

April 2025

In honor of National Volunteer month, HOC recently celebrated our volunteers with a party that included cake, bingo with patrons, and the reintroduction of the silver tray award! There is so much our volunteers do that supports the daily operations of our shelter. To say we could not run this place without volunteers is truly an understatement! Last year, over 280 volunteers worked over 5,337 hours supporting kitchen service, front desk support, nightly check in, and direct client engagement.

Our silver tray award was an ongoing acknowledgement that took a hiatus during COVID. We have so many amazing volunteers, we knew we had to bring back this special award. This year, we honored two such volunteers—Mike Gibson and Audrey Burr—with two meal trays that have their names and dates engraved directly on the tray. We hang the trays in our cafeteria until our next silver tray awards when their engraved tray gets put back in meal circulation, ensuring their legacy lives on as a daily part of our service to Spokane's most vulnerable.

Mike has been a volunteer in our kitchen for the past six years. Chelsea McNary, our volunteer specialist nominated Mike because she says he helps make work in the kitchen a fun, welcoming place. The staff and fellow volunteers light up when he's around—probably because he's part cheerleader, part comedian, and part workhorse. A rare combo! Mike says he volunteers because it's a labor of love that keeps him "out of his wife's hair" in his retirement. He offers; this is key to a good marriage that is going 46 years strong! He also appreciates the camaraderie and laughs he shares with staff, Resident Client's and the other volunteers.

Audrey joined HOC as a volunteer in 2023 and has been full speed ahead ever since! Sharing her background as a clinical social worker, Audrey has introduced many client support groups and activities that have enriched

patron's sense of belonging and well-being. She has been especially connected to our Resident Client program, working directly with those participants through anger management classes, art groups, and maybe most exciting... outings to the Museum of Arts and Culture, where she is also a volunteer! She has also been working her connections so RC's can attend Spokane Indians baseball games this summer. She sees that these opportunities for clients to connect to the community as key to their long-term success as they build confidence, a greater sense of self-worth, and increased sense of belonging when they get included in areas not typically accessible to those experiencing homelessness. Of course, in true Audrey fashion she was not able to attend our party as she was taking a group of RC's through the latest MAC exhibit. They all had a great time!

Thank you to all our treasured volunteers for all you do, day in and day out. If you would like to become involved at HOC, please reach out to us at chelsea.mcnary@cceasternwa.org. You will be joining a great group of people who make a difference in their community every day.

With gratitude,

Dena Carr
HOC Director

*Mike Gibson,
2025 Silver Tray
Honoree*

