

NOMINEES VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR:

GAIL MCDONALD -BIRCH RUN

Gail embodies the true spirit of volunteerism. A servant to others in all that she does, she is always the first to step forward and offer her time, talents, and heart for the greater good. Time and time again, Gail jumps into action to support people, projects, and community events—often behind the scenes and without seeking recognition. She is actively involved in several organizations and is often the first call when an extra set of hands is needed to accomplish a task or reach a goal. Gail's dedication, compassion, and selflessness make her exceptionally deserving of Volunteer of the Year.

LEE ENGELHARDT - BIRCH RUN

In addition to his responsibilities on the board of education, Lee has demonstrated exceptional leadership in his inaugural year as youth football commissioner. His effective communication skills and adept issue resolution have been instrumental in ensuring a successful season. The current year has been executed flawlessly.

PAIGE BUCKLEY - BIRCH RUN

For more than a decade, Paige Buckley has been an extraordinary volunteer coach and unwavering pillar of support for Birch Run's forensics programs. Serving both of the high school forensics team and the middle school programs, Paige has dedicated countless hours to helping students grow into speakers, thinkers, and leaders. From October through May each year, Paige commits multiple afternoons, evenings and weekends to coaching, mentoring, and preparing students for competition. She brings patience, expertise, and genuine enthusiasm to every practice. Her guidance helps students discover their voices, build confidence, and develop skills that benefit them far beyond the competition season. Paige's impact is seen not only in improved performances and successful results, but in the pride, belonging, and self-assurance she inspires in every student she works with. Her long-term dedication, her passion for empowering young people, and her deep commitment to our school community make her an exceptional candidate for volunteer of the year.

DAWN PAGEL - BIRCH RUN

She volunteered to serve as the team mom for the JV football team and is always willing to step in wherever help is needed. She generously volunteers her time with the volleyball team, school events, baseball, softball, football, and more—often behind the scenes, but always making a meaningful impact. Her dedication, reliability, and servant heart have earned her the respect and appreciation of students, families, coaches, and staff alike. She is truly a well-respected and valued member of our town, whose commitment to supporting youth and community programs makes a lasting difference.

BETH BELILL - BIRCH RUN

Beth stepped into a volunteer role on the board of Birch Run Youth Sports a couple of years ago. She not only volunteers her time as secretary of the board, but also spends countless hours helping to run your youth basketball programs from 3rd grade to 8th grade. On top of that she continuously offers to help out where she can. She volunteers at concessions stands at every imaginable sporting event and as a ticket taker as well. She is also always offering to run errands for whoever needs it in both youth sports and the athletic association. She is a true asset to our athletics in BR.

NOMINEES VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR:

CHERIE MCFARLAND - BRIDGEPORT

Cherie has been a shining example of consistency, kindness, and community spirit. She showed up for Walk It Wednesdays almost every week—rain or shine—with a smile, encouragement, and positive energy. More than just walking, she helped create a welcoming atmosphere of connection and accountability that kept others coming back. Cherie continually uplifts others, supports Bridgeport businesses in our Facebook groups, and truly leads by example—literally walking the walk.

KIM BADOUR - BRIDGEPORT

Kim Badour is a compassionate servant leader whose heart for others is evident through her dedication to ministry and community outreach. She actively supports ministries at Bridge to Recovery, offering encouragement, guidance, and hope to those seeking healing and restoration. In addition, Kim volunteers with Emmaus House, where she faithfully serves individuals and families in need with humility and grace. Her commitment to meeting people where they are reflects her deep belief in the power of love, faith, and community. Kim also serves as a Chaplain at the Saginaw County Jail, ministering to inmates with compassion, understanding, and respect. Through this role, she brings comfort, spiritual support, and hope to those navigating some of life's most difficult moments.

Her unwavering dedication to service makes Kim a powerful light in our community and a true example of faith in action.

NOMINEES CITIZEN OF THE YEAR:

RACHAEL CAIN - BRIDGEPORT

Rachael is a lifelong Bridgeport resident and a true supporter of her hometown. After earning a degree in dental assisting from Delta College, she later completed her elementary education degree at Saginaw Valley State University, feeling called to invest more deeply in her community and its children. Rachael has spent most of her career teaching and mentoring students.

Outside the classroom, she volunteers with sewing and crochet clubs and has previously served with Girls on the Run, helping young girls build confidence, life skills, and strong friendships. She also serves at Bridgeport Community Church, where she has been a member throughout her adult life. Many were grateful to recognize a friend, & coworker —a dedicated leader who consistently steps up and loves her community well.

KELSEY RUDY - BIRCH RUN

Kelsey Rudy exemplifies dedicated community leadership. As Director of Marketing and Business Development at Birch Run Premium Outlets, she uses her role to bring people together and create meaningful impact across the Birch Run–Bridgeport area. Beyond her professional work, Kelsey serves on the Birch Run Bridgeport Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, contributes to key committees including Best Of and Trucks, Trunks & Treats, and is an active member of the Birch Run Rotary Club. Her consistent involvement, creative ideas, and willingness to serve have strengthened Chamber initiatives, supported local businesses, and enhanced community events throughout the year. Kelsey leads with passion, positivity, and a genuine commitment to seeing the community thrive, making her an outstanding choice for the Birch Run Bridgeport Chamber Volunteer of the Year Award.

NOMINEES CITIZEN OF THE YEAR:

DIANNE MARTINDALE -BIRCH RUN

Yes, Diane is the superintendent of schools. But, she takes her role as a Panther to the next level for this community. Not only does she always have the kids at heart when making all decisions, she goes above and beyond to attend so many events in the community for the kids, too! She is at games, plays, concerts, meetings for many different organizations, etc. in addition to all of that, she is a member of the Rotary Club and the Birch Run Education Foundation and attends those meetings regularly on top of volunteering for their events and all she does for the school. Diane is a huge asset to our community and we are lucky to have her do all that she does for us.

TRACI LOY - BIRCH RUN

Traci Loy is exceptionally deserving of recognition as Birch Run Volunteer of the Year for her decade of dedicated service as President of the Birch Run PTO. For the past ten years, Traci has gone above and beyond to support students, families, teachers, and staff, consistently giving her time, energy, and leadership to strengthen our school community. Under her guidance, the PTO has grown into a well-organized, impactful group that provides meaningful programs, events, and resources that directly benefit students' learning and well-being. Traci leads with commitment, positivity, and a genuine passion for Birch Run, often working behind the scenes to ensure success without seeking recognition. Her long-standing service, steady leadership, and unwavering dedication have made a lasting difference, and her contributions truly embody the spirit of volunteerism.

KARLY RUELLE - BIRCH RUN

Karly owns several businesses in the area. She volunteers at the school, PTO, several sporting events, the list goes on and on. She is beyond deserving of this award.

Karly Ruelle - Birch Run

NOMINEES: ORGANIZATION OF THE YEAR:

***ROTARY
CLUB OF BR***

***CLASS OF 64
ALUMNI &
FRIENDS***

NOMINEES BUSINESS OF THE YEAR:

BIRCH RUN

**5 HEART EARTHWORM FARM
BIRCH RUN PREMIUM OUTLETS
BNE PLUMBING
HALO BURGER
HOME TOWN HUSTLE
JOANNIES FLORAL
PITA PIT
SCHMITZER HARDWARE
SILVER CREEK APARTMENTS
SOMETHING BARROWED SOMETHING NEW**

BRIDGEPORT

**ORCHID ORTHOPEDICS
UNITED FINANCIAL CREDIT UNION
RENUVE PHYSICAL THERAPY
SUBWAY OF BRIDGEPORT**