

## Features



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# Rachel Strickland Receives Volunteering Works Grant

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REALTOR® Magazine and the Good Neighbor Society have announced the recipients of the eighth annual Volunteering Works grants and mentoring; the program matches Realtors® who work on small-scale charitable efforts with mentors and awards them grant money.

The five Volunteering Works recipients will receive a \$1,000 seed grant and a year of one-on-one mentoring from a member of the Good Neighbor Society, comprised of past recipients of the National Association of Realtors®' annual REALTOR® Magazine Good Neighbor Award for volunteer service.

“Realtors® are committed to helping homebuyers achieve their dreams of owning a home and building communities, and many are just as committed to building that sense of community through volunteer and charitable work,” said NAR President Tom Salomone, broker-owner of Real Estate II Inc. in Margate, Florida. “The Volunteering Works program provides a way for Realtors® who are helping in their communities to team up with mentors who can help their charitable efforts grow and thrive.”

The Volunteering Works recipients were selected based on their devotion to their communities through volunteer work and the potential for their good works to be expanded or improved with the help of an expert mentor. Their mentors are past winners of the Good Neighbor Awards, the highest honor that NAR awards to Realtors® involved in community service.

2015 Volunteering Works recipient Kerry Constantine, Power Brokers Real Estate Inc., Ft. Myers, Florida, says the Volunteering Works experience has been a great way to increase exposure for a cause near and dear to her heart: homelessness. Constantine says the \$1,000 grant enabled her to distribute over 500 packets of toiletries to the homeless in her community.

“We are looking at expanding our services to help homeless families with emergency housing,” she said. “I am thankful for my mentor Cynthia Shafer and blessed that she lives nearby.”

“The Volunteering Works mentoring program gives the recipients the tools they need to face the upcoming challenges and to make their charities bigger, stronger and more complete,” said LeRoy Bendickson, Edina Realty, Minneapolis, Minnesota, who is a 2011 Good Neighbor Award winner and the chair of the Good Neighbor Society Advisory Council.

The 2016 recipients of Volunteering Works grants and mentoring are:

**Diana Bowler, Allen Tate Company, Charlotte, North Carolina**

Since 2014, Bowler has served Wesley Chapel Friends of Parks and Recreation, a community organization that promotes cooperation among businesses and nonprofits through events and fundraisers. As co-coordinator, Bowler has been instrumental in planning and implementing the grand opening, Christmas in the Park, Easter egg hunt, BBQ cook-off and fall festival. Bowler will receive advice from her mentor, 2015 Good Neighbor Award Winner Susan Stearns, Berkshire Hathaway HomeService, Calabasas, California, about motivating volunteers.

**Candi DeMoura, Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage, La Jolla, California**

In 2013, DeMoura founded Candi’s Holiday Food Drive as a way of bringing her community together during the holiday season. To raise awareness, DeMoura walks the neighborhoods and accepts donations at her weekly open houses. Her commitment to fighting hunger is evident: 1,247 pounds of food provided 1,039 meals for children, seniors, physically challenged and families throughout San Diego County. DeMoura will seek guidance from her mentor, 2012 Good Neighbor Award Winner Rocky Balsamo, Long & Foster Real Estate Inc., Princeton, New Jersey, on how to build a strategic plan.

**Tamara “Tami” Hicks, Century 21 Signature Real Estate, Ames, Iowa**

Since 2012, Hicks has given countless hours, financial donations and marketing efforts to help grow awareness of the Overflow Thrift Store. She collects quality items when people move out of an apartment or house; she repurposes and sells the items and then gives the

profits to nonprofits that provide housing, food and education. Hicks will be advised from her mentor, 2014 Good Neighbor Honorable Mention Beth Smoot, NextHome City of Oaks, Raleigh, North Carolina, on how to overcome hurdles of funding, systems for reusing excess materials and training board members.

**Ben Jones, Prime Mountain Properties, Gatlinburg, Tennessee**

In 2014, Jones and his wife co-founded Angel Wings Memory Gowns as a way of bringing comfort to grieving families who have lost a child. He repurposes formal attire and wedding dresses into complimentary burial gowns for babies and toddlers up to five years old. He has brought together more than 45 volunteers and serves 25 local hospitals. Jones will benefit from guidance from his mentor, 2012 Good Neighbor Honorable Mention Kathleen Peck, All in One Realty Group Inc., Naples, Florida, about getting more exposure and financial support.

**Rachel Strickland, Young Real Estate LLC, Dexter, Missouri**

Six years ago, Strickland founded Manger Full of Toys, a volunteer organization that collects gently used children's toys and donates them to families in need at Christmas time. In 2012-the best year so far-more than 7,000 toys were given to 371 families. She hopes to find a permanent facility to store the toys and host the giveaways. Strickland will be counseled by her mentor, 2000 Good Neighbor Award Winner Linda Booker, Realty Executives, Glendale, Arizona, about recruiting volunteers and obtaining nonprofit status.

Volunteering Works is funded by The Stuart & Jill Siegel Charitable Foundation. To learn more about Volunteering Works or the Good Neighbor Awards, go to [www.REALTOR.org/gna](http://www.REALTOR.org/gna).

The National Association of Realtors®, “The Voice for Real Estate,” is America’s largest trade association, representing more than 1.1 million members involved in all aspects of the residential and commercial real estate industries.

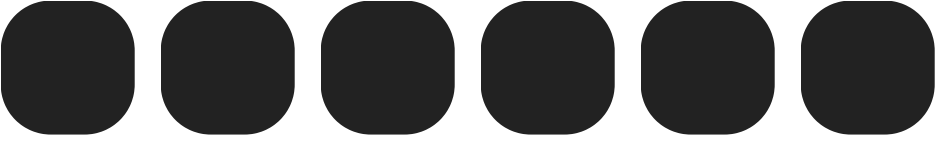
Information about NAR is available at [www.realtor.org](http://www.realtor.org). This and other news releases are posted in the “News, Blogs and Video” tab on the website.

Press Release: Realtor from Dexter Receives 2016 Volunteering Works Mentoring and Grant

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