

## NEKLS Library Super Volunteers 2017

Each year, NEKLS asks member libraries to nominate outstanding volunteers for recognition at Assembly. This year, we had eight *truly outstanding* nominations. The selection committee decided to honor all eight nominations.

Today, NEKLS staff and executive board recognizes and appreciates the contributions of hundreds of volunteers at public, school and academic libraries throughout our region.

Here's a bit about this year's Super Volunteers. Libraries with Super Volunteers will receive a cash prize, so I will be calling up library representatives along with the Super Volunteers.

### 1. Bill Klenklen, Delaware Township Library, Valley Falls

**Library representative: Linda Heinen**

Bill's nominator says: "Bill has done multiple acts of service for the library. Most significantly he was one of two people who built our wireless patio on the east of side of the library. He leveled the ground, helped bring in paving stones and sand to form the base. He helped lay down pillars and bore re-bar to hold them in place and helped rivet our new benches into place.

"Many people enjoy our new patio and use it to browse the internet or just read a book in the shade during the hot summer months."

Bill also volunteers throughout the community, which the selection committee especially appreciated. We love that he is linking the library to the community!

When asked why he nominated Bill, Library Director Adam Doolittle said, "Bill is one of those rare people who give so much to the community. And he's done such much for the library I feel that we must do something to bring recognition for all his work."

**2. Don and Diane Low, Lawrence Public Library**  
**Library representatives: Angela Hyde and Brad Allen**

As longtime Friends of the Library volunteers, Don and Diane saw a need and stepped up to fill it. The Friends group was hesitant to venture into selling used books on Amazon. Don and Diane led the charge with tremendous success. From modest beginnings in 2013, LPL Friends increased their sales through Amazon each year reaching a record number in 2016 of more than \$63,000.

When asked why he nominated the Lows, Library Director Brad Allen said, “The Lows will be passing the torch very soon, and I felt that their hard work and dedication should be recognized now.”

The selection committee appreciates the Lows’s willingness to try something new, and also the recognition on the part of the Lawrence Public Library that Friends are volunteers, too!

**3. Library Quilters Club, Morrill Public Library, Hiawatha**  
**Library representative: Kelly Meyer**

This special award recognizes a group, instead of an individual volunteer or pair. The recipients of this award are the Quilters Club from Morrill Public Library in Hiawatha.

Today, we have seven representatives of the club here:

<p><b>Sarah Bauer</b></p> <p><b>Carol Boggs</b></p> <p><b>Janet Irwin</b></p> <p><b>Shirley Hargis</b></p> <p><b>Barbara Lemons</b></p> <p><b>Kathleen Twombly</b></p> <p><b>Sharon Waser</b></p>
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The quilters club has been meeting at the library for some time, and early this year, the Brown County Relay for Life committee asked the group to make and donate a quilt as a fundraiser. The group agreed, and ended up raising more than \$1,000 for the cause.

Their nominator said, “Although it may seem unusual to nominate a group for this award, it was clear from the start the Quilters were acting as one on the project. Everyone in the group contributed. They shared in the work and the joy, not as individuals, but as friends with a united purpose.

“Most touching to us, as Library staff and trustees, was the way the group were always saying they were the **Library** Quilters Club. We were able to share in all of the goodwill they created in our community, and for that we cannot thank them enough.”

#### **4. Kavian Kalantari, Olathe Public Library**

**Library representative: Emily Baker**

Kavian has volunteered at Olathe Public Library since 2013, which is notable because he is currently a high school student. In his four plus years at the library, he has volunteered more than 700 hours and has performed a wide array of tasks, including circulation, Friends of the Library book sales and programming. Last summer, he worked nearly every weekday in the Meet & Eat program – a free lunch program that the library provides to any child under age 18.

He also stepped in when an IT staff member was sick and helped deploy the Windows 10 roll out to all staff and customer computers. This summer he has completed special projects for Tech Services and is helping IT staff complete summer maintenance on computers throughout the library.

Kavian’s nominator says, “His selfless dedication to the library and willingness to do whatever is necessary makes him a super volunteer. He completes tasks with a sense of responsibility **and** a sense of humor. The fact that he is a high school student who is highly involved in school-related events and sports and maintains a high grade point average makes the list of services completed even more extraordinary.

#### **5. Bonnie Lewis, Olathe Public Schools, USD 233**

**Library representative: Lori Franklin**

Lori, Bonnie’s nominator says, “Bonnie Lewis is simply a gem! She worked in our district years ago, opening an elementary school as a library media specialist (LMS). Since then she’s moved

all over the country, and retired recently from Florida where she worked as a school librarian. Once she and her husband Mike settled back in Olathe, she showed up on our doorstep inquiring how she could be of help to librarians!”

So Bonnie began volunteering at Oregon Trail Middle School and at the District’s Instructional Resource Center. At the Center, Bonnie helps clean up the district catalog by merging multiple and varying forms of MARC records.

Lori said, “This might not sound like an exciting job, but Bonnie makes it fun and interesting and she is a whiz at managing records in Destiny, our circulation system. She has found many errors that we are able to fix, which results in a better access experience for our patrons.

*“Bonnie is always in a wonderful mood and this infects everyone around her. She used to sing in a girl band back in the 60s and she’ll usually bring up some wonderful music on her work station, and sing along while she makes our catalog shine.”*

Lori adds, “Bonnie is also a thoughtful and valuable sounding board for me as I craft advocacy efforts towards retaining and developing school librarians to best meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century learners. I don’t know if Bonnie will receive an award or not, but she’s already earned one in our hearts!”

The selection committee truly admires Bonnie’s dedication to the profession.

## **6. Betty Ventura, Paola Free Library**

**Library representative: Emily Burgdorf**

Betty has been serving Paola Free Library for the past 16 years!

Emily Burgdorf, Library Director, says, “Betty is an institution here at Paola Free Library—everyone knows her. She works the checkout desk every Thursday, rain or shine. She is 83 years old and continues to volunteer despite the fact that she uses a walker and depends on getting a ride here from a friend.

“Betty continues to volunteer despite changing technology and her physical limitations. She knows everyone and everyone knows her. Her commitment to the library is amazing!”

Paola recently joined the NEKLS shared catalog, NExpress, so Betty is truly committed to learning new technology. The selection committee appreciates her dedication to her library and her community!

## **7. Tonganoxie Public Library – 2 volunteers**

**a. Elizabeth Daniel**

**b. Patty Szini**

**Library representatives: Nicole Holifield and Jayma Zook**

### **Elizabeth Daniel**

Liz Daniel is a mom who attended Tonganoxie Story Time programs with her two young boys. One day, she approached a library staff member and said that she needed some kind of creative outlet...Would the library be interested in her volunteering her artistic skills at the library? She had no idea where her simple offer would land her.

Liz's nominator, Jayma says, "Liz and I tossed around a couple of ideas and decided her talents would be best put to use with a Teen Art Club since our library did not offer many programs specifically for teens. Liz came every week with new ideas and her spunky personality ready to brave the world of teenage minds. While we provided the basic supplies, she often donated supplies of her own to enrich the projects even more. All of this was going on while she had a baby strapped to her chest and a toddler an arm's length away."

The Teen Art Club was such a success that Tonganoxie expanded the program to include activities for younger kids and for adults. She also helps with library displays and donated an original piece of artwork for the library's silent auction.

Liz's nominator Jayma says, "To top it off, Liz is an active member of The Friends of the Library too. She has been a godsend to our library on so many levels. I am amazed by her artistic abilities, but I am truly impressed by her giving spirit."

### **Patty Szini**

Patty started volunteering at Tonganoxie Public Library just 9 months ago, but her nominator says that she has become a heart of the organization, defined as "the central or innermost part of something".

Patty has been central in running the afterschool food program for the library, which provides healthy snacks each weekday. 40 to 50 children regularly stop by the library for snacks. In the past 6 months, the Café has had more than 4,000 visits from children and teens.

Patty's nominator says, "Patty has become our go-to gal. I don't know how we'd run the run

Chieftain Café without her. Patty is truly giving her heart to this library....day in and day out. What more could you ask for--especially when time and heart is all one truly has to give?"

**A heartfelt thank you to all of our Super Volunteers!**