

REALTOR

MAGAZINE.REALTOR



Ending Weekend Hunger

Good Neighbor Award Winner
Jeremy Lichtenstein



NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION of
REALTORS®

When Giving

Meet 10 REALTORS® who make us grateful.

By Sara Geimer

REALTORS® step up. They're problem solvers. They're stop-talking-about-it-and-start-doing-it types. And each year, the National Association of REALTORS® Good Neighbor Awards spotlights great exemplars of that can-do spirit, whether their goal is alleviating homelessness, bringing clean water to parched villages, alleviating chronic hunger, or giving a leg up or moments of joy to others in need. Through the Good Neighbor Awards, we recognize and support the works of 10 honorees each year. Those they serve have shared with us stories of profound thanks. But gratitude works both ways. These Good Neighbors say giving is a gift in its own right. The *opportunity* to serve others is reason enough to feel grateful. They step up for a deceptively simple reason: because they can. **See their full stories and videos at nar.realtor/gna.**



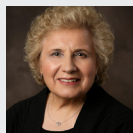
Omayra Borges jumped in to save lives after Puerto Rico's storm. **Page 4**



Elias Thomas has worked to make clean water available to thousands in India. **Page 6**

Honorable Mentions

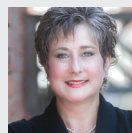
From hundreds of nominations, we selected five more REALTORS® who make a difference through passionate volunteer work. They will each receive \$2,500 grants for their charities. Read their full profiles at realtorm.ag/hon-mentions.



ANNETTE EVANS Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices New Jersey Properties, Livingston, N.J. Evans

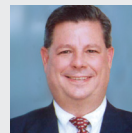
has spent 30 years as a volunteer board member at JESPY House, a nonprofit advancing indepen-

dence for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. She has taken on multiple roles, including helping parents prepare for their adult



children to age in place. **NECIA T. FREEMAN** ABR, CRS, Old Colony, REALTORS®, of Huntington, Barboursville,

W.V. Freeman founded Backpacks & Brown Bags to feed children who do not reliably have food



on the weekends and to help opioid-addicted women, some of whom are these children's mothers, find a path to recovery.

Is a Gift



Chet Choman provides shelter and support for the rural poor. **Page 8**



Jeremy Lichtenstein ensures that kids have enough to eat on the weekend. **Page 10**



Joy Nelson offers a bucolic getaway for people with a range of disabilities. **Page 12**

RICHARD L. HARRIS CCIM, Richard Harris & Associates Inc., Palm Harbor, Fla. Harris is volunteer president of The Arc Tampa Bay, which empowers people of all ages with intellectual and developmental disabilities. His business expertise helped the nonprofit reduce costs, increase revenue, and obtain grants to extend its reach.



MICHAEL LAFARGUE Coldwell Banker Residential, Chicago LaFargue is a powerhouse in multiple nonprofits supporting Chicago neighborhoods. He championed the installation of community

security cameras, which led to arrests in the murder of a local judge. He also heads a community-based coalition that seeks to ensure that a



5-mile train route expansion benefits underserved areas.
JACK PERSIN Baird & Warner, Naperville, Ill. Persin

co-founded Naperville Responds for Veterans, a nonprofit that helps low- and moderate-income veterans remain in their home as they age. The organization has helped nearly 200 veterans, making crucial home repairs and adding retrofits like wheelchair ramps.

2018 Web Choice

Although the Good Neighbor Awards judges (page 14) selected our 2018 winners, all 10 finalists competed for “Web Choice” honors through public voting online. This year, a record 165,000 votes were cast. Congratulations



to top vote-getters Michael LaFargue, Necia T. Freeman, and Joy Nelson, who receive bonus grants thanks to sponsor realtor.com®.

Ending Weekend Hunger

Jeremy Lichtenstein launched a system to nourish thousands of low-income kids. BY SAM SILVERSTEIN

When REALTOR® Jeremy Lichtenstein realized thousands of schoolchildren regularly went hungry in the community where he helps people buy million-dollar-plus homes, he saw an opportunity to act. Lichtenstein, an agent with RE/MAX Realty Services in Bethesda, Md., drew on his experience running a lean business to devise a sharply focused plan to buy nutritious, nonperishable food in bulk and deliver it to schools for students in need to take home. “I’m not a rocket scientist, but I can figure this stuff out,” says Lichtenstein. “Efficiency is the best policy.”

The first delivery took place in 2012, with weekend food supplies going to 37 children at Cedar Grove Elementary School in Germantown, Md. The idea quickly became a nonprofit operation, which Lichtenstein dubbed KIND (Kids In Need Distributors). During the last school year, KIND provided weekend food to over 2,100 children at 27 Montgomery County elementary and middle schools every week. KIND has raised over \$1 million and provided more than 1 million meals since its inception.

KIND plugs a gaping hole in the federal program that provides free or reduced-price breakfast and lunch to children from low-income families: hunger that arises when kids go home. “We see such a difference in kids when they get food,” says Kelitah Armstrong, community school coordinator at Highland Elementary School in Silver Spring, Md. Armstrong says food insecurity is so acute at her school that she tries to have snacks on hand for hungry kids. “If I can make sure that [even] one kid is satiated, I’m doing a service for their whole class.”

Around 175 students who attend Highland received food from KIND during the last school year, and Armstrong says that number will grow to 200. She notes children need the food so badly that they’re not embarrassed to pick it up: “The kids notice if their mom isn’t able to buy food, and they know they’re doing their duty to bring home the food. It takes away the worry.”

About 14 percent of children who live in Montgomery County—where the median household income is among the highest in the U.S.—are food-insecure. “People don’t think we have a huge need in our community,” says Kathy Lazor, director of the Department of Materials Management for Montgomery County Public Schools. “But we have low-income students everywhere, and they need assistance.”

Keeping a Sharp Focus

Lichtenstein manages KIND from the homey one-room office that is also the base for his real estate business. His staff provides administrative support to the organization at his expense. Lichtenstein says because KIND buys all the food it distributes, the organization maintains a reliable supply chain and stays focused on its mission. The organization relies on donations and grant funds from Montgomery County to buy food.

Dozens of volunteers pick up the food from a Costco warehouse in Wheaton, Md., once every six weeks and use their own vehicles to transport it to the schools the program serves. KIND’s order is so large that several Costco staff members come in early to pull their order, says Debbie Ross, marketing and membership manager for the store. KIND volunteers load it into their vehicles, and they’re on their way before the warehouse opens to the public. “It’s down to a science,” says Ross.

One factor behind KIND’s success is Lichtenstein’s ability to recruit. “Jeremy attracts good people, and they spread the word,” says Russell Lacey, a volunteer Lichtenstein recruited. Lichtenstein hopes real estate pros across the U.S. will replicate his work. “I want to get hundreds of people doing this. It’s so easy,” he says. “They’re going to catch the fever, and at the end of the day they’re going to feel much better about themselves.”

KIDS IN NEED DISTRIBUTORS

1 million meals provided since 2012 | kindinmd.org

Contact Jeremy Lichtenstein at jllichtenstein9596@gmail.com to learn more



School counselors tell me that when kids are not suffering from hunger, they have fewer sick days, better school performance, and improved social interaction."





About the program

NAR's Good Neighbor Awards is celebrating its 19th year of honoring REALTORS® who make an extraordinary impact through volunteer work. Since 2000, the Good Neighbor program has donated more than \$1.1 million to REALTOR®-led charities. The five 2018 Good Neighbor Award winners will be honored in November during the REALTORS® Conference & Expo in Boston. The winners' charities will each receive a \$10,000 grant. In addition to the winners, five Honorable Mentions will each receive \$2,500 for their community cause. We choose the Good Neighbor Award winners through a multistage judging process. Then the public votes to choose which of the 10 finalists receive bonus grant money as Web Choice Favorites. This year, more than 165,000 votes were cast. Nominations open in January for the 2019 Good Neighbor Awards. Deadline is May 10. Find out more at realtorm.ag/gna.

Thank you, judges

Martin Edwards NAR Past President | **Shannon L. King** NAR Member Communications Chair | **Vince Malta** NAR First Vice President | **Veronica C. Malolos** NAR Housing Opportunities Chair | **Stacey Moncrieff** Vice President, NAR Business Communications & Publishing | **Suzanne Mueller** SVP of Industry Relations, Move Inc. and realtor.com | **Ron Phipps** NAR Past President (and 2001 Good Neighbor Honorable Mention) | **Thomas Riley** NAR Treasurer | **John Smaby** NAR President-elect | **Martin Sundquist** SVP of Customer & Community Programs, Wells Fargo Home Mortgage

Thank you, sponsors

Since 2000, the Good Neighbor Awards has donated more than \$1.1 million to REALTOR®-led charities. Those grants—and REALTOR® Magazine's Good Neighbor program itself—wouldn't be possible without the generous support of its sponsors: realtor.com® and Wells Fargo.

realtor.com®
Primary Sponsor

**WELLS
FARGO**

**HOME
MORTGAGE**

Are you a Good Neighbor?

Or do you know someone who should be nominated? Visit nar.realtor/gna to nominate someone for the 2019 awards (deadline for entries: May 10) or to contribute to current and past winners' charities.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®