

Giving From the Heart Volunteer Awards:

The **View** page displays a submission's general information and data.

► SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Category

Youth

Nominee - Individual or Group Contact Name

Luke Matthew Wilkinson

If a Group - List all members here:

{Empty}

Volunteer Job Title:

Volunteer & Intern

Years volunteered with organization:

2

Number of hours volunteered per week:

5

Number of weeks volunteered per month:

4

Volunteer Organization

Organization Name:

The Corner Table

Nominator

Lorraine L Swagger

The Corner Table

Describe the nominee's commitment to volunteering with the agency/organization they serve. (300 words maximum)

Luke has been volunteering with The Corner Table for two years. He came to us first to complete an internship through the high school. Luke jumped right in and has basically had a hand in every task, role, and responsibility at our place. He has served in the kitchen preparing food, served meals to our guests, given out to-go lunches, organized the stockroom to name a few. He has shadowed the Executive Director in board meetings, in the organization of fundraising activities, and in the operations of community connections and partnerships. Luke is always willing to complete any task needed and his outgoing personality shines through to our staff, guests, and volunteers.

Describe nominee's accomplishments and how their service has helped meet critical needs in our community. (300 words maximum)

There are not many young men of Luke's caliber. He is one that is not afraid of new ideas and putting in an extra work necessary to make something a success. Along with his daily service in volunteering to fulfill any needed tasks, Luke created a new program to help other young men be involved while fundraising for us as well. In the spring of 2023, Luke was assisting with items for our young women's society, and he asked why it was only for girls. He posed his idea to create a similar opportunity for young men. Thanks to his hard work, a year later, Spring 2024, we inducted 19 young men into the inaugural campaign of The Dudez Dozen. He developed the name, logo, nomination letter, and a list of prospects for the society. He assisted with every aspect of the program: preparing books, speaking at the kickoff, and mentoring current participants. Through his persistence and determination, Luke not only created an opportunity for young men to make a difference in their community, but a fundraising effort that will have a huge impact for years to come.

Describe nominee's special skills, qualities and/or leadership qualities. (300 words maximum)

Luke Wilkinson earned his respect from The Corner Table veteran volunteers from day one. In working with him, he leaves a lasting impression of kindness and goodness. His work ethic, positive attitude, and reliability are to be recognized. Luke has demonstrated leadership and has proven to be a dedicated, levelheaded young man. He always enters the kitchen with a smile and typically a joke; however, his serious side comes forth when there is a guest in need. He is compassionate and wants to help others. He has stated through his experience with The Corner Table, he is driven to be an advocate for the disadvantaged and homeless. His mission of lending a helping hand is one of his most important goals in life. While Luke has so many skills to be acknowledged, his change in mindset for this struggling population compiles his most desirable qualities.

Explain why you nominated this person(s) for the Giving From the Heart Award. (300 words maximum)

Luke Wilkinson is nominated for the Giving From the Heart Award because it exemplifies his whole character. In his words, "I am rarely faced with social situations that make me feel uncomfortable; this was not the case when I walked through the doors of The Corner Table. I was nervous and curious about my role and responsibilities. I was serving food to a middle-aged man who called me over to talk. He told me about his first night being homeless and he described it as terrifying, with the worst part feeling so completely helpless." Luke says these words have stayed with him to this day and he realized how fortunate he is to never have been concerned about food, clothing, and the basic needs in life. I include his words as it shows his passion to serve and help others. Volunteering here has humbled him and inspired him to raise awareness to contribute solutions to alleviate deprivation and homelessness. His giving heart will leave a positive impact on anyone as he moves forward in life. Luke deserves this award and recognition as his experience has been life-changing for both him and our guests, staff, and volunteers at The Corner Table.

Volunteer Photo



Giving From the Heart Volunteer Awards:

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Category

Youth

Nominee - Individual or Group Contact Name

Reese Poovey

If a Group - List all members here:

{Empty}

Volunteer Job Title:

HOPE Center Van Rider Lunch Bag Preparer

Years volunteered with organization:

1

Number of hours volunteered per week:

1

Number of weeks volunteered per month:

2

Volunteer Organization

Organization Name:

The HOPE Center at the Hickory Soup Kitchen

Nominator

Laura P. Sigmon

The HOPE Center at The Hickory Soup Kitchen

Describe the nominee's commitment to volunteering with the agency/organization they serve. (300 words maximum)

Opened in January 2019, the HOPE Center links HSK clients with jobs and, if needed, provides transportation to and from work for these people. Although the concept of HOPE is fairly simple, the execution is not! We provide HSK clients with access to resources and employment opportunities by partnering with a variety of employers, municipalities, and other local agencies.

Reese and her grandmother have been coming to The HOPE Center every other Tuesday starting in the fall of 2023 except for holiday and school breaks. They originally volunteered in the Hickory Soup Kitchen grocery, but soon found out that there were enough volunteers in the grocery and wanted to volunteer where they were most needed. They contacted me to see if it was possible to volunteer at The HOPE Center. Because we are so small we normally don't need a lot of volunteer assistance. Once I understood why they wanted to volunteer and what they wanted to do then I agreed.

Through the use of our HOPE Van we provide transportation to and from work for up to six clients at a time depending on the route and time of day. Part of our HOPE program includes a bag lunch. These are given out Monday, Wednesday, and Friday to our riders. These bag lunches include enough food for two lunches, two breakfasts, and plenty of snacks. We always make sure they include a microwavable type protein/entrée like mac and cheese or ramen noodles. Reese and her grandmother have taken over the preparation of the lunch bags to much success.

Describe nominee's accomplishments and how their service has helped meet critical needs in our community. (300 words maximum)

I am so thankful for the work that Reese and her grandmother have to help The HOPE Center in preparing lunch bags for our working clients who ride the HOPE Van to work during the week. The first obstacle our clients face is getting a job that will not just provide them with income, but one that will also have a support system that will enable them to achieve simple goals. Without this support system they are less likely to be successful. For The HOPE Center providing not just transportation, but also a lunch gives our clients some food to keep them from going hungry on a daily basis. Having breakfast and lunch while working a labor intensive job is of vital importance. This is a critical part of our program that we are constantly trying to improve. Our objective is to help move HOPE Center clients from dependence on HSK and other agencies to independence. We do this by providing the opportunity for these people, most who are socially and economically disadvantaged, to get a decent job and thus begin to bring in income and to get on a path to self-sufficiency.

Through the efforts of Reese and her grandmother our clients have some support towards self sufficiency.

Describe nominee's special skills, qualities and/or leadership qualities. (300 words maximum)

Reese is one of the most enthusiastic, giving young people I have ever met. She has a big heart and an empathic personality. She not only sees the bigger picture, but also wants to do all within her ability to help those in need. Even though she is only a middle schooler I have found her to be an old soul trying to find where she fits in and how she will make a mark on this world.

Explain why you nominated this person(s) for the Giving From the Heart Award. (300 words maximum)

I have known Reese's family for many years, but I didn't personally meet her until the fall of 2023. Reese really struggled socially during the 2022-2023 school year. Part of this struggle to fit in and find her place occurred from being the target of bullying by other students. Whether this was because she is a unique individual or because of her attention deficit disorder I do not know. When the 2023-2024 school year started out with the repeated bullying her parents made the decision to pull her out of school to be home - schooled during the week by her grandparents. She lives over an hour from home during the week. This has been challenging for her, her parents, and her grandparents, but the phrase it takes a village is quite fitting in this situation. Part of her curriculum has included community service or volunteering in the community. This has been successful due to her learning style and the structure of being educated at home. Reese has embraced the situation and has thrived this past year. I nominated Reese for a United Way Giving from the Heart award because despite the difficulties she has faced socially and academically she has persevered and wants to play a part in making a difference in the world. I hope volunteering at The HOPE Center has been as impactful on her as it has been on us.

Volunteer Photo

