

NOMINEES FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Senior Humanitarian nominees

Niki Delson and **Ron Kokish** were nominated as a couple. Since arriving in Carbondale in 2009, they have both become deeply involved as volunteers through RSVP, the continuation of a lifetime of service. In his nomination letter, their son Alan wrote that the couple taught the value of empathy and compassion, and emphasized the power our own, local actions have on the greater world.

Kokish serves as a volunteer with the Medicare Assistance Program, the RSVP Advisory Council, the Handyman Program and Meals on Wheels, and manages the Medicare Fraud Prevention Program for RSVP.

Delson volunteered in 2011 to revive the Nonprofit Spotlight column in the Post Independent, writing an article every other week to highlight worthwhile community organizations.

John Neal is a dedicated, trustworthy driver for Grand River Meals on Wheels and an active member of the Grand River Hospital District Volunteer Association. He manages the food commodities program for the Rifle Senior Center and often delivers food to program recipients, and organized the "Blizzard Bags" program to provide emergency food for shut-ins.

Neal also serves as the Garfield County representative to the Emergency Support Function Team and the Medical Reserve Corps for the U.S. Surgeon General. He is active with the American Red Cross Crisis Intervention Team for western Colorado. As nominator Kaaren Peck of Grand River Hospital wrote, "When disaster threatens or erupts, John is there."

Young Adult Humanitarian winner



Roberta McGowan Special to the Post Independent
Melea Sheridan, a volunteer in the physical therapy department at Grand River Hospital and Medical Center, and the 2011 Young Adult Humanitarian winner.

Melea Sheridan has been a weekly volunteer for more than two years in the radiology and physical therapy departments at Grand River Hospital. Her professional colleagues say she is always ready to learn new things, displays a cooperative spirit and professional disposition, and is consistently a hard worker, often staying well beyond her scheduled volunteer hours.

Sheridan is an active member of

Garfield County 4-H, and helps out with the grungy chore of cleaning up at the fairgrounds after livestock shows. At her church, Sheridan volunteers to gather and make quilts to give to Social Services for foster children. She helps in the nursery and sometimes serves as a sign language interpreter during the church service.

Young Adult Humanitarian nominee

Sarah Rippy serves on the YouthZone board, on the steering committee for project TITAN, and is a teen pal to a young girl, whose mom reports that she "always comes back home with a smile on her face," after spending time with Rippy.

Rippy is a founding member of Students Helping Our Community Club at Glenwood Springs High School, which raised \$16,000 to donate to other nonprofits. As a volunteer with Habitat for Humanity of the Roaring Fork Valley, she helped hang sheet rock in Silt and made runs to the dump in the work truck.

Staff Humanitarian winner



Roberta McGowan Special to the Post Independent
Debbie Bath, executive director of Access Roaring Fork and the 2011 Staff Humanitarian winner.

Debbie Bath is the executive director of Access Roaring Fork, an after-school enrichment and activity program from Parachute to Carbondale. Access Roaring Fork offers after-school classes in five middle schools using more than 100 teachers to deliver 3,400 hours of instruction in 200 classes each school year. Kids can explore cooking, drumming, art, kickboxing, drama and many other options.

Bath coordinates these programs with teachers, administrators, students and parents. She is a visionary who does whatever it takes to provide academic and social enrichment opportunities to strengthen and enhance the life of each student.

Staff Humanitarian nominees

Jenny Lang Burns is a nurse practitioner at Mountain Family Health Center. She provides medical care and guidance for teen moms at Yampah Mountain High School, for clients of Mountain Valley Developmental Services, and for women who are in the criminal justice system.

One of her nominators wrote, "Jenny meets people where they are at, supports them to make changes and is able to see the whole person and the needs they have beyond medical care. She works tirelessly as an advocate for those who are in her care."

Kelly Keefe is a registered dental hygienist and executive director of the Aspen to Parachute Dental Health Coalition. The program provides dental care to seniors, and to more than 800 students in public schools during this school year.

Starting in 2010, she built the fledgling organization to become a model in the state for prevention-based oral health care. She is the state's first regional health consultant appointed by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's Oral Health Unit, and with her success, the state plans to spread this concept across Colorado.

Kathleen Coffee Kline started her career with the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment as a tax auditor for the Unemployment Insurance Division. Now she is an employment specialist with the Workforce Center of Glenwood Springs, helping unemployed people retool themselves for today's jobs and present themselves as valuable prospective employees.

In her spare time, she is an active member of the Elks Lodge, running Bingo games and raising money for scholarships.

Barbara Romero is the night manager at Creekside Assisted Living in Glenwood Springs, where she has earned the trust and respect of residents. They describe Romero as a true friend, a person who is kind, giving and forgiving. When tensions rise, she calmly steps in as a negotiator, mediator and problem solver. She is also appreciated as a dog sitter for residents' pets, and makes delicious fudge.

Gyla Stark is the owner of Creekside Assisted Living in Glenwood Springs and a full-time nurse at the Colorado State Veterans Nursing Home in Rifle. At Creekside, she is the hands-on principal caregiver and supervisor. She drives residents to their medical appointments, and celebrates each resident's birthday and holidays with special meals and gifts. Her employees rave about her ability to help them manage complicated work and family schedules.

Megan Lee Taylor-Alstatt is a detective with the Garfield County Sheriff's Department. She works directly with victims of child abuse and sexual assault, with the intent of helping victims turn a terrifying crime into a something they can manage in their lives.

As a member of the agency's Victim Response Team, she trains colleagues who are also working with victims, and follows up with victims themselves to make sure they are receiving the services they need. She is also actively involved as a volunteer with the Grand Valley Fire Protection District and Garfield School District 16.

Collective Grace Award winner

The First United Methodist Church of Glenwood Springs opens its doors to all for what its nominees call "countless miracles." The church and its congregation host community meetings, musical rehearsals and performances, the Extended Table, Pie Day, bake sales, adult day care, classes for adults learning English, and meetings for those struggling with alcohol and drug addiction.

First United Methodist is the first



Roberta McGowan Special to the Post Independent
Pastor Michael Ingersoll, center, and members of the First United Methodist Church of Glenwood Springs. The church is the 2011 Collective Grace winner.

community institution to be nominated for its humanitarian service. The awards committee members said the things that individual humanitarians are recognized for doing is what forms the being of this church.

Visionary Founders winner



Roberta McGowan Special to the Post Independent
Rosie McSwain, founder of Tom's Door and the 2011 Visionary Founders winner.

Rosie McSwain is the founder of Tom's Door, a low-key nonprofit that provides emergency assistance to those in need from Aspen to Rifle, and aid to those who demonstrate the potential to improve their quality of life. The 100 percent volunteer organization raises money through the sales of notecards that feature the work of local photographers.

McSwain, who started volunteering almost as soon as she moved to Carbondale in 1999, also gives her time to the Extended Table, is an ambassador at Buttermilk ski resort, helped with the renovation of the library at St. Mary of the Crown, and is chair of the St. Vincent Bazaar.

Her philosophy is that generosity comes back to the giver. Tom's Door brings people together for the common cause of giving what they can for others in need. McSwain's enthusiasm for life, and for helping, is an inspiration to all who know her.

Visionary Founders nominee

Diane Welter is the founder and director of Your Friends for Life, a non-profit organization that provides support to cancer patients and their families throughout Garfield County. Your Friends provide companionship, meals, transportation, clothing, Christmas gifts and anything else that families need. Welter and her volunteers organize activities and outings for patients and their families, backing up all this giving with their own fundraising.