

January 11 - February 8, 2019

## Town Hall highlights: Douglas volunteers

By Matthew Wojcik

Town Administrator

During the month of January, we acknowledge the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., whose extraordinary example and sacrifice have inspired many to perform acts of selfless generosity for the sake of making the world better. Invoking

Dr. King's name should not suggest everyone needs to rival his accomplishments, indeed, one should bear in mind his words: "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, what are you doing for others?"

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# VOLUNTEERS

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Answering Dr. King's question can be accomplished by the most simple acts of volunteerism. One cannot underestimate the impact of teaching a small child to kick a soccer ball, planning a special Town event that brings people together, or taking the time to keep a war memorial clean and neat in honor of those who served. Every time people give of themselves, they acknowledge our common humanity - what is truly important in a world cluttered with things that simply aren't valuable at all.

Local government is perhaps the single most important building block of a real,

functioning democracy. The truth of this plays out in many ways, not the least of which is the involvement of so many people as volunteers to make the proverbial trains of government run on time. Without people willing to give of themselves, it would take much more time and effort to accomplish even the mundane. One measure of a government for the people simply is, whether it is truly run by the people.

Just before the holidays, the employees of the Town held an event to honor the commitment of the Town's volunteers. A little over a dozen of us pulled together a potluck dinner and invited over one hundred sixty people who help operate

the library, Senior Center, and numerous boards and commissions that touch almost every aspect of life in Douglas. Over a hundred attended, and a good time was had by all.

It is a fact that over a dozen people have worked as volunteers for more than fifteen years making Douglas a better place for everyone, including Octoberfest and Senior Center activities. Hundreds of hours every year over more than fifteen years - this marks an enormous commitment to the community!

Each year going forward, Town employees will have this event again, and mark the milestones of our many generous volunteers who, through their every act, reaffirm our values of honest public service on behalf of the people of the Town. The next time you see someone working at a meeting or a town-wide event, please remember they work willingly and diligently with little or no compensation. Being mindful of this will preserve the mutual respect that binds the foundation of our civic spirit to whatever form of government we build over it - a dream that we can work toward every day.

The volunteers honored at the dinner included:

**25 years:** Finance Committee, Pamela Holmes.

**20 years:** Council on Aging volunteer, Eileen Cardona; Council on Aging, Patrick Blake.

**15 years:** Board of Assessors, John Blatchford, Jr.;



An abundance of food was offered by municipal employees to the volunteers.



Volunteers and friends enjoy an evening of socializing.

Council on Aging, Jennifer Hoffer; Library Trustees life member, Joseph Biagioli II. **10 years:** Cable Advisory Committee, Robert Werme, Jr.; Capital Improvement Committee, Ellie Chesebrough; Council on Aging, Martha Allan, Thomas Wall; Board of Health, Steven Donatelli; Library Trustee life member, Barbara Van Reed; Octoberfest Committee, Keith Menard; Worces-

ter Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board, Patrice Rousseau.

**5 years:** Board of Assessors, Carol Field, Arthur Griffin Jr.; Building and Facility Construction Committee, Michael Fitzpatrick; Capital

Improvement Committee, Brandon Auger, John Furno; Council on Aging volunteer, Ann Holden; Council on Aging, Christine Furno, Rita Haire; Old Grammar School Disposition Committee, James Ducharme, Jer-

emy Flansburg, Donna Hardy, Lisa Moszynski, Susan Perkins, Pamela Schwartz, John D. Zifcak; Board of Selectmen, Kevin Morse; Tax Workoff, Grace Lamaro; Zoning Board of Appeals, Michael Fitzpatrick.