

2026 Tampa Bay Golden Heart Awards

presented by



Engaging, Educating and Empowering Older Adults through Community Theater



Our Guest Emcee

🌟 **Public Information Manager
St. Petersburg Police Department**

🌟 **Former Tampa Bay TV News
Anchor & Reporter**

🌟 **Longtime Tampa Bay
Communicator &
Community Advocate**



*2026 Tampa Bay
Golden Heart Awards*



**Special Guest
Emcee**
🌟
Yolanda Fernandez
from
St. Petersburg
Police Department 🌟

Thank you, Yolanda!

Advocacy



**For the individual who
advocates for seniors
in our community
through their work
making sure senior
voices are heard and
choices respected.**

Bernadette Homan

☀ Selfless Professional

Always prioritizes the well-being of families seeking memory care, even if it means connecting them with a different community that better fits their needs.

☀ Generous Networker

Constantly uses her extensive connections to help colleagues find employment and to introduce professionals to new opportunities.

☀ Quiet Hero

Serves without ever expecting recognition, making life better for families facing difficult circumstances through countless acts of kindness and generosity.



Daphni Tsongranis

🌟 **Veteran Supporter**

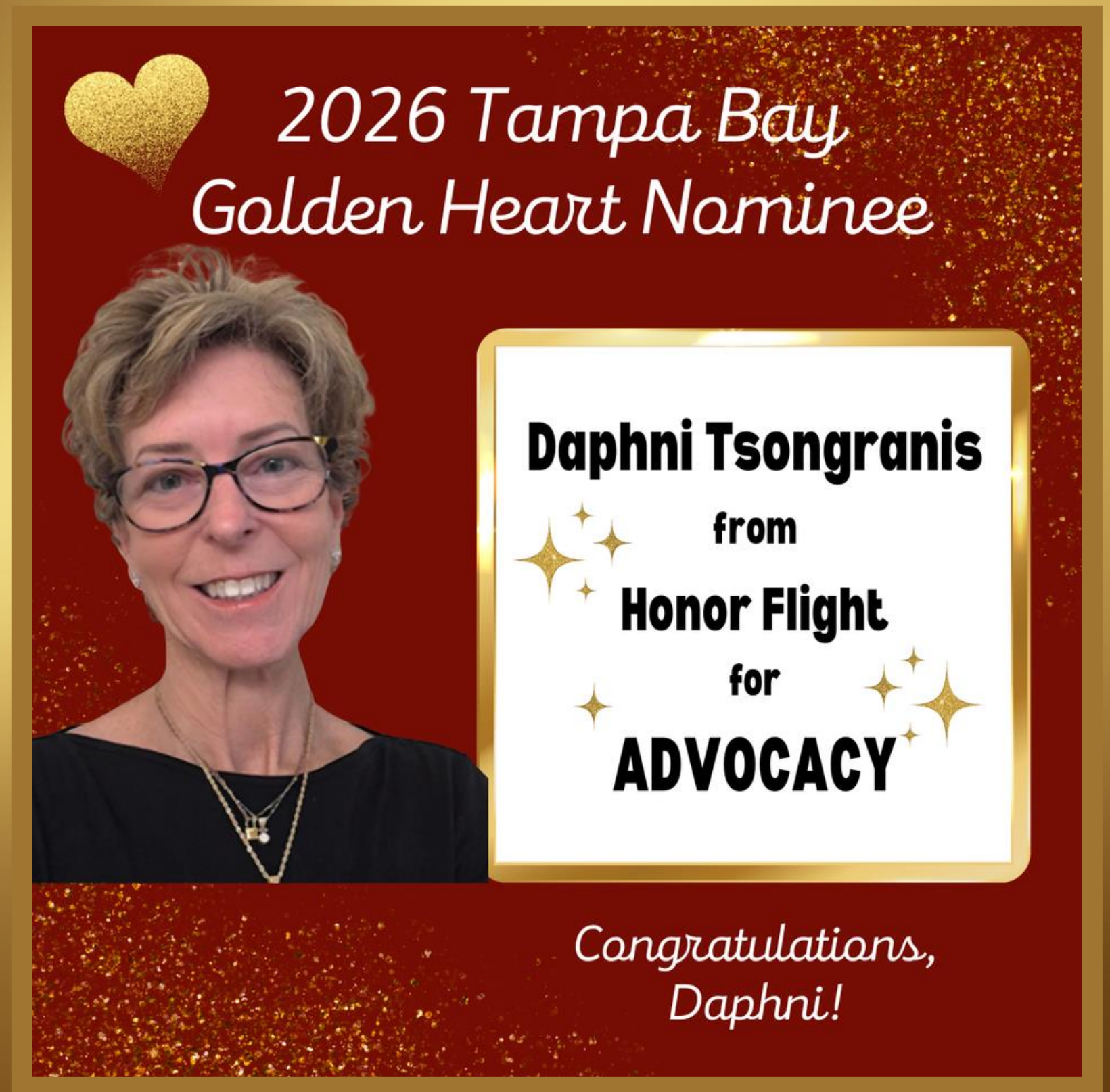
Generously volunteers her time with the Honor Flight for Veterans, honoring those who have served with deep respect and care.

🌟 **End-of-Life Angel**

Has given years of profound service as an End of Life Doula and Hospice Nurse, bringing comfort and dignity to those in their final transitions.

🌟 **Community Warrior**

Dedicates her life to serving vulnerable populations, providing compassionate care management for seniors who need a fierce advocate.



Gary LeBlanc

🌟 Lifelong Educator

Founded the Dementia Mentors & Dementia Spotlight Foundation, transforming his personal caregiving experience into a mission to educate the public and healthcare professionals.

🌟 Prolific Author

Has written several books and over 350 articles, sharing practical guidance and expertise on person-centered dementia care.

🌟 Tireless Advocate

Travels extensively to ensure that individuals living with dementia are treated with the utmost dignity, compassion, and respect.



Mary Wiley

🌟 Empathetic Guide

Helps families transition their loved ones into senior living not with sales tactics, but by building deep trust, patience, and genuine relationships.

🌟 Active Fundraiser

Earned her Certified Dementia Practitioner credential to better support families, and actively fundraises for the Walk to End Alzheimer's.

🌟 Community Pillar

Serves as a Silver Santos Site Captain and stays personally connected with residents and their families long after they move into her community.



Nancy Figueroa

🌟 **Relentless Advocate**

Has spent 9 years diligently ensuring that patients at the Good Samaritan Health Clinic receive the vital medications they cannot afford.

🌟 **Compassionate Coordinator**

Works seamlessly alongside volunteer doctors to provide a deeply caring environment where every single patient is assisted with dignity.

🌟 **Dedicated Supporter**

Always gives 100% of her effort to her community, making sure that vulnerable individuals have access to the quality healthcare they deserve.



2026
GOLDEN HEART
Honoree



2026 Advocacy Nominees

- ✿ **Bernadette Homan**
- ✿ **Daphni Tsongranis**
- ✿ **Gary LeBlanc**
- ✿ **Mary Wiley**
- ✿ **Nancy Figueroa**

2026 Advocacy
GOLDEN HEART
Recipient



*Congratulations,
Gary!*

Community Connection



For the activities coordinator who motivates and encourages seniors to feel valued and connected in their community.

Buddy Morabito

🌟 Proactive Helper

Constantly looks for opportunities to assist his neighbors, from repainting faded mailboxes to fixing doors for friends while they are on vacation.

🌟 Dependable Handyman

Routinely steps in to maintain pools or fix broken items for elderly neighbors who live alone, making them feel safe and cared for.

🌟 Everyday Hero

Makes acts of service a normal, everyday activity, demonstrating what it truly means to be a wonderful neighbor and friend.



*2026 Tampa Bay
Golden Heart Nominee*



Buddy Morabito

from

YMCA & Long Center

for

**COMMUNITY
CONNECTION**

*Congratulations,
Buddy!*

David Middleton

✦ Inspirational Director & Mentor

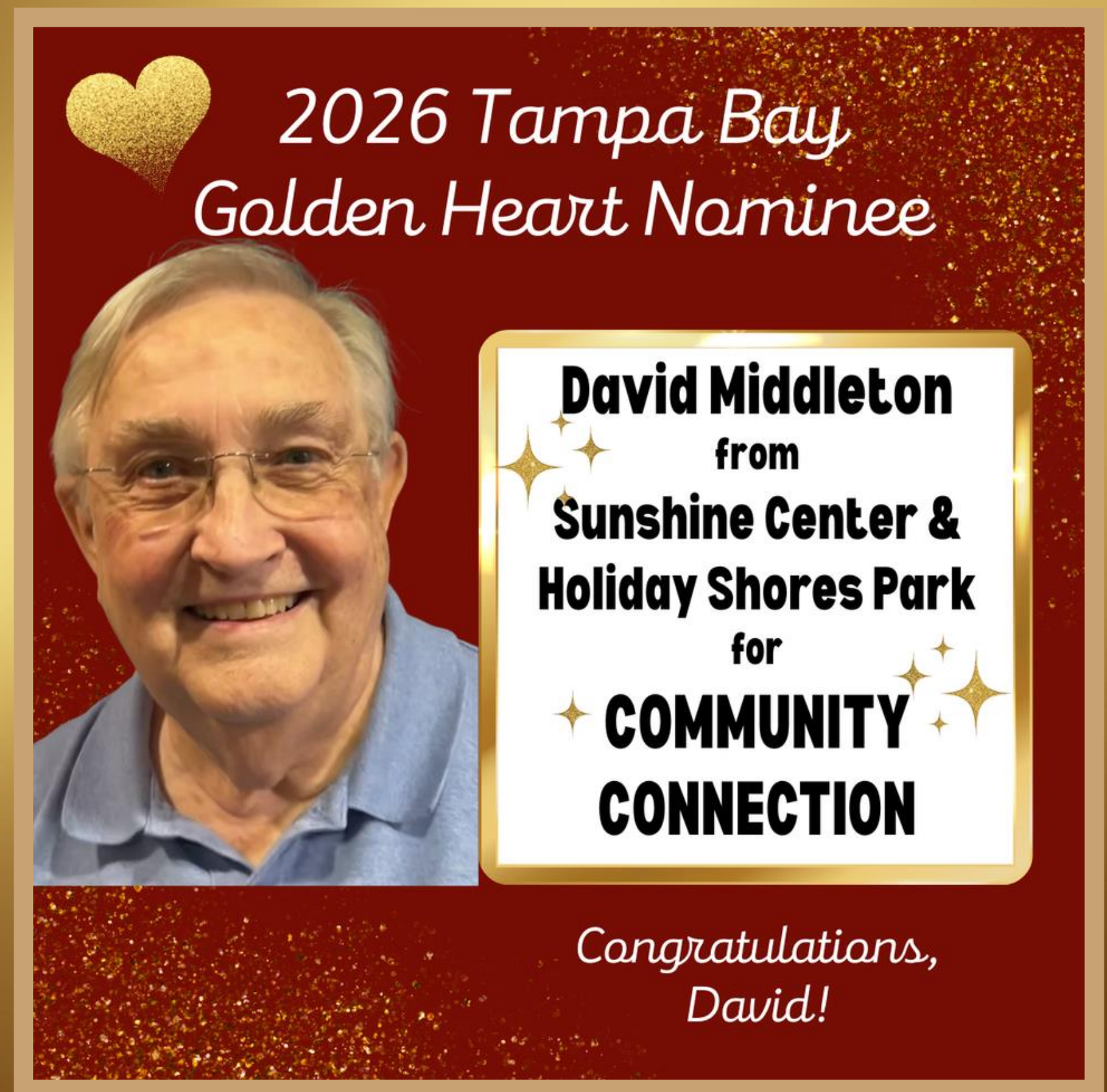
A monstrously creative and patient director who brings immense fun, friendship, and gentle guidance to rehearsals, helping actors of all ages and backgrounds find their moment to shine.

✦ Champion of Inclusive Theater

Passionately writes and directs custom plays specifically tailored for seniors, thoughtfully adapting scripts to include everyone—whether incorporating a walker or adding non-speaking roles so that no one is ever turned away.

✦ Community Builder

Dedicates enormous amounts of personal time and resources to ensure the senior community is deeply engaged, seen, and celebrated, bringing pure joy and a sense of profound accomplishment to hundreds of participants.



Jill Andrew

🌟 Innovative Advocate

Earned statewide recognition for her brilliant and empathetic design of a color-changing cup that helps individuals living with dementia stay properly hydrated.

🌟 Dedicated Youth Leader

Generously serves as a youth minister at her church, guiding and inspiring the next generation with deep warmth and care.

🌟 Community Champion

Actively volunteers at the Seeds of Hope food bank, beautifully embodying the very best of community spirit and selfless service.



2026 Tampa Bay
Golden Heart Nominee



🌟🌟🌟 **Jill Andrew**
from
Ambiance of Brandon
for
🌟 **COMMUNITY** 🌟
CONNECTION

*Congratulations,
Jill!*

Julie Schultz

☀ Joyful Hub Coordinator

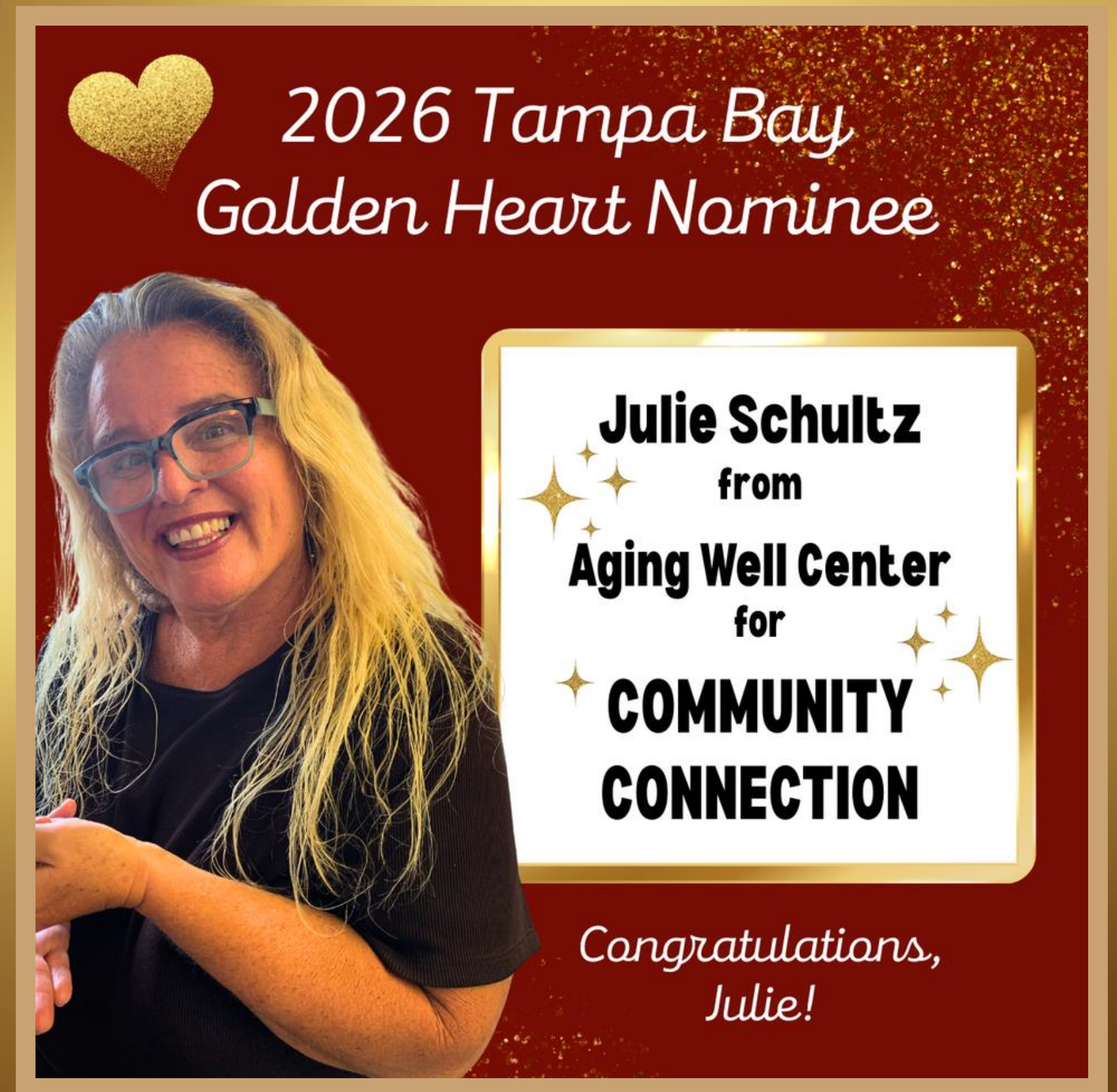
Serves as the Supervisor of the Aging Well Center, masterfully blending the protective care of a "Den Mother" with top-tier organization to ensure the center remains a vibrant hub of activities.

☀ Engaging Event Creator

Organizes fantastic day trips, educational lectures, and four spectacular seasonal socials filled with entertainment, raffles, and her own contagious, hearty laugh.

☀ Fostering of Lasting Friendships

Leads highly popular exercise classes and coordinates a cheerful team that seamlessly adapts spaces with a smile, creating the perfect environment for seniors to build deep, enduring connections.



Linda Mells

☀️ Compassionate Servant Leader

Devotes her heart and energy to feeding the unhoused population in St. Petersburg, personally cooking, plating, and distributing nearly 100 nutritious meals every single week.

☀️ Inspirational Team Builder

Leads a motivated team of senior volunteers—including an incredible 87-year-old team member—inspiring them to give their all in service to their community.

☀️ Living Example of Faith

Beautifully puts her faith into action, traveling to highly populated areas to kindly distribute food and comfort, truly serving as a source of light and nourishment to those in need.



*2026 Tampa Bay
Golden Heart Nominee*



Linda Mells
from
**Seventh Day Adventist
Church of St. Pete**
for
**COMMUNITY
CONNECTION**

*Congratulations,
Linda!*

Val Sanford

🌟 The Heartbeat of Local Theater

Selflessly volunteers her time each month to create and distribute a comprehensive community theater newsletter, keeping performers, directors, and audiences beautifully connected.

🌟 Uplifting Cheerleader

Possesses a remarkable gift for celebrating others, writing thoughtful and encouraging reviews that boost morale and validate the hard work of local casts and crews.

🌟 Collaborative Spirit

Quietly supports all local theaters equally, breaking down competition to foster a supportive culture of friendship, inclusion, and mutual success.



2026 Community Connection Nominees

✿ **Buddy Morabito**

✿ **David Middleton**

✿ **Jill Anderson**

✿ **Julie Schultz**

✿ **Linda Mells**

✿ **Val Sanford**

2026 Community Connection

GOLDEN HEART

Recipients



David Middleton
from
**Sunshine Center &
Holiday Shores Park**
for
**COMMUNITY
CONNECTION**

*Congratulations,
David!*



Julie Schultz
from
Aging Well Center
for
**COMMUNITY
CONNECTION**

*Congratulations,
Julie!*



Linda Mells
from
**Seventh Day Adventist
Church of St. Pete**
for
**COMMUNITY
CONNECTION**

*Congratulations,
Linda!*

Direct Care



For the care provider who provides hands-on services to seniors and goes above and beyond to ensure they feel cared for and respected.

Dr. Cruz Faña-Souchet

🌟 Patient-Centered Physician

Delivers exceptional, personalized healthcare, taking the time to build meaningful relationships and empower seniors in their own wellness.

🌟 Preventative Champion

Focuses tirelessly on chronic disease management, ensuring her patients maintain their independence, confidence, and high quality of life.

🌟 Community Educator

Extends her care far beyond the exam room by leading wellness initiatives that encourage older adults to remain active, engaged, and informed.



Irena Hoxie

🌟 Dedicated Caregiver

Irena is always there for residents and colleagues alike, going above and beyond with genuine warmth, respect, and care.

🌟 Compassionate Professional

With her nursing background and natural gift for nurturing others, she brings reassurance, dignity, and kindness to every interaction.

🌟 Joyful Spirit

Whether it's her infectious laugh, a warm smile, or her amazing food, Irena has a special way of lifting spirits and making everyone feel truly cared for.



*2026 Tampa Bay
Golden Heart Nominee*



Irena Hoxi

from

**The Barrington
Senior Living**

for

DIRECT CARE

*Congratulations,
Irena!*

Monice “Moe” Cannell

✶ Hands-On Leader

As Director of Nursing, she never considers herself above direct care, always stepping in to help caregivers and comfort anxious families.

✶ Personalized Caregiver

Personally welcomes every new resident to learn their routines and preferences, ensuring they receive individualized care from day one.

✶ Heroic Dedication

Stayed awake for over 24 hours during recent hurricanes, sleeping at the facility to continuously comfort residents and ensure their safety.



Sheryl Baker

🌟 **Fierce Advocate**

Navigates her husband's progressing dementia with unmatched positivity, demanding accountability for his care and visiting him daily.

🌟 **Radiant Spirit**

Balances the heartbreak of caregiving with incredible style and a laugh that lights up the room, all while successfully running her own travel business.

🌟 **Courageous Storyteller**

Quietly chronicles the heavy realities of dementia care on social media, shedding light on the journey to support herself and educate others.



*2026 Tampa Bay
Golden Heart Nominee*



Sheryl Baker

for

FAMILY CARE

*Congratulations,
Sheryl!*

Tracy Horsefield, LPN

☀️ Compassionate LPN

Has spent over 20 years treating every resident like family, providing dignified care and going far beyond what is expected of her.

☀️ Selfless Advocate

Builds deep trust with families, offering reassurance during difficult decisions and providing comfort and companionship during patients' final moments.

☀️ Inspirational Caregiver

Frequently purchases needed supplies and bakes special desserts, demonstrating a genuine heart for service that inspired her own daughter to become a nurse.



2026 Direct Care Nominees

- ✿ **Dr. Cruz Faña-Souchet**
- ✿ **Irena Hoxie**
- ✿ **Monice “Moe” Cannell**
- ✿ **Sheryl Baker**
- ✿ **Tracy Horsefield, LPN**

2026 Direct Care
GOLDEN HEART
Recipient



Leadership



**For the individual who
inspires, guides and
supports others
around them to be
their best selves while
serving our senior
community.**

Andre C. Smith

★ Veteran Advocate

After more than 24 years of military service, continues serving his community as a trusted, empathetic resource for veterans and families navigating civilian life, healthcare, and VA benefits.

★ Resource Connector

Through his organized, proactive advocacy and monthly resource meetings, Andre brings VA representatives, nonprofits, veterans, and families together—creating direct connections to information, services, and solutions.

★ Selfless Community Servant

From supporting veterans today to volunteering with the local cemetery committee to honor those who have passed, Andre lives his commitment to ensuring that no veteran is ever forgotten.



*2026 Tampa Bay
Golden Heart Nominee*



Andre Smith
from
**Mt. Hermon Missionary
Baptist Church**
for
LEADERSHIP

*Congratulations,
Andre!*

Ann Wilkinson

★ Creative Matchmaker

Successfully recruits and matches older adults with meaningful volunteer opportunities, giving them a profound sense of purpose.

★ Loneliness Combatant

Brings purposeful activities like jewelry making and memory games to senior living communities, helping residents build strong support networks.

★ Educational Advocate

Prioritizes vital education for seniors, bringing important programs on medication safety and disaster preparedness directly to their communities.



*2026 Tampa Bay
Golden Heart Nominee*



Ann Wilkinson
from
**Pasco Retired & Senior
Volunteer Program**
for
LEADERSHIP

*Congratulations,
Ann!*

Arthur Moseley

🌟 Humble Mentor

Generously shares his knowledge and best practices across a competitive industry to elevate the entire senior care community.

🌟 Collaborative Spirit

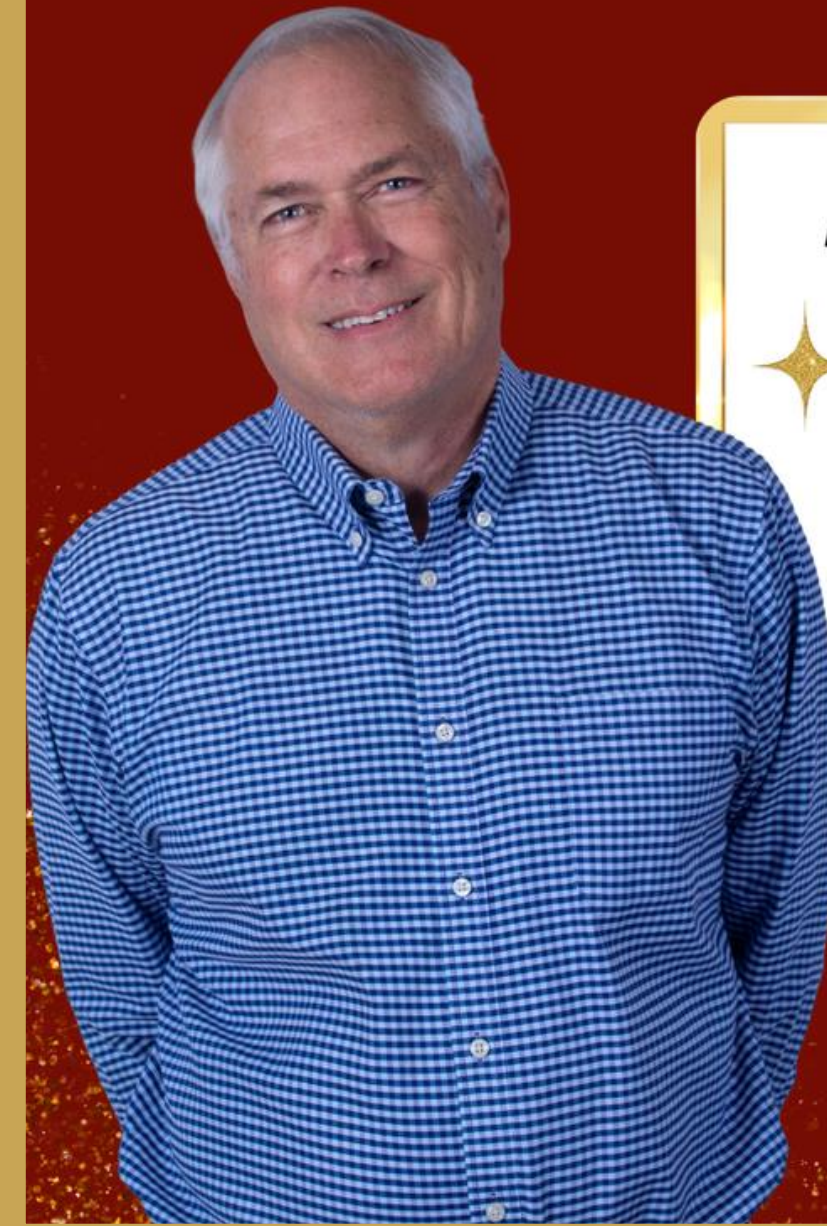
Creates valuable networking opportunities that strengthen professionals, knowing that working together ultimately benefits the seniors they serve.

🌟 Servant Leader

Leads with profound integrity and compassion, always taking the time to celebrate the success of others and lift his peers up.



*2026 Tampa Bay
Golden Heart Nominee*



Arthur Moseley

from

**Griswold Care
Pairing**

for

LEADERSHIP

*Congratulations,
Arthur!*

Barry Rubin

🌟 Visionary Executive

Founded the Hand Up Pinellas philanthropic initiative, turning his community vision into actionable, meaningful results.

🌟 Generous Provider

Successfully leads efforts to provide food assistance and thousands of holiday gifts to seniors, families in need, and hospitalized youth.

🌟 Tireless Champion

Uses his influence to advocate for those whose voices are often unheard, including homeless animals and individuals with developmental disabilities.



*2026 Tampa Bay
Golden Heart Nominee*



Barry Rubin
from
**Pinellas Beaches
Chamber of Commerce**
for
LEADERSHIP

*Congratulations,
Barry!*

Charlene Miller

🌟 Community Connector

Arrived with a heart for service and quickly began bringing people, resources, and causes together—turning that instinct into the League of NonProfits, now connecting more than 300 organizations.

🌟 Collaborative Leader

As President, she creates opportunities for nonprofits of every size to meet, learn from one another, build partnerships, and work together toward shared community goals.

🌟 Leader by Example

Gives generously of her time, energy, and encouragement—supporting events, communications, and connections while inspiring others with her contagious positivity and belief in the power of working together.



Frank Katz

🌟 Heart of Gold

Selflessly dedicates countless hours to ensure that guests in his community are fed, cared for, and connected with essential resources.

🌟 Humble Servant

Leads by pure example, always stepping in wherever help is needed with unwavering commitment and a steady, calming presence.

🌟 Uplifting Presence

Shows what true leadership looks like by serving others first and creating an environment where every volunteer and guest feels deeply valued.



*2026 Tampa Bay
Golden Heart Nominee*



Frank Katz
from
**Trinity Lutheran
Church**
for
LEADERSHIP

*Congratulations,
Frank!*

Frank Kneen

☀️ Resourceful Chef

Uses his culinary talents to teach kids at the Boys and Girls Club how to cook nutritious, scrumptious meals on a tight budget.

☀️ Observant Helper

Quietly identifies community needs—like feminine hygiene products or children's books—and immediately organizes drives to fulfill them.

☀️ Generous Distributor

Makes weekly rounds to pick up unsold food and essentials, delivering them directly to neighborhoods in need simply because it's the right thing to do.



*2026 Tampa Bay
Golden Heart Nominee*



Frank Kneen

from

☀️☀️☀️
**Good Shepherd
Episcopal Church**

Dunedin

☀️☀️☀️
for

LEADERSHIP

*Congratulations,
Frank!*

2026 Leadership Nominees

- ✿ **Andre C. Smith**
- ✿ **Ann Wilkinson**
- ✿ **Arthur Moseley**
- ✿ **Barry Rubin**
- ✿ **Charlene Miller**
- ✿ **Frank Katz**
- ✿ **Frank Kneen**

2026 Leadership **GOLDEN HEART** **Recipients**



Ann Wilkinson
from
**Pasco Retired & Senior
Volunteer Program**
for
LEADERSHIP

*Congratulations,
Ann!*



Barry Rubin
from
**Pinellas Beaches
Chamber of Commerce**
for
LEADERSHIP

*Congratulations,
Barry!*



Andre Smith
from
**Mt. Hermon Missionary
Baptist Church**
for
LEADERSHIP

*Congratulations,
Andre!*

Spirit



For the individual who uses their influence and enthusiasm to encourage others to focus on the positive and enjoy interacting with the senior community.

Al Rodriguez

🌟 Tireless Care-giver

Serves as the beloved facilities director at his temple, joyfully moving furniture and setting up events without a single complaint.

🌟 Generous "Mensch"

Always goes above and beyond to help those around him, paying close attention to detail to accommodate everyone's needs.

🌟 Humble Helper

Continually supports his community behind the scenes, asking for absolutely nothing in return while leaving a lasting impact on multiple generations.



*2026 Tampa Bay
Golden Heart Nominee*



Al Rodriguez
from
Temple B'nai Israel
for
SPIRIT

*Congratulations,
Al!*

Andy Ellis

☀️ Compassionate Organizer

Successfully united public agencies and volunteers to collect over 700 bags of adult disposable diapers for seniors in need.

☀️ Action-Oriented Leader

Bridges the gap for both securely housed and unhoused older adults, ensuring they have access to essential resources and comfort.

☀️ Inspiring Partner

Leads by example with profound integrity, building community partnerships that ensure overlooked individuals receive the dignity and respect they deserve.



Barbara Baughman

☀️ Thoughtful Creator

Built a beautiful, accessible outdoor garden at a memory care unit to honor her husband, allowing residents to joyfully plant and harvest together.

☀️ Generous Provider

Supplied warm socks and fun trinkets to residents without families during her time as the Ladies Guild president.

☀️ Celebrator of Life

Founded a local Birthday Club for older adults without family, showering them with brunch, cards, and the priceless gift of friendship.



*2026 Tampa Bay
Golden Heart Nominee*



Barbara Baughman

from

Menorah Life

for

SPIRIT

*Congratulations,
Barbara!*

Barbara White

🌟 Inspiring Job Coach

Meets discouraged job seekers with genuine warmth and respect, helping them recognize their strengths and see that a better future is possible.

🌟 Champion of Older Workers

Empowers older adults re-entering the workforce, reminding them that their experience is highly valuable and that purpose has no expiration date.

🌟 Model of Positive Aging

Turned her own retirement into a vibrant new chapter of service, evolving from a volunteer into an indispensable, hope-giving employee.



*2026 Tampa Bay
Golden Heart Nominee*



Barbara White

from



ECHO's

Opportunity Center

for



SPIRIT



*Congratulations,
Barbara!*

Barbara Wojcik

★ Unwavering Supporter

Brings incredible longevity and consistency to her volunteer work, passionately serving on multiple committees for many years.

★ Enthusiastic Advocate

Serves as a vocal champion for initiatives like Silver Santas, S.P.A.R.K. and Hearts & Hope, always being the first to sing their praises.

★ Dedicated Fundraiser

Maintains an unfailing commitment to her community, seamlessly transitioning between roles while keeping her heart - and humor - firmly in the mission.



2026 Tampa Bay
Golden Heart Nominee

Barbara Wojcik
from
BLS Pinellas
for
SPIRIT

*Congratulations,
Barbara!*

Chantala Davis

🌟 Empowering Mentor

Leads an initiative that provides financial literacy and emotional healing to help mothers break unhealthy cycles and build self-sufficient lives.

🌟 Crisis Responder

Immediately stepped onto the front lines after devastating storms to coordinate disaster preparedness and long-term recovery for displaced elderly residents.

🌟 Tireless Advocate

Answers every call for help with grace, expertly building supportive networks to uplift both vulnerable mothers and senior citizens.



Karen Parrish

☀ Empathetic Encourager

Despite being blind and deaf, she actively participates in prayer groups to comfort seniors experiencing grief, illness, or the loss of a pet.

☀ Independent Spirit

Beautifully navigates life alongside her trained Guide Dog, Gadget, using her own experiences with adversity to relate deeply to others.

☀ Faithful Visitor

Consistently makes time to visit and uplift folks in need, proving that a servant's heart knows absolutely no boundaries.



Karen Taylor

🌟 Creative Visionary

Transforms local theater productions with her extraordinary costuming expertise, investing countless hours and her own materials to bring scripts to life.

🌟 Patient Collaborator

Works patiently with actors to ensure every garment feels authentic, always maintaining a positive, can-do attitude amid sudden cast changes.

🌟 Uplifting Leader

Serves as a dedicated board member who celebrates wins, supports the crew, and approaches every creative challenge with grace and enthusiasm.



*2026 Tampa Bay
Golden Heart Nominee*



Karen Taylor

from

**Francis Wilson
Playhouse**

for

SPIRIT

*Congratulations,
Karen!*

Kay Klosterman

🌟 Neighborhood Treasure

At 93, Ms. Kay remains a warm and welcoming presence, greeting neighbors with a wave, a smile, and kindness that makes everyone around her feel seen.

🌟 Generous Neighbor

From thoughtful gifts and helping a young child learn to care for a puppy to opening her home for weekly meals and fellowship, she naturally creates connection and community.

🌟 Graceful Role Model

Even while navigating changes in her eyesight and hearing, her spirit remains bright. She leads by example, showing younger generations what it truly means to age with grace, generosity, and joy.



2026 Tampa Bay
Golden Heart Nominee



Kay Klosterman

for

**Brookhaven
Neighborhood**

for

SPIRIT

*Congratulations,
Kay!*

Mariaelena Alcira

🌟 **Deeply Connected Caregiver**
Knows her day center participants so well that she affectionately calls them "her people," embracing their realities to give them a profound sense of purpose.

🌟 **Empathetic Guide**
Navigates difficult conversations with families with incredible empathy, partnering with caregivers to support them through their unique journeys.

🌟 **Community Educator**
Generously spends her free time teaching seminars to caregivers, ensuring they have the resources and emotional support needed to care for their loved ones.



Ron Regan

☀️ Joyful Social Butterfly

Attends and supports nearly every community event, bringing a big heart and an infectious, positive energy to every room.

☀️ Community Promoter

Acts as an unofficial photographer, generously using his platform to promote upcoming events to seniors and professionals alike.

☀️ Generous Giver

Frequently donates his own items to be used as door prizes, ensuring that attendees leave events feeling special and celebrated.



2026 Tampa Bay
Golden Heart Nominee

Ron Regan
from
**Suncoast Jazz Festival
& BLS Pinellas**
for
SPIRIT

*Congratulations,
Ron!*

Sandy Kneen

☀️ **Compassionate Navigator**

Uses her background as a retired social worker to wisely guide friends and neighbors through the complex challenges of aging in place.

☀️ **Comforting Organizer**

Rallies teams to help overwhelmed older adults downsize and pack, listening to their distress and reassuring them with profound grace.

☀️ **Fierce Advocate**

Expertly coaches adult children through difficult conversations and helps families effectively communicate with facility caregivers and administrators.



*2026 Tampa Bay
Golden Heart Nominee*



Sandy Kneen
from
**Good Shepherd
Episcopal Church**
Dunedin
for
SPIRIT

*Congratulations,
Sandy!*

Sara Im

🌟 Resilient Survivor

Transformed her unimaginable experience in the Cambodian Killing Fields into a beautiful life dedicated to service, education, guidance, laughter, and hope.

🌟 Inclusive Gatherer & Speaker

Organizes health fairs that feel like warm community gatherings, expertly connecting seniors, families, and wellness providers.

🌟 Radiant Light, Leading by Example

Exudes a joyful, life-affirming spirit, making absolutely everyone she meets feel welcome, valued, and deeply loved.



*2026 Tampa Bay
Golden Heart Nominee*



Sara Im
from
**Smart Living
Health Fairs**
for
SPIRIT

*Congratulations,
Sara!*

Virginia & Cal Fox

🌟 Devoted Neighbors

Actively check on their neighbors every single day, running errands and ensuring everyone has exactly what they need to feel supported.

🌟 Community Pillars

Virginia founded and continues to run a beloved Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, having also served as the social club secretary for three years.

🌟 Holiday Heroes

The couple volunteers together to serve hot meals to the unhoused on Christmas Day, leaving a piece of their warm hearts wherever they go.



2026 Spirit Nominees

✿ **Al Rodriguez**

✿ **Andy Ellis**

✿ **Barbara Baughman**

✿ **Barbara White**

✿ **Barbara Wojcik**

✿ **Chantala Davis**

✿ **Karen Parrish**

✿ **Karen Taylor**

✿ **Kay Klosterman**

✿ **Mariaelena Alcira**

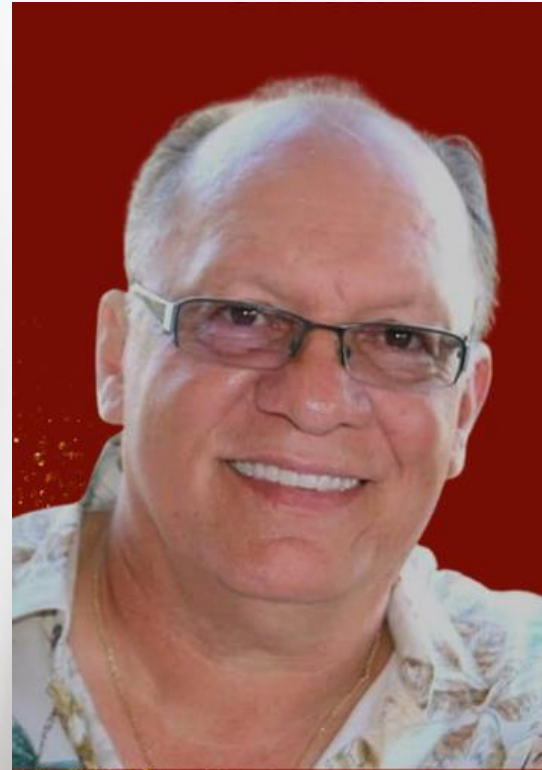
✿ **Ron Regan**

✿ **Sandy Kneen**

✿ **Sara Im**

✿ **Virginia & Cal Fox**

2026 Spirit **GOLDEN HEART** **Recipients**



Al Rodriguez
from
Temple B'nai Israel
for
SPIRIT

*Congratulations,
Al!*



Mariaelena Alcira
from
**Weissman Day Center
at Menorah Life**
for
SPIRIT

*Congratulations,
Mariaelena!*



Ron Regan
from
**Suncoast Jazz Festival
& BLS Pinellas**
for
SPIRIT

*Congratulations,
Ron!*

Volunteerism



For the individual who dedicates their time to volunteer specifically with seniors and makes an outstanding difference in their lives.

André Kühner

🌟 Empathetic Guide

Uses his own combat experience to build deep trust with fellow veterans, guiding them through the complex VA healthcare system with compassion.

🌟 Lifesaving Advocate

Coordinated immediate care for a veteran contemplating suicide, shifting his despair into hope through shared stories and genuine connection.

🌟 Comforting Presence

Sat without judgment alongside a homeless veteran, allowing his service dog to provide quiet comfort when words simply weren't enough.



*2026 Tampa Bay
Golden Heart Nominee*



André Kühner
from

**Operation:
Veteran Connect**
for

VOLUNTEERISM

*Congratulations,
André!*

Barbara Salyers

☀️ Cheerful Companion

Constantly drives her fellow senior apartment residents to appointments, shopping trips, and errands with a bright, joyful attitude.

☀️ Selfless Helper

Readily steps in to help residents clean out their apartments or pack their belongings whenever they need to transition to a new home.

☀️ Community Contributor

Personally transports usable, unwanted items to the Sunshine Center's thrift store, helping to fund vital services for area seniors.



*2026 Tampa Bay
Golden Heart Nominee*



Barbara Salyer
from
**Peterborough Apts
& Sunshine Senior
Center**
for
Volunteerism

*Congratulations,
Barbara!*

Colleen Weimar

☀ Warm Welcomer

Greets visitors at Empath Suncoast Hospice with a beautiful smile, personally guiding them across campus and offering a comforting listening ear.

☀ Tireless Organizer

Keeps busy organizing food pantries, stuffing resource bags for theater audiences, and writing heartfelt thank-you notes to veterans.

☀ Community Champion

Actively raises awareness for pancreatic cancer research and uses her Citizen's Academy training to share valuable program information with residents.



*2026 Tampa Bay
Golden Heart Nominee*



Colleen Weimar
from
**Empath Suncoast
Hospice**
for
VOLUNTEERISM

*Congratulations,
Colleen!*

Eric Steinbuechler

☀ Quiet Contributor

Has served as a highly dependable and precise volunteer at the Seminole Community Library since 2020.

☀ Literary Caretaker

Expertly coordinates the library's eBay store, sorting, scanning, and shelving books with a deep, guiding love for literature.

☀ Humble Servant

Acts without looking for thanks or praise, making himself an incredibly valuable and appreciated member of the Friends of the Library.



*2026 Tampa Bay
Golden Heart Nominee*



Eric Steinbuechler

from

**Friends of
Seminole Library**

for

VOLUNTEERISM

*Congratulations,
Eric!*

Gregory Ferguson

🌟 Dependable Friend

Serves as a trusted companion to four older adults, accompanying them to medical appointments and combating their isolation with genuine friendship.

🌟 Thoughtful Listener

Remembers the names of his companions' grandchildren and their birthdays, providing the encouragement they need to feel valued and seen.

🌟 Quietly Consistent

Shows up day after day without seeking praise, offering patience and unwavering support to make Tampa Bay a more caring, age-friendly place.



*2026 Tampa Bay
Golden Heart Nominee*



Gregory Ferguson

from

**Senior Companion
Program**

for

VOLUNTEERISM

*Congratulations,
Gregory!*

John Killeen

☀️ Dedicated Fundraiser

Actively raises funds to expand the Gulfport Senior Center, ensuring it remains a vibrant, lasting asset for future generations.

☀️ Compassionate Co-Chair

Volunteers with the Alzheimer's Association and Silver Santas, bringing awareness, dignity, and holiday joy to seniors who might otherwise be forgotten.

☀️ Selfless Advocate

Consistently gives his time, energy, and leadership without ever seeking recognition, motivated purely by a genuine desire to help others thrive.



Julie Ciccarella

☀️ Tireless Provider

Dedicates 33 hours a month to coordinating a hot meal ministry, preparing food before sunrise, and organizing essential weekly grocery pickups.

☀️ Generous Leader

Often goes out of her way—and uses her own personal resources—to ensure the church pantry has exactly what struggling families need.

☀️ Dignified Server

Restores hope by making every single person she serves feel seen, valued, and cared for with profound patience and humility.



*2026 Tampa Bay
Golden Heart Nominee*



Julie Ciccarella
from

**Trinity Lutheran
Church**

for

VOLUNTEERISM

*Congratulations,
Julie!*

Karen Burdewick

☀️ Resourceful Nurse

Transitioned her hospice nursing experience into running a free ostomy clinic, eventually moving it to her church to accommodate growing needs.

☀️ Generous Provider

Ensures that all donated equipment and products are given completely free of charge to recipients, easing their financial and medical burdens.

☀️ Trusted Expert

Provides such exceptional care that doctors and hospitals now directly contact her to help discharged patients navigate their ostomy needs.



Marian Tagliarino

🌟 Creative Volunteer

For more than 23 years, Marian has generously shared her talents, time, and creativity with seniors, students, and community organizations throughout the Tampa Bay.

🌟 Artist & Mentor

Through photography, collage classes, and decades of mentoring young photographers, Marian helps people of all ages discover creativity, build confidence, and form meaningful connections.

🌟 Champion of Positive Aging

Celebrates the joy, friendships, and accomplishments of fellow seniors while encouraging others to stay engaged, keep learning, and embrace aging with pride, purpose, and creativity.



Randy Billingsley

★ **Dedicated Veteran**

Continues his lifelong commitment to service by applying his exceptional skills and military experience to benefit his local community.

★ **Compassionate Leader**

Spends countless hours volunteering his time and talents to support seniors and families, leaving a lasting impact on everyone he meets.

★ **Inspiring Presence**

Leads with a loving, selfless heart, inspiring those around him to step up and serve their community with the same dedication.



*2026 Tampa Bay
Golden Heart Nominee*



Randy Billingsley
from
**REC & Pearlina's
Adult Activity Center**
for
VOLUNTEERISM

*Congratulations,
Randy!*

Raymond Van Loon

🌟 Ageless Hero

At nearly 90 years old, he proves that age is no barrier to service, traveling to multiple communities to help seniors prepare for disasters.

🌟 Calming Presence

Teaches older adults how to build emergency kits and distributes supplies, offering a reassuring and compassionate presence during uncertain times.

🌟 Inspiring Ambassador

Represents Seniors in Service with incredible humility, encouraging his peers to stay active, engaged, and connected to their community.



Shirley Onofrey

🌟 Lifelong Server

Has dedicated an astounding 34 years to Meals on Wheels and Ruth Eckerd Hall, along with 27 years to local Aquariums and Heritage Villages.

🌟 Welcoming Role Model

Consistently greets patrons with politeness and helpfulness, serving as a shining example of what it means to be a dedicated volunteer.

🌟 Humble Inspiration

Only agreed to be nominated in the hopes that her story of decades-long service might inspire others to begin volunteering.



*2026 Tampa Bay
Golden Heart Nominee*



Shirley Onofrey

from

Meals on Wheels

for

VOLUNTEERISM

*Congratulations,
Shirley!*

2026 Volunteerism Nominees

- ✿ **Andre Kuhner**
- ✿ **Barbara Salyers**
- ✿ **Colleen Weimar**
- ✿ **Eric Steinbuechler**
- ✿ **Gregory Ferguson**
- ✿ **John Killeen**

- ✿ **Julie Ciccarello**
- ✿ **Karen Burdewick**
- ✿ **Marian Tagliarino**
- ✿ **Randy Billingsley**
- ✿ **Raymond Van Loon**
- ✿ **Shirley Onofrey**

2026 Volunteerism **GOLDEN HEART** **Recipients**



Colleen Weimar
from
**Empath Suncoast
Hospice**
for
VOLUNTEERISM

*Congratulations,
Colleen!*



Gregory Ferguson
from
**Senior Companion
Program**
for
VOLUNTEERISM

*Congratulations,
Gregory!*



John Killeen
from
**Gulfport Senior
Foundation**
for
VOLUNTEERISM

*Congratulations,
John!*



Raymond Van Loon
from
**Senior Disaster
Support**
for
VOLUNTEERISM

*Congratulations,
Raymond!*

Amazing RAFFLE BASKETS!

DINE. EXPLORE.
ENTERTAIN.

Make Memories!



TAMPA BAY
GOLDEN HEART
AWARDS

Every ticket
supports
SAGES Theater!



Last Chance!



Thank You!



S*A*G*E*S

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