



## **RIFA's Volunteer Appreciation Brunch & Awards 2024**

Presented by Cadence Bank and Love & Truth Church

Award winners are recognized for their service to RIFA in 2023

### **RIFA Rockstars:** Honorable Mention

- Heather Button: Heather has a willingness to do whatever it takes to get things done in the Soup Kitchen. From food prep to inventory, to interacting with patrons or welcoming new volunteers, Heather is a “getter-doner”.
- Ashley Drown: Ashley has been serving RIFA for over a decade. Her love for people and passion for serving are matchless. She is a recruiting powerhouse—for Soup Kitchen, Pack the Bus, and Pack the Truck. If RIFA needs volunteers, she'll be there with reinforcements!
- Jaida Ingram: Jaida is a fabulous young lady! She started volunteering on the weekends in the Soup Kitchen with her mother and little sister. In 2023, she served on the Bus Stop Cafe two days a week where she loved the kids and made sure they had food in their hands.

### **Dan Ward Snack Backpack Award:** Award to recognize people who make RIFA's biggest ministry possible so children can have meals on the weekends

- Lauren "LOLO" Cobb—Two words: Gospel Brunch. If you haven't experienced this, live and in person, let it become part of your holiday traditions. \$56,921 raised—which equals 9,486 Snack Backpacks. Nearly two months worth of weekend food for our most vulnerable kiddos. What a heart she has—beautiful inside and out.

### **Pickup Driver Award:** Award for volunteers who drive all over the city to pick up food donations from local establishments

- Raul Dominguez—Raul is a quiet, unassuming, jack-of-all trades, who prefers behind the scenes work. Raul has faithfully picked up Olive Garden and Dollar General donations. He goes beyond the call of duty as he stocks the Choice Food Pantry, walk-in freezer, and crates Snack Backpack items.

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### **Warehouse Award:** Award for people who help in various ways to keep the RIFA warehouse manageable and organized

- Rebecca Young—Rebecca is amazing and goes above and beyond! She is always willing to help—no matter the task! She is willing and able to serve in every part of the building—from the donations door to the Soup Kitchen, the Choice Food Pantry to the warehouse. She is a part of the fabric of RIFA. We're not sure what we would do without her!

**Board Member of the Year:** Award to recognize a member of RIFA's Board of Directors who has gone above and beyond in service

- Mandy White—Mandy is our board President and is an excellent ambassador for RIFA! Her leadership at RIFA and in the community allows us to lead and engage the community in the fight against hunger.

**Senior Staples Award:** Award for volunteers who help with RIFA's Senior Staples ministry, which provides thirty pounds of staple food items to food-insecure senior citizens each month

- Jim & Carol Wallace—Month after month, year after year, Jim and Carol are ready and willing to serve. They are devoted volunteers who are excited to do whatever they can to serve our community.

**Special Projects Award:** Award for a volunteer who has helped RIFA in unique ways

- BlueCross BlueShield—initiated in summer 2023, Team Blue staff members have provided nearly 1000 cards of care and encouragement for our Senior adult population that are delivered along with our Senior Staples boxes and CSA produce bags. Their efforts have inspired other groups and organizations to do the same, including students from one of our Snack Backpack recipient schools!

**Thrift Store Award:** Award for volunteer who has provided tremendous help in RIFA's Thrift Store

- The Crew (Ann, Cindy, Hanne, Sandra, & Tammy)—Faithful. Fun. Feisty. Committed. These women have over 20 plus years of combined Thrift Store expertise! They welcome new volunteers to their crew with joy and ease as they teach others how to best serve the Thrift Store, and ultimately the One who sent them here.

**Team Impact Award:** Award for a team that has done great volunteer work at RIFA

- Tennessee College of Applied Technology—Christine Rowland led TCAT students to log 120 hours donated in 2023. Everything from CSA Produce to Snack Backpack, Thrift Store to donations door. Thanks to 46 TCAT volunteers, Construction 2023 was cleaned up in less than 2 hours!

**Driving Force Award:** Award for volunteers who have taken initiative and been extra eager in serving at RIFA and encouraging others to serve

- RJ Field—RJ is part of the Union University Serve team. He is a weekly volunteer and took on any job we gave him! He has been a part of Snack Backpack delivery, organized a group of Spanish-speaking volunteers to volunteer at a breast cancer screening event, and organized Union University students to serve meals throughout the community, regardless of weather conditions.

**Reverend Don Daniel Servant's Heart Award:** Award for volunteers who demonstrate what it means to have the heart of a servant. These volunteers have a heart for putting others before themselves, and they show compassion in their service in the Soup Kitchen.

- Sarah Gibson—Sarah has a precious smile and willing heart. Her calming presence in the Soup Kitchen is a gift to all she encounters. She serves tirelessly and is warm and gracious to all.

**David Hallock Volunteer of the Year Award:** Award for a volunteer who serves consistently and faithfully and is willing to serve in all areas of RIFA

- Denise Dyer—Whether it's Snack Backpack, the Bus Stop Cafe, Senior Staples, or any other ministry or task, Denise is there!. She helped distribute Hunger-Free Holiday Bags and is willing to jump in when extra hands are needed in the Soup Kitchen. Her heart for RIFA and our community is incredible to witness.

**Lifetime Achievement Award:** Award for a volunteer who has made a meaningful impact on RIFA and the community through many years of service

- Ann Tafoya—Since 2007, Ann has served in the Thrift Store and Donations Processing area. She loves God and loves people. She teaches new volunteers how to serve in the Thrift Store and is a joy to be around. She has wisdom to offer all. She is a beautiful servant leader who serves behind-the-scenes, modeling the call to “serve and not be served”.