

# 10 Who Make A Difference



The 10 Who Make A Difference Awards recognize 10 outstanding individuals or groups within Southeastern Minnesota and Northern Iowa who have made an impact in their community through volunteering. Each year [KTTC Television](#) and United Way of Olmsted County ask the public and non-profit organizations to nominate an individual or a group who have made a difference in their community. A judging panel of community members have reviewed the nominations and selected 10 individuals and/or groups to receive this award.

The 23rd annual KTTC Television and United Way of Olmsted County 10 Who Make a Difference Award Ceremony will occur on Wednesday, June 22 at 11:30 a.m. at the Rochesterfest Main Stage. This year's winners include Carrie Clark, Diane Ilstrup, Fred Regal Catering, Kitchen for a Cause, Martin Omerichamoi, Rochester Reading Champions, Mary Rossman, Chatfield Student Service Club Leadership Team, Arlan Walton, and the Women's Leadership Initiative of Mower County.

## **Carrie Clark**

Clark is a very active volunteer in Olmsted County, regularly giving back to causes she identifies with. From sharing her story with people going through treatment at the Nicotine Dependency Center to working and volunteering with NAMI, Clark is being a light for those struggling in her community. She also sits on four boards: Community Service Advisory Board, SE Minnesota Adult and Children's Mental Health Local Advisory Council, CREST, and the SE Minnesota Adult & Children's Mobile Crisis Steering Committee. Clark is an advocate for people struggling with addiction, mental illness, homelessness, incarcerated youth, the underserved in the community, and people with physical disabilities.



### **Diane Ilstrup**

Ilstrup has served in numerous leadership capacities with the Rotary Club of Rochester since joining in 1988. Near and dear to Diane's heart is the STRIVE program, Students Taking a Renewed Interest in the Value of Education. The Greater Rochester Rotary Club started the STRIVE program in 1999 at John Marshall High School, at the time that Diane Ilstrup was principal. Diane embraced the program, believing in its potential to make a brighter future for many high school students. STRIVE pairs a high school senior who has been challenged academically with an adult mentor, usually a Rotary member, during the student's senior year. STRIVE mentors make a difference by giving hope and direction, helping the student set goals, improving academics, making friendships and celebrating accomplishments



Ilstrup became very instrumental in expanding the program beyond John Marshall High School to all the public high schools and was instrumental in expanding STRIVE to all three Rochester Rotary clubs. Years after she retired as a school principal, Diane remains very active in promoting, improving, and growing STRIVE. She currently is the co-chair of STRIVE for all 3 Rotary clubs.

### **Fred Regal Catering**

In 1983, Regal initiated the first ever Taste of the Town, – then called “Kitchen of the Rochester Chef's Culinary Charity.” The event has grown over the last 32 years, all the while Fred and Regal Catering have remained active participants. Proceeds raised from Taste of the Town benefit the Good Samaritan Dental Clinic, where on a monthly basis, Regal generously prepares and donates dinner for the volunteers. He also provides the meal for the biannual Dental Clinic Volunteer Appreciation event.



Outside of The Salvation Army, Regal has prepared the Thanksgiving meal for the International Thanksgiving, and more recently he has been making the Thanksgiving meal at Peace Lutheran Church.

### **Kitchen for a Cause**

Harry Kerr and VFW Post 1215 have provided support to Zumbro Valley Health Center for more than 15 years to assist veterans in our community experiencing homelessness. Kerr served as the project manager for an exceptional group of area veterans who helped build out a small kitchen at Zumbro Valley Health Center's 7th Street office. This building houses our Homeless Services Team, which identifies and provides housing and long-term support services to people – many of whom are veterans – experiencing homelessness in Olmsted County.



Through their efforts, Kerr and his team have, and continue to, support our organization's efforts to reduce homelessness in our community. Zumbro Valley Health Center staff are now able to provide nutritious food to people experiencing homelessness as well as those clients who have been housed, but do not have the resources to purchase food on a regular basis. In addition, staff now prepare meals for social events that allow clients to interact with others, helping them build critical social skills and reducing the isolation commonly found in people diagnosed with a serious mental illness or substance use disorder.

### **Martin Omerichamoi**

Omerichamoi has had a wide range of responsibilities through his many volunteer experiences. He has served as mentor, interpreter, motivator, advocate, and friend, and has worked with all ages – children through seniors. His volunteer experiences have ranged from serving as an election judge, weeding at Quarry Hill, volunteering as an interpreter for UN refugees, helping with disaster relief, connecting low-income people to cell phones, and volunteering with Boys and Girls Club and United Way.

Omerichamoi has been volunteering in the Rochester area since 2004 and has been especially helpful to African immigrants. He puts the needs of others before his own and is passionate in his efforts to improve the lives of others.



### **Rochester Reading Champions**

Volunteers for the Rochester Reading Champions program meet two times a week with a student who is struggling to read. Reading is a critical part of everyday life and crucial to employment and engagement as a successful, contributing member of society. Rochester Reading Champion volunteers provide their students with the opportunity to experience success, build confidence, and develop literacy skills required to change their life trajectory.

Volunteers have successfully completed 120 hours of training and practicum and prepare and execute unique research-based lesson plans aimed at meeting the specific needs of their students.



### **Mary Rossman**

Since 1998, Rossman has helped coordinate, sew and finish baby clothing and blankets with Bundles of Love, a Rochester group dedicated to helping families in need be able to provide for their babies. The group also packs layettes, and delivers "bundles" which are the layettes in homemade diaper bags.

Rossman has been on the board, has been a leader in the Rochester group of Bundles of Love of which she is a cofounder. She averages 36 hours a week doing this volunteer work.



### **Student Service Club Leadership Team**

The youth of Student Service Club in Chatfield do an incredible amount of volunteer service, often while partnering with other organizations. Some examples include semi-monthly meals provided at the Dorothy Day House, raking leaves and shoveling driveways for those who otherwise cannot through the Help Our Neighbors initiative, ringing bells for The Salvation Army, helping several organizations provide holiday gifts to those who cannot afford any, making blankets and providing goods to the Women's Shelter, donating blood, cleaning the highway through Adopt A Highway, and several others. The Student Service Club is run by students. These leaders motivate, organize, prepare, run, and provide all the logistical support for all activities.

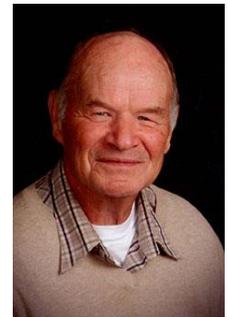


### **Arlan Walton**

Walton is a volunteer that serves faithfully at Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch, showing up many days even before the staff arrives. He specializes in construction work and fine woodworking. When he is not at the ranch, Walton is off serving individuals who need housework done that can't afford it.

Ironwood serves people with disabilities, members of the military, and youth.

Walton works on projects all related to those people they serve; building furniture for the Miracle Lodge that is used by people who stay there.



### **Women's Leadership Initiative**

The Women's Leadership Initiative of Mower County (WLI) is an organization that is run solely by volunteers. Their mission is to ensure that the basic needs of children are being met. Their main program is providing weekend food backpacks for children in grades PreK-6 for three schools in Austin as well as Leroy, Southland, Lyle, and Grand Meadow. The WLI also funds and has volunteers assist with personal care closets in all the elementary schools in Mower County. Students and families, are able to get such items as toothpaste, clothes soap, and socks as the need arises. The group is filled with caring, dedicated members who have put in countless hours to help ensure the children of Mower County have their basic needs met. The children are healthier and happier, parents are less stressed, and the schools benefit because the students are more ready to learn when their basic needs are met.

