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MONITOR

# VOLUNTEERS

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# Brent BOHNERT

////////////////////////////////////BOHNERT TEACHES LIFE SKILLS THROUGH FOOTBALL

Age: 39

**Family:**

wife, two sons

**Profession:**

District manager  
for Rhodes 101

**Who  
inspires  
you:**

The players

**Hobbies:**

Being with family

## KEY FACTS

Sometimes when you volunteer for something, you fall in love with it. That's exactly what happened to Brent Bohnert. He has been a coach for the Perryville Youth Football organization for the past three years and loves it more every year. "I was asked to help and my son was on the third grade team and once I got started it became addicting," Bohnert said.

Bohnert continues to help coach the players and over the past three seasons has had plenty of good memories. One sticks out to him in particular.

The Perryville Youth Football league joined the Heartland Football Conference a few years ago and in their first season won the championship at the 3rd/4th grade level.

"It was pretty special to all of us," Bohnert said. "We were underdogs and were able to come out on top. I actually think that it helped spur a lot of interest in the league and organization and what we are trying to do here."

The Perryville Youth Football organization takes players in grades 2-6 and teaches them the fundamentals of football before they reach the middle school and high school levels at either St. Vincent or Perry County school districts.

Teaching young kids the game of football can be challenging at times, especially when a child is learning the game for the first time.

"When you get a bunch of young kids together for the first time at this specific age, it can be tough," Bohnert said. "It takes a lot of patience to get them to understand the process of what football is and what their role on the team can be."

While it can be challenging at times for both the players and coaches, the most rewarding thing can be seeing them win games and succeeding at a certain skill.

"I love seeing it finally click for the kids and seeing them be able to work as a team," Bohnert said. "When things finally come together it is great to see because then all the work meant something."

Along with learning how to block, catch, and the different skills needed to play the game, Bohnert believes football allows kids to learn other life lessons.

"These skills are something that they can take with them to high school and beyond," Bohnert said. "You learn work ethic, teamwork, and selflessness. To get that lineman as excited for a touchdown as the player who scores it, is a lesson we should all come to learn."

Bohnert plans on coaching for a while longer in the league, partly because he has another son coming up through the ranks.

"I want to help the program as much as possible, but once my kids both move on I want to be able to watch them at the next level."



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# Nancy HOUSE

## HOUSE MAKES MISSOURI NATIONAL VETERANS MEMORIAL VISITORS FEEL AT HOME

Nancy House volunteers a couple times a week at the Missouri National Veterans Memorial. She worked in physical therapy before retiring.

"Before I retired, they had just announced that they were going to be putting in the exact replica. One of our patients came in, I knew he was a Vietnam veteran, and I asked him, 'Hey, did you hear they're putting up the exact replica (of the wall) and everything?' He got really emotional and looked at me and said, 'With my age, and my health, I'll never get to D.C. but the wall is coming to me. Right there I knew once I retired that that's where I'd end up volunteering."



The volunteer work helps her remain involved in the community.

"You retire and you still need to feel like you're useful and making a difference somewhere. House described the work she does at the MNVM.

"Greeting the guests, making them feel welcome," she said. "If they're a veteran we obviously thank them for their service. A lot of them, they just want to tell their story. They just want somebody new to hear their story. We listen to them. It helps them accept what happened to them and with the healing process."

The guests are shown a 15-minute video and provided with potential sponsorship opportunities, House said. In addition, she often helps visitors look up locations of "any of their buddies that are on the wall."

House appreciates how grateful the visitors are for the volunteers that help improve their experience at the MNVM. "What really got me, so many people thank me and thank us volunteers for what they do," she said. "It's something that had never crossed my mind in any kind of volunteering. I've traveled to other places where volunteers greet you and show you around. I had never thought of thanking a volunteer for what they do."

The work of training additional volunteers includes going over the wall dimensions and other specifics of MNVM. As for the most rewarding aspect of assisting at MNVM, House likes the love for the country shown by many visitors.

"Just seeing the patriotism and then getting the kids to understand what's going on," she said. "We do school groups and little activities and then at the end you'll see them just standing there reading the names, talking about the soldiers. They're actually focusing on the veterans and what they've done for us."

Sending off the visitors as they return to their bus or van is one final chance to connect with the tourists, House said. "They always ask me to go to lunch with them," she said.

House shares a few closing comments as the visitors get back on the bus.

"I say, 'God bless you, come back and see us,'" House said. "I enjoy that interaction with them and the feeling of how grateful they are that this place is here. They are just as proud as we are that we have this in the middle of the Heartland."

Prior to helping at MNVM, her volunteer opportunities were limited to "church committees, nothing major."

Previously, House did a little genealogical research. She also enjoys yard work.

House was born and raised in Perryville, and is a PHS graduate.

## KEY FACTS

- Age:** 64
- Family:** married, daughter
- Profession:** Retired
- Who inspires me:** More of a sense of the need to help others and important causes.
- Other affiliations I volunteer at:** Immanuel Lutheran Church, Perryville

**Down time:** genealogy, sewing and whatever comes along.

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# Robert CAHOON

CAHOON WORKS TO HELP PEOPLE AS FIREMAN

Age: 39

Family:  
fiancée, three kids

Profession:  
Machine  
Maintenance and  
Process Technical  
Manager at  
TG-Missouri

Who  
inspires  
you:  
Everyone at  
Biehle Department

Other  
affiliations  
where you  
volunteer:  
Sedgewickville  
Fire Protection District

Hobbies:  
Spending time with  
family, instilling values  
and skills with sons

## KEY FACTS

For Robert Cahoon, volunteering means being a selfless person. That's exactly why he chose to become a volunteer fireman and EMR first responder for the Biehle Community Fire Protection Association.

Cahoon has only been a part of the association for one year, but felt the need to do something worthwhile.

"For me, it's about putting others ahead of yourself and doing something for the people of this community," Cahoon said.

He mentioned that whenever a call comes in for the Biehle department, he drops everything to attempt to help, no matter the time of day.

"It doesn't matter if you are sleeping in the middle of the night or having dinner. Whenever a person dials 911 they are having one of the worst moments of their life," Cahoon said. "I feel like we need to have a positive impact on that person's life, no matter if it's big or small."

It's that feeling of helping others that makes being a volunteer fireman a good experience for Cahoon.

"It's all about helping others," Cahoon said. "Not everything we do has a positive outcome, but when it does it kind of balances everything out and makes everything worth it."

That balance is something Cahoon continues to work on, between his position within TG-Missouri in Perryville and being a volunteer fireman.

"Working on the volunteer life, along with the family and home life, versus work life can be a challenge," Cahoon said. "With every fire department it's probably the same struggles."

Cahoon also went a step further on the different challenges, especially when it comes to the department itself. The Biehle Community Fire Protection Association has about 20 volunteer firemen, but could always use more.

"It's the same everywhere, but we have the toughest time with recruitment and retention," he said. It puts a strain on the department when you're short-handed and we are always looking for people that have that drive to volunteer. But, being a fireman isn't for everyone."

Above all else, that is the biggest challenge of most establishments that take on volunteers.

"It's hard to find people who want to volunteer," he said. "It takes a special person to want to take time out of their lives to help people and I believe that's what we do here in Biehle."

Cahoon plans to keep working as a volunteer fireman for the foreseeable future.

"It can be dangerous at times," he said. "However, the ability to help people when they are in need is what it is all about. And what keeps me going."



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# Sergia PECAUT

## IT'S ALL IN THE DETAILS

She's retired, but you would never know it. On any given day of the week, 88-year-old Sergia Pecaut can be found volunteering as a member of the Auxiliary at the Perry County Memorial Hospital, as an attendant at the Perry County Military History Museum, or participating in adoration at the St. Mary's of the Barrens Catholic Church.

But on Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m., you'll always find her in the same chair, at the same round table, poring over the tiny print of not-yet published articles in the newsroom of the Republic-Monitor. It's a full-circle, coming home story that began in 1967, when Pecaut had the opportunity to work as a typesetter and proofreader under Paul Pautler, then editor and publisher of the Monitor newspaper.

"It was small, and we didn't have that many people," said Pecaut. "And I used to work for the Republic when it was on its own; I sold and made up ads for about a year. I used to have my own column called 'New Homes in Perryville' before [the newspapers] joined together."

Later, during her years teaching English, Spanish, and journalism at the Perryville and St. Vincent high schools, Pecaut would bring her students to the newspaper to see the industry at work. "At that time, we didn't have computers. We had to do it all by hand," she said.

Pecaut led the students in their production of the Pirate Puns newspaper at Perryville, and in the production of St. Vincent's The Gleaner. She shared that her journalism students helped her through the loss of her husband in 1977, just three years into her teaching career, and the Class of 1983 surprised her with a personal tribute on the front page of the school paper.



"Some of the students still remember me, even with my gray hair," Pecaut said.

In 2008, after retiring from her teaching career, Pecaut began writing a new column called "A Senior Point of View".

"I stopped at the Republic-Monitor office and spoke to Kate Martin, then editor and publisher of the newspaper, about writing a column expressing my feelings, thoughts, and changes in my life since my retirement as a high school teacher in July 2007," Pecaut said.

In 2017, Pecaut again walked through the doors of the Republic-Monitor, and she introduced herself to publisher Beth Durreman. After hearing her story, Beth was happy to welcome Pecaut aboard as a proofreader once more.

"What I do is I proofread what they have on each page, and I go through it all and correct it," Pecaut said. "I don't type it in. (Reporter) Justin (Hotop) is the one that fixes it all. It's little print, so I have my reading glasses that I use to read the small print, and I try to do the best I can."

Despite the challenges, Pecaut stated that she has enjoyed coming back to her roots.

"Beth has been wonderful," Pecaut said, remembering when the publisher surprised her by taking her to Jefferson City to receive a Senior Service Award from the governor for her commitment to volunteering. "It's just awesome the way they have treated me. They make me feel part of the family, even during the pandemic time."

Pecaut doesn't see an end to her days as a volunteer any time soon.

"I have lots to be grateful for, I still do. When my husband was sick, all the businesses in town got together. People just helped us tremendously," Pecaut said. "I don't forget these things, and I thought this would be a little something to give back to Perryville. I think the world of Perryville. You couldn't get me out of Perryville if you could pay me a million dollars."

## KEY FACTS

- Age:** 88
- Family:**
- Husband: Harold Bertrand Pecaut (late)
  - Children: Danny (Amy), Rene (Kenny), Diana (Maxx), Randy (Cindy), Douglas (Donna), Raymond (Tammy)
  - Grandchildren: Whitney, Abby, Makayla, Jacob, Gabriel, Grace, Madelyn, Noah, Justin, Sarah, Jasper, Payton, Maddison, Kyle, Katelyn, Adam (late), Christina, Brandon, Trina, Nathan
  - Great-Grandchildren: Lilly, Lauren, Thomas, Jewell, Dominic, Jocelyn, Julia
- Profession:** Retired teacher of English, Spanish, and journalism at Perryville High School and Saint Vincent High School

**Who inspires you?**

Amelia Carrion Balaguera (mother), Evelyn Hinni (inspired her to go to college and teach), Paul Pautler (previous editor and publisher of the Monitor newspaper)

**Other affiliations where you volunteer:** Perry County Memorial Hospital Auxiliary, Perry County Military History Museum, American Legion Auxiliary, St. Vincent De Paul Society

**What do you like to do in your down time?**

Playing cards, reading, and bingo

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# Lynn WINTER

*PAYING BACK, PAYING FORWARD*

**Age:** 68

**Family:**  
Carol (wife)

**Profession:**  
Retired

**What do  
you like to do  
in your  
down time?**

I enjoy cars  
(hot rods) and  
motorcycles.  
I enjoy building  
things, making  
something from  
little or nothing

## KEY FACTS

Uniontown native Lynn Winter has been a proponent of Saxony Lutheran High School for nearly a quarter century. Winter's association with the Lutheran high school goes back to before its inception. "My main place I do volunteer work at is Saxony Lutheran High School," Winter said. "I've kind of been associated and affiliated with the school since it started in the late 90s." He remembers an exploratory meeting at Trinity Lutheran Church in Cape Girardeau in the mid-1990s. "It was a meeting about remotely considering thinking about the possibility of a Lutheran high school," he said. "An effort was started to feel out and see if there was enough interest in pursuing it. Winter is just one of many individuals that embodies the mission of the school. "I am Saxony Lutheran High School," he said. "I'm just one person but I'm all about the mission of that school and what it's trying to do."

Winter was a longtime member of the school's Board of Regents, spending time as treasurer for several years. About a decade ago there was mention made at a meeting that the grass hadn't been mowed or kept up. "I thought, 'Well, I've got some equipment, I've got some time,'" Winter said. "I went down there to try and take care of the problem and it just kind of snowballed from there," he said. "Before you knew it, I was overseeing mowing most of the grass down at Saxony (Lutheran High School)." The 40-acre school site in Fruitland has an estimated 16 to 18 acres to mow. It's a process that starts in early March getting the sports fields ready. The work lasts through October and November.

During the peak time, he spent eight or so hours per week keeping up with the mowing. That time commitment has been trimmed back to about three or three-and-half and an increased stable of volunteers have helped reduce a singular workload.

"There is a lot of grass to take care of down there," Winter said. "Up until just a couple years ago I was doing the sports fields and I took great pride (in that). There were six different patterns I used to mow the baseball field to make sure it didn't develop a bunch of ugly tracks." The complex has also soccer and softball field, and now a fenced in track.

"Just mowing the grass is one thing but making it look nice is another," he said. "I think that's important." Early on, he used to borrow a trailer and haul his own mower down there. When he tired of got tired of hauling the mower to Fruitland, he purchased a mower which is now kept in the school's basement.

"I have a feeling of ownership in that school because I so believe in the mission that the school is tried to educate young kids and keep them focused on their faith," Winter said. "I just think it's worthwhile." The mowing isn't a chore in his mind.

"When I'm down there I kind of transition to getting that feeling of pride that I'm doing something worthwhile," he said. While admittedly not an official groundskeeper, he just takes pride in the work "I don't have any official capacity at Saxony anymore," he said. "I've just taken an ownership stance."

Through the years, other volunteers have assisted with the mowing. "When it comes to volunteering, I take the approach that if somebody is going to need to do a job, why would I consider myself above trying to help with that job. Why should it be you instead of me? If I would expect somebody else to do a job and I have the health, the equipment, the time to do it, why wouldn't I serve."

It's a way of serving a need, according to Winter. "I'm also looking at it as volunteering in other areas of paying back what people did before me and paying forward to people coming up and trying to make their world a better place maybe," Winter said.



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# Hellen MOLL

## PCMH AUXILIARY: NEVER A DULL MOMENT

After a 40-year career as a teller for Regent's Bank, 74-year-old Helen Moll needed a change of pace. When a friend suggested that she join the Perry County Memorial Hospital Auxiliary, she decided to give it a go. Eleven years later, Moll hasn't looked back once. "It was Ann Martin, who was one of the volunteers," Moll said. "She'd keep saying, you need to come join us for volunteering! Finally, I just thought, 'Well, I'm going to give it a whirl!'"

Moll explained that she and the other Auxiliary members follow the direction of Jessica Krauss. "We do whatever our volunteer manager needs help doing," Moll said. "We might get packets ready for the mothers of new babies, or just whatever she wants us to do." Auxiliary volunteers typically divide their time between three areas of the hospital: the information desk, the gift shop, and the outpatient entrance. "I like it all. I have volunteered in all three," Moll said. "I'm not particular which place I go, but I'm pretty much in the gift shop now."

During each of her four-hour shifts, Moll waits on customers and occasionally updates pricing.

She explained that the operation of an electronic register presents a challenge to staff availability for that post, which is why she has been spending the majority of her time there. "It's not that hard, but a lot of [volunteers] are older yet than me," Moll said. "There's not that many of us, and then sometimes one of them is gone with her grandkids and one of them is camping, so I fill in a lot. I added my hours up for July, and I think I had 71 hours."

Since the COVID-19 outbreak of 2020, fewer volunteers have been available to serve. Until numbers are back up, the members have been hard-pressed to support all three areas. "Right now, we just have the information desk and the gift shop," Moll said. "We don't have enough to man the outpatient (desk), so we just have those two places right now."

Moll stated that one of the most challenging responsibilities she has come across in her time at PCMH is helping patients to and from their vehicles with a wheelchair. A slight incline from the parking lot to the outpatient entrance complicates the process. "Sometimes a shot affects them in different ways, and you have to be careful holding onto them until they get in the car okay," Moll said. "One time I had to go get this man from the parking lot in a wheelchair, and I worried about taking him out if I didn't have a good grip on the wheelchair. Luckily, the nurse that had attended to whatever he had done took him out. Jess told us if we ever feel worried about something like that not to do it."

In her 11 years at PCMH, one particular memory stands out to her. "I was working the desk at the time, and we had a young lady that left with her baby," Moll said. "She walked out the door, and it was just no time at all and she came running back in and she said, 'I need to get to the ER, my baby's not breathing!'" "And, oh, my goodness — I went and I held on to the baby carrier with her, and ran past the pharmacy part back to the ER. The girl that works at the pharmacy, she wrote up the nicest thing saying how it seemed to her like I had maybe gone above and beyond."

"The baby was all right, and it makes me teary-eyed to think about. That was one experience that I'll never forget."

Moll said that the most rewarding part of her position is the ability to help people on a daily basis. Even on her lunch break, she will take the time to make sure that patients are getting what they need. Although the outpatient entrance is not being regularly manned, Moll was recently able to help a group of people waiting for lab results.

"I saw this one person in outpatient, and she said, 'You know, I've been sitting in here 15 or 20 minutes,'" Moll said, sharing that she immediately called into the lab to make sure that the patient was taken care of. "I said, 'If this ever happens again, you push this lab button.' They thanked me and thanked me." Moll spends as many as four days each week at Perry County Memorial Hospital, and she doesn't plan on stopping any time soon. "If it suits my schedule, I'll do it in a heartbeat," Moll said.



Age: 74

### Family:

- Husband: Clyde Moll (late)
- Son: Mark Moll (Jen)
- 2 granddaughters: Savanna Green and Denea Forehand
- 3 great-grandchildren: Kalina, Maggie, Briley, Roman

### Profession:

Retired from Regions Bank as a drive-up teller for 40 years

### Who inspires you?

Ann Martin (inspired me to volunteer)

### Other affiliations where you volunteer:

Red Cross blood drives

### What do you like to do in your down time?

Read, do crossword puzzles, walk, and play solitaire.

## KEY FACTS

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**Age:** 30

**Family:** Husband Corey; 7-year-old son Carson, 3-year-old daughter Hallie.

**Profession:**

I work at Robinson Construction as the Benefits Administrator.

**Who inspires me:**

My Grandpa Bob Miget. He was such a family man and was always involved in the community. He served on the Board of Alderman for several years then became mayor, where he served for 25 years, which is why the location of this playground and the meaning behind it was inspirational to me.

**Other affiliations where I**

**volunteer:** I am the Secretary for the Kiwanis Club of Perryville, I also teach 4th grade PSR at St. Vincent de Paul, and am on the parent committee at my son's school.

**What do I like to do in my**

**downtime:** I love spending time with family, camping and reading.

## KEY FACTS

# Hanna BOHNERT

By Daniel Winningham  
editor@perryvillenews.com

HELPING MAKE A KID'S DREAM BECOME A REALITY

Hanna Bohnert has a passion for helping others. This love helped get involved with the Lucas and Friends Backyard Adventures Playground. This local effort is centered around Lucas Fritsche's dream of getting a playground in Perryville where kids of all ages and abilities can play. Bohnert works with Lucas' mother Jennifer at Robinson Construction.

Project events began in 2017 with the presenting of proposals to companies. "We got connected through a mutual family friend, but mostly Jennifer (Fritsche) and I connected through work and I've got to know Lucas through that. When Lucas decided on this idea, after they presented it to the school (board) and it wasn't going to work out, she said, 'I kinda just want to do a playground in Perryville.'" Bohnert's response: 'Let's do it.' She had the idea and I told her I'd help her, Bohnert said. The project had to be at a city-maintained park, not a school, Bohnert said.

"We sought a new playground at the school but that was already in the short-term funding," she said. Initially, the volunteering included planning small fundraisers. "We brainstormed (and then contacted) some people we knew to form a committee," Bohnert said. "We have grant writing nights where we sit together and write out and apply for a bunch of grants. We've gotten a lot of money through that." Due to the extra modifications, the cost is almost double, Bohnert said.

"One of my best memories I've had was just recently, we had a bingo (night) and almost 100 people showed up. It was just a really feel-good moment, (with) so much support and love through it all." Continuing with the fund-raising efforts amidst a pandemic and informing people how the all-inclusive playground is unique adds to the difficulty.

"I think the most challenging part of is trying to educate people on what type of playground this is and raising the funds," Bohnert said. Through it all, Bohnert has been grateful for the support. "I think we thought we would get more money from other companies, but they've all been extremely generous," Bohnert said. "Everybody has been hit hard by COVID. Admittedly, the fundraising effort took longer, according to Bohnert.

The rewarding aspect, Bohnert noted, is being part of an effort to assist those in need. "Just helping people of all abilities," she said. "I cannot wait to see children in wheelchairs, children with sensory disorders, just typical children playing better, and being able to see parents in wheelchairs and people of all disabilities and abilities being able to go somewhere they feel comfortable and they enjoy themselves."

She previously served as a preschool teacher and has a passion for children and children with disabilities. Bohnert understands it has been a team effort to get the playground project a reality. "It felt like it was my calling to be a part of this project," she said. "It was a dream of my grandpa's to have this park be a special place for families to go and now it is coming true, all because of Lucas's dream. Our committee has spent five years and many hours planning, designing, fundraising, meeting with the city, writing grants, work days, and so much more to see our vision come to reality. The first phase of fundraising is complete, and in a few weeks the finished portion of the project will be ready for use. Bohnert has a family connection to where the all-inclusive playground is located.

The late Robert J. Miget Memorial Park on French Lane is named after her late grandpa. Years ago, the extended family constructed a small pavilion adjacent to the spray park. "My grandpa loved children," Bohnert said. "I told Jennifer we'd love to see this (project) come to fruition and have a better place for kids to play."



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# Jim HART

## HART 'AMAZED' BY PERRY COUNTY MUSEUM

If there was ever a person who wanted to know what it was like to be in Perryville decades ago, there's only one place to go: The Perry County Museum. Jim Hart along with his sister Cheryl have been the volunteer curators of the Museum for more than eight years.



"We started helping Nancy Moore, who was the curator before," Hart said. "After a while we were the only ones left."

Located at the entrance of the City Park, the two-story brick house was built in 1881 by Joseph and Mary Broeker Duerr, a local butcher and his wife. The museum is home to the Perry County Historical Society.

The museum opened in May 1990 with each room signifying different parts of old-time life. The rooms include areas of: children's toys/supplies, kitchen, schools, books, churches, medical and many other treasures from Perry County. Displays are also found in the hallways and stairways. As new donations are received, they are cataloged by Hart and labeled.

"There's a lot of stuff in here," Hart said. "You'd be amazed. It's a lot of stuff brought in by residents that they don't want to be lost in history at a garage sale."

Hart has had a number of interesting visitors walk through the halls of the building, but the one that he is most proud of is members of the St. Louis Art Museum.

"They were visiting places within 150 miles and we were their first stop," Hart said. "They were taken away by what we had. They had never seen a museum set up like this before. It was the best feeling for someone to say that about this place. I take great pride in it."

The museum is open on Tuesday and Thursday from 1-3 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m.-noon.

"We wish we could be open more, but it's tough to find people to volunteer to be here and show people around," he said. "However, when we go to the Historical Society meetings if you're 60 years old, you may be one of the youngest ones there."

Partly to these factors, Hart said the biggest challenge is to get people to visit on a regular basis.

"Whenever someone does come in, we tell them to say something about the museum to their friends or their enemies. We don't care," Hart said. "We just want people to come in and see this stuff. It's here for the people of the community."

While that may be the biggest challenge, the biggest reward is to see people's faces when they tour the building.

"When people do come in they are amazed," Hart said.

Hart plans on volunteering at the museum for years to come.

"It's really a great place to be and it gets me out of the house," Hart said. "If I don't volunteer I believe that they would have a hard time keeping this place open. The museum is too valuable for it to just go away and for people not to enjoy."

## KEY FACTS

- Age:** 67
- Family:** wife, 3 children
- Profession:** retired from Boeing
- Who inspires you:** Nancy Moore
- Other affiliations where you volunteer:** Perry County Military History Museum
- Hobbies:** Working in wood shop

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# Kate SANSONE

## ////////// SANSONE FEELS WELCOMED AT ASSOCIATION OF THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL

**Age:** 70

**Family:**  
four children and  
eight grandchildren

**Profession:**  
Cleaned houses for  
30 years, retired

**Who inspires you  
to volunteer:**  
grandchildren

**Other  
affiliations  
where you  
volunteer:**  
St. Vincent de Paul  
thrift store

**What do you do  
in your down time?**  
Pray at AMM church,  
work with seniors

## KEY FACTS

If a person were to walk around the Association of the Miraculous Medal campus, they are sure to see Kate Sansone.

She has been volunteering on campus for seven years and has done a variety of jobs which include cleaning the altar areas, replacing the holy water containers, cleaning the gift shop, organizing the shelves and dusting and even in the office sorting the mail. She's helped with just about everything.

"I've done a variety of things," Sansone said. "The holy water thing was just something that I had to do. There are a lot of germs that collect there and I felt that it needed to be cleaned on a regular basis, especially in today's time. I don't necessarily need to be assigned something, if I see something that needs to be done. I just do it."

Sansone has been hampered in recent weeks thanks to a shoulder injury, but she still makes sure everything is done.

"It stinks not being able to help with everything I want to, but I still want to help out everywhere that I can," she said.

"We moved here from St. Louis in 2012 and I went there and asked if there was anything I could do because I was lost and so bored," Sansone said. "I was looking for something to do."

Sansone has enjoyed her time doing just about everything at the Association of the Miraculous Medal, but there is one moment when she first started volunteering that has proved to her that she is in the right place.

She was helping paint a wishing well by the priest residence and a man began to help her and she started talking to him. She found out later that it was Don Fulford, the President and CEO of AMM.

"I was rubbing elbows with the top man of the place and he was just as nice as could be," Sansone said. "I love everybody here, but who would have thought that would happen to me."

Whenever she spends any time at all over on the campus doing anything, she feels an overwhelming sense of peace.

"I feel like I stepped from this world into another," Sansone said. "The appreciation I receive from doing the smallest thing, is probably what I like the most. Everyone talks to me and says they enjoy seeing my smiling face every day, but my smile comes from them allowing me to work there."

Sansone plans on continuing to volunteer at the Association of the Miraculous Medal and her other duties at the St. Vincent de Paul thrift store as much as she is able to and the people want her to keep coming back.

"I just love what I do over there and try to help as much as I can," she said.



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# Linda PANNIER

## GIRL SCOUTS: RAISING THE WOMEN OF TOMORROW

When it comes to Girl Scouts, it's all in the family. For troop leader Linda Pannier, it's literally in the family. "It's probably been like 20 years," Pannier said. "Originally, I started when my daughter got in. When she was in Scouts, I was what you call the registered adult that helped the leaders. I had a gap when she graduated and went to college, and then when my oldest granddaughter was 5, I went to an activity where you could sign up your girls. They were looking for leaders, and I thought, well, I could do that."

Four years later, Pannier's youngest granddaughter, Caitlin, also joined the Scouts. Now, Pannier finds herself doing double duty as the leader for two groups of six girls, Troop #70032 and Troop #71146, as well as the secretary treasurer of the Perry County Service Unit. Her oldest granddaughter, Kiera, is now a senior in high school. The troops meet twice a month, every other Sunday afternoon. Each meeting begins with the Pledge of Allegiance and the Girl Scout Promise, after which the scouts work on badges or activities.

On any given meeting day, the girls have sent care packages to soldiers overseas, made decorations for residents of nursing homes, or volunteered at Missouri's National Veterans Memorial in Perryville. No matter what the activity, the focus is on the "Three Cs of Girl Scouting": courage, confidence and character. "Our girls are really big on service, which I think is awesome," Pannier said. "My girls were in kindergarten when they started, and now they're seniors in high school. During that time, you teach them how to be good people. That's your main thing, giving great experiences, teaching them about life, and helping them grow."

Although service has always been the group's focus, they like to find a healthy balance of work and fun. Pannier noted that while it can be challenging to keep the Girl Scouts engaged from kindergarten to senior year, outdoor adventures provide a welcome opportunity to grow together.

"My girls love to camp and hike," Pannier said. "We always went camping at Cherokee Ridge. My girls loved it there — they learned to ride horses, they learned to cook on an open campfire, slept in cabins, fished, archery, canoes — that place was like our biggest outdoor adventure. When they bridged from cadets to seniors, which is eighth grade to freshmen in high school, we bridged at that camp in a little outdoor chapel which always meant a lot to those girls."

"Right now, my youngest granddaughter Caitlin inspires me because she was diagnosed a year ago with Type 1 diabetes at 12. She's had to grow up faster than I would have wanted, so to watch her really handle what she's dealing with with grace and maturity really inspires me. We use the experience to relay to the girls that you should always be good to people because you never know what they're going through. They're all so supportive of her."

Pannier noted that, over the last 20 years, she has seen many changes in Girl Scouts. Most recently, the organization has had to find a way to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak. Pannier shared that, because of COVID-19, they have not had a recruitment event for two years.

"We are preparing girls to be powerful women, and the world needs powerful women," Pannier said. "I always impress upon my girls that you can do whatever you want to do, you can be whatever you want to be. The most rewarding thing to me is watching young girls grow into wonderful young ladies. High school graduation is going to be tough. I'll see those special young ladies graduate and move on to college. I am so proud of them."

In Pannier's words, there are many circles in life. "Girl Scouts is a circle, and your family is a circle," Pannier said. "They overlap at times." For Pannier, they are inseparable.



Age: 70

### Family:

- Husband: Richard
- Daughter: Amie
- Two granddaughters: Kiera and Caitlin

### Profession:

Retired from the St. Vincent Parish as a bookkeeper for 21 years

### Who inspires you?

Youngest granddaughter, Caitlin, for her bravery

### What do you like to do in your down time?

Reading mystery books, knitting

## KEY FACTS



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# (TRISH) Patricia O'HARA

REGIONAL FAMILY CRISIS CENTER: A CHANCE TO BUILD, GROW, AND HEAL

Age: 54

## Family:

- Daughters: Raymie Hart, Jenna Riley
- Son: Kris Bates
- Grandson: Cameron Caldwell

## Profession:

Buchheit employee for 1 1/2 years

## Who inspires you?

God

## Other affiliations

### where you volunteer:

None, but looking

## What do you like to do in your down time?

Play with the dog, go to the movies with Kris (son), and travel

# KEY FACTS

When the pandemic hit in March 2020, Trish O'Hara and her son Kris Bates were both on the lookout for employment — along with hundreds across the nation. But what began as a job search turned into nothing less than providence, according to O'Hara, who now volunteers at the Regional Family Crisis Center.

"God provided," O'Hara said, explaining that the month of March 2020 had been a wild ride for both her and her son, as they played leapfrog with their employment week by week. By the end of the month, she had been hired full-time at Buchheit in Perryville, and her son had been hired full-time at Gilster-Mary Lee.

"He doesn't drive, so we carpool. It ended up working out perfectly," O'Hara said. "Part of why I went with the Crisis Center is because normally he has to work at seven in the morning, and a lot of times I have to close at Buchheit I don't start until 12:30 p.m., so it's a waste for me to drive him up to Perryville from Cape and then just sit around and not do anything, so I was like, I'm going to find somewhere to volunteer."

It was more than just timing that led O'Hara to the Crisis Center. When she was looking online for local volunteer opportunities, the organization stood out to her in a personal way.

"It kind of hit close to home. I have a little bit of experience with being in a domestic violence situation, so I know where the women are coming from," O'Hara said. "He was an alcoholic. I had a child who was six months old, my daughter Raymie, and I didn't want her growing up in that kind of environment. I was able to relocate and go and live with my mom, and I had grandparents that helped me out a lot. Only through the grace of God and through God's help was I able to be successful and come out of the situation that I was in."

In addition to her personal experience with domestic violence, O'Hara learned many others' stories while she served as a correctional officer in Lincoln, Ill. for 10 years.

"I worked with female housing units, and so I learned a lot about domestic violence through them as well," O'Hara said. "A lot of the women had been in domestic violent homes in one way or another. A friend of mine, also a correctional officer, was shot and killed by her husband one night. He was drunk, they had been having problems, and she was looking for a different place to live. There's a lot of it out there."

After the tragic death of her friend, O'Hara resigned from her position at the correctional facility and eventually spent the next 13 years of her career working at United Cerebral Palsy, where she taught independent living skills to adults with disabilities. O'Hara has now been at the Crisis Center for nine months, and spends the majority of her volunteer hours sorting through donations.

"I think the most rewarding thing that I have seen is to see someone be successful," O'Hara said. "When they're ready to move out, what I see in the basement, working through the donations and organizing, is that the furniture leaves because someone was ready to move out on their own. People were being successful, and they were being provided for."

O'Hara is looking forward to continuing her work with the Crisis Center.

"The Women's Crisis mission is to provide women and children with a place to go who are currently going through a domestic violence situation. It gets them away from the situation, the person and or people, and it provides them a safe, confidential environment where nobody knows where they're at. It gives them a place to heal."

If you or someone you know is in a domestic violence situation, call the Regional Family Crisis Center at 573-547-2480.



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# Brenda & Larry BROWN

## MEALS ON WHEELS: TEAMING UP TO FEED THOSE IN NEED

The recipients of Meals on Wheels — a delivery service that has provided meals to the homebound and elderly since 1954 — have always been grateful for the contribution to their ability to continue living in the comfort of their own homes. But when the COVID-19 virus hit in the spring of 2020, it became even more important to protect those most vulnerable. Schools shut down. Employees of many businesses moved to work from the safety of their own homes. In Perry County, the Senior Center shut down in order to protect the elderly by preventing large gatherings. However, they continued to run the Meals on Wheels program, which became more important than ever.

Brenda and Larry Brown, who have been volunteering with the meal delivery service for four years, met the challenges of COVID-19 only two years in.

"The center is closed, where if you were well enough to go in you could go in there and eat and visit with people," Brenda said. "The center itself hasn't opened back up yet. All it is is the shut-in part. We did have to wear masks for a while, but then we got our vaccines so we didn't need to. But the way it sounds, it's coming back again."

Brenda shared that she was originally inspired to volunteer for the program by her parents, Harold and Lillian Bohnert, who are in their 90s.

"My parents get Meals on Wheels, and I saw how thankful [they were] and how great that program was," Brenda said. "I saw an ad in the paper where they said they needed help at the time, so I thought that would be a good thing to do with my free time. I thought, well, I could do this. That's really how I got started."

Brenda, who had just retired from Stonie's Sausage Shop prior to her work with Meals on Wheels, was joined by her husband Larry a few years later, when he retired from his position as a supply supervisor at Menard Correctional Center in Chester, Ill.

"We do it together now," Brenda said. "We have the same route every time we deliver. We see the same people, and we take meals to these people that are shut in."

The husband-and-wife team delivers meals two days each week. On Thursdays and Fridays, they pick up pre-packaged meals from the Senior Center and make their rounds around the county.

"The most rewarding thing is the people," Larry said, "delivering to these people who really can't get out and, you know, help themselves. Most of them are very very nice and pleasant to us. We just find it very rewarding." In agreement, Brenda noted that the program presents few challenges aside from the recent restrictions in response to COVID-19.

"Really, we enjoy doing it," Brenda said. "I mean, I don't really find anything challenging. It's just wonderful. You feel good about yourself because you feel like you've done something for your community. We enjoy the people we see all the time — they're happy to see you, and you're happy to see them. I mean, you make friends with these people. They know you. They're so thankful. It's a good thing."

Brenda and Larry plan to continue volunteering for the program as long as they can.

"As long as we're able, we're going to keep doing it," Brenda said. "It's good for us, it keeps us busy, and we feel like we're helping the community. It's good for them and us."

If you or someone you know is an eligible Perry County Senior and interested in receiving Meals on Wheels, call 573-547-2188.



**Age:** 70 (Brenda), 68 (Larry)

### Family:

- Brenda's parents: Harold and Lillian Bohnert
- Larry's parents: Norman Brown and Barbra (late)
- Children: Joshua Brown, Jamie Weinhold
- Grandchildren: Kira and Alec

### Profession:

- Brenda: Retired from Stonie's Sausage Shop
- Larry: Retired from Menard Correctional Center in Chester, Ill. as a supply supervisor

### Who inspires you?

Brenda's parents

### What do you like to do in your down time?

Bake and cook (Larry), hang out with friends and read a good book (Brenda)

## KEY FACTS

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STATE SENATOR

**HOLLY REHDER**

DISTRICT 27



**Age:** 44

**Family:**

Married to Karl Kasten, two children: Elijah, 5; and Clara, 3;

**Profession:**

Special education teacher at Perry County Middle School

**Who**

**inspires me:**

Family, my parents, siblings, husband and kids all inspire me to get up and keep moving every day

**Other affiliations**

**I volunteer at:**

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Perryville

**Down time:** genealogy, sewing and whatever comes along.

Member at Salem Lutheran Church, served on numerous board offices such as Farm Bureau and Extension Council. In my free time I love to travel with my family, garden, and find bargains at yard sales.

## KEY FACTS

# Natalie FRITSCHKE-KASTEN

By Daniel Winningham  
editor@perryvilleneews.com

## PREPARING 4-H LEADERS FOR THE FUTURE

Natalie Fritsche-Kasten was nominated to serve on the Perry County Extension Council a few years ago. "We have Council meetings almost every month where all the leaders come and discuss our plans for the year and things like that," she said. A few years back, an opportunity to be involved with 4-H came up. "They were like, 'You were in it 10 years, you know what this is all about, we don't want this club to fall apart, we need someone to help carry it on,'" she said.

She was involved in Farrar Hawthorne 4-H Club growing up, and now is the group leader. "I started at 8 and went until I was 18," Fritsche-Kasten said. Fritsche-Kasten described the work involved with being the group leader.

"As a leader, we organize the group, we officer meetings to plan the year, we have lots of different activities, some community-service projects, project meetings for the fair, getting items ready," she said. "I kind of help organize all that."

This is her first year as a parent with a member. Her son Elijah, 5, is involved as a Clover Kids member. This is a newer program for 5-7 year-olds. "That's kind of a neat experience," Fritsche-Kasten said. "For a while, I was volunteering as a non-parent. Someone asked me to take over 4-H. I was kind of hesitant at first."

The most challenging aspect is organizing a manageable schedule when many families have multiple time commitments, Fritsche-Kasten said.

"Scheduling, getting parents to volunteer, things like that," she said. "It's always a conflict when you're trying to do a fund-raiser or something to get everyone there on the same day to help out, people have different schedules."

One of the more rewarding aspects of volunteering with 4-H is looking forward to what the kids create for the annual fair in July.

"Going to the fair and seeing the kids win their ribbons, seeing their projects," Fritsche-Kasten.

Earlier this summer, several of the Farrar group entered projects for the annual 4-H Fair. Members of other county groups presented livestock and other projects.

"Usually, it's just been cows, and then they had chickens, too," Fritsche-Kasten said. "I think a lot of people have taken to new hobbies, and sheep and goats are kind of the hot thing right now."

The Farrar club hosts a community Easter egg hunt in the spring as well as a trunk-or-treat Halloween celebration each fall.

"We do a lot of extra service work," Fritsche-Kasten said. "We do birthday boxes for food banks and we also do chemo bags filled with different items for those going through chemo (therapy)."

In years past, there has also been a Christmas party each December. She described the benefits of volunteering. "It's a great way to get youth involved and have them become leaders," Fritsche-Kasten said. "I think it's a great program for kids to step up to the plate, learn to speak in public, different things like that."

Previously, the perception may have been that 4-H was agriculture based. "It's much more than that," Fritsche-Kasten said, adding other areas of focus include foods, robotics and public speaking.



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# Sue LUKEFAHR

## 'VOLUNTEERING IS PRETTY NORMAL' //////////////////////////////////////

Sue Lukefahr is a member of Crossroads United Methodist Church in northern Cape Girardeau County. From her perspective, volunteering has been a way of life. "Volunteering is pretty normal," she said. Her father was a Methodist pastor and her family lived all over Missouri. "I was born in Poplar Bluff. We lived in Doniphan. We moved near Springfield. Other places she lived prior to southern Perry County included Lamar, Marble Hill and Maplewood. "The first thing I volunteered for was the president for the United Methodist women. I became a member when I first moved." Previously, served as president of that group while a member of a Methodist church in Herculaneum.

"They kind of volunteered me into it," she said. The involvement includes meetings, programs Nearly five years ago, Lukefahr began a children's church program as a way to help youngsters learn more of the weekly Bible stories. "The kids didn't have Sunday School," Lukefahr recalled at the time. "Everyone had kind of dropped out." She wanted to do something for the children.

"My husband and I, we were brought up in the church, and we remember Sunday school and how we remembered the stories and our teachers and everything," she said.

A survey was conducted to gauge interest from parents.

"The parents didn't want to stay after or come before church," Lukefahr said. "We decided to do it during church. It's been working out pretty good. We want the kids to be able to get part of the church (service), so we leave when it's time for the sermon."

Attendance averages about three to four children per Sunday, though the total varies.

"It depends," she said. "It has gone up to eight or 10, in this little country church, that's pretty good.

Lukefahr says its a way to incorporate church "for their level."

A lesson and a craft are part of the Sunday activities. Occasionally, Lukefahr plays music in the background.

"After you volunteer, it makes you feel good," she said. "You have a good feeling and you're glad you did it, even though it takes a lot of time."

She admitted the volunteering can be stressful, such as planning get togethers and parties. One event in the past that she recalled were the Christmas parties for United Methodist Women's group.

"It takes a lot of preparation for that," Lukefahr said.

The gathering would last a couple hours and she was thankful when they concluded.

"You want your house to look really nice for the ladies," she said. "After it's over, you're like, 'That was a lot of fun,' even though it was a lot of work."

"I'm a perfectionist," she said. "I want things to go well."

Lukefahr enjoys the people she is helping.

"The reason I really do it is because I love people, I love the Lord and I love our church. I just feel like after it's over I know the Lord will reward the time I've spent in some other way. My mom and dad taught me you can't outgive the Lord, with your time or your money."

Earlier this year, she was asked to participate in a recent murder mystery event at the Perryville United Methodist Church "I guess I could try to be an actor," she said.



## KEY FACTS

**Age:** 65

**Family:**

Husband, Mark; four children;  
Rick Dawson, Chrissy Lewis,  
Miss Johnson and  
Tommy Dawson;  
five grandchildren

**Profession:**

Retired  
teacher's aide

**Who inspires you:**

My pastor and dad,  
Donald Blaylock

**Other affiliations**

**where you volunteer:**

In the future, volunteer  
at school

**What do you like to do in  
your down time?**

Go camping, play with my  
pets (cats). My grandkids call  
me Grandma Kitty.

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# PVHS CHAIN GANG

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**Age:** mid-60's

**Who inspires  
you to volunteer:**  
grandchildren

**Other  
affiliations  
where you  
volunteer:**  
various  
boards in the  
community

**What do  
you do in your  
down time?**  
Bowling

## KEY FACTS

**A**s Bob Wichern put it, "We have the best seat in the house." Wichern along with Brian Dreyer, Ron Heuring, Dave Meyr and Steve Landholt have been a subtle, yet large part of football on Friday nights at Perryville High School.

The group has patrolled the sidelines as part of the chain gang together for more than 30 years. The group has been together since right around the time St. Vincent High School built their own home field in the late 1980s as not to conflict between the two local schools.

Four of them keep track of the first down markers, while Landholt primarily keeps the play clock in order whenever the Pirates are playing at home.

"I just love the interaction that we get to have with the coaches and players on the other team," Dreyer said.

So much so that Wichern has to resist the urge to relay the opposing play calls.

"We have a pretty good idea what the plays are going to be before anyone else does," Wichern said. "We've thought about using hand signals, but I'm sure the other team would catch on to that."

The five men have seen their fair share of Perryville wins and losses over the years, but have one game that sticks out to all of them, especially for Meyr. During the 1989 season, Perryville played Jackson and led 35-0 at the half.

"[Perryville coach] Rick Chastain would watch [Jackson coach] Paul Weber do his defensive signals before he sent in his offensive play," Meyr said. "We were just okay and we went in and beat them. That was my favorite game I've seen after all these years."

Despite seeing all of the best moments of Pirate football over the last three decades, The group said there is one challenging part of the job, especially as they get older.

"The biggest thing is getting out of the way," Wichern said. "The kids are getting faster. They pulled us back three feet from the sideline a few years ago, which makes it easier, but you still have to pay attention. If the players are coming our way we drop and run. We don't wait around to see where the play goes."

The five men are still excited about games under the Friday night lights, so they plan on doing it for at least one more year.

"We've been on our last year for the about five years now," Wichern said. "We are going to do it as long as we can get up and down the sidelines."



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