

IN THE SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY CAREGIVING

Stories of the 2011 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Caregiver Award Nominees



2011

"Every person must decide, at some point, whether they will walk in the light of creative altruism or in the darkness of destructive selfishness. This is the judgment. Life's most persistent and urgent question is: What are you doing for others?"

— DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

"A lot of people are waiting for Martin Luther King or Mahatma Gandhi to come back — but they are gone. We are it. It is up to us. It is up to you."

— MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN

- 1 A Legacy of Service
- 2 Our 2011 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Caregiver Award Nominees
- 13 2011 Duke Hospital MLK Commemoration Planning / Award Selection Committee Members

A full listing of University-wide MLK events is available online at: <http://mlk.duke.edu>

Last year, Clinical Educator April Perry, from Duke HomeCare & Hospice, was named winner of the 2010 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Caregiver Award at Duke University Hospital.

Honored for her public health improvement efforts in Haiti, during her acceptance speech, she stated that the \$5,000 award would help countless people in the impoverished nation. As president and founder of Luke's Mission, a non-profit, faith-based group committed to serving the poor, Perry had traveled to Haiti many times over the last decade and had grown close to the families she cared for there in the small village of Belbede.

Even as she spoke, there was no way any of the members of the Duke Medicine team who sat listening to her could have predicted what would occur later that day. It was January 12, 2010, and, several hours later, Haiti would be devastated by a massive earthquake.

The next week, amidst the rubble and the chaos, April Perry went back to Haiti to help, and has since returned there multiple times to continue her work. Selflessly determined to make a difference, the qualities April has continued to demonstrate through her volunteerism are the hallmarks of a Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Caregiver Award winner.

When we started the award program three years ago, our goal was to honor Duke Medicine employees like April whose connection to a greater purpose drive them to accomplish great deeds. Through honoring April for her work, countless others were moved to help the people of Haiti. That is the power of recognizing our MLK Community Caregiver Award winners and nominees.

This year, eleven staff and faculty members from Duke Hospital, the School of Medicine or Ambulatory Services were nominated for the award. Their inspirational stories appear on the following pages.

In recognition of the Duke Medicine spirit showcased by our nominees, I hope you will seek out opportunities to make a difference in a world that needs your unique skill sets and abilities.

Thank you to April and to each of our nominees for honoring the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and for continuing the Duke tradition of service to the community.



William J. Fulkerson, MD
Executive Vice President for Duke University Health System

PROFESSOR

PEDIATRICS-CARDIOLOGY, SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

YEARS OF SERVICE TO DUKE: 30

As a pediatric cardiologist, Dr. Brenda Armstrong is dedicated to the health and well-being of children. As “Coach Doc” for the Durham Striders Youth Association (DSYA), her aim is encouraging young athletes to take charge of their own health and well-being.

For more than 25 years, Dr. Armstrong has worked with DSYA, widely considered the nation’s leading track and field program for youth. Its members are required to perform well academically to suit up; Dr. Armstrong has her own rules, too.

“Coach Doc encourages every athlete... to drink water and stay away from fast food and soda,” says Strider athlete, Sherri Owens. “She is serious about [us] making good choices and striving for excellence on the track and off.”

A firm believer that it takes a village to raise a child, Dr. Armstrong mobilizes families, communities and authorities to support the Strider Nation. In team meetings, families receive dietary instruction and are encouraged to practice healthy

lifestyle habits. Her work with the Durham County government ensured the newly renovated stadium included a track, and she was instrumental in Durham’s designation as the Striders’ home and the host team for the yearly Russell E. Blunt East Coast Invitational. In 2010, Dr. Armstrong was the Dr. Nell C. Jackson Award honoree for her service and leadership in girls’ and women’s sports.

“If you were to meet Coach Doc, you would not guess that she is a track star,” writes former Strider Andrew Byrd. “Her feet do not touch the ground when she sits in a stadium seat. [But] for hundreds of young people who wear the blue and white uniforms of the Striders, Coach Doc is a track star.”



It is said that miracles don't just happen, people make them happen. Rustica Aujero, a volunteer for the Carolina Medical Mission (CMM), is an ambassador for miracles.

A humanitarian project of the Philippine American Association of North Carolina, CMM provides free medical, dental and surgical services to underprivileged Filipinos.

“While we had a mission in her hometown, Dinalupihan, Phillipines, the medical team was running out of pediatric medicines; that would shorten our service,” writes Emma Dempsey, General Coordinator for CMM. “Rusty, although she had been gone for almost 30 years from home, along with her high-school classmate, was bold enough to approach different pharmacies and businesses nearby. ...Miraculously, more boxes of medications arrived at the medical site, and we were able to accomplish our goal of serving the whole day on our last day.”

In addition to volunteering in the Philippines, Rustica trains Filipino nurses who want to work in the US, organizes fundraisers and solicits companies for donations. A member of Couples for Christ, a group that works to create community, service and fellowship opportunities for Christians and non-Christians, Rustica is quick to extend a caring hand, and recruits others to do so, too.

“I know both her patients and co-workers think she is a compassionate and conscientious worker,” says colleague Stephanie Pittman, “but where Rustica surpasses most is in her untiring effort to involve more and more people in the act of helping others at Duke, and in the global community at large.”



MARKETING MANAGER

DUKE HOME CARE & HOSPICE, AMBULATORY SERVICES

YEARS OF SERVICE TO DUKE: 7



Where Ann Farmer sees need, she creates immeasurable solutions. A caregiver who “has never met a stranger,” she is dedicated to supporting and caring for others.

“She simply sees a need and works to find a solution,” says Duke Home Care & Hospice Executive Director Starr Browning, “and she doesn’t stop until she does.”

After exhausting traditional means of finding a caregiver for a patient to be discharged, Ann provided support for the patient.

Ann was made aware that the Triangle area was hosting the 58th Reunion of the Fifth Marine Division. One of their needs was transportation for 15 Marines who were physically challenged and had never been able to leave the hotel during the previous reunions due to lack of transportation. She met with various services and finally found one that would provide the transportation. When the reunion was over, the Marines were very grateful for all of Ann’s efforts.

“I shudder to imagine what might have been our reality if Ann hadn’t been with us,” says neighbor, Denise Zavaleta. When Zavaleta’s C-section burst after giving birth to twins, Ann nursed her back to health. For more than two months, she visited twice a day, dressing and changing her wound, and caring for the newborns. “She protected me from the seriousness of my condition and allowed me to concentrate on the joy of being a first-time mother,” says Zavaleta.

PATIENT RESOURCE MANAGER

DUKE HOSPITAL

YEARS OF SERVICE TO DUKE: 12

5

In 2005, Monica McKnight helped establish the Neighbor House of Hillsborough's Food For All (FFA) program. The organization seeks to meet the needs of emergency food and shelter for the homeless population of Orange County, providing 80-100 meals per evening.

“She is instrumental in preparing meals, reaching out and communicating with the homeless and those who are in need in Northern Orange County,” writes FFA Founder and President, Reverend Ronnie L. Torain. “Her tireless and faithful services are instrumental in the success of the Neighbor House Food For All program.”

On a monthly basis, Monica volunteers with FFA, helping to purchase, prepare and serve meals, as well as providing emotional support to those she serves.

“Monica not only diligently gives of her time and strength for this mission, but cultivates an aura of fellowship with those in need,” writes Lindsay Anthony. “She not only meets their physical need of hunger, but their emotional needs of unconditional, non-judgmental acceptance and love.”



MONICA BROOKS MCKNIGHT

**PROFESSOR**

GENERAL INTERNAL MEDICINE, SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

YEARS OF SERVICE TO DUKE: 22

For Primary Care Physician and Clinical Researcher Dr. Eugene Oddone, the term “pay it forward” is a way of life. A Habitat for Humanity of Durham volunteer, he is ensuring local families have a place to call home.

In 2009, Dr. Oddone and his wife, Grace were invited to a Habitat site to help build a home for a Duke employee and her children. He was so inspired by his experience, that when they were invited to be lead donors for the next “Pay it Forward” home, the Oddones contributed 50 percent of the needed funds.

“Energy, unparalleled enthusiasm and solid commitment are all traits that describe Eugene Oddone in his recent involvement with Habitat for Humanity of Durham,” says Executive Director Miguel Rubiera.

In addition to providing financial support, Dr. Oddone recruited his children, neighbors, colleagues and running buddies to help build the home. During the construction, the Oddones invited the homeowner family and their friends,

along with Habitat volunteers and donors, to their home for a celebration dinner. He has also worked to create a continuous chain of giving, so that every new home project will encourage others to get involved. The group is now on its third Pay it Forward home, with a goal of building 10 homes in 10 years.

“Eugene continues to build, to financially support, to educate and to advocate for Habitat for Humanity of Durham,” says neighbor and friend Anthony Brown. “Because of Eugene Oddone’s community service work, three families are able to buy and own a home. Eugene continues his work with, and dedication to, Habitat, and that is why we are proud to support his nomination for the MLK award.”

Four years ago, before Ellen Parks had fully settled into her new home in North Carolina, her reputation as a stand-out volunteer for the American Cancer Society (ACS) was already being discussed.

“I received a call from an ACS staff leader in Illinois telling me a wonderful volunteer had relocated to North Carolina,” remembers Lynn Erdman, ACS vice president of Medical Affairs for the South Atlantic Division. “I called Ellen immediately, and she has exceeded the description painted of her by former volunteers and staff in Illinois.”

A nurse clinician at Duke, Ellen created the Durham Leadership Council for the ACS and now serve as chair. In addition to affecting positive change in cancer care in the Durham community, Ellen assists patients and their families with workplace and financial issues and local programs and services.

For a young testicular cancer patient and his fiancée who came to Durham for treat-

ment and wanted to “give back,” Ellen got the couple involved in the Durham Relay for Life, of which the fiancée became event chair. When a chemo patient insisted on stopping his treatment so he wouldn’t miss his last bus home, Ellen helped to organize a project team that led to 32 new drivers being trained for the ACS Road to Recovery program for patients. In April 2010, she received Duke Hospital’s Strength, Hope and Caring Award for her work in re-establishing this program.

“Ellen is a true role model, and her volunteerism has made an impact on Duke as well as the community,” writes Erdman. “Ellen embodies the meaning of the [MLK] award, and every day she works to enhance the quality of life for cancer patients and their families.”



ELLEN PARKS

CLINICAL NURSE IV

INTENSIVE CARE NURSERY, DUKE HOSPITAL

YEARS OF SERVICE TO DUKE: 21

Years ago, despite having Guillain-Barre Syndrome, Marie Peluso rode in a 150-mile charity bike ride for Multiple Sclerosis. Recently, after a car accident demolished her bike and left her hospitalized, she couldn't stop talking about the upcoming tour.

“Marie began volunteering with our chapter over 21 years ago—mostly as a cyclist who wanted to ride and conquer the challenge of 150 miles in one weekend,” writes Kay Gooch, vice president for Programs & Services for the Eastern NC chapter. “Not long after this ride, a close family member of Marie’s was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. It was at this point that Marie became ‘volunteer extraordinaire’ with our chapter.”

A staff nurse in the Neonatal Intensive Care Nursery and chair of the Bereavement Committee, Marie soon became chair of the MS 150 Tour planning committee. She has biked 3,000-plus miles in the annual bike tour and raised more than \$35,000 toward a cure for multiple sclerosis. She also

started Team MSFITS (Multiple Sclerosis First in Team Spirit), one of the top 10 fundraising teams for the organization. She has spent countless hours developing the tour route, recruiting volunteers and riders for the tours, organizing smaller fundraising rides, recruiting friends and family members to volunteer, publicizing events and securing donations.

“I have heard Marie say she will ride until MS stands for ‘mystery solved,’” writes colleague Carolyn Juettner. “I know she will. Her dedication to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society is admirable.”



Margaret Pendzich has a passion for helping people improve their lives. At Duke, she works on community-based obesity prevention, encouraging healthy eating, physical activity and the critical role of community support in helping to cultivate and sustain healthy lifestyle behaviors.

At the Special Olympics Orange County (SOOC), what began as a desire to help her son John, who has autism, successfully participate in community-based sports quickly expanded to include others. Margaret is now a cycling coach for SOOC and helps to organize the program and the athletes to improve and develop their skills. In her six years with SOOC, she has also assisted with the soccer, swimming and basketball programs.

“Margaret’s commitment is not at all common,” says Jerry Phelps, a fellow coach. “In my observation, only a very small number of the parents of Special Olympians have gone to the considerable effort to become a Certified Coach as Margaret has done. It is not a small amount of work to reach this level,

and it is exemplary of her desire to help all people in her community with special needs.”

In addition to coaching, Margaret helps SOOC develop an understanding of how to support athletes of varying skill levels. An avid cyclist along with her son John, she has taken special interest in adults with cerebral palsy and is working on a presentation to help SOOC raise funds to purchase recumbent bikes better suited for the athletes, as well as a transport trailer.

“Her tireless energy, compassion for the athletes and organizational skills are critical to shaping our vision,” writes Ron Hagner. “Without her, it would be impossible to have an effective cycling program in Orange County, and impossible to change the lives we do, every Sunday morning.”



SENIOR ANALYST, IT

DUKE CLINICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE, SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

YEARS OF SERVICE TO DUKE: 4

After Deidra Powell's son was deployed to Afghanistan in January 2010, he called requesting items like socks and canned spaghetti. As Deidra prepared his care packages, she wondered about soldiers who had no one back home to do the same. "None of the Marines ask for much when they call," Powell says.

Deidra began collecting names of Sailors and Marines in Afghanistan who weren't receiving letters or care packages and approached her church to collect items. They asked her to start and lead the Ministry to Military (M2M) program. Since February 2010, she has prepared and shipped more than 60 packages, organized multiple letter-writing campaigns and written more than 100 letters to soldiers overseas. She has repeatedly requested donations from her church and local businesses, including a restaurant chain she convinced to donate a percentage of profits to M2M for an entire week.

Deidra has also prepared more than a dozen gift bags for soldiers who lacked family members to welcome them home, and has led two visits to the Bethesda

Naval Hospital to encourage and thank wounded soldiers for their sacrifices. Using a considerable amount of her own money and countless hours of her time, Deidra ensures that Marines fighting overseas feel appreciated and cared for.

"Her selflessness and commitment to our soldiers is limitless," writes Sharon Kucyk, an Elder Mission and Outreach leader at Wake Forest Presbyterian Church. "She requests no recognition for the work she has done other than continued support for her mission to support our soldiers. I hope that you will consider Deidra and M2M worthy of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Caregiver Award, as I believe she and the M2M exemplify what giving and service should be."



DATA TECHNICIAN

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY

YEARS OF SERVICE TO DUKE: 2

11

MICHELLE ELIZABETH ROLEY

When colleagues describe Michelle Roley, words like “intelligent,” “committed” and “passionate,” are often used. She is a volunteer for El Futuro, an organization that serves under-served, Spanish-speaking residents and families in central NC who struggle with mental health or addiction concerns.

“Michelle Roley is a very special person. El Futuro is a very special organization. Together they create magic in the hearts and minds of the people they serve,” writes Joseph English, clinical research coordinator for the Duke Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder program. “They are glowing examples of those who are providing mental health services to the under-served Latino community.”

A research technician in the ADHD program, Michelle brings her knowledge and determination to her work with El Futuro. She helps to ascertain if the organization’s services are reaching its clinical population, and whether patients’ symptoms are improving through their care. Her skills in data entry and scientific analysis help El Futuro staff better provide effective patient

care and improve access to care. At El Futuro’s outreach programs, Michelle interacts with families and educates members of the community on behavioral health.

Benjamin O’Brien, research assistant in the ADHD program, calls her commitment to the community “inspiring.” “Michelle’s undying dedication to helping others has undoubtedly impacted the community in a multitude of positive ways,” he says.

“All of our staff and our clients are amazed by her and touched by her in a special way,” adds El Futuro Executive Director Luke Smith, MD. “We feel she is a perfect fit for an honor given in Dr. King’s name, because of the way she chooses to give so much of herself to others.”



PATIENT TRANSPORTER

DUKE HOSPITAL

YEARS OF SERVICE TO DUKE: 4

When Walter Ray Smith began working as a patient shuttle driver, he identified with the depression, desperation and helplessness of many of the patients. His wife is a 17-year cancer survivor, and Ray, himself, suffered from depression many years ago.

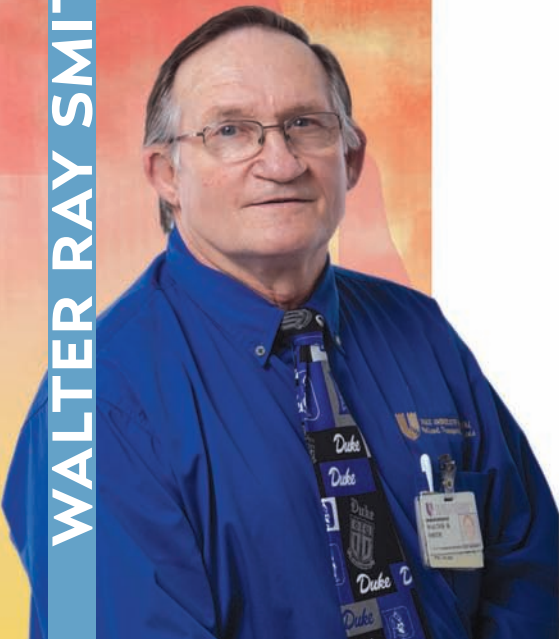
“My job was to simply transport them, but my heart said I had to reach out and help however I could,” he says. This “reaching out and helping” has made Ray a favorite for many patients and families at Duke, and in surrounding communities. He keeps stuffed animals in his van to cheer up children; consoles parents and lends a listening ear; has prayer with any who request it; and cooks a monthly barbecue dinner—complete with gospel singing—at the Caring House.

“He was always kind to everyone, joking and lifting our spirits,” writes a former Caring House guest.

Though he primarily works with patients and caregivers at the Duke Comprehensive Cancer Center, Ray also transports patients to and from many of

Duke’s hospitals, houses and clinics in the area. In 2009, Ray was the first in his department to win the Strength, Hope and Caring award for his outstanding community service and leadership in patient care and safety at Duke.

Sheridan Townsend, executive director of the Caring House, calls Ray a giver “in every sense of the word.” “His care and concern do not end when the patient or guest returns home,” he says. “He oftentimes stays in very close touch, making sure they are still in good health and taking care of themselves. The world would be a perfect place if there were more Ray Smiths!”



2011 DUKE HOSPITAL MLK COMMEMORATION PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERS / AWARD SELECTION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Sylvia Alston
- Barbara Cameron
- Wanda Evans
- Bryan Galbreath
- Jarvis Gray (*Co-Chair*)
- Mary Lutz
- Sam Morrison
- Antoinette Parker (*Co-Chair*)
- Ellen Robinson
- Bernie Stewart

*How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment
before starting to improve the world.*

— ANNE FRANK



DukeMedicine