

Unsung Hero Nominees Bios for the Citizen
January 2012

Monroe County charitable nonprofit organizations will honor their volunteer of the year on Friday, January 21, at the tenth annual Unsung Heroes luncheon sponsored by the Community Foundation of the Florida Keys (CFFK). This popular event is made possible by the Foundation's Very Important Partners in Paradise whose annual support helps underwrite the CFFK activities and programs.

This event provides an opportunity to honor those who have answered the call of volunteerism. On behalf of the nonprofit community, the Board of Governors of the CFFK extend our gratitude for all these wonderful volunteers who have made valuable contributions of their time, energy and talents, expecting nothing in return. Our lives are greatly enhanced by their call to service.

For further information regarding the Community Foundation of the Florida Keys contact Dianna Sutton, cffk@cffk.org, 292-1502.

Larry Kahn- Domestic Abuse Shelter

Larry thought he would volunteer his time to help with grocery shopping at the Domestic Abuse Shelter. Now six years later, DAS is grateful to Larry for his years of service on the DAS Board of Directors with the last three years as President of the board and Chair of DAS's annual fundraiser the No Name Race.

Ellen Engelson- Key West Art & Historical Society

Ellen Engelson spent her summer a volunteer ARTCamp teacher for the Key West Art and Historical Society. She generously gave her vacation time to assist and help the young artists in our community. When she is not volunteering, Ellen is a master gardener, accomplished quilter and artist.

Diana Reif- Key West Writers Guild

Retired attorney Diana Reif is president of the Key West Writers Guild and also serves as treasurer much of the time. She has moved the organization forward in many ways and was instrumental in drafting much-needed new bylaws. The Guild is moving forward toward a more structured future.

Michael Marrero- Monroe Association of ReMARCable Citizens

Michael is an award winning artist whose creative talents have graced the MARC family. Michael became involved with MARC through our Bocce Team . He then wanted to show others the complex, unique and varied lives of MARC. From this he created "The Remarkables" a photo essay of the MARC clients. Michael's photo essay opened to rave reviews. Michael also drove 6 portraits from Key West to Tallahassee for Developmental Disabilities Days. Michael says yes to all our requests. He represents what is so special about Key West.

Neils Hubbell-Florida Keys Outreach Coalition

Niels Hubbell believes deeply that we all have an obligation to help others in need. Having worked with marginalized people since his teens, he service to them is “as much a part of my life as eating and sleeping.” FKOC is privileged to have him as a board member and tireless volunteer.

Marcia Sweeting Somerall- American Legion Auxillary # 168

Marcia has willingly contributed time, talent and treasures to many civic causes in Key West. Her generous efforts are well known to our organization and the community. She has accomplished much that will directly impact positive, future benefits to our Post. We recognize her outstanding accomplishments all that she has so willingly given to others.

Jane Grannis- Studios of Key West

For the last three seasons, Jane devoted endless hours helping us grow by greeting visitors, processing enrollments, planning trips, and setting up and servicing events. Janes good nature simply smiles at the mound of material set before her each week at TSKW and helps the staff roll over bumps and manage what would be an impossible work load.

Suzanne Sullivan- Boys & Girls Clubs of The Keys Area

Over the past five years, Sue Sullivan has supported and attended almost every Boys and Girls Club fundraising event. In addition to generously donating her time and financial support, she also listens and problem solves. She is the best kind of volunteer an organization like our can have.

Mary Sandusky- Key West Garden Club

A 20 year member of Key West Garden Club, Mary Sandusky has worn many hats. Whether handling our money for over 10 years as Treasurer, or as co-chair of propagation, or organizing Christmas decorations, Mary always has a smile and an effortless way about getting things done. She is truly talented in floral design and faithfully makes many arrangements each year for the garden. She is our lovely unsung hero and we love her.

Clayton Lopez- Friends of the Aids Memorial

Today we acknowledge a gentleman embedded in community and faith-based service, who navigates politics with grace, who raises his voice in song and for the disenfranchised. We especially honor him as a longtime Board Member of Friends of the AIDS Memorial, acting as City liaison for the annual World AIDS Day Service. Thank you, Clayton Lopez.

Ian Brockway- Tropic Cinema

If a great volunteer is one who reminds you every day to believe in the work you do, that's Ian Brockway. Ian is Tropic Cinema's most loyal critic and blogger. Whether disappointed or delighted, Ian's reviews are always eagerly anticipated by his fans. Ian lets us all know that Tropic Cinema brings meaningful, evocative art into our lives.

Dr. George Peterson-Florida Keys Healthy Start Coalition

Dr. George Peterson and his staff go above and beyond to ensure health babies are born in our community. They have worked tirelessly on countless occasions-taking the time to hold the hand of a scared new mom, fitting a patient into his already busy schedule and being there when no one else would. The Coalition is forever indebted to Dr Peterson and his staff for the care that they give to new moms and babies. We thank you.

Jeff Shumate- USCGC Ingram Memorial Museum

Our unsung hero this year is a local military group known as the Southernmost Chiefs Association and represented by Command Master Chief, Jeff Shumate of Coast Guard Sector Key West. The Chiefs have worked to direct community service of the Sector to help in the restoration and fundraising activities. Our thanks go to this organization for the contribution of their personal time toward the support and restoration of this historic landmark.

Jeffrey Grosky- Key West Pops

Jeffrey Grosky has been a cornerstone of the Pops Board of Directors for over eight years. Jeffrey rarely misses a Board meeting and has unselfishly given his time and guidance to ensure that the Pops remains a high caliber organization. Jeffrey's outgoing personality and happy nature have helped the Pops in so many ways, gaining the respect of the community.

Mayor Craig Cates- Southernmost Homeless Assistance League

Mayor Craig Cates is the Unsung Hero of the Year for the Southernmost Homeless Assistance League. Mayor Cates has been a tireless advocate for the Key West community and has demonstrated courage by taking on the complicated issue of homelessness in Key West. Mayor Cates has displayed extraordinary leadership by learning about the complexities and varying philosophies and approaches in serving homeless individuals. He has embraced change and continues to seek and support improvements in serving these vulnerable and often ill citizens of our community. In so doing, he has created new enthusiasm and energy and has drawn new and talented individual community leaders and volunteers onto the team working every day to help solve the many challenges our homeless face. Craig has led several committees, community members and city staff to look at local ordinances and services, as well as championed the introduction of a mobile outreach van that provides services to people on the streets. Mayor Craig Cates, we admire your "Leadership by Example" style and your embracement of our "One Human Family" philosophy. You are our hero!

Josie Koler- American Cancer Society

Josie Koler has been a dedicated volunteer for the American Cancer Society over 4 years. She's a board member and passionate about promoting ACS's life-saving research, cancer prevention, early detection, and patient programs. Josie led the Pink Sunrise team for ACS's Making Strides Against Breast Cancer and is the 2012 Chair for the Keys Diamond Gala.

Alan Eckstein- Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe

Attorney and child advocate, Alan Eckstein has served on the ELC board since 2006; chairing the By-laws Committee and Monroe Advisory Committee. He serves as local chair of the Children's Movement of Florida. Alan enjoys volunteering in character as "guest reader" at ELC sponsored literacy events at early education centers.

Carolyn Williams- Navy League Key West

Carolyn Williams is the Navy League Council Board Treasurer. Carolyn not only pays the bills, does the accounting, and prepares the monthly financial reports for all the Navy League's activities but also prepares the voluminous annual reports to the IRS and the National Navy League organization. A volunteer financial superstar!

David Miller- Habitat for Humanity of Key West & Lower Florida Keys

David Miller and his wife, Donamae Szepesi, volunteer with Habitat's *A Brush with Kindness* program, which helps income-qualified homeowners who struggle to maintain the exterior of their homes. Habitat is grateful to David for selflessly giving of his time and construction skills. He puts his faith into action.

Rev. R J Starr- I Believe Foundation

Reverend RJ Starr has devoted countless hours serving the community youth, elderly, homeless and wounded soldiers, and their families. Rev. RJ is the Minister of the Spiritual Living Center of the Florida Keys and is the Director of the I Believe Foundation. He serves on numerous boards and he is an irreplaceable asset to our community.

Darlene Bennett- Canon John H. Reece Scholarship Fund

Darlene has been a valuable member of our board for the past six years. She worked diligently on the Hotel and Scholarship Committees and followed through on getting the necessary work done in a timely manner. She is energetic and has a passion for helping develop young minds.

Bill Beck- Old Island Restoration Foundation

Bill Beck has been a long time supporter and volunteer for OIRF. Now, as Volunteer Coordinator, he contacts, trains, and supervises over 250 volunteers each year for the four annual house tours. The proceeds from these tours fund scholarships, renovation grants, and maintenance of the Oldest House Museum.

Susie Reutling- Key West Botanical Garden Society

Susie Reutling admittedly checked the garden out before joining in February 2010. Susie's sense of fun and cheerfulness soon ingratiated herself with everyone while offering exceptional skills in record keeping and organization. Her steady rise led to her passion as a leader of the Garden's growing endangered plant conservation program. You Grow Girl!

Ann Eid- Key West Womans Club

Ann Eid has been a member of the Key West Woman's Club since 1970. She was Director for 8 years, Membership Chair and 2nd V.P. for 6 years, Recording Secretary for 4 years, Treasurer for 4 years and on the Finance Committee for 4 years. Ann has been volunteering at Bayshore Manor on behalf of the Woman's Club since the 1980's and has been Chairman of the Volunteers since 1992. Ann Eid, a true unsung hero.

Jane Dawkins- Friends of the Key West Library

A dedicated Friends of the Library volunteer since 1997, Jane shelved books, did data entry and bar-coding when the computer system was new, and managed a season of book sales. Now she works many hours culling donated books to enhance the book sales. Her efforts sell more books, enabling the Friends to add even more new resources to our community's fine library!

Laura Dockery- Historic Florida Keys Foundation

Laura Dockery is a volunteer guide for tours of the historic Key West Cemetery. Funds raised by these tours are used for education and restoration at the cemetery. Laura has independently researched the cemetery and this, together with her enthusiastic attitude and outgoing personality, gives our visitors a top-notch experience.

Dr. Leslie Safer- Good Health Clinic

Not only has Dr. Safer given unselfishly to the Clinic and to the thousands of patients he has treated, but he also gives of his time assisting the Clinic in fund raising and grant writing. The number of volunteer hours he has given well exceeds 300 hours, with a service value over a million dollars. Dr. Safer, without hesitation, also fills in for the Clinic's Medical Director. To him, any patient in need of assistance is a top priority. He is indeed an integral part of the Clinic's medical team and continues to be a career-long, dedicated, "unsung" volunteer.

Ruth Anne & Jon Davis- KWCA/Impromptu Classical Concerts

KWAC/Impromptu Classical Concerts nominates Ruth Anne and Jon Davis as our Unsung Heroes of the Year. They have selflessly served on our board of directors for over ten years in various capacities from officers to committee chairs to volunteers. Their support of the organization has contributed directly to our reputation for excellence and our gratitude to them is enormous.

Naomi Hazeltine- Unity of the Keys Spiritual Center

Naomi Hazeltine ("tine" rhymes with twine) is a dedicated volunteer. She is one of our Trustees and is currently our Treasurer. A professional bookkeeper, Naomi often assists our Administrator with budgets and accounting questions. She is also a member of our Music Team who sometimes leads singing and sometimes operates our sound board.

Clinton Barras-Helpline

In today's marketplace, an NPO's website must tell their story and promote their service. A 10-year-old website cannot do that. We needed help and it came in the form of FloridaKeys.com's Clinton Barras who volunteered time and talent to do just that.

Gale Killion- Cancer Foundation of the Florida Keys

Gale Killion's dedication and volunteer hours to the Cancer Foundation have taught each of us that the most important thing one can do is to have the courage to follow your heart and your intuition. Everything else is secondary. Gale moves as if time were limited. Her quiet leadership is an example of not wasting it living trapped with the results of other people's thinking. She does not let the noise of others' opinions drown out her own inner voice. She works her tasks tirelessly with a smile and makes them seem as if it was just another day! She moves to the beat of a different drummer.

Richard Stephens- Trophia Butterfly Foundation

The Trophia Butterfly Foundation is pleased to have Richard Stephens be our unsung hero. He has been watching over for years, with the greatest care and skill, the finances of this important foundation. His exceptional devotion has guided it through completion of numerous successful projects. We loudly sing his praises.

Tina Henize- Last Stand

For the past 30 years, Tina Henize has been an advocate for the preservation of the unique and delicate Florida Keys environment. She has worked as a volunteer with Reef Relief, The Nature Conservancy, Master Gardeners, Overseas Heritage Trail, U.S. One's Scenic Highway Designation, Glee, Key Deer Protective Alliance, and Last Stand.

Dan McAfee- Habitat for Humanity of the Upper Keys

Dan McAfee donates his time and tools every Saturday on the construction job sites, spends countless hours a week overseeing behind the scenes activities, and is the first one to show up when help is needed. Dan McAfee deserves to be recognized as the Unsung Hero/Volunteer of the Year for Habitat for Humanity of the Upper Keys.

Rosemary Hymes- Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice of the Florida Keys

A retired registered nurse, Rosemary has been a year-round volunteer in the Upper Keys/Tavernier Officer of Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice of the Florida Keys for 17 years. She lends a loving hand with direct patient care, office and flu clinic support, as well as fundraising. Rosemary is generous, a strong patient advocate, with a constant positive attitude and caring presence.

Maureen Freedman- Heron-Peacock Supported Living

Maureen, a Speech/Language Pathologist and Interpreter is Secretary of the Heron-Peacock Board of Directors, where her contributions are considerable. She has volunteered for the Jail Recidivism Task Force; Key West NAMI; Easter Seals; Keys Chorale; Florida Keys Deaf Services; Take Stock in Children; the Garden Club and Team Ocean. She is an important part of Heron-Peacock and an asset to our community.

Marjorie Mearns-Westcare Guidance/Care Center

Marjorie Mearns is an energetic, steadfast, community minded individual. A founding Board member of the Guidance Clinic of the Middle Keys, past Marathon City Council member, former Pigeon Key Director, mentor for troubled youth, and local business owner, Margie was instrumental in bringing Mental Health and Substance Abuse services to the Middle Keys over 38 years ago.

Patti Carey- Hemingway Look-A-Like Society

Patti Carey has been instrumental in making the Hemingway Look-Alike Society Scholarship Program (benefitting FKCC students) grow and prosper. Patti excels at her job and uses her exceptional organizational skills to facilitate the work of the scholarship selection committee. We love working with her and appreciate her efforts and enthusiasm.

M. Pat Miller- FKCC Foundation

Pat is a multifaceted, sensitive and caring individual who continues to give his time and expertise. He established the Student Ambassador Scholarship, a source of enrichment for students as well as the College. With his expertise in investing, Pat has also helped to establish and guide Foundation investments.

Lee Christine Young- Conch Life Scramble

Construction and Renovation aren't typical terms used in Philanthropy when describing a person's efforts for charity and change. In this case, Lee Christine Young (the volunteer board treasurer for the Conch Life Scramble) serves as the unsung philanthropic "general contractor" for this fundraising event. While many hands made this "on the water" golf tournament a huge success, Lee brings all the working pieces together. Her time, creativity, commitment and enthusiasm continue make this event one of the most successful off season efforts to fund organizations helping children in the Keys.

Joan Higgs- Metropolitan Community Church

Metropolitan Community Church and the Florida Keys have been blessed with a volunteer who never gives up. Some twenty years ago Joan Higgs began a food program, "Cooking With Love" which brings a meal every Saturday to over 100 home bound people in need. She has volunteered time to the Martin Luther King Jr Community Center and has been in the forefront of immunization programs for children and seniors. In addition, Joan's tireless efforts have served this community a hundred fold.

Amber Shaffer- Zonta of Key West

In Amber's six years, two of which were spent as a two term president, Amber utilized her leadership and take-charge attitude in managing our many service projects. Zonta's service projects make a tremendous impact on the Key West Community and require a person with working knowledge of their importance and Amber is that person. Amber is generous and fills in where she sees a need. It is easy to come up with the ideas, but the challenge lies in making projects happen. That gift is why Amber is Zonta's Unsung Hero.

Joan Walters- Pete Rosin Scholarship Fund

Joan Walters has been an indispensable volunteer for all the Pete Rosin auction events for many years. She coordinates registration for the annual event, as well as managing all the art after it has sold. Joan makes sure that all the art goes to the right bidder and does it quickly and efficiently each year. Thanks for all your hard work!

Ed Reilly- Save Our Pines

Ed Reilly's experiences as a seagoing maritime engineer and his success drafting United Nations maritime safety treaties reflect his even-keeled, gracious, clear-headed approach to problem solving. Applying these qualities while defining Save Our Pine's goals, Ed became a propelling force in negotiations with Florida to protect Fort Zach Pines.

Joey Schroeder- AIDS HELP

Joey Schroeder has opened many businesses in Key West including Schroeder Builders and the 801 Bourbon Street complex. Joey is also active in many charitable organizations and is a strong supporter of AIDS Help. He works closely with the AIDS Help education staff providing space for HIV testing and counseling, supports the SMART Ride, sponsors the Bed Races and Miss Closet Ball, and supports the campaigns for the King and Queen of Fantasy Fest. He is the president of the Bahama Village Business and Neighborhood Associations. Each year he hosts the New Years Eve Sushi in the Shoe Drop, as seen on CNN. Joey is a very generous and giving person, always willing to lend a helping hand to others.

Eva Hamilton- Montessori Children's School

The Montessori Children's School honors Eva Hamilton as our Unsung Hero of 2011. Eva has been volunteering her time for over eight years, specifically with our facility maintenance, special events and of course in the classroom with the children. Her positive attitude and endless effort will be missed.

Clifford Saylor- Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Key West

Cliff Saylor is the quiet heartbeat of UUFKW. He comes early to set up, stays late to clean up, serves on our Board, and even chops off one of his trees for our yearly Christmas tree! He models our Behavioral Covenant, upholds the democratic process, and lives our 7 Principles.

Kirsti Madeo and Pat Mediedo- Wesley House Family Services

Kirsti Madeo and Pat Mediedo have gone above and beyond our expectations year after year. They have been the driving force behind the Prudential Knight Gardner Silent Auction at the Annual Wesley House Valentine's Day Event. These two ladies start preparing for this event months in advance by collecting auction items, rallying the troops and continuing to work right up to the close of the event on February 14th. In our opinion, their teamwork and relentless pursuit of achieving the perfect event sets the standard for all other volunteers. We thank them for everything they do on behalf of the children and families of Monroe County.

Ron Demes- Sigsbee Charter School

Ron represents the heart of Sigsbee Charter School. He is always ready, always faithful and filled with honor, courage, and commitment to our families. Acting with integrity first and putting service before self, Ron gives selflessly to the children as a measure of thanking their parents for serving our country.

Mark Todaro- Be The Change of the Florida Keys

Mark Todaro served as the inaugural president of the Be the Change of the Florida Keys, Inc. Board. In this role, Mark was instrumental in establishing by-laws, writing contracts, approving grants, and moving the organization forward during the transition to a stand-alone 501c3. Our current success can largely be attributed to Mark's tenacity and dedication.

Dr. Kris Bly- Womankind

Kris Bly has been Womankind's volunteer Medical Director since 2010. She is a board-certified physician who owns AM-PM Housecalls, Southern Keys, and works in the ER of LKMC. Kris provides consultations to Womankind's medical staff, assists with chart reviews, sponsored our ABC Zonta Walk, and makes us delicious fudge.

Violet Montero- Samuel's House

Volunteers don't come any better than Violet. She single-handedly sold 15 out of the 25 tables for the Key West Men in Paradise Fashion Show before they even went on sale. Then she began calling all of the many business people she knows to solicit sponsorships and donations for the prize packages. Violet does all with a smile and a chuckle. She is a truly wonderful friend of Samuel's House!

Nancy Perez- REEF Environmental Education Foundation

Nancy Perez has been a REEF volunteer for four years at our headquarters in Key Largo. She has been instrumental in REEF's extra-curricular activities, in charge of our monthly lecture series, using her own gas to deliver flyers to dive shops, organizing a building dedication ceremony, and helping at public events.

Surrey Westrupp- Sister Season Fund

Surrey made significant contributions of her time even though she worked two jobs: Franco's Hero & Deli and 801 Bourbon Bar. She coordinated all the donated food the Survivor's Party Memorial Day. While running for Fantasy Fest Queen, acted as stage manager for the Sister Season Pageant Labor Day.

Charles Lee- Take Stock in Children/Monroe County

Charles E. Lee has been a resident of Key West for the past 32 years. In November 2010, Charles joined Take Stock in Children as a mentor. Since then, Charles has devoted countless volunteer hours and worked closely with his mentee Oscar Rojas an 8th grade scholar at Horace O'Bryant Middle School. Due to Charles's dedication, he has played a vital role in Oscar's academic success in school and in life.

Maria Triana- Literacy Volunteers

Maria Triana came to our organization 20 years ago as a student knowing no English. Today, Maria is the Middle Keys Coordinator for Literacy Volunteers of America, helping her own students achieve personal goals through increased literacy skills. Maria, we thank you for your hard work, your dedication, and your heart.

June and Clark Luster- Sculpture Key West

Sculpture Key West's Unsung Hero is June and Clark Luster. June has been in recovery from brain surgery. Clark, her husband, dedicated to her recovery, has been by her side ever since she left the hospital late summer 2010. At the beginning of the 2011 exhibition, she was unable to talk and walk. She was walking (with Clark's support) and starting to form words (and a smile) by the end of the exhibition.

Jerry Underhill- Marathon Wild Bird Center

A few years ago retired physician's assistant Jerry Underhill was looking for a new passion. He found that opportunity at the Marathon Wild Bird Center located at Crane Point in the Middle Keys. Jerry tirelessly tends to the center's landscaping and enthusiastically assists with bird rescues and medical procedures on an as-needed basis.

Genevieve Kelly- FKCC Keys Chorale

Genevieve Kelly has been a member of the Keys Chorale at FKCC for more than twenty years wearing numerous hats towards the Chorale's success. In addition to being a featured soloist, Genevieve has assisted in the music library, with refreshments, stage decoration and ticket sales to name but a few. Her ongoing devotion to the music and "behind the scenes" tasks has made her the 2012 Un-Sung Hero.

Carolyn Sullivan- Florida Keys Council of the Arts

We honor Carolyn for her dedication, creativity, easygoing hospitality and the very best Happy Hour in town! What began as a “whim” 5 years ago now has a two year waiting list. “The Bottle Cap Happy Hour” is a perfect example of giving back to one’s community every week. Carolyn is our hero for her commitment to the Arts in schools, community, and to every not for profit organization

Erin O’Hara- United Way of the Florida Keys

An independent thinker and dynamic volunteer, Erin has served on the Board of United Way of the Florida Keys since 2008. Currently serving as Secretary on the Executive Board, she embodies caring for our community with an exceptional ability to just get it Done, whatever the task.

Marie and Peter Pittman- The Educational Coalition for Monroe County

The Educational Coalition for Monroe County proudly nominates Marie and Peter Pittman as our Unsung Heroes. The Pittman’s creative approach to fundraising lead to the development of ECMC’s Incredible Fruit Stand. They have personally run the stand every Saturday for seven years and have generated over \$200,000 in donations for ECMC sponsored educational programs such as; Dancing Classrooms, currently provided in several MCSD schools; the Marathon Skate Park; and Camp and Careers. The Pittman’s donate countless hours serving ECMC and the Marathon community.

Carol Tedesco- Anne McKee Artist Fund of the Florida Keys

Carol Tedesco is a former Anne McKee board member and present Associate Board member who has donated more than half a decade of serving Keys artists through the Anne McKee Artists Fund of the Florida Keys, for whom she has worn the various hats of press/publicity liaison, print media producer, and photographer. Carol admits to being an Anne McKee groupie and says she loves Anne for her generosity, her vast community spirit, and her fabulous hats.

Michelle Elgerabli- Keys Kids

She is amazing at organizing and running the Silent Auction for many shows. Michelle is dauntless in asking businesses to donate wonderful gifts, which help support Keys Kids. There's nothing silent when Michelle is in charge of the Silent Auction!

Kim Wilkerson- Florida Keys SPCA

Kim Wilkerson is the perfect example of the saying, "If you want something done, ask a busy person." Aside from operating her own business and raising two teenagers, for the past three years, Kim has been volunteering at the shelter's spay/neuter clinic where her skills as a registered nurse have been invaluable. Lately, Kim has also been helping out in the office, too. Her compassion for our animals and her bubbly personality make Kim a wonderful addition to our team of volunteers.

Rick Ramsey and Don Hiller- Florida keys Children's Shelter

Recently, with the help of Col. Rick Ramsay and Capt. Don Hiller, our emergency shelter, Jelsema Center for Children, in Tavernier, received a much needed facelift! These men, along with several others worked tirelessly through the heat and long days to complete our new paint job. We went from a very old drab gray to a bright sunny yellow. The transition is amazing and everyone has been encouraged by the fresh new color. That, in itself is wonderful, but the story goes much deeper. You need to know that every Sheriff's Officer and the Trustees were extremely eager to help and expressed a genuine interest in improving the surroundings for our kids. Some of the Officers had even worked overnight shifts and still showed up with smiles on their faces and paint brushes in hand. They were a joy to work with and a positive model for our kids in shelter. We are honored to have such outstanding partners.

Zhanna Cashdollar- History of Diving Museum

Originally from Russia, Zhanna Cashdollar is happily settled in the Florida Keys and has been volunteering at the History of Diving Museum for two years. She regularly assists in the membership office and Museum Store, and often translates Russian for the museum's artifact database. Zhanna's dedication to our mission, along with her positive attitude and enthusiasm, is what makes her our hero!

Matthew Babich- Sunrise Rotary Foundation

Matt, the Godfather of Brewfest, organized the inaugural Brewfest in 2010 during Labor Day weekend. The 2011 version was even greater attended. Brewfest draws tourists, locals and Rotarians from other states and foreign countries. It is now one of Sunrise Rotary's most successful fundraising events, second only to our long running Poker Run.

Manny Madruga- Leadership Monroe County

Manny Madruga chairs the Leadership Monroe County board of directors, now celebrating its 20th year. Not satisfied with those years of success, Manny has developed innovative programs for participants. Additionally, he created a state-of-the-art recruitment program, and dedicated countless hours and miles presenting it to residents throughout the county.

Kathy Lesseter- Voices for Florida Children

Kathy's perseverance and creativity are responsible for some of the most successful fund-raisers we have ever had. She is on our executive board and is Vice-President of Ways and Means. For fifteen years she has served as a volunteer Guardian and Litem. Thanks Kathy

John Gish- American Civil Liberties Union-

Lifelong human rights activist, Gish has been founding board member of numerous organizations, including the Florida Keys Chapter of the Florida American Civil Liberties Union. For Keys ACLU he has, with the late Henry Woods, presented numerous Constitution Day events and been liaison in establishing the William Bradford Memorial Essay Contest. Gish is immediate past-president of the local Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship.

Rob Carlson- Waterfront Playhouse-

Since moving to Key West in 1992, Rob helped with anything we needed. He manned the box office, built sets, designed costumes, and prepared grants. Over the years, he has hosted a multitude of out of town actors in his home -- making many of our productions possible and affordable.

Rae Burns- RPM Nautical Foundation-

Rae Burns has provided invaluable bookkeeping service to RPM Nautical, donating many extra hours and helping revamp and revitalize our company books. She has saved our company thousands of dollars through her dedicated oversight of our spending and by working to reduce our insurance costs.

Florence Bousquet- Key West Orchid Society

The Key West Orchid Society proudly nominates Florence Bousquet as our volunteer of the year. A member since 1978, Florence served three terms as president of the Orchid Society. She is an accomplished orchid grower, specializing in vandas, and has had a vanda and a dendrobium named after her.

Michele Grahl- Red Barn Theatre

Michele Grahl is the Red Barn Theatre's Unsung Hero for this year because she has been a devoted and vital Board Member, who works quietly in the background to ensure the success of our organization. She chaired last year's very well received Sunset Gala and is always willing to pitch in when work needs to be done. We are grateful to have her on our team.

Tommy Haskins- Key West Rotary Club Foundation

Tommy Haskins is dedicated husband and father of 3 and owner of local plumbing company. Tommy coaches softball, baseball, soccer, and is a member of The Rotary Club of Key West. Volunteering his time, skill, and equipment, Tommy's behind the scenes efforts have earned him the Unsung Hero Award.

Richard "Diver" Overman

Richard has been treasurer of The lower Keys Chapter # 1351, AARP for 2011. Prior to this he was a board member. Richard volunteers at our Senior Center, 1016 Georgia Street in Key West. His volunteer activities include supervising the center when he is available, planning a movie time on Mondays and assisting with the meal service on a daily basis. "Diver" is a valuable member and volunteer of The Lower Keys Chapter #1351. AARP.

J. Matthew Massoud

Matthew Massoud, affectionately known as "Moose" came to Key West with the Coast Guard. Volunteering with the Haunted Fort at Fort Taylor over many years, he is the number two man in this annual production for the Friends of Fort Taylor. Moose is the Haunt's heart and soul with his charming and "frightful" example.

