



2022 VJJA Meritorious Award in the Area of Community Services

Name: MICHELE BANALETT

Each year the association presents a Meritorious Award in the Area of Community Service. The community service honor is bestowed upon a group or individual working to make a difference in their community. This year is no exception. Our recipient has worked tirelessly and made a difference in the Chesterfield area.

(See award write-up below)

Our 2022 award recipient graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Social Work and started her career with the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice approximately 43 years ago. She is currently the Senior Intake Officer for the 12th District Court Service Unit since 1990. In 2009, she received the Chesterfield County Employee of the Year and in 2021, she received the Susan Galyen Legacy of Service Award at the Chesterfield Juvenile Court for exhibiting the qualities of generosity, humility, and grace. This recipient has achieved a great deal in her role as an intake officer, but her role as a humanitarian is even greater. She has affected numerous lives across Chesterfield County and the surrounding areas.

This recipient is the community service/humanitarian leader in the office. She reminds the people in the office about blood drives in the community as well as opportunities to donate food, time, and gift bags to those in need. It is said, she has no issues "shaking down" staff for a good cause.

The Chesterfield Juvenile Detention Center had a robust greenhouse project where the residents would grow plants, vegetables and herbs to sell at the annual plant sale. With the challenges that COVID, this project took a backseat. Our recipient stepped up to get this project restarted and got the vegetables planted and then donated to the SevaTruck Richmond Foundation, a 501©(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to reducing hunger in the Richmond area by serving free nutritious meals to those in need, with a focus on children of Title 1 school and the homeless. This spearheaded more organizations to donate supplies to allow "our kids" to work in the garden.

For all of these reasons and more, please join me in congratulating our

2022 VJJA Meritorious Award Winner in the Area of Community Services:

MICHELE BANALETT