



MAJOR NEWS: West Virginia's Spirit of Philanthropy Awards Announced

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*Hope rising after WV's tragic 2016 floods,
Ensuring hunger is eliminated for West Virginia's children and youth, and
Igniting pride and community betterment are exhibited in the 2017 West Virginia Spirit of Philanthropy*

In a time when West Virginia is becoming stronger, the Spirit of Philanthropy Awards showcase the best of the Mountain State. At the recent Philanthropy WV Annual Conference, four tremendous leaders and community collaborations were honored for their impact on West Virginia's citizens and communities across the Mountain State.

The Spirit of Philanthropy awards are West Virginia's highest honor recognizing the generosity, leadership, and philanthropic investments made by individuals, organizations, businesses, and collaborative projects in our state. "In the midst of tragedy and great challenges, philanthropy through leadership, generosity, and problem solving partnerships is transforming our communities. This year's honorees exemplify the greatest spirit of philanthropy and improving the quality of life for our citizens," shared Philanthropy WV President & CEO Paul D. Daugherty. Philanthropy West Virginia presented the 2017 awards in memory of long-time board member and Beckley Area Foundation Executive Director Susan Stevenson Landis who sadly passed away in July. The 2017 awards are presented to four remarkable individuals and groups including:

Spirit of Philanthropy for Critical Impact: After one of West Virginia's most tragic events with the June 2016 floods, citizens came together to develop solutions to restore communities and improve the quality of life. One hope filled and results driven collaboration that has delivered miracles in the past year is ***Homes for White Sulphur Springs***. ***Homes for White Sulphur's*** inspirational, life changing, and community restoring work was honored with the **2017 Spirit of Philanthropy Award for Critical Impact**. This transformative project brings partners together from every sector, donations of in-kind services and money, and putting homes in place for many impacted by the horrible flood. ***Homes for White Sulphur*** has raised more than \$3 million and spent it on new homes being built and restored in White Sulphur Springs, Rainelle, Richwood, and Roane County, WV. ***Homes for White Sulphur*** provides hope and an emotional and spiritual lift for those impacted by the floods. Receiving the award for ***Homes for White Sulphur Springs*** are volunteer leaders: Tom Crabtree, Maggie Hutchinson, and Rob Vass of Greenbrier County.

Spirit of Philanthropy for Volunteer Leadership: The 2017 Spirit of Philanthropy Awards included two special Volunteer Leadership recipients with an adult and youth leader honorees. Philanthropy requires giving of one's time, talent, and treasure and this year's volunteer honorees are:

- (a) **Adult Award:** In Raleigh County, a leader of great impact and humble service is ***Conrad Cooper***. Cooper is a unique donor and volunteer who is currently Board President of the Beckley Area Foundation. Cooper was recognized with the award for his multiple roles including recently assisted in initiating the community collaborative to reduce community blight with the Household Hazardous Waste Collection program. He is serving his second time on the Beckley Area Foundation Board of Directors, and is owner of Cooper Insurance. He is a leader who does not wait to be asked to serve the community, but initiates action and delivers results.
- (b) **Youth Award:** In West Virginia, our youth are great examples of our spirit of philanthropy. Philanthropy WV is pleased to present a youth recipient the Volunteer Leader Award by honoring ***Roark Sizemore*** of Morgantown, WV. Roark founded ***Pantry Plus More*** to respond to the growing need of students in Monongalia County who could not afford food, school supplies, or personal toiletry items. The ***Pantry Plus More*** brings basic necessities to children by putting pantries inside public schools. These pantries are stocked with food, hygiene products, clothes, and school supplies. Students can take as much as they want, whenever they want, with complete anonymity. Roark launched ***Pantry Plus More*** as a high school project and now in his sophomore year at West Virginia University has expanded it to serving six schools with a seventh pantry to

open in January 2018. As a full-time honor student and Bucklew scholar at WVU, Roark works tirelessly to raise funds, write grants, coordinate delivery, handles media, and promotes the program. Additionally, his work resulted in **Pantry Plus More** receiving their own 501(c)3 status with the IRS, partnering with Mountaineer Food Bank, and arranging for the Mobile Food Bank to come to his community once a month. His personal investments of time, talent, and treasure is transforming his community and is a model to others.

Spirit of Philanthropy for Staff Leadership: The staff of foundations, United Ways, corporate giving, and other philanthropic institutions are the unspoken heroes who live the spirit of philanthropy with great impact in our state. The **2018 Spirit of Philanthropy for Staff Leadership is presented to Erin Hurst, Executive Director of the United Way of the Greenbrier Valley.** During the past 18 months, Hurst has worked tirelessly by expanding the United Way's impact, engaging donors with community needs, and leading unbelievable efforts in response to the tragic 2016 floods. When United Way became a disaster-relief agency overnight following the devastating floods of June 2016, Erin led the United Way of Greenbrier Valley in providing leadership in the initial phases of relief and recovery. On June 24, before the flood water had receded, Erin co-created and co-managed a distribution center to ensure supplies and resources got to those who needed them. This was in addition to managing hundreds of volunteers who stepped up to give their time and hearts to rebuilding after the flood. When tasked with collecting monetary donations, Erin set up a disaster recovery fund, ultimately raising and distributing close to \$1M. With Erin's energy and leadership, the United Way has distributed more than \$900,000 to flood-affected communities, keeping her promise that all funds raised would directly impact flood survivors. Her service goes beyond a job, but a tremendous vocation to transform the quality of life for the citizens and communities of her region.

“From southern counties to the northern panhandle of West Virginia and beyond, this year’s honorees of the **Homes for White Sulphur, Erin Hurst, Roark Sizemore, and Conrad Cooper** exemplify the best of West Virginia and philanthropy. Their work is strengthening communities and our state,” said Paul D. Daugherty. He added, “Philanthropy is working together with businesses, nonprofits, government, and the public to improve our state and opportunities for our citizens.”

*Philanthropy WV is the statewide leadership organization representing private, family, corporate, community and public grantmaking foundations. We are committed to advancing our mission of “**Strengthening Philanthropy in the Mountain State**”. For more information about Philanthropy WV, visit: www.philanthropywv.org or follow on twitter: @PhilanthropyWV*