtuous woman, Sharon Hanshaw. I would like to present the **2014 non-profit organization award to the Coastal Women for Change.**

The 2014 Education Volunteer promotes education and serves both the children and adults around her. She not only volunteers at local schools and in the community but she also teaches her two daughters the value of educational volunteerism by including them in her service. She not only works full time, goes to school full time and assist critically ill relatives would keep most people from volunteering in the community but this volunteer is not most people. She volunteers at North Bay Elementary at many events including the Book Fair, NB night out, Bunny Hop contest, field day, she chaperones field trips and has become one of the go-to Moms when needed. At Biloxi Junior High she serves as a PTO volunteer , recruiting and coordinating volunteers for every PTO event throughout the school year, serving alongside them. She also volunteers 20 hours every month at Care-A lot Daycare center when they are short staffed or needs additional help with activities and classes. She volunteers for the American Heart Association Walk event and as a past Girl Scout Troop leader and Special Olympics. She also helps an elderly neighbor with doctors appointments and house cleaning, in addition she assists her aging grandparents and her husbands father, who has been diagnosed with lung cancer, with medical needs and house cleaning. To her true commitment to volunteerism. I am pleased to announce **The 2014 Education Volunteer of the Year is Amy Pullen.**

The 2014 Youth Group Volunteer of the year is a group that influences student life and the community in a positive way on a daily basis. What makes them the ideal recipient for the youth volunteer award is the commitment they willing make to enhance the lives of young and old in this community on their own time. One of there programs they help with is Santa Wears a Badge, a program with the Biloxi Police Department , the students actively campaign to receive many donations so that children in Biloxi can have a happy Christmas. This year they collected hundreds of new toys for all ages. They have also been heavily involved in hosting and participating in other positive activities that impact the community; such as Night out against crime, toys for tots, Bridge Walk, Biloxi Cemetery Tours, Red Ribbon Anti drug events, Relay for Life and other community sponsored programs in addition to hosting several anti- DUI and anti Texting and driving programs. They have net worked with many local organizations such as Gulf Coast Mental Health Center, MS highway Patrol, Biloxi Fire Department, and Biloxi Main Street make to collaborate on events that improve the lives of citizens in our city. They are comprised of a group of students who are motivated to plan, implement and volunteer in ways that significantly impact those around them. At the same time they are learning the value of commitment and leadership skills that will carry them through life as productive, involved citizens. I am pleased to announce the **2014 Youth Group award to Biloxi High School Campus Security Council.**

The 2014 Military Group Volunteer of the Year is sponsored leadership program at Keesler Air Force Base, it is offered to 40,000 Technical Training Airmen each year. Since its inception in 1977, the program

emphasizes leadership development, enhancing the service members ability and willingness to service the local community. Each member is challenge to make a difference in the lives of those they serve. The 400 members have made a huge difference. They served 33,280 of their fellow students and provided over 9,500 hours of assistance to the chapel Staff, overseeing daily operations at the center saving the military \$77,500 in this past year! They served in 67 opportunities to actively serve the local Biloxi Community through various volunteer projects. At Jefferson Davis Elementary School they served a total of 904 hours mentoring 7,750 children. 167 volunteer 762 hours to the Humane Society for caring over 400 abandoned and unwanted pets. They cleaned over 300 kennels and walked and fed 686 sheltered animals. 47 student leaders provided \$11,158 worth of labor for a \$1.1 million dollar housing project, helping in the reconstruction of 6 homes for low income families in the Biloxi area. They volunteered 211 hours at Loaves and Fishes and provided 3200 meals to the homeless. 57 of them helped with Biloxi Special Olympics., they served 4104 man hours escorted more than 1000 Special Olympians, provided adequate lodging and meals to over 50000 participants and spectators saving the community more than \$10,149. 42 students helped in the annual Cemetery Tour Clean up ensuring that 326 graves were cleaned. They also participated in 3 different beach clean ups totaling more which constituted in savings of \$11,930. All of these volunteer efforts added up to \$149,217 in savings. We would like to award **the 2014 Military Group of the Year to the The Fishbowl Student Ministry “Center White Rope Program**

The 2014 Retired Biloxian Volunteer of the Year has been volunteering at Back Bay Mission since 2010. Exhibiting dedication and compassion to all who walk through the doors of the Micah Day Center She has been a mother, sister, and friend to staff, visitors and Day Center guest who utilize its services and programs to help change their lives. Born in Biloxi she sees her work at the Day Center as an opportunity to make her beloved Biloxi a great place to live. She started volunteering at the Micah Day Center one month after it opened in 2010. The Micah Day Center provides a place where people may find respite from the outdoors, interface with various organizations and enjoy basic services such as showers, laundry haircuts, mail and computer access. She manages the distribution of clothing and other needed items, she helps with laundry services and ensures that the Day Center is clean and in top condition. Last year she provided services to 1693 guests, distributed 528 hygiene kits, and helped process 3114 individuals for shower use. She also coordinates with other organizations to make sure they have all they need to assist those in need. She is truly a community friend and ambassador for the City and for Back Bay Mission. I am proud to present Ethel Curry as **the 2012 Retired Biloxian Volunteer of the Year.**

The 2014 Community Volunteer Has served the community for over 20 years in numerous capacities. She has always had a passion for volunteerism. There is a short list of individuals that would do anything when it comes to volunteering and she is one of them, a true testament to how fantastic this volunteer is. Volunteerism is something she passed on to her children in fact 7 years ago her daughter was honored as youth volunteer of the year. She drove her daughter to all of these opportunities and volunteered right along with her, picking up trash at the coastal cleanup, serving food for the homeless and walking for a cure, it was her guidance that led her daughter to contribute her time to those in need. Through the years she has done things for her girls Nativity BVM Elementary, Mercy Cross High School, & St. Patricks High School at concession stands, Field trips, fundraisers, picnics, field days, & cookie sales. She can also be found donating her time with St. Michael's Church for fundraisers, festivals or parish needs. She is also a member of Children's International Summer Villages, now known as CISV. This past summer she spent most of her time with the international students maintaining the campsite and providing valuable resources for their time spent on the MS Gulf Coast. She is an extremely family person and a very hard working individual. It is with great pleasure to announce the **2014 Community Volunteer of the Year- Katherine Doyle, who had to miss her youngest daughters soft ball game to be here.**

The 2014 Distinguished Volunteer of the year defines the meaning of the word “volunteer”, and she is a very passionate volunteer. When given a mission she is committed no matter what obstacles get in her way. In her professional life she was employed as teacher of students with special needs, she is now retired from teaching. You will never find anyone with a bigger heart. She never turns down a project and often seeks out opportunities always knowing the perfect time to appear just when needed most. She never complains, is always on the run and can out last and out run everyone. She has been involved with Special Olympics for over 20 years, traveling around the state judging, coaching or just lending a helping hand so “her children” can participate. Some other events she is involved with is All special needs City

events and Challenger League sports, Senior Events, Hiller Park events, Farmers Market events, Halloween events, and at Fatima Church. She has opened up her home to those in need. She also makes sure her entire family is there helping out. She is very passionate and will do whatever is needed to make the event or program a success. She is an amazing and incredible woman and is "the best kept secret" because she is a behind the scenes kind of worker, so it is time she gets the recognition she deserves. Over the years she has given hundreds of hours to making the city of Biloxi a great place to live and play! We are very fortunate to have our 2014 **Distinguished volunteer of the year. Shirley Lovelace Please stand**

This concludes our program. Thank you to all the nominees and winners for making a difference in our city. We will now open the food lines and our guest of honor will lead the way. I would like to thank the Biloxi Bacon brigade for the preparation of food we have for you tonight. Also, would like to thank Laurie Rosetti for her help in making this event happen. Thank you again.