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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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5 Over 50 Honorees Celebrated during Older Americans Month

In tough times, communities find strength in people—and people find strength in their communities. In the past year, we’ve seen this time and again in our region as friends, neighbors, businesses and nonprofit organizations have found new ways to support each other during the ongoing pandemic and the challenges it’s introduced.

In our community, older adults are a key source of this strength. Through their experiences, successes, and difficulties, they have built resilience that helps them to face new challenges. When communities tap into this, they become stronger too.

Each May, the Administration for Community Living (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) leads the celebration of Older Americans Month (OAM). This year’s theme is *Communities of Strength*, recognizing the important role older adults play in fostering the connection and engagement that build strong, resilient communities.

Also each May Aging Together underscores the ACL’s annual Older American’s Month designation by honoring five older adults in our own region, one from each county, in the “5 Over 50” celebration (postponed to a virtual event in September for 2020 due to the pandemic). This year’s honorees exemplify their contributions to building *Communities of Strength* in their own distinctive way. A short bio of each is follows this press release.

The honorees are chosen from a number of nominations received from each county.

Event Specifics

Date: May 20, 2021

Time: 6:30pm

Venue: Virtual on Facebook Live (www.facebook.com/agingtogether) You do not have to be a member of Facebook to view.

Presented by: Culpeper Media Network

Sponsored by: AARP Virginia, Culpeper Human Services, Culpeper Star Exponent, Innovative Insurance Group/Sharon Accardo, Lake of the Woods Lions Club, Rappahannock Pantry, Rappahannock Rapidan Community Services, Skyline CAP

Honorees

Culpeper County: **Mr. Frank Bossio**
Fauquier County: **Ms. Liz Danielson**
Madison County: **Ms. Delano "Dink" Kreis**
Orange County: **Ms. Donalda Lovelace**
Rappahannock County: **Ms. Mimi Forbes**

For more on Older Americans Month: www.acl.gov

The mission of Aging Together is, through partnerships, to connect people to communities and resources to improve quality of life as we age. Aging Together serves the counties of Culpeper, Fauquier, Orange, Madison and Rappahannock.

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Frank Bossio



Donalda Lovelace



Rev. Liz Danielson



Dink Kreis



Mimi Forbes

Culpeper County Honoree: FRANK BOSSIO

As County Administrator for Culpeper from 2002 until his retirement in 2015, Frank Bossio demonstrated good citizenship, mentorship and leadership and greatly impacted hundreds of programs and services that improved the County. But according to Sue Hansohn who nominated Frank, one of his greatest passions was to serve younger people which he did for over 20 years in our community. His energy for forward-thinking and “go get it” initiative inspired his volunteerism in programs involving students of local public schools through organizations like Career Partners, Incorporated (CPI), a Culpeper based nonprofit with the mission of inspiring students for workplace preparedness through connection with local business, government and community. He was involved in the creation of several community programs sponsored by CPI that continue to touch the lives of thousands of students and families each year, including a STEM program for all Culpeper fifth graders and a Maker Energy Faire for all ages. In 2016, Frank was a founding member of Culpeper County’s New Pathways Tech, Inc. and created a training program to teach students of all ages CNC Machining.

Frank is a retired Navy Captain with 27 years of service as a naval aviator. This influenced his participation as a long-time member of the Young Eagles Program, which flies kids between the ages of 8-18 in a small airplane, thus introducing numerous youngsters to the magic of flight. He has been very involved in the growth of the Culpeper County Airport and its programs, and the Culpeper Regional Air Fest, an aviation outreach program that celebrated its 20th year in 2019.

Frank was a member of the steering committee that founded Culpeper’s downtown revitalization organization, Culpeper Renaissance, and served on that Board from 2002-2020. He has also served on the Board of Directors of the Culpeper County Chamber of Commerce, Culpeper Department of Tourism, Workforce Development Board, Healthy Culpeper, and was an Executive Committee Member for Career Partners. He also served on the Service Academy Board and as a member of the American Association of Airport Executives.

As Ms. Hansohn states. “Frank is a humble man who has served others his entire life though his community involvement and volunteer work and has positively impacted our community. He exemplifies the true meaning of a volunteer.”

Fauquier County: LIZ DANIELSEN

Reverend Liz Danielsen is an ordained minister with an emphasis on hospital and hospice ministry. When she encountered unmet needs to support those who are chronically ill, dying, or grieving, she founded Spiritual Care Support Ministries Inc in Warrenton. She not only directs the organization but also serves as a certified Bereavement Facilitator and Death and Grief Counselor. She conducts support groups, training sessions, and retreats; and when invited, she also preaches and shares the ministry of SCSM at churches throughout Virginia, the USA and overseas.

Liz was inspired after caring for her own mother and then volunteering for several Hospice organizations. She gained a vast amount of knowledge at the bedsides of hospice patients and continued her education to become a hospice Chaplain. Liz’s pastoral education training was done at Somerset Medical Center in Somerville, NJ. She has been on staff and has ministered as a Chaplain at Newton Memorial Hospital and The Karen Ann Quinlan Hospice in New Jersey, as well as The Hospice of the Piedmont and Culpeper Regional Hospital in Culpeper, Virginia.

In 1989 she had a vision for Spiritual Support Care Ministries and a ministry center. The center would be a place to assist people who suffer from the emotional, physical, and spiritual pain of loss in their lives. The center would provide the support they need emotionally. In March, 2004 that vision became a reality.

Journey from Heartache to Hope is a book written by Reverend Liz – sub-titled, “God’s Miraculous Healing Power”. As her nominator shares, after numerous personal tragic losses, Liz “helped me feel embraced and loved and surrounded by support during a desperate time in my life. She certainly is an inspiration and blessing for all the counties, states, and countries that her center touches!”

Madison County: DELANO “DINK” KREIS

Dink’s nomination states: “After moving to Madison County more than 16 years ago, Dink dove in and made it her personal mission to give back to the community she now calls home.” Born and raised in Denver, Dink attended the University of Colorado. Service to community began early on as she spent some time in Texas where she served as a facilitator for Right Trail, which offered equine-assisted psychotherapy, more plainly described as using horses to help children.

During her almost two decades’ residency in Madison County, Dink has served a variety of nonprofit organizations. She was a founding member of Madison County Educational Foundation, working in partnership with Madison County Public Schools and the community to identify ways to create a resilient and successful community through education. She also served as an officer in the Lion’s Club and prior to the pandemic was often seen in Skyline’s Head Start classrooms helping to perform vision screenings for the children. Dink supported many other projects for the Madison Lion’s Club, including their annual community calendar sale which funded many of the Club’s efforts. The Lion’s Club website reveals her pictured next to club members following a trash pick-up project on Route 231, which further shows her commitment to Madison County and preserving its natural beauty.

Dink began serving on Skyline’s CAP Board of Directors in 2012 and is now in her second five-year term. She serves on the vestry of Piedmont Episcopal Church and helps with their outreach in the Madison community. She started an annual sock drive by herself a few years ago, working with Piedmont Episcopal and other area churches to collect warm socks for those in need.

Other organizations fortified by Dink’s volunteerism include the Literacy Council of Madison County, which helps adult learners; Friends of the Library, the fundraising arm of the Madison County Library; Rural Madison, an organization dedicated to careful and responsible growth in Madison County; and MESA (Madison Emergency Services Association), a resource for Madison County neighbors during times of need. In the days before COVID, it was not unusual to see Dink out and about in the community advocating for one or more of these organizations, and post-pandemic Madison will undoubtedly see her resurface to continue her outreach!

It seems that helping others *is* her career. In her own words, her “working career has consisted mostly of volunteerism.”

Orange County: DONALDA LOVELACE

A large number of peers, acquaintances and friends stepped up to nominate Donalda. As they say, “Donalda’s exemplary dedication and commitment to community service at Lake of the Woods (LOW), as well as in Orange County and the five-county region, makes her especially deserving of this award.”

Donalda’s professional skills as a social worker and nonprofit executive, coupled with her compassion for older adults, have been tremendous assets to LOWLINC (Lake of the Woods) during the past five years. Donalda joined the LOWLINC board in January 2016, and will continue through 2021. In 2016, when Donalda chaired the LOWLINC fundraising committee, the organization received a grant from the Culpeper Wellness Foundation to develop a Health Matters Toolkit to help older adults prepare for and navigate healthcare appointments. Donalda led outreach efforts for its distribution to seniors in Orange County, including to African-American churches. As fundraising chair, Donalda also led plans for LOWLINC’s initial fundraisers: a successful and fun 1950s sock hop in 2017 and the first “Art of Wine” community wine-tasting event in 2018.

More recently, she has chaired the Membership Intake program for LOWLINC, Lake of the Wood’s “aging in place” Village program to assist older residents remain in their homes. She brings to this work her compassion for older adults, especially the most vulnerable. She interviews potential members and uses her perceptive interpersonal skills to assess need for services, while determining whether LOWLINC can meet those needs.

Other organizations at Lake of the Woods that have benefitted by Donalda’s are the LOW Visual Arts Council,

Pools Committee, and the Environmental Control Committee. She joined the LOW Lioness Club after moving to Lake of the Woods in 2010, and has been an active volunteer for the Lioness/Lions Wilderness Food Pantry. She served as an officer of the LOW Lioness Club before becoming president 2017-2018. As president, Donalda helped resolve challenges in legal status, and drove their recognition as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. She also served on the Germanna Community College Scholarship Committee providing scholarships to low-income single parents attending Germanna. Beyond her involvement in the local LOW Lions Lioness Club, Donalda is North American Membership Initiative Champion, responsible in Lions District 24 for 94 clubs, and Zone Chair in the Blue Ridge Region.

Donalda's community service has extended beyond Lake of the Woods with her involvement and leadership in several Orange County and regional social service organizations. Donalda was a member, representing Orange County, of the Rappahannock-Rapidan Community Services (RRCS) board of directors, completing six years in 2020. During her term, she served in several leadership capacities, including board 1st vice president and secretary and chair of the Program Committee. Donalda also served as a board member on the Orange County Department of Social Services and the The ARC of North Central Virginia, which includes four counties, one of which is Orange.

In sum, Donalda Lovelace has shared her many talents and left a mark on local and regional community organizations, each of which is stronger for her involvement and dedication.

Rappahannock County: MIMI FORBES

The Rappahannock Food Pantry is in many ways the beating heart of Rappahannock County, and Mini Forbes is the force at the center of this extraordinary volunteer effort to support residents. Pantry volunteer and board member, Gwen Bates, says they threw away the mold after Mimi's birth. She is described as an energizer bunny that engenders all to "hop enthusiastically to her tireless beat"; a true multi-tasker able to respond to multiple questions and issues simultaneously from volunteers, clients or a ringing phone; and "Saucy Bossy Pants". And when you get to know Mimi, you recognize that all these descriptions and monikers arise from complete respect and affection. All are welcomed to the Rappahannock Pantry as though they are family. And they can bring any challenge in front of Mimi, not just food, and she usually finds a way to confront it.

Since 2009 Mimi efficiently manages over a hundred volunteers at the Pantry, as well as thousands of tasks required to ensure smooth-running processes. She is on high alert at times like the Thanksgiving & Christmas seasons when she assures there are turkeys for Thanksgiving, gifts for the children at Christmas, and hams with all the trimmings for families. But the amazing part of Mimi goes beyond helping families with food, and to helping with other support services in the community such as health care, furniture, housing, and even used cars when they are donated. Her service benefits literally hundreds of recipients.

The role of the pantry has been especially critical in the age of COVID, not only supplying much-needed food to an increased number of families under duress but also serving as a nexus of information about other crucial community services. Clearly to Mimi, the volunteers and patrons are "family," and the pantry is a compassionate mission through which neighbors can help support each other.

Mimi exemplifies the older adult who has essentially retired from their former career but remains in the workforce for reasons such as "service-to-others". She has created a "hub" of centralized support where anyone can feel cared for and welcome. She may run a tight ship, but it's never devoid of a way to help. In her humble way she brushes off the accolades, saying "but I'm just doing my job". Can anyone imagine Rappahannock County if Mimi wasn't "just doing her job?"

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