

## **For Service in 2024**

### **RIFA Rockstars:**

*Libby Webb*—Libby is always willing to serve wherever needed! Soup Kitchen, Thrift Store, Choice Pantry or Bus Stop Cafe. We appreciate Libby's kind spirit and enthusiasm for all that RIFA does! Volunteering since May 2024.

*Addie Wilson*—Reliable. Conscientious. Veteran volunteer—a fixture in our Choice Pantry. OG Soups. Volunteering since June 2024.

*Jeremy Chandler*—Jeremy jumped right into service at RIFA, volunteering almost immediately for SBP Delivery, serving on the Bus Stop Cafe, winning the hearts of all who interact with him! So gracious and willing. Volunteering since June 2024

### **The Dan Ward Snack Backpack Award:**

*Carolyn Pope & Carol Griffin*—Carol and Carolyn are a dynamic duo who just happen to be cousins! These ladies show us constantly how to “do your 80s”right. Carolyn Pope has been volunteering since 2014—I’ve known her to be gracious and kind, with a reserved, sweet nature. Carol Griffin, retired from years in the school system, came to us in 2020. Expert SBP-ers, you will usually find at opposite ends of the assembly line, tying bags, sharing stories. Faithful and ever-present. We’re grateful for their commitment to making sure over 1000 schoolchildren a week receive weekend food.

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

*Robert Eatman*—Snack Backpack and Longhorn. Faithful, energetic—makes the Energizer Rabbit look lazy! Constant supporter of RIFA, professionally and on social media.

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

*Joe Garner*—Joe has become a fabulous fixture in our Warehouse. His laid-back spirit combined with his work ethic makes him a blessing to all who encounter him—whether it be at the Door or in the Warehouse. He’s a man of many talents, and we’re grateful for his service.

### **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:**

*Linda Nickell*—Ever faithful, ready to do whatever it takes! Linda is ready and able—whether it’s SBP or serving in the SK. Her quiet presence and gentle spirit make her a joy to be around.

### **Special Projects Award—Award for a volunteer/organization who have helped RIFA in unique ways:**

*POEMS Co-Op*—started with a group visit in November 2023. Did Food Sorting/HFH Bags, TS—everything. Then they put their creative talents to work, making over 500 cards for HFH bags, Senior Staples boxes, and Valentine Treat bags for our volunteers—with a surprise happy for our staff. Representing POEMS Homeschool Co-op is KyLynn Daniels.

**Thrift Store Award:**

*Mary Hill*—Faithful. Dependable. Willing. Committed.

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

*Augustine School*

Since 2023, Augustine School has committed their time, energies, and talents to RIFA. Grades 3-5 come and pack snack backpacks and PreK-Grade 2 make the notes of encouragement/scripture that go into the bags! Total numbers? 343 service hours, 9200 notes, and 11,650 backpacks! (2024: 101 hours, 4200 cards, and 4935 backpacks).

**Driving Force Award—Award for volunteers who have taken initiative and have gone the extra mile, both in serving at RIFA and encouraging others to serve:**

*Melissa Hill*

Ever since Planet Fitness staff came in the door, they have been a blessing. And their enthusiasm for what we do is contagious—and their fearless leader is to thank for that! Organizing food drives (November 2024–45 lbs), sponsoring a Canstruction table, promoting RIFA’s mission to their clients, serving in the Warehouse, TS, Pack The Bus and the SK (50 hours since 2023). In fact, Melissa and her team are always willing to take a Saturday AM breakfast shift, if I have a last-minute need!

**Reverend Don Daniel Servant's Heart Award (Soup Kitchen Award)--Award for volunteers who demonstrate what it means to have the heart of a servant.**

*Peggy Pate*

Delightful. Bringer of joy and yummy breakfast food. Always there with a smile, and a kind word. Since 2020, this volunteer has been lighting up our dining room. Her gracious ways and spunky spirit make her beloved by patrons, volunteers, and staff. She epitomizes the servant’s heart as she serves in any way asked of her—whether it’s sweeping a floor, wiping down tables, or making sure our physically-limited patrons have just what they need! She is a nourisher of the heart and the belly! This year’s Don Daniel Servant’s Heart Award goes to—Mrs. Peggy Pate.

**NEW: All in the Family Award**

*The Daniels Family*

I don’t even know where to start! Since this adorable crew first set foot in the building, they have been a blessing. It started with a POEMS visit (there’s a connection). It all started with Snack Backpacks. Then onto Food Sorting—where they helped us transform the area (2.0). Whether it’s sorting and organizing Christmas in the attic, making travel outreach bags, helping Abby coordinate all of the fabulous outreach donations, making crayon bags—whatever the task, they do it with willing hearts, competent hands, and just so much fun! Even when allergies and springtime “ick” keep them at home, I’ll get a text asking, “what can we do?” Isn’t that a Volunteer Coordinator’s dream!

The inaugural recipients of the All in the Family award are The Daniels Family! KyLynn, Sophia, Everly, and Emmaline. Nate, thank you for sharing your beautiful family with us—we love you, too!

**David Hallock Volunteer of the Year Award—this prestigious award is named for David Hollock, retired Executive Director of RIFA, founder of Second Harvest Food Bank, and a past recipient of Jackson Exchange Club’s Man of the Year. This award goes to a volunteer who serves consistently and faithfully—and is willing to serve in all areas of RIFA:**

*Ashley Parsons*

I get to meet the most incredible people—and this person is no exception! From the moment she sat across the desk from me, she was eager and willing to serve wherever needed. “Mondays and Tuesdays are RIFA’s,” she said. Need a SBP delivery person for Thelma Barker? A Bus Stop Cafe volunteer—sweating through the summer? Extra help in the Soup Kitchen, Thrift Store, Food Sorting, you name it, she’s done it—and she does it with joy! And so very well. She definitely has her RIFA Passport stamped—and then some!

### **Service Anniversary Award:**

*Jan Baker (20 years)*

Twenty years ago, Jan began coordinating/organizing/serving our Thursday night evening meal. Every Thursday night, without fail, she and her team made (and continue to make) sure our most vulnerable friends had a yummy dinner. With her go-getter personality and joyful ways, she not only helped nourish folks physically—but also emotionally, feeding the belly—and the heart. (By the way, since I like to do RIFA math, that’s about 1000 Thursday nights—give or take!)

She tirelessly recruited rotations of volunteers—many of whom became her “regulars.” Matt Campbell and Joey Ferguson, two of the Thursday night regular volunteers shared this with us:

"Jan always has a funny story to tell rather about her dog or work day. One particular adventure involving cats, dogs, and ashes—you’ll have to ask her about it!"

Joey remembers Jan as being very resourceful, never letting any **THING** go to waste. And though she is petite in stature, she is “tall” in character and courage, dealing with whatever challenges might come about!

“Jan deserves this award. Someone so dedicated—who comes in every week, never complaining, she is so uplifting and always encouraging," said Matt Campbell.

Because of these qualities and Jan’s tenacity, the Tuesday evening meal became a reality! Matt Campbell, who now oversees the first three Tuesdays of the month, loves Jan for her humor, energy, and drive!

It is our privilege and honor to award Jan Baker for her 20 years of “platinum” years of service to RIFA!