



VIP: VOLUNTEERS IN POWER

SUMMER 2019

We're the Best!

Stop the presses! This just in: MLGW wins two – count ‘em – two Best of the Best Awards! Still giddy from the praise and recognition, MLGW’s United Way Campaign co-chairs and Key Persons celebrated at the United Way Best of the Best Awards held at Memphis Bioworks on June 18.

So let’s add a wee bit to the United Way Campaign wrap-up in this issue. Not only did we win two awards, we exceeded our United Way fundraising goal. We couldn’t have done it without you, our generous employees and volunteers who put so much into the campaign. Details on pages 1-2.

It’s now summer, and the heat is on. Stick your hand out the window, and it may come back well done. Thankfully, there’s not a lot going on volunteer-wise in the summer heat, so let’s revisit spring and its plethora of volunteer and charitable events before someone sticks a fork in me and tells me I’m done!

In this issue, you’ll see two Bowl-A-Thons, a wrap of the 2018/2019 United Way campaign, Family Day, Glynis’ Cancer Walk and several other events. Our volunteers are full of energy, adapting to change and budget cuts, and always stepping up to the plate. We and the members of our community who benefit from your volunteerism are grateful.

Don’t forget to send selfies and your volunteer event experiences to VIP editor **Dan Hope**, Corporate Communications, at dhope@mlgw.org or call me at 528-4557.

It’s a Wrap

MLGW’s United Way Campaign seems seamless, never-ending. In truth, each campaign does cover most of a year, starting in August with Steering Committee planning and continuing with Days of Caring in September; Key Person training then the MLGW’s fundraising campaign in October and November; the Fashion Show and Park Like an Executive in December; the Key Persons Appreciation Luncheon in early February; check presentations in the spring and the Best of the Best Awards in June (MLGW won the big one in 2018!).

MLGW United Way co-chairs **Bryan Hutton**, Reliability/Power Quality, and **Sharon Strahan**, Bldg. Svcs./Grounds, got the ball rolling early and organized a stellar Steering Committee along with an army of Key Persons. They were all over town for Days of Caring, sprucing up and fixing up for several



United Way of the Mid-South President Dr. Kenneth Robinson photo-bombs MLGW’s United Way team at United Way’s Best of the Best Awards June 18. MLGW won two!



Residential Energy Services staff helped manicare Memphis Athletic Ministries’ golfing greens and fairways for Days of Caring. They were recognized with a United Way Award of Excellence at the Key Persons Luncheon February 1.



*MLGW volunteers **Nikki Mitchell**, Prop. Mgmt. & Survey; **Sharon Strahan**; **Danielle Turner**, Downtown Credit Ofc.; and **Jameka Hearn**, CCC, worked with the children at Porter-Leath Home for Days of Caring.*

non-profit United Way supported organizations like Porter-Leath Home, the Botanic Garden and Creative Life in September as the citywide campaign officially kicked off.

The MLGW United Way Golf Tournament held October 12 at Glen Eagle in Millington raised \$19,800. “We had 34 teams sign up, along with J.T. and others who had a wonderful time,”

said Bryan. “Great lunch with a catfish dinner, awesome prizes. Everywhere I rode that day, the players were having a blast, the course looked good and the weather was great.”

The two-week MLGW United Way fundraising campaign started October 22, and kickoff events happened all over the Division. Different areas took different approaches, held meetings and promotions, talked up their employees and turned in their employee pledges at the end of the two weeks. That’s when the majority of MLGW’s United Way fundraising occurs.

The second annual, employee-led “Rip the Runway” fashion show raised \$7,022 for United Way of the Mid-South. The December charity event at Holiday Inn at U of M featured local models and vendors and was again organized by **Sharika Hollingsworth**, Treasury Mgmt., and co-coordinator **Jovan Harris**, Purchasing.

Small fundraisers run by different areas also added to the mix, including an Ice Cream Social (\$879), Carnival Concessions (\$504), Park Like an Executive (\$410) and a Bake Sale at Netters (a whopping \$1,900!).



*MLGW golfing teams hit the links at Glen Eagle to raise funds at the United Way Golf Tournament. One team included (l-r) **Leon Dickson**, MLGW Commissioner; **J.T. Young**, MLGW President & CEO; **Nate Guyton** and **Eric Miller**.*



MLGW United Way Campaign presented a check for \$661,173 to United Way representatives on March 6, surpassing our campaign goal. Thanks to all MLGW employees who donated!



*MLGW’s United Way “Rip the Runway” Fashion Show founder and organizer **Sharika Hollingsworth** and co-coordinator **Jovan Harris** take a fashionable pose at the end of the runway.*

MLGW presented United Way officials a check for the total amount raised in our campaign, \$661,173, at MLGW’s Board meeting on March 6. “We actually exceeded our goal this year and increased giving from last year by around \$50,000,” said Bryan Hutton. “This is all due in part to all the great people I had to work with – Sharon (co-chair) along with all the Steering Committee and campaign reps. Everyone at MLGW from J.T. to Corporate Communications, all the management team and employees played a key role in making this year

so successful. It actually felt different this year; I could see and feel some camaraderie back in the workplace which I haven’t seen in a long time.”

A Key Persons appreciation luncheon was

held at SCS Teaching Academy on February 1 to recognize their hard work fundraising. And on June 18, another Best of the Best Awards was held at a new venue, Memphis Bioworks. MLGW won two awards: Best Campaign Climber: Highest Employee Giving, Large Company and Best Team Effort: Highest Participation, Large Company. Congratulations are in order! Now on to Campaign 2019...

(More photos in Volunteer Views)



*MLGW’s ubiquitous Paint Shop crew, **Shelley Harper**, **Shannon Wigley**, **Calvin McGlown** and **Dewey Gianelloni**, always shows up to swing the brush for Days of Caring. They were recognized with an award at the Key Persons Luncheon.*

Glynis' Cancer Foundation Walk

Cancer can throw your life into disarray, but surviving it gives you a whole new lease on life. That's how it is for **Glynis Finnie**, MLGW employee and cancer survivor. Glynis didn't feel sorry for herself. Instead, she got inspired and created the Glynis Cancer Foundation, which organized its second annual fundraising walk May 18.

Participants gathered at MLGW's Administration Bldg. early, and Glynis, a crew leader for Network Construction, hollered her trademark "Yaaaaay!!!" as the large group spilled out of MLGW and poured down Main Street to Union Ave. and the river, down

along Wolf River Harbor to the Bass Pro Pyramid and all the way back – a distance of about (whew!) three miles. Guys, gals, Glynis, moms with strollers, kids, security staff – all enjoyed the brisk walk along the riverfront in the cool of the early morning.

Forty-five walkers participated raising more than \$225 for Glynis' Cancer Foundation. "I had cousins come all the way from Ohio and Mississippi. I even had my classmate and speaker (before the walk) come all the way from Atlanta. My Glynis Cancer Foundation would like to thank you ALL



Glynis and Angela Boyd-Ingram, Corp. Security, pose for pics in the "Glynis frame" after the walk.

for the participation, support and encouragement," Glynis said after the walk. "Thank you! Thank you! We can't thank you enough. Yaaaaaaay!!!" (Check out Glynis' new website at glyniscancerfoundation.org)



Walkers took a couple of minutes for a wonderful group photo with our security detail in front of the Admin. Bldg. before dashing off towards the Pyramid. Big thanks to Security for keeping us safe!



Rolling down Union and heading for Riverside and the Pyramid, MLGW walkers enjoyed a lovely morning.



Atlanta's Denise King, who addressed the walkers before the start, and Carolyn Dickinson, retired, paused for a little fun under the bridge.

Double Trouble Bowl-A-Thons



The MLGW Executive JA bowling team includes **Cliff DeBerry**, VP, Design, Constr. & Delivery; **Roland McElrath**, VP, Accounting; **Jim West**, Chief Customer Officer; **Alonzo Weaver**, SVP & COO; and **J.T. Young**, President & CEO.



Corporate Communications and Human Resources were bowling strikes. This JA team features **Tamara Nolen**, Corporate Communications; **Valerie Whitlow**, Comp. HRIS; **Von Goodloe**, VP, Shared Svcs./Acting Chief People Officer; **Anita Mills**, Comp. HRIS; and **Lillian Johnson**, Corporate Communications, another Corp Comm ringer.

Which Bowl-A-Thon is which, and does it really matter? NO! Because MLGW employees love to bowl AND raise funds, so twice is nice.

For years, MLGW volunteers have bowled to raise funds for Junior Achievement in February. This year's Bowling on the River Bowl-A-Thon was held at Hardwick Lanes on Saturday, March 2, and the competition was spicy!

MLGW bowlers take their bowling seriously, and as such, nailed down a few awards. The Junior Achievement Bowl-A-Thon Volunteer of the Year was **Joan Brown**, Gas Engrng.; the Top Individual Fundraiser was **Dr. Von Goodloe**, VP, Shared Services and Acting Chief People Officer; and the Top Female Bowler was **Juanita Hamilton**, retired, making MLGW proud.

MLGW employees raised over \$18,000 for Junior Achievement this year. Quite impressive! We had around 150 employees, retirees and family members enjoying a little bowling together – all for a good cause.



Bowl for HER organizer Otis Sanford (l) joins MLGW bowlers for a group shot at the Bowl for HER Bowl-A-Thon at Hardwick Lanes in April.

Bowl for HER

A more recent fundraising effort, Bowl for HER, organized by Memphis media giant Otis Sanford, a former Commercial Appeal editor and columnist, holder of the Hardin Chair at U of M's Journalism and Interactive Media department, and a WREG and WPTY commentator, was held April 20, again at Hardwick Lanes.

MLGW bowlers were the top contributors, raising the most funds for HER Faith Ministries, the Bowl-A-Thon beneficiary led by Rev. Dr. Elaine Sanford. Bowling for MLGW, Justin Williams (score: 562) was Top Male Bowler and Val Jordan, retired, (score: 491) was Top Female Bowler. An MLGW bowling team led by **Leon Rogers**, Street Light Engrng., took second place; another team led by **Mary White**, retired, took third place. "We had around 50 employees, retirees and family members bowl at Bowl for HER," said **Tiffany Crumpton**, Empl. Activities, "and we raised \$2,265 for HER Faith Ministries."



Food, bowling balls and a few friends... MLGW employees love to bowl. Just ask Bowl for HER bowlers **Edward Castro**, Empl. Svcs.; **Val Jordan**, retired; **Mary White**, retired; and **Tabrena Wilson**, Gas Matrix Mgr's Ofc.

Volunteer Spotlight

Debbie Coats: “My Glue Person”

Sometimes volunteer coordination can be like trying to herd a bunch of loose ends. Then there are those volunteers who come to your rescue, taking the shift that no one else will, helping you stick the whole thing together. That’s what **Debbie Coats** does for our new volunteer coordinator, Ken Mack, Corp. Social Resp., “Debbie’s my ‘glue person!’” says Ken.

Debbie started at MLGW as a part-time permanent service advisor in 2004 working in the Customer Care Center at Netters, then she transferred to the Downtown Credit Office working as a teller in 2006. “I was working under Ira (Carbage),” she says. “It was flexible – I even went back to the CCC for a time, then back to cashiering.” Debbie was promoted to section supervisor for cashiers in August 2015 working at the North Community Center. She’s done supervisor rotations at all the Community Offices except Whitehaven. Debbie’s manager is now Brenda Reddick in the newly renamed Customer and Community Services area.

In her first volunteer experience at MLGW, Debbie was asked to be a key person for United Way. “I was asked to volunteer one year, and it took off from there,” she recalls. “I have participated in the United Way Campaign, MIFA Plus-1, Operation Feed, the Southern Women’s Show, Beale Street Parade, Whitehaven Christmas Parade, Annual MLGW Family Day, Play It Cool and Power of Warmth. For all of these events, I was the key person or volunteered giving energy tips, answering customers’ questions about special programs offered by MLGW.”

“I did Day of Caring at a previous job,” Debbie remembers. “We went to abuse centers to help out. United Way does such a good job, and Dr. Kenneth Robinson (United Way president) is so full of energy – maybe because he has a new grandbaby!”

“As United Way key persons, we raised funds, gave out and collected pledge cards, organized area events, all to benefit United Way,” Debbie says.

Remembering the Plus-1 Telethon, Debbie gets excited. “I just loved the Plus-1 Telethon,” she enthuses. “We’d answer the phone banks, talk to

people who called in to donate, got their pledges then raised our hands, rang a bell and called out the larger pledges live on TV – ‘Hey, Debbie Coats got a \$100 pledge!’ It was so much fun.”

The next MLGW Plus-1 venture was Lip Sync Plus at the Hard Rock on Beale, and Debbie was there in support. “I really enjoyed that, too,” she said. “Seeing Mayor Luttrell do Johnny Rivers was hilarious.”

Operation Feed is another MLGW fundraiser Debbie works as key person. “My area? I make sure they donate,” she emphasizes. “‘Give what you can!’ I tell them. We’ve been trying to get 100 percent participation from our area, and the cashiers did real good. We are a giving department. Even when customers can’t pay bills, sometimes we’ll help when we can.”

“At events like the Southern Women’s Show, I volunteer giving energy tips or answer customers’ questions about special programs offered by MLGW or benefits involving the programs,” Debbie says. She also likes going to the Neighborhood Christian Center to help elderly residents as part of the Power of Warmth and Play It Cool programs in winter and summer. “I love the smiles on elderly customers’ faces when we give out the electric blankets and heaters at the Neighborhood Christian Center,” she fondly recalls. Debbie’s also a volunteer blood donor for MLGW’s Blood Drives.

“I love the parades, too,” she says. “At the Christmas parades on Beale or in Whitehaven, we’re carrying signs, giving candy and trinkets to the children. They love the plastic MLGW helmets – guys get yellow, girls get pink. ‘I want one!’ they shout.

“Ah, the joy I have in it! We’re not just the person cutting the lights off. We’re giving. And we’re changing attitudes in the community. ‘Oh, that’s Light, Gas and Water,’ they say.”

Debbie volunteers at Family Day, too. She works registration, giving tickets, badges and food tickets to families checking in. And she often helps with the treats like ice cream. “Oh my, how they love those corn dogs!” declares Debbie. “This year, the rain held off and it was real nice. Kids enjoy the bouncy castles, the food and rides. I hope it comes back,” she muses.



Debbie Coats

Debbie Coats, cont.

“My favorite volunteer projects include visiting different schools for Career Days educating young children on the importance of education and the great job opportunities at MLGW,” Debbie says.

That “glue person” reference? It’s not an easy job gathering volunteers and trying to fill a schedule, as Ken Mack well knows. But Debbie has his back. “Ken calls, and I say, ‘Okay, Ken. I’ll go.’ I’m there whenever needed or when there’s an unfilled time slot,” Debbie says.

A family disaster helped frame Debbie’s dedication to helping her community. “Neighbors woke me up, and I could hear crackling coming from the side of the house,” Debbie recalls. “I looked out the window, saw flames, called out and jumped up. We made it out safe, but only with the care and help from neighbors. The house? It burned down. Different organizations reached out – the Red Cross, United Way. It was an eye-opener, how they and my church helped out. When the fire struck, I was a single mother taking care of two kids and a nephew, and all have asthma, so the help was very appreciated.”



Debbie works the Whitehaven Christmas Parade

Debbie also volunteers for her church, St. Andrew AME on South Parkway. “I’m very active at my church, and we have an annual back-to-school shoe drive I participate in,” she says. “We also have a neighborhood baby shower I volunteer for, providing spiritual support, prenatal needs, big gift bags, diapers and wipes for expectant

moms.”

“Just try it, and I promise you, you will like it,” Debbie suggests to potential volunteers. “And you will not want to stop; you’ll get energy like the Energizer Bunny! I get a rewarding feeling and I am blessed to be able to help somebody while I’m here on Earth. I understand I am my brother’s keeper. My now-grown kids say, ‘Mom, you can’t save the world!’ Well, I can help some of them.”

The next time Ken needs a volunteer to fill an empty slot? You can bet that Debbie will be there, supplying the super glue that holds it all together. “It gives me joy just to see everyone working together and the love we share for one another representing MLGW when we volunteer. It’s priceless!”

We Are Family!

Lots of hard work goes into organizing and coordinating MLGW’s annual employee gathering. Family Day last fall was one of those rewarding experiences that feed volunteers’ souls. Seems like everyone and their family was having a wonderful time.

There are always a bunch of volunteers helping at Family Day held October 13 at McCord Pumping Station on Summer Ave. Coordinating the effort were the tireless crew led by **Tiffany Crumpton**,



Employee Activities, and **Quita Wade**, Gas Engrng., with the help of assistant coordinators **Paulette Gordon**, Human Perf. People Dev., and **Tabrena Wilson**, Gas Matrix Mgr’s Ofc.

“We had over 2,000 employees and their families join us,” recalls Quita. “We had a petting zoo, bounce houses, face painting, a photo booth, game trucks, bingo, a baking contest, karaoke and lots of food! Thanks goes to all our volunteers.”

Volunteer Events Calendar

Join your co-workers and volunteer for these fun and rewarding MLGW summer volunteer events. Contact information is listed by each event. The contacts' email addresses below are active – all you have to do is click on them.

September 2019

- United Way Campaign Days of Caring – September 5-7. Contact: **Kevin Watkins**, Performance Engineering, 528-4711 or kwatkins@mlgw.org
- MS Society Rockin' Ride – September 7-8. Overnight bike ride with three different mileage options! Contact: **Tiffany Crumpton**, Employee Activities, 528-4245 or tcrumpton@mlgw.org

Volunteer your time and give back to our community.

School and Community Speakers Needed

MLGW Corporate Communications receives numerous requests for school speakers in the fall. Employees are needed to talk to students at area schools about careers, energy/water conservation, renewable energy, safety, natural gas, electric distribution and many other topics. Days and times vary. Contact **Tanya Becton**, Corp. Social Resp., at tbecton@mlgw.org or 528-4820 if you would like to volunteer.

Hearts a'Walkin'

Since the American Heart Association rescheduled its Heart Walk to April, MLGW walkers have had to reprogram themselves. It didn't hurt to have three MLGW Heart Walk warm-ups leading up to the walk, as a total of 60 participants got in shape as the weather warmed. Not all walked in the AHA Heart Walk itself.

Held Saturday, April 27, the Heart Walk started at AutoZone Park and wound through Downtown before heading back to the Redbirds Stadium.

It was an energetic walk for a good cause. We all need our hearts... "We raised a little over \$1,000 from the warm-ups and the Heart Walk itself," says **Tiffany Crumpton**, Employee Activities.



*MLGW employees took Heart Walk warm-ups leading to the AHA Heart Walk. Walking down Main are (l-r) **Gyton Nolan**, Budget, Plant & Rates; **Markus Holt**, Elec. Dist. Engrng.; **Tiffany Crumpton**; and **Felecia Tuggle**, Subst. Transm. Engrng.*

*Showing some heart before the Heart Walk are **Philana Harris** (friend of Valerie), **Tiffany Crumpton**, **Gyton Nolan**; **Valerie Whitlow**, Comp. HRIS; and **Renee Daniel**, Labor Engagement, Diversity & Inclusion.*

Volunteer Views

Photos of MLGW volunteers are viewable on your home computer or mobile device in our volunteer photo albums at [flickr.com/photos/mlgwpix/albums](https://www.flickr.com/photos/mlgwpix/albums).



Southern Women: The message was saving energy and powering up your phone as MLGW volunteers (l-r) **Vanessa Brown**, Payments & Banking; **Carla Randle**, Downtown Business Ofc.; and **Tiffany Byrd**, Supplier Diversity, staffed a booth at the Southern Women's Show March 1-3.

Earth Fest: Staffing an MLGW info booth at the Earth Day Festival in Shelby Farms Park and talking to folks in tie-dye T-shirts are MLGW volunteers **Jennifer Price**, Corp. Social Resp.; **Charles Henderson**, Comm. Control; and **Beth Henderson**, Purchasing.



Glynis Walk: Making a U-turn in front of the Bass Pro Pyramid and heading back to the Administration Bldg., walkers for the Glynis Cancer Walk on May 18 are halfway through a spritely three-mile walk.

Park Like an Executive: MLGW United Way Campaign Co-Chairs **Bryan Hutton** (l) and **Sharon Strahan** (r) watch as the winning bidders for Executive parking spaces proudly show off their winning certificates. Pictured are (l-r) VIP parkers **Daphne Winston**, Insurance; **Lela Garlington**, Corporate Communications; **Jasmine Pruitt**, Cust. Accts./Recs.; and **Paula Jackson**, Property Mgmt. Survey.



Volunteer Views

Photos of MLGW volunteers are viewable on your home computer or mobile device in our volunteer photo albums at www.flickr.com/photos/mlgwpix/albums.

COAP: These MLGW volunteers made it happen for MLGW's Conference of Administrative Professionals who held their annual conference April 26 at the Neighborhood Christian Center. A day full of activities and speakers kept COAP members busy, informed and entertained.



COAP: Sometimes you just feel like singing, as **Bria Cox**, Prop. Mgmt. & Survey, and **Nedra Bailey**, Human Performance, suddenly burst into song at the COAP Conference.

Bowl-a-Thon: Larry Colbert (r), Junior Achievement of Memphis President, appreciates our MLGW bowlers and the support we provide. With Larry are (l-r) **Joan Brown**, Gas Engrg.; **Cheryl Eppenger**, Res. Contact Ctr.; **Tiffany Crumpton**, Employee Activities; and **Gyton Nolan**, Budget, Plant & Rates.



Days of Caring: A block party at United Way Plaza kick-started the citywide campaign in September as MLGW's Campaign Steering Committee and Executive staff posed for pics before rolling up their sleeves for Days of Caring.