

2021 Governor's Volunteer Award

Hans and Megan Kanal H&M Catering

Research indicates that one in five children struggle with food insecurity in North Carolina. Many receive free and reduced lunch at school. Molly Moffit, YMCA Executive Director overseeing community outreach, notes that when schools closed in March 2020 due to the pandemic, H&M Catering worked alongside the YMCA staff and volunteers to safely make and deliver almost 4000 meals to children and seniors across Gaston County. In addition to children who were unable to receive school lunches, COVID impacted seniors, many of whom were on waiting lists to receive home delivered meals. Hans and Megan Kanal, owners of H&M Catering, stepped up to volunteer their time and kitchen space to prepare and pack lunches. At first volunteers assisted them in the packing of the lunches but as concerns over the spread of COVID rose, Hans and Megan personally prepared the lunches, packed the coolers, and helped load buses for food delivery. Molly reports, that upon return they would be waiting with smiles on their faces ready to take the empty coolers to fill again for the next day.

Molly also states that Hans and Megan were always available to take a call, in case there was a change in the number of lunches or the time of pick up. Hans stated, "When everything was going down, it gave us purpose." Megan added, "We feed people, that's what we do." Molly says she wishes they could have seen the faces on the kids and seniors when the Y bus arrived with food. The kids would come running. The seniors' hearts were filled with gratitude. The Y's reach into the community would never have been so great without Hans and Megan's help. They gave of their time, talent and treasure because they believe in the mission with a common goal to bring food to those who were hungry.

Leon "Lee" Stadther

Leon "Lee" Stadther was nominated for the Governor's Volunteer Award for his work with the Backpack Weekend Food Program. Executive Director Dallas Butler reports that Lee is a selfless individual with integrity, dedication and is one who has committed his life to serving others. Lee has served on the Board of Directors of the Program, as Treasurer since its inception in 2011. Lee is a Certified Public Accountant who has brought tremendous leadership, vision, and accuracy to help build and sustain the Program, now more than 10 years old. Humble and highly astute, Lee has devoted years of his personal time and talents to help grow and establish a viable organization, alongside the Board of Directors, staff and volunteers. Lee has a full-time job, so he spends most of his time volunteering for the program in the evening and on the weekends, managing the finances of the organization, including but not limited to budget preparation, credit card reconciliation, invoicing, financial reporting, and tax preparation. Lee continued as volunteer for the organization past his term, when in 2018 the founder of the organization, Carolyn Niemeyer, retired and a new director was hired. Lee's efforts were critical in ensuring knowledge transfer and a seamless transition.

Parkdale Mills and US Cotton

We are proud to have Parkdale Inc. as a member of our community, the largest consumer of cotton in the US and one of the largest providers of spun yarns in the world.

The global pandemic has impacted virtually every aspect of our lives over the last year and a half. When many retailers shut down affecting the demand for cotton apparel, the company was forced to shut down facilities, yet front-line medical workers needed help. Parkdale Mills and US Cotton answered the call when the White House reached out to Parkdale's leadership expressing the need for PPE equipment, particularly face masks and gowns. Within 48 hours, Parkdale devised a plan to pivot from making blue jeans and t-shirts to manufacturing face masks and gowns. Within 2 1/2 days, Parkdale had a commitment for 600 million masks.

Similarly, US Cotton played a significant role in the fight against COVID by producing specifically designed medical swabs needed for COVID-19 testing kits.

The Charlotte Business Journal stated, "Parkdale Mills is taking on our nation's fight against the spread of COVID-19, noting in addition to making facemasks the company produced 60 million isolation gowns for medical workers and first responders."

The PPE project allowed thousands of US textile workers to return to work. Parkdale's CEO Andy Warlick sums it up perfectly saying, "When we got the call, we answered."

This unforeseen opportunity meant less layoffs for thousands of employees within the manufacturing supply chain. It is such a blessing to have a company helping to protect the health and welfare of our citizens.