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***United Way IMPACT Awards celebrate local heroes***  
*Awards honor extraordinary volunteers who transform our communities*

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**PITTSBURGH, Pa** (Nov. 14, 2024) – Two nonprofit agencies are receiving grants from United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania to honor outstanding efforts by their volunteers. The newly launched United Way IMPACT (**Individuals Making Progress And Creating Transformation**) Awards will honor Donnie Black, volunteer and board member of [Allegheny Youth Development](#) (AYD) and Mary Ann Shiring, volunteer at [South Hills Interfaith Movement](#) (SHIM).

United Way agency partners were invited to nominate volunteers for the IMPACT Awards. Of the 160 agencies invited, 32 submitted nominations, which were thoughtfully reviewed by a committee of [United Way's Tocqueville Society](#) members, a dedicated group of some of our area's most influential business and civic leaders who donate, help establish the agenda for United Way's future and inspire others to engage with the community.

"The IMPACT Awards provide an opportunity for United Way to honor volunteers who have dedicated their lives to uplifting this community," said United Way President & CEO Bobbi Watt Geer, Ph.D. "We are inspired when we see these volunteers in action because they show us that everyone has a part to play in contributing to our region."

**About IMPACT Awardee Donnie Black:** An AYD alumni, Donnie Black has been giving back and volunteering for 13 years. He leads AYD Judo, a Japanese martial art in which students use an opponent's own force and momentum to throw or subdue them, for young people mainly from Pittsburgh's North Side. Donnie teaches 12 to 20 students twice a week, assisted by two or three other volunteers and some of his advanced students. About once a month, he coaches his Judo students at all-day tournaments or inter-club competitions. Additionally, he spends considerable time researching and writing the lesson plans for his classes. Donnie learned Judo at AYD starting in the sixth grade and rose through the sport's competitive levels to become a nationally ranked athlete in his later high school years.

"Donnie Black is a remarkable blend of passion coupled with a sense of giving back to the neighborhood where he grew up," shared Brain R. Foltz, executive director of Allegheny Youth Development. "Like most volunteers, he derives more satisfaction and pleasure from his work

than he could from any compensation, including awards. But Donnie's also enthusiastic about convincing others to give back, whatever their passion. He sees this as an opportunity to inspire others to volunteer, wherever they're needed."

**About IMPACT Awardee Mary Ann Shiring:** Mary Ann Shiring has donated more than 1,000 hours to helping her neighbors through SHIM over the last five years. She volunteers in the food pantry, both with preparations and with distributions; participates in shelf stocking and box packing; helps organize and package diapers, pet food and other items that need to be sorted; and Mary Ann helps distribute items to pantry clients and manage the flow of inventory.

"SHIM is grateful for the 200+ volunteers who dedicate more than 15,000 hours each year," said Jim Guffey, Executive Director of South Hills Interfaith Movement. "Mary Ann stands out for her leadership and consistency. Not only does she focus on helping our clients, but she focuses on supporting her fellow volunteers. Mary Ann takes time to appreciate her team, which increases productivity and helps SHIM maintain high levels of volunteer participation for these vital tasks."

In recognition of their outstanding volunteer contributions, each agency will receive a grant. With its \$15,000 grant, Allegheny Youth Development will add more tournament competitions to the schedule, provide new judo uniforms and update their exercise equipment. South Hills Interfaith Movement will receive \$5,000 to support the food pantry operations including food, supplies and fuel for the trips volunteers make to the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank to collect food to distribute through SHIM's pantry.

"It is an honor to recognize these two extraordinary individuals for their commitment and contributions to our region," said Sally Ellwein, chief Program and Policy Officer at United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania. "These volunteers are sincere, steadfast and extremely generous, always going above and beyond. Allegheny Youth Development and South Hills Interfaith Movement are lucky to have such selfless leaders within their communities."

To learn more about United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania, please visit <https://uwsdpa.org>.

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**About United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania** – United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania, serving Allegheny, Armstrong, Butler, Fayette and Westmoreland counties, convenes and mobilizes the caring power of individuals, the business community and organizations to help local people meet basic needs, move toward financial stability and build success in school and life. Together with dedicated donors and caring volunteers, United Way creates long-lasting change for the betterment of our community.