

Wednesday, June 16, 2021

Douglas County Health Department volunteer spotlight shines on Rays

By Colleen Lehmann, DCHD public health liaison

While the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the myriad obstacles involved in fighting viruses on a global scale, it also served to underscore the strength and resilience of the human spirit in rising to such a daunting challenge. That has certainly been true in Douglas County, and DCHD has borne witness to many volunteers who selflessly offered their time in helping with relief efforts.

In several cases these acts were a family affair, and we will be shining a light on them, starting with the mother-daughter duo of Chana and Brooke Ray of Tuscola.

Chana was recently named Douglas County EMA director, having started with the EMA/coroner's office as an administrative assistant in 2008. She also serves as director of the county's search-and-rescue (SAR) operations. She and husband, Todd, have two children-son Christian and daughter Brooke-and other family members include daughter-in-law Cheyenne, grandson Asher Weber-Hood, parents Delbert and Barb Allen, and in-laws Tony and Carolyn Ray.

Brooke is a 2020



TCHS graduate, and this fall will be starting college for emergency and disaster management. She is also working to become a licensed EMT.

What volunteer efforts have you been involved with since the start of the pandemic?

Chana: Gathering, organizing, and delivering the PPE (personal protective equipment). I order resources from the county from cleaning supplies to PPE. Brooke and I both helped with drive-thru testing and mass vaccination clinics. Both of my kids have followed in my footsteps, and Todd's too. Our family is emergency service oriented. Brooke has

followed me to SAR/MRC meetings. Naturally, when she was old enough she joined SAR and MRC, and of course helped where she could during the pandemic.

Brooke: I volunteered with EMA and helped get the proper PPE to all first-responder agencies in Douglas County. I have also helped with weekly vaccine clinics.

What was your motivation for getting involved with these efforts?

Chana: To assist the county in efforts to flatten the curve and help our citizens in Douglas County. Grow our partnerships with not just county offices, but municipalities, schools, and nursing homes.

Brooke: My biggest motivation for being involved was being able to get back out in the community and give people hope. I grew up in a family where volunteering was important. I knew that when they opened vaccine clinics that I wanted to help.

What has been the most gratifying aspect of these efforts?

Chana: Meeting and helping residents of the county, young and old. My family is an emergency service family.

Brooke: The most gratifying aspect for me was being able to meet so many people. If you take a moment and listen to people's stories you can learn so much. For some of the residents that came to the clinics they hadn't gotten a chance to go outside and talk to people since before the pandemic. The vaccine clinics gave part of their lives back.

What have you found to be the most challenging part of these efforts?

Chana: I think the online scheduling for the vaccine appointments, but I thought it was great to have so many volunteers willing to help get people scheduled.

Brooke: I would say the most challenging thing we encountered was getting

people signed up online. After a while we worked through the hurdles and we were able to help lots of people.

Why did you choose to be vaccinated?

Chana: My family, my volunteers, my job, and my colleagues.

Brooke: I chose to be vaccinated because I wanted to be able to help my community the best I can. And to me, I could best serve the community if I was vaccinated.

Chana counts among her many service-oriented pursuits her involvements with CERT, SAR/MRC and serves on the conference board with Illinois Emergency Services Management Association. Favorite hobbies include kayaking, boating, and spending quality time with family, and singing with her dad.

Brooke is a volunteer on the Tuscola Fire Department, as well as the previously noted SAR, MRC, and EMA. In her leisure time she enjoys reading, kayaking, and fishing.

The Douglas County Health Department additionally said that, "Chana and Brooke have selflessly served, supported, and volunteered hundreds of hours at DCHD drive-up and in-person mass vaccination

clinics, online appointment sign-ups, and distribution of PPE throughout Douglas County.

They are two of Douglas County's most dedicated community members and Douglas County is safer because of their experience and expertise as emergency service professionals and members of Douglas County's Medical Reserve Corps.

Thank you Chana, Brooke and family for the beautiful difference you make in our community. Thank you for all you have done and will continue to do. Douglas County is safer and better prepared for emergencies because of your service and leadership.

We hope all who live and/or work in Douglas County will join DCHD staff in thanking our Ray's of Light, Chana and Brooke Ray, for their heartfelt dedication to the health and safety of all in Douglas County, IL."

Congratulations and sincere thanks to Douglas County's mother-daughter duo, Chana and Brooke Ray of Tuscola. DCHD deeply appreciates both of you and your family.

Horizon Health awards Bowers with Dr. Phipps Scholarship

Hannah Bowers, patient services representative at Horizon Health, is the recipient of the 2021 Dr. Leland Phipps Memorial Scholarship. Bowers, of Paris, is pursuing a bachelor's degree in biomedical science at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville.

The \$1,000 scholarship, made possible by

the Carle Foundation, is awarded to a Horizon Health employee to further his or her education in the healthcare field.

"I have chosen to become a physician to serve my community," Bowers said.

Bowers' name will be added to the Dr. Leland Phipps Memorial Scholarship plaque that is on per-

manent display near the main entrance to the Paris Clinic. The plaque reads, "Time will never erase the work you have accomplished and the lives you have positively affected."

Dr. Phipps, a longtime Paris family medicine physician, died suddenly on May 22, 2017.



Submitted Photo

Hannah Bowers

Arthur seeks entries for Freedom Celebration parade on June 26

Entries for Arthur's 2021 Freedom Celebration Parade are being accepted. Registration forms

Sponsored by Arthur Area Association of Commerce, the line-up for the parade will begin at 12:45

parade route turns left from Vine on Logan Street and then left again on Pine Street back to Progress.



are available at the Arthur Graphic-Clarion or the Arthur Welcome Center.

Individuals, organizations, churches, and businesses interested in participating in the parade should call 217-543-2151 to request a form or stop by the newspaper office at 113 E. Illinois or the Welcome Center at 106 E. Progress to pick up a form.

"Salute to Freedom's Heroes" is the theme for the 27th annual parade.

p.m. in the old Progress Tank Facility (402 East Progress St.) and the parade will begin promptly at 2:00 p.m. Only parade participants are allowed in the line-up area. Drop off area for parade participants will be at 402 East Progress St., which is the entrance to the plant.

The Freedom Celebration Parade route will run west on Progress Street to Vine Street, turn left on Vine and travel through downtown Arthur. The

The Arthur American Legion Post #479 will be handing out American flags along the parade route again this year.

People are encouraged to bring their lawn chairs to watch the parade anywhere along the route with their families, friends and neighbors. Kids and kids at heart don't forget to bring the candy bags!

Parade entries should remember to report to for line-up between 12:45 and 1:45 p.m. on June 26.

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