

VOLUNTEER BURKE CEREMONY**'Burke's Best' honored**

Four receive
awards for service

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"I think that's why we are put here — to help others," said Donna Street, one of the four recipients of the "Burke's Best" awards presented Monday night.

The awards are presented by Volunteer Burke and recognize those who have made a mark on the community by being generous with their time in helping organizations and causes that benefit the people of Burke County.

"You express the best of Burke County," said Marsha Riddle, former director of volunteers for the J. Iverson Riddle Developmental Center. "You are our community's role models."

In her remarks to preface the award presentations, Riddle said events of the past few weeks have shown the importance of volunteerism.

"Over the last two weeks, we have been witness to literally thousands of volunteers who rushed to the aid of their home communities in Boston and Texas where many volunteers were killed as part of the firefighting effort," Riddle said.

"The daily work of volunteers often goes unnoticed, but tragically like we've seen in the last few weeks highlights the efforts of volunteers. They rush intentionally into harm's way to help those who need help."

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PHOTOS BY BRIAN GRAVES/THE NEWS HERALD



ABOVE: Donna Street, recipient of both the "Burke's Best" volunteer award and the Governor's Medallion for volunteerism, shows a teary-eyed grin as her honors are read.
LEFT: Hazel Hull, right, "Burke's Best" honoree, shares a word with presenter Marsha Riddle.

Honored

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Street was awarded for her work as a volunteer at A Better Life Animal Rescue where she helps trying to find homes for dogs or cats who would otherwise be slated for euthanasia.

That work has also gained her the prestigious Governor's Medallion award, which is the state's highest award given for volunteerism and one for which she was also recognized at Monday's reception.

Street received that award last week in Raleigh from Gov. Pat McCrory and First Lady Ann McCrory.

"I started back in 1996 in my home county of Randolph," Street recalled. "We saved two dogs from a puppy mill and that kind

of started it."

When she and her husband moved to Burke County, she became involved with the Humane Society later starting the rescue organization for which she now works.

The Streets have recently worked to put up kennels on a piece of land A Better Life owns in the hopes it can become a sanctuary for older or handicapped animals.

She described the experience of receiving the recognition both here and for the governor as being "extremely humbling."

"Volunteering is giving something without any expectations of getting anything back," Street said.

Lily Dunham was also recognized Monday for her work with the Riddle Center.

She has worked with the center for six years and she spends one afternoon a week helping with office work.

"Although most of her duties are not in direct contact with residents, Lily also serves residents when needed," said Gretchen Lowman, president of Volunteer Burke. "She walked an entire parade route with a resident so that the resident could have the experience of walking in the parade as a participant."

Lowman also honored the volunteer work of Hazel Hull, who volunteers for the George Hildebrand Elementary After School program.

"She was nominated because of her dedication to so many children for so many years, with all of their many, many needs,"

Lowman said. "Ms. Hazel is a mentor not only to the children, but to the staff as well. She is the model of timeliness and dedication."

Lee Opp was honored for her work with the Trail of Faith.

"She was nominated because of her never ending excellence in quality of service," Lowman said, "but she was also nominated for her commitment and heart for communicating the rich history of the Trail of Faith organization to the youth of the area."

She also praised Opp for her work with the old Colony Players, CoMMA, AARP, and the Department of Social Services and noted her and her husband have served as foster parents for more than 30 years.