While working with many volunteers throughout the years, some individuals stand out for their great qualities and Leanna is one of those people. She is eager to offer her time and resources regardless of the task. Leanna has served in a wide variety of volunteer roles with Reston Association. She often goes above and beyond to help wherever there is a need, and is well-known for her strong work ethic. Whether it was staying late to help staff breakdown at the Multicultural Festival after she spent most of the day working with children in the activities tent, or helping patrons in and out of the kayaks and canoes at the Spring Festival when we were short staffed, Leanne was happy to help. Leanna woke up early to volunteer at the Nature House 5K on a Saturday to help cheer runners on along the race route. She helped to sort donated games and toys for the Closet at the MLK Day of Service, greeted families at the Halloween House and Trick-or-Treat Trail, and worked with the students at the Maker Faire NOVA.

Rain, snow or shine, Leanna always arrives to the events with a smile and ready to work. Her smile is contagious along with her great attitude. She volunteers for most of the events throughout the year and enjoys sharing her experiences and knowledge to help train new volunteers. She is an outstanding volunteer and an amazing person. RA is happy to announce Leanna is the Volunteer of the Year.
Emily is a dedicated volunteer, who has spent over 22 hours in committee meetings, and countless hours preparing for them. She has engaged in the least visible, least rewarding, least public-acclaim causing part of helping Reston to remain a great place to live. Her attendance at these and outside meetings, public meetings on road and infrastructure projects, and subcommittee meetings directed toward upgrading Reston’s Bicycle Friendly Community status with the League of American Bicyclists, have not simply been from a desire to pad her college applications or to gain acclaim in the community. Emily has worked hard thinking about the issues, asking thoughtful questions and challenging “old school” assumptions about transportation in our community. This has caused the adults on the committee, as well as others she has interacted with, to think harder about innovative solutions and ideas. She is generous with her time and energy. It is rare to find a high school student with the kind of devotion she exhibits in doing this kind of committee work.

Emily attends the monthly MTAC meetings as an active participant, prepared and engaging with people of all ages in a respectful manner. She is dedicated to helping Reston become a truly multimodal friendly community. In her capacity as an engaged citizen, she has attended meetings such as the RA Board of Directors, Fairfax County DOT, Virginia DOT and many others. Her voice has been unique at these meetings as few people her age ever attend them. She is eager to take on assignments for MTAC even while she is an International Baccalaureate (IB) student, athlete, tutor for other students, and works at a part-time job. The hours she gives in the committee meetings are a drop in the bucket compared to the hours she has spent researching issues and preparing for the meetings. She also volunteers at local races, reads to children at a local elementary school, and mentors freshmen students.
Emily’s work with MTAC not only helps address current issues, but helps design the future. She has also taken the lead for two areas of our Bicycle Friendly Community application, which requires research and analysis. In November, Emily raised issues regarding transit (bus) networks in Reston based on her use of the RIBS and Fairfax Connector systems. As she has transitioned from being a bicyclist only to a bicyclist who also drives, Emily has applied her knowledge, insights, and curiosity to try to help our committee make useful recommendations to the RA board. She personally got involved with trying to effectuate safety changes along Twin Branches Road where the RA trail crosses the road interacting with VDOT and FDOT officials.

Emily has a keen mind, able to focus on the issue at hand as well as see the future impact on people her age who want to live in Reston for many years. She is diligent, mature, kind and respectful. Committee work is tedious, especially when dealing with details of land use. Individuals like Emily who display personal dedication to excellence are exactly what Reston Association committees need in order to advise current boards, as well as help them plan for the future. RA is delighted to announce Emily as the Youth Volunteer of the Year.
The Chantilly Key Club has truly defined the term commitment when it comes to volunteering. They have contributed many hours to help the Watershed and Environmental Resource Team keep Reston beautiful one site at a time. Club members showed dedication and eagerness in many events this year. They participated in almost every scheduled Habitat Heroes in 2016. Eager to help, the Key Club members proved to be hard workers by pitching in Saturday mornings for two hours to control and suppress invasive species. These fast-growing, invasive plants escape from people’s yards and threaten local ecosystems, taking away vital food and habitat from already stressed wildlife populations. Invasive plants can produce tons of seeds and spread rapidly, decreasing the space for native plants to thrive. The Key Club organized many hands to cut and uproot invasive shrubs and vines to help create space for native plants to grow. They used tools like the weed wrench, handsaws and loppers to remove invasive plants. They hauled the vegetation onto dump trucks to be taken away for proper disposal. Members risked thorns, mosquitoes, yellow jackets and getting poison ivy rashes. With their help, we started to restore the woods and provide healthy wildlife habitat.

The Chantilly Key Club also participated in other RA events last year. Members also worked alongside the Watershed team to cleanup Snakeden Branch Upper They helped at the MLK Day of Service at Southgate Community Center where they sorted toys for the Closet. They also made an impact by walking at the Walk MS in Reston. The Chantilly Key Club members made a significant impact this past year and are being recognized for their outstanding involvement in our community.
Reston Association volunteer photographers have shown their devotion to the Reston community through their lens. Their meaningful pictures always speak for themselves. If that weren’t enough, you can read the many thankful comments about the images on our social media channels or our magazine. Whether it’s a mother and daughter dancing at an event, a family running at the Nature House 5K for the first time, a bus trip to Alexandria, or artists showing off their talents at the local festival, these volunteers have helped capture many lasting memories for our neighbors.

Without these volunteers, many of our events would not get the exposure they deserve. Throughout the year, many of our programs and events have conflicting times, making it difficult for staff to capture. With the support of these hardworking individuals, our organization has been able to cover many more events than we ever could in the past.

As these humble volunteers race to capture these precious moments in events that can last up to eight hours, they continue to strive to improve their craft. Not only do they do it to help, but they do it with a passion and always a wonderful attitude that makes people comfortable around them. These amazing individuals have been a wonderful addition to our volunteer program, and we hope that their passion to capture the Reston community continues for many years to come. RA wants to recognize their outstanding work.
2016 Volunteer Reston Service Award Recipient
The Bond Family – Family Volunteer of the Year

Charlie and Julie have woven volunteerism into the fabric of their lives. These two individuals help to maintain the grounds and building at the Walker Nature Center. They share their extensive knowledge of pond maintenance, gardening, and decorating skills freely on an ongoing basis. They don’t have to be asked to help or see a call for volunteers. When they see a problem, have an idea for improvement, or think they could make something better, they take the initiative to become part of the solution – always communicating and vetting their ideas respectfully before jumping into action. Mostly, they enjoy getting their hands dirty whether it’s skimming leaves from the pond, weeding the garden, planting flowers or chipping a trail. They are the good Samaritans that everyone would be happy to have as neighbors.

At the top of this dynamic duo’s list of accomplishments are the amazing seasonal displays that they create at the nature center each year. They always share quality items like Williamsburg hurricane lamps or a painting of Reston's official bird (the Pileated Woodpecker). If the perfect item isn’t available commercially, they make it themselves such as the hand painted eggs at Easter time, or lend family heirlooms of sentimental value such as a grandfather's red wheel barrel filled with greens at Christmas.

Charlie and Julie also volunteer their time at special events such as the Holiday Open House. They are the nature center's extended family who luckily lives right down the street. They are part of our neighborhood watch, reporting when they notice anything awry.

Charlie and Julie have remarkable energy. They are excellent role models for other seniors in our community as well as their own extended family. Their impact touches generations including their children and grandchildren who frequently follow in their footsteps to volunteer and participate in events such as the Nature House 5K.
Whether it is their hard work and time or financial and item donations, the Bond’s truly make a positive impact on our community. Their generosity never ceases to amaze us. We are so thankful for all that they are and do for the community.
2016 Volunteer Reston Service Award Recipient
Natural Areas Assessment Team - Group Volunteer of the Year

Pictured L to R – Michael Horton, Don Coram, Frideh Mirmirani, Doug Britt

Mike, Don, Farideh, and Doug are dedicated and talented volunteers who gave Reston Association 90 hours of their time to help RA’s Environmental Resource Team assess the health of the open space. For the first time ever, RA’s environmental staff used the assistance of volunteers to inspect and assess the natural areas. The Environmental Resource Department implemented the Natural Areas Assessment using the Fairfax County’s assessment and prioritization methodology to look at the quality of RA’s woods. To do this, staff reached out to Fairfax County master naturalists for assistance. Mike, Don, Farideh, Doug and a few other Reston residents volunteered. They participated in a training facilitated by RA staff to learn the assessment process and the new application called ArcCollector to be able to collect data while out in the field.

With the support of these four skilled and knowledgeable volunteers, the Environmental Resource Team was able to split up into multiple groups and go to separate parcels in Reston simultaneously. This new collaboration has caused a dramatic increase in productivity of our mapping of Reston. They helped complete assessments for almost all of Reston’s open space within five months. It typically takes RA staff six months to complete inspections for only half of RA natural areas. Being able to complete our assessments during one season is tremendous. It will allow staff to better prioritize our restoration work to help create healthier wildlife habitats and protect rare or sensitive native species. RA is ecstatic to have them as part of the team.
RA’s Science Summer Camp has been hosted by the United States Geological Survey for over 20 years. The USGS building manager’s team supply the space and volunteered their efforts to make sure RA has a top notch Science Camp. The team goes to bat for RA in requesting space to use during the summer months. There were tighter demands on space this past year, but they were again able to reserve a place for 60 children to attend camp at the USGS campus. The Team’s passion for children and science is why they go to great lengths to find the best space and people to teach the children in the Reston community. In addition to spending many hours preparing materials and the lecture space the team also recruits current and past USGS employees to come to camp weekly to teach and be guest scientists.

The guest scientists share with the campers specific topics relating to their science field. They also have a passion they want to share with tomorrow’s leaders, and the only way to make sure it is passed on is to get involved, volunteer and teach it to them. They demonstrate the exciting ways to learn and have fun in the sciences with hours of curriculum planning, experimental prepping, and gathering supplies during time outside of their daily jobs with USGS.

This year, each speaker had a different skill of getting new ideas and concepts to stick for the campers to learn. The guest scientists are great leaders for the children to emulate as they spoke with such passion and excitement about their topics to hopefully one day lead the next generation into the sciences. All of the people that work with or for USGS gave the children that attended Science Camp an avenue of learning and a platform for new experiences. Some of these children may not have been exposed in school or their daily lives to some of the "ologies" they encountered at summer camp 2016.
We are happy that the Science Camp has been able to call USGS home for so many years. The professionalism and understanding of the children from each dept. at USGS is outstanding. Thank you to this wonderful team for facilitating this outstanding program at USGS.
The Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC) advises the Reston Association Board of Directors on the sound management and development of facilities and amenities for association members, the delivery of association sponsored or co-sponsored recreation/leisure activities and services, and prioritizing funding for capital improvements and recreation services. The advisory committee has performed exemplary service to the RA board and staff through the accomplishment of its first work plan. The members of this committee have dedicated their various skills and professional experiences to the creation of a reliable and highly useful set of observations and conclusions about recreation in Reston, which can be drawn on by our board in making important decisions about Reston's future.

Despite the limited number of committee members over the last year, the PRAC has increased its levels of commitment and output for the benefit of the association.

In addition to their monthly meetings, committee members have spent countless hours coordinating the execution of their work plan and engaging with RA members on what they want to see in the future. These individuals have contributed value to the association that would have been worth paying an outside professional consultant.

The seven person team planned and conducted a survey to collect feedback from RA members on Reston's parks, recreation and open space. They identified and engaged the users of RA facilities to gather input about their current uses and future needs. They researched best practices, emerging trends, and the lessons learned from community partners and comparable entities with regard to parks, recreation and open space. Lastly, they presented a comprehensive findings report based on this research to the Board of Directors with specific recommendations for next steps.
The members of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee have freely donated their time and talents, including strategic thinking, survey development and analysis, member engagement, recreation planning, meeting facilitation, best practice research, and committee management to help create a better environment. RA owes a great deal to the PRAC for its hard work and dedication.