

NORTHWEST GEORGIA

United Way honors those doing 'extraordinary things'

Organization announces yearly volunteer awards

BY JEFF HARRISON

jeffharrison@daltoncitizen.com

Honoring "everyday people who are doing extraordinary things" was the goal Tuesday of an event hosted by the United Way of Northwest Georgia, said Amanda Burt, president of the organization.

The group held its "Year in Review: Annual Meeting and Volunteer Awards" banquet at Stage 123 in downtown Dalton to celebrate individuals and partner corporations who in 2014 dedicated their time, effort and money to support area charities that improve lives throughout the community.

"All of the people recognized tonight do their part, come together and support the individuals around them," Burt said. "These people are truly making a difference in their community."

Among the honorees were two women who work full-time jobs in Murray and Whitfield county, respectively, but spent a combined



338 hours last year volunteering to aid both children and adults locally.

Anita Killion was given the 2014 Connie Woodward Award, which recognizes the person responsible for the "most outstanding

Carlene Mutter, left, gives the Elaine Butler Award to Renae Richards Tuesday during the United Way of Northwest Georgia's "Year in Review: Annual Meeting and Volunteer Awards" banquet.

➤ Please see **AWARDS, 5A**

MATT HAMILTON/The Daily Citizen



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Above, Shaw Industries President Randy Merritt congratulates Elizabeth Robinson, a senior at North Murray County High School, on winning one of two \$5,000 Elbert Shaw Memorial Scholarships. Below, George Woodward gives the Connie Woodward Award to Anita Killion, which recognizes the person responsible for the "most outstanding volunteering" effort in Whitfield County.



PHOTOS BY MATT HAMILTON/The Daily Citizen

Top, John Shaw congratulates Mason Allen, a senior at Northwest Whitfield High School, on winning one of two \$5,000 Elbert Shaw Memorial Scholarships. Above, United Way president Amanda Burt thanks outgoing campaign chair Brenda Knowles, right, on Tuesday during the United Way of Northwest Georgia's "Year in Review: Annual Meeting and Volunteer Awards" banquet.

Awards: Volunteers

➤ Continued from page 1A

volunteering" effort in Whitfield County. Renae Richards was presented the 2014 Elaine Butler Award, given for the same reason to a person volunteering in Murray County.

Killion "gave 132 hours of service to RossWoods Adult Day Services in 2014. Twice a week, you will find her at RossWoods playing a game of cards or designing a quilt square with a participant," said George Woodward, presenting the award named in honor of his mother. "(Killion) is always in a crowd of people who want to play a game with her. She knows that the extra special attention she gives to a person will be more powerful than any medication the doctor could order."

Killion is employed at Hamilton Medical Center, in Dalton.

The award was a complete surprise, she said.

"When I was asked by someone if they could nominate me, the only reason I said yes was because I didn't think I'd win. I don't like to be the center of attention," Killion said. "But, (winning) is special. (Volunteering) is more rewarding to me, I think, than it is to anyone at RossWoods. When I walk in there my heart melts for them. I am the one who is blessed."

Richards, in addition to work with March of Dimes and Ronald McDonald House, gave 206 hours of service to Murray County 4-H in 2014.

"Her volunteer activities included chaperoning and supervising youth at Health Rocks Day Camp, kayaking down the Hiwassee River and cleaning up the Chief Van House," said Carlene Mutter, the daughter of Elaine Butler. "Renae truly has a passion for kids and has a way of making everyone feel welcome. The kids really love 'Mama Renae' and the excitement she brings to 4-H."

She is employed by Holly Creek Baptist Church.

Said Richards: "I am very honored, and very humbled. I

fell in love with 4-H after beginning volunteering there. There are so many kids in the Murray County community that don't have mothers or grandmothers in their lives, and it is just a blessing to be able to sort of fill that role for so many."

Several other awards were given out Tuesday, including: United Way-Kiwanis Outstanding Youth Volunteer Group, presented to Northwest Whitfield High School Service Learning Students; Outstanding Adult Volunteer Group, presented to Northwest Georgia Kids on the Block volunteers; and top corporate contributors, who were Brown Industries, Cargill, Dalton Utilities, Dorsett Industries, Engineered Floors, J&J Industries, Marketing Alliance Group, Mohawk Industries, Shaw Industries, Textile Management Associates and UPS.

The builders of 26 "Little Free Libraries" — oversized birdhouses that contain donated books, which can be shared among the community — Gary Asbury, Howard Elder and Carey Mitchell were also honored. Elizabeth Robinson, a senior at North Murray County High School, and Mason Allen, a senior at Northwest Whitfield High School, were each awarded \$5,000 Elbert Shaw Memorial Scholarships, for their community participation.

According to Brenda Knowles, 2014 United Way board chairperson, the United Way of Northwest Georgia helped more than 59,000 people in 2014; more than 10,000 people invested money.

The 2014 United Way fundraising campaign exceeded a \$3.55 million dollar goal, by raising more than \$3.6 million, she said.



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