



L to R: Tom Foster, St. Francis House; Deb Shissler, January Volunteer of the Month; Susie Ryks, Helpline Center; and JoAnn Linn, MetaBank

January Volunteer of the Month

The Helpline Center congratulates Deb Shissler on being named the January 2020 Volunteer of the Month, an area-wide award program sponsored by the Helpline Center and MetaBank.

Deb serves both noon and evening meals. She is one of the few noon volunteers who has served a “full” noon meal and often bakes deserts or buys and brings in special treats for the guests. Deb belongs to St. Francis House “Saints” and will answer the call to serve when they have a cancellation or unfilled meal spot. Deb also volunteers three to four times a week running with our guests in the early morning. Deb has also been the lead trainer and cheerleader for the guests participating in “Up and Running Again” a nationwide non-profit that St. Francis House has partnered with that helps homeless and individuals with addiction issues train for and complete a half marathon.

Deb herself has experienced homelessness and struggled at times in her life to make ends meet and suffered the judgements of society that come with those factors. Due to this Deb passes no judgement on the guests but treats everyone equally with love and dignity. Deb not only affects the community by serving meals, but her bubbly personality causes smiles to break out on even the most cynical and jaded of guests. She routinely cracks jokes and makes goofy faces to make the guests laugh. Shas danced in the kitchen with staff, developed personal bonds with guests.

Tom Foster, with St. Francis House commented, “Deb is a shining light. She has more fun volunteering than almost any of our volunteers, and that is really saying something. Deb goes above and beyond for our guests. She even brought Popeye’s chicken and ice cream to one of them who was in the hospital. That guest stated: “You can tell Deb serves Jesus, not by what she says, or because she preaches, but by how she acts.”

The Helpline Center and MetaBank are pleased to present Deb with a framed certificate, a gift from MetaBank, and a letter of appreciation from Mayor Paul TenHaken. We will honor her again at the Spirit of Volunteerism Awards Luncheon on May 12, 2020.