

Community Volunteer: Mary Elizabeth Bell

Mary Elizabeth Bell is this year's recipient of The Weakley County Press Best Community Volunteer in Weakley County. Mrs. Bell was born and reared in Weakley County 84 years ago in the Stella Ruth Community. Taught by her parents and grandparents to be ever thoughtful of others, no matter of their color or origin. She was educated in the Weakley County School System and received her B.S. and M.S. from the University of Tennessee at Martin.

Mrs. Bell taught school at Martin Middle, Martin Elementary and Martin Primary Schools and retired from teaching in May 1999. She remained very active in the schools continuing to volunteer with mentoring, organizing K-Kids at MES and worked with Builder's Club at MMS and helped with Key Club at Westview and the Aktion Club with CDS clients. She also volunteered by teaching 4-H children to sew at UTM during the "Line and Design Camp." Mrs. Bell has also volunteered with Special Olympics.

Mary Elizabeth is the mother of 4 children, James Denton, Sarah Beth, David Donoho and John Mark Bell. She has 9 grandchildren and 19 great grandchildren. She and her husband, Denton Bell, spent 42 years in the Dairy business in the Public Well Com-



munity. She is an active member of the Public Well Missionary Baptist Church, Beta Omega Chapter of the Delta Kappa Gamma International, Martin 20th Century Club, Martin Kiwanis Club, Martin Woodmen Life, Weakley County Family and Community Educators, Weakley County Historical and Genealogical Society, Weakley County Council of F.C.E., Weakley County Democratic Women, and AARP.

Jesus said in Mark 12:30-31, "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. Love thy neighbor as thyself." Mary Elizabeth proudly states, "I got my strength from the Lord my God. Without Him, I could not do what I do. I love the Lord, my neighbors and my family. I especially love teaching children and helping to make the world a better place in which to live."



Best Consignment Shop: We Care Ministries

AN ARMY OF VOLUNTEERS — The staff and volunteers of We Care Ministries in Martin had just finished taking down Christmas decorations and toys at the thrift store before pausing to accept the honor of Best Consignment Store in the Weakley County Press' Reader's Choice awards. While the store is not definitive of an actual consignment store, their "thrift shop" is one that is a ministry of people donating their unused items and others purchasing them for an incredible bargain. All of the money that swaps hands at the thrift store is used to provide a numerous number of services for people in need throughout the community. WE CARE Ministries began in 1973 by the First United Methodist Church of Martin with a donation for \$3,600 designated to be used for people, and not for bricks and mortar. This provided the seed money for WE CARE to begin a ministry with transportation and emergency assistance. The Thrift Store followed a year later. In 1990 WE CARE expanded into an ecumenically supported ministry followed by a growth in 2002 offering eight programs of assistance. Seven denominations participate actively in the ministry. By combining the resources of the churches within the community, businesses, schools and individuals, WE CARE was able to better serve the community by assisting more people the same rather than duplicating efforts. WE CARE has expanded with our partners to establish a strong ministry with 10 programs to provide help for immediate and special needs. The WE CARE programs fall into six categories –public support, family support, seasonal needs, hunger relief, educational, and spiritual growth. WE CARE has consistently assisted over 4,500 families with over \$450,000 of assistance.



Best Postal Carrier: Chris Capps

