

2014 Governor's Volunteer Awards

On behalf of the Governor, OneStar Foundation is proud to announce the winners of the 31st Annual Governor's Volunteer Awards. The long standing tradition of the Governor's Volunteer Awards strives to recognize those who dedicate their talents and skills to help their fellow Texans. The winners were honored at the Governor's Volunteer Award Ceremony held during the [Texas Nonprofit Summit](#) on September 17, 2014.



From left to right: Michelle Hagerty (Texas Master Naturalist Program), Oscar Cole, Virgil Teter, Jr., Elise Clements, Katherine Martin, Susan Copeland (Heart of Texas RSVP)

Governor's Lonestar Achievement Award Virgil Teter, Jr. (Waco)



Feeding the hungry on a massive scale was just a dream more than 20 years ago when Virgil Teter came back to Texas to run the news operation at an award winning television station. He brought with him an idea that would grow from meager beginnings to become what today is the largest one-day food drive in the state of Texas.

The first food drive in 1990 consisted of 7 counties and gathered 84,435 pounds of food. This past year "Food for Families" provided food for 37 pantries in 9 counties throughout Central Texas and gathered more than 1.5 million pounds of food.

The entire Friday before Thanksgiving Day, KWTX TV Channel 10 in Waco, is dedicated to live coverage of the Food for Families effort in Waco, Temple, Belton, Killeen, Copperas Cove, Harker Heights, Gatesville, Mexia, Clifton, Meridian, Fairfield, Groesbeck, Cameron and other communities in the heart of the state.

This event brings thousands of volunteers from dozens of communities together: schools, churches, civic groups, major businesses, military units on Fort Hood, even Texas Prison units in Gatesville compete with each other to see who can gather the largest amounts of food.

In the past 24 years over 20,826,549 pounds of food has been collected.

First Lady's Rising Star Award

Elise Clements (Denton)



Elise Clements is an exceptional Girl Scout. She completed a yearlong project to earn her Girl Scout Silver Award by having a Texas Historical Commission Marker made for Miss Beulah Harriss, Denton's own very first Girl Scout.

Elise gathered so much information on Miss Harriss that she wanted to share it with the community. She asked Mayor Mark Burroughs to proclaim 2/27/14 as Beulah Harriss Day. Elise organized a reception displaying her findings. Girl Scouts can now earn a Beulah Harriss patch designed by Elise.

On June 3, 2014, Elise was given permission by the Denton Parks Board to place a Beulah Harriss Texas Historical Marker in the Quakertown Park where the Girl Scout Little House once stood. Also, the Denton County Historical Commission submitted an application for an Undertold Story Historical Marker.

Elise plans to continue to hold a Beulah Harriss Day event in Denton each year. This day will honor all forgotten citizens and their untold stories. The public will be invited to bring their favorite untold story and share it with the community.

Elise is also working with University of North Texas to have a marker made that will document Miss Harriss' years of service at the college from 1914-1960 and will be placed at the location where the Harriss Gymnasium once stood.

Twice a week, Elise volunteers at the North Branch Library during the summer reading program and is also a member of the Library Teen Advisory Board. She also volunteers once a month with Our Daily Bread to make weekend snack bags for the homeless. Elise volunteers at least 100 hours each year and has received the Gold President's Volunteer Service Award for the last 3 years.

Community Leadership Award Texas Master Naturalist Program (Kerrville) – *tie for award*



The Texas Master Naturalist Program exists to make a positive difference in the quality of the environment in Texas. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension serve as sponsors for the program

Together they provide education, outreach and service to their community with an emphasis on how to manage Texas' natural resources.

Texas Master Naturalist (TMN) was instrumental in transforming Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area (LLELA) into a dynamic, publicly managed wildlife preserve with many exciting projects constantly underway. With a full time staff of 3 and 2000 acres to manage and restore, only a fraction of the current projects could be accomplished without the assistance of the Master Naturalist Program. This has also resulted in a huge increase in community involvement in habitat conservation and environmental education.

TMN provides volunteers with 40 hours of initial training, including field and classroom instruction and 8 hours of advanced training annually customized to meet the needs of local environmental issues. Certified Master Naturalist Volunteers then give 40 hours of community service to create a better environment for their fellow Texans. Over 8,850 volunteers have been trained to date dedicating over 2.4 million hours valued at more than \$53.9 million to date impacting over 206,300 acres and over 1,866 miles of trails

Twenty new partnerships were developed by TMN chapters statewide in 2013 with over 370 partnerships established statewide.

The Master Naturalist program has been so successful in Texas that it has been replicated in 29 other states.

Community Leadership Award

Heart of Texas RSVP (Waco) – *tie for award*



Heart of Texas RSVP provides support and services to over 75 nonprofits, schools, nursing homes, and citizens in their community. RSVP is constantly involved in programs including food drives, civic development, public safety and education. They have developed a “Kids Kamp”, helped staff food banks, crisis centers and even worked with financial literacy programs to benefit the Heart of Texas communities.

As a result of the explosion of the fertilizer plant last year in West, Texas, RSVP provided over 10,075 man hours and supervised over 400 volunteers in West, Texas alone. RSVP worked tirelessly for months to provide and coordinate services and goods to people in the community of West and continue to meet the needs in the West community as they arise.

RSVP has provided rich learning opportunities each semester for students from McLennan College, Baylor University, Texas State Technical College and Tarleton University. These interns are an additional resource to the community as many of them are assigned individual projects in which the intern is directly assisting other community agencies.

The Heart of Texas Health Fair, hosted by RSVP, serves well over 5,000 participants with free health screenings and information. They also organize several workshops and conferences such as the Adult Protective Services Event that trains over 65 senior care workers annually. The MCC Heart of Texas RSVP program also trains older disadvantaged seniors for future employment.

Senior Corps Community Impact Award Oscar Cole (Beaumont)



For the past 21 years, Oscar Cole, aka “Grandpa”, has been volunteering his time and talents as a Senior Corps Foster Grandparent with the youth at a residential operation, Boys Haven, Inc. which serves boys ages 5 to 17 and provides a port for stormy times in their lives. Many of these boys come from single parent homes and are in need of a more structured environment. Several of them are there long term and stay at the residence until they graduate high school.

Oscar recruited his church to get involved with these youth as well. The church hosts a party for the boys and provides them with gifts during the holidays. Oscar has been named Foster Grandparent of the Year, received the President’s Volunteer Service Award for completing 4,000 or more hours of service and received his 20 year service award pin from the Foster Grandparent Program. He has accumulated over 20,000 hours of service to these young men.

Oscar rarely misses a day of volunteering and even takes the boys fishing some Sunday afternoons. Most of his Saturdays are spent serving at a second volunteering station, D.A.A.R.C./Unit Treatment Center, being a foster grandparent to youth while their parents attend required drug treatment classes.

Oscar frequently has boys return as men to visit with him and show appreciation for the impact he has made on their lives.

Boys Haven, Inc. recently announced they are adding an additional building to their campus. In recognition of the service and dedication “Grandpa” Oscar Cole has given to Boys Haven the new building will be named the “Grandpa Cole Education Complex” in honor of Mr. Cole.

AmeriCorps "Make a Difference" Katherine Martin (Dallas)



As an AmeriCorps member Katie served as the inaugural Site Coordinator at Charles Rice Learning Center, a new partner for Reading Partners Dallas and proceeded to build one of their most successful school sites in Dallas.

Katie transformed a storage room into a vibrant learning space that is a wonderland of books for students of all ages. Katie was a warm welcoming presence at the heart of the reading center and had a knack for getting students who had struggled in the classroom to come alive in their tutoring sessions. Katie created such an inviting and positive environment that whenever she went to a classroom, all of the students would raise their hands so she would pick them for tutoring.

Due to Katie's great work ethic, professionalism, and individualized approach with each teacher and volunteer, over 90% of all enrolled students narrowed their achievement gap while participating in the program.

Wanting to embrace other service opportunities in her community, Katie also attained a new partner in Zeta Phi Beta Sorority which led to increased volunteer numbers bringing the Reading Center to capacity for students and tutors. In addition, she organized the Reading Partners Dallas team to serve at a "9/11 Day of Service" event.
