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## **For Immediate Release**

### **Northern Illinois Food Bank Honors 7 Top Volunteers**

GENEVA, ILLINOIS – May 4, 2021 – Northern Illinois Food Bank is proud to announce it has awarded seven volunteers for extraordinary service in the past year. The awards were presented during Volunteer Appreciation Month throughout April in Geneva, Rockford, Joliet and Park City.

“We are so grateful to have hard-working, dedicated volunteers who give so much of their time and energy,” said Director of Volunteers Shannon Thompson. “Without our volunteers, particularly in this past year, we would not have been able to provide over 100 million meals to our neighbors who have fallen on hard times.”

“We are honoring these seven volunteers who have gone above and beyond – often working extra shifts in a week – to help sort, pack and distribute food,” Thompson said. “Thank you to these individuals and to all of our 20,000+ volunteers throughout Northern Illinois.”

The following volunteers were honored:

**Bob Stokes of St. Charles** received the Volunteer Supervisor of the Year Award. Working in the Food Bank’s Geneva Distribution Center, Stokes completed 359 shifts in the past year – sometimes pulling a double shift in a day. He began volunteering in July 2019 and oversees other volunteers and their projects from start to finish. He also ensures volunteer safety. To date, he has accumulated 1,500 volunteer hours.

**Denise Ellison of Rockford** received the Volunteer of the Year award from the Food Bank’s Northwest Center in Rockford. She has served more than 1,000 hours sorting and packing food at the Winnebago Community Market, the Northwest Center’s onsite food pantry. She was first introduced to the Food Bank two years ago when she picked up food, and a friend who was volunteering quickly roped her in. She’s been counting steps and her volunteer hours ever since.

**Ed Overton of Zion** received the Volunteer of the Year award from the Food Bank’s North Suburban Center in Park City. Since 2016, he has volunteered mostly on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons. He

acts as the material handler — stacking, wrapping and moving pallets to the staging area, while ensuring other volunteers have the materials they need. He has served more than 630 hours.

**Kelly Tummillo of St. Charles** and **Jim Kukla of Naperville** both received Volunteer of the Year awards from the Food Bank's West Suburban Center in Geneva. They each have volunteered more than 750 hours sorting and packing food in Geneva and have served at multiple pop-up food distributions throughout the suburbs. Both of them came to the Food Bank in March 2020 to serve during the pandemic. They also volunteer at Loaves and Fishes, a food pantry in Naperville.

**Carol Ferguson of Channahon** received Northern Illinois Food Bank's Legacy Award for her eight years of volunteer service. Ferguson started volunteering at the Food Bank's center in Geneva in July 2013. When the South Suburban Center opened in May 2018, Ferguson was its first volunteer. She soon became its first volunteer supervisor as well. Over the years she has accumulated more than 1,200 volunteer hours. As a retired registered nurse, Ferguson was called out of retirement last year to administer the COVID-19 vaccine on behalf of the Will County Health Department.

**Amy Winters of Channahon** received the Volunteer of the Year award from the Food Bank's South Suburban Center in Joliet. She started in June 2019 and enjoyed volunteering so much she started coming in several times a week. She quickly rose to the rank of volunteer supervisor. She also has been at every Rx Mobile in Joliet, which runs every other Thursday. She has accumulated 635 volunteer hours.

If you'd like to become a Northern Illinois Food Bank volunteer, sign up on the Food Bank's [website](#). There are 35 opportunities for more than 1,000 volunteers each week.

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### **About Northern Illinois Food Bank**

Our vision at [Northern Illinois Food Bank](#) is for everyone in Northern Illinois to have the food they need to thrive. A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and proud member of [Feeding America](#), we serve our neighbors in 13 counties with dignity, equity and convenience, providing 250,000 meals a day. We bring together manufacturers, local and corporate grocers, area farmers, corporations, foundations, and individuals who donate food and funding, and each week nearly 1,000 volunteers help us evaluate, repack, and distribute food. We also proudly partner with more than 900 food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, and youth and senior feeding programs to provide nutritious food and resources. Our distribution centers are located in Geneva, Park City, Rockford and Joliet. Find out how you can [get help](#), [volunteer](#), [donate](#) or [get involved](#) at [SolveHungerToday.org](#), or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).