

District 6

Sarah Fennell, Customer Service Coordinator

Hired: 8/28/2015

Food City #619

Blaine, Tennessee

Why should this person be considered for the Claude P. Varney Humanitarian Award?

Spends numerous hours volunteering for a variety of organizations in the community to make it a better place. Helping an organizations with the smallest tasks can help make a real difference to the lives of people, animals, and organizations in need.

Organization #1:	Tennessee Promise/Tennessee Achieves
Length of Service:	10 Years
Service Hours:	120 hours per year
Why did you become involved in this organization?	
I mentor because I believe that education is the key to getting ahead in life. Each graduating high school senior is assigned a volunteer mentor who helps them to eliminate the barriers associated with post-secondary access and success. As a mentor my job is to support my students as they navigate the college process and to offer a helping hand or listening ear when the need a boost.	
Volunteer Duties:	
Education is the key to success in life and some of the students that I work with are first generation college or TCAP students. Working with young people in the county and helping them achieve their goals is one of my most rewarding volunteer activities. I mentor because I believe that education is the key to getting ahead in life. Each graduating high school senior is assigned a volunteer mentor who helps them to eliminate the barriers associated with post-secondary access and success. As a mentor my job is to support my students as they navigate the college process and to offer a helping hand or listening ear when the need a boost. I have been a mentor since the program begin with the graduating class of 2012. Each mentor is assigned give (5) high school students in the fall meeting face to face with them at least three times a year. As a mentor I am available any time one of my students has a question or just needs someone to vent to. We have a mentor shortage in our county so for the last four years I have mentored 10 students in addition to keeping in touch with many of my students from previous years. In addition to the students that I am assigned to mentor I answer questions at work and out in the community about how to fill out forms, how to maneuver the online system, questions about FASFA and help students find community service to perform. Each student is required to perform 8 hours per semester of community service and one of the things I have been able to help with is finding my students community service that goes along with their educational goals. Some high school students do not have the resources available at home to help them navigate through the paperwork that FASFA and college both require. Without encouragement and assistance student often give up and fail to complete the necessary paperwork and/or community service that helps them acquire an associate or technical school degree at no cost. I have stayed in contact with many of my students throughout their educational experience. I spend a minimum of 10 hours each month talking, texting, or facetimeing my students. This is the first year that I have not been able to meet face to face with my students, however, we have kept in touch by text, talk and zoom. This year Grainger County is still short 17 volunteers, so I am actively recruiting volunteers to help with this program.	

Organization #2:	Grainger County Tomato Festival
Length of Service:	30 years
Service Hours:	200 hours per year
Why did you become involved in this organization?	
I was new to Grainger County when the festival committee was formed, and this offered me a chance to give something back to the community that was now my home.	
Volunteer Duties:	
<p>I was one of the original festival organizers who help to showcase the world-famous Grainger County Tomatoes.</p> <p>The Grainger County Tomato Festival is 30 years old this year and I have been a part of the festival since the beginning. I have served on the board of directors for several years. Each year of the festival I have had a part in the event if not on the board serving as an ambassador. For the last three years I have been volunteering as part of the summer concert series. In January 2018 I was elected as treasurer of the Tomato Festival and serve on both the board of directors and festival committee. Our chairman resigned at the organizational meeting in February and did not share any of the prior applications, information, contacts, etc. with the committee.; was replaced and that chairman resigned in May. The committee was now down to eight members to attempt to organize, get vendors and pull the festival off this year. The UT Extension agent and I volunteered to contact both craft and commercial vendors. As a part of this area, I was responsible for contacting the participants, layout of the festival grounds and helping vendors to set up. I have approximately 200 volunteer hours on this project, but we did manage to pull off a very successful Tomato Festival this year and have started working on the 2022 festival. The festival was organized to promote the world-famous Grainger County Tomato and all the agricultural products as well as local artist authors, talent, and craftsmen in the area. The festival is a family event and is free to everyone who attends. The festival highlights not only arts and businesses but also helps the local community with the influx of visitors the festival draws.</p>	
Organization #3:	Grainger County Farm Bureau Women
Length of Service:	30+ years
Service Hours:	120 hours per year
Why did you become involved in this organization?	
I am a farmer’s wife and became active in this organization because there is a knowledge gap between consumer and producer. Agriculture impacts everyone even if they do not realize it. Most people think of agriculture as cattle, milk, and bread. What they do not realize is that it is impossible to get in a car and drive on a paved road without agricultural involvement. Cosmetics, makeup and other everyday household items are agricultural by-products. Almost all sports have a component that originates with agriculture. The same is true in medicine, publishing, education, and recreation. My goal is to lessen the knowledge gap between consumer and producer (farmer).	
Volunteer Duties:	
I have been an active member of the Grainger County Farm Bureau since 1986. I have served as both Vice-President and Secretary in the past. Currently I am starting my fourth year as Chairman of the	

Farm Bureau Women. The Farm Bureau Women's group participates in the implementation of priority issues, takes part in leadership development opportunities, networks with other individuals and organizations and communicate the agricultural story to achieve a positive image for agriculture. Our group organize and support many activities at the local, state, and national levels. We are involved with priority issues through policy development sessions, contacting elected officials on issues affecting agriculture, and conservation of our natural resources. I have met with my legislators concerning agricultural issues this year by electronic communication. We have been active in getting people out to vote and in promoting agriculture issues with the theme I Farm I Vote. Our Farm Bureau Women's Face Book page has been active this year since we are not able to be out and about in the community. I am involved in the agriculture in the classroom program, farm day tours for local school children and various opportunities to promote agriculture and the abundance of food and products agriculture provides the consumer. In March for commemorate the Farm Bureau Gives Back Campaign our women raised and donated \$ 1000.00 to the two organizations in our county Grainger Baptist Association and Johnson's Chapel Church that provide meals, food, and hygiene items to anyone who expresses a need. To promote agriculture in the schools to younger children we read books that emphasize farming This year we read to our classes via Zoom. Our group has been active in promoting farm commodities promotion by updating our Face Book page with fun farm facts and resources for virtual learning. We sponsored an essay contest to promote agriculture education and I sent information to schools and talked to the teachers about having their students participate. We award cash prizes for the top three winners. I represented Grainger County Farm Bureau Women as a voting delegate in Franklin at the Tennessee Farm Bureau Convention. I am working to revive the Young Farmer Program in our County . As Women's Chairman I also attend the regular Grainger County Farm Bureau Board of Director meetings.

Organization #4:	East Tennessee Regional Leadership Board of Directors
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Length of Service:	2 years
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Service Hours:	36+ hours per year
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Why did you become involved in this organization?

I am an alumnus of Regional Leadership and was appointed by the county executive.

Volunteer Duties:

This is my second year to serve on the board of directors for East Tennessee Regional Leadership. This board meets monthly for three hours and requires board members to attend at least one county leadership day as well as Regional Leadership Alumni events and graduation. Regional Leadership provides a networking opportunity for community leaders from East Tennessee and facilitates the interchange of ideas and familiarization with local issues of the region as they relate to economic and community development. This program creates a network of leaders through which information can be effectively channeled to and utilized by the county leadership programs while promoting the positive aspects of participating counties with appreciation of similarities and differences.

Organization #5:	Grainger County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors
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Length of Service:	27 years
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Service Hours:	48 hours per year
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Why did you become involved in this organization?

I have a member of the Grainger County Chamber of Commerce for the last 29 years. I have been a board member for 27 consecutive years; however, I have served as Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer over the years. Currently I serve as the Chamber Secretary and Treasurer. My responsibilities include sending our invoices for membership dues documenting receipts of dues, bank deposits, reconciling bank account. taking minutes of board meetings, correspondence, and being a chamber ambassador at ribbon cuttings and other events. We have held several ribbon cuttings in the past year.

Volunteer Duties:

I also serve the Grainger County E 911 Board of Directors, Grainger County Agricultural Advisory Committee, am a Grainger County 4-H Volunteer Leader (due to COVID 19 we have not been allowed to meet in the schools yet), Grainger County Leadership and Youth Leadership programs, assistant Sunday School clerk, social committee and finance committee at Blue Springs Baptist Church and secretary of the Grainger County Republican Party.