



APRIL 2026



Honoring Our Extraordinary Volunteers

Each year, April serves as a vital reminder that volunteers are the lifeblood of our community, offering their time and talent to bridge the gaps that no budget could ever cover. It is a dedicated season to pause and recognize the selfless individuals whose daily contributions transform abstract missions into tangible hope. By celebrating these efforts, we not only honor our current heroes but also inspire a renewed culture of service that strengthens the very fabric of our society.

On Wednesday, April 22, our community gathered for our annual Volunteer Appreciation Event. It was a beautiful morning celebration dedicated to the selfless individuals who drive our mission forward. In addition to recognizing our stellar cadre of 70 volunteer drivers—who often provide dozens of rides apiece—this year's spotlight shone especially brightly on two truly remarkable contributors.

A Celebration of Double Honors: Michael Nestell

We are thrilled to announce that volunteer driver Mike Nestell received the unexpected honor of being recognized twice during our April 22 celebration. Mike was presented with both the prestigious Dele Davies Award from The Davies Project and the Volunteer of the Year Award from the United Way of South Central Michigan. While he knew the first award was coming his way, the second was a complete and heartwarming surprise!

Mike joined The Davies Project in January 2016. Over the past decade, he has provided 282 rides for families who otherwise might not have made it to their child's medical appointments. In 2025 alone, Mike dedicated 124 hours to driving 2,946 miles with families in tow. Whether driving locally or trekking to Grand Rapids and Ann Arbor, Mike is always eager to help.

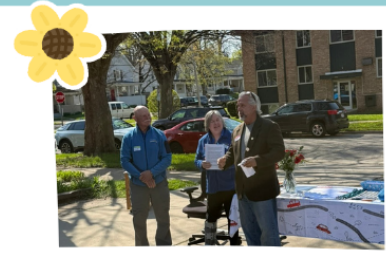
What truly sets Mike apart is his blend of reliability and compassion. Beyond providing transportation, he offers a calming presence to anxious parents and communicates with a precision that ensures no detail falls through the cracks. Even behind the scenes, Mike consistently goes out of his way to make TDP staff and interns feel valued.



His spirit of service extends far beyond our organization:

- Education: A retired teacher of 32 years and a former high school counselor in Perry.
- Community: An AARP tax volunteer and a blood donor.
- Leadership: A Board member of the Greater Lansing Unitarian Universalist Church.
- The Arts: Mike and his wife, Jann, have hosted 26 out-of-town actors and playwrights for the Williamston Theatre over the last 11 years.

Mike leads with kindness and quiet dedication. If you see him around town, please join us in congratulating him on these well-deserved accolades!



Outstanding Community Supporter: Kellie Dean and Dean Transportation

It was also a privilege to present the Outstanding Community Supporter Award to Kellie Dean, a man who truly understands that a community is only as strong as its ability to care for its own.

To understand Kellie's impact, you have to look back to his roots in the classroom. Before leading a premier transportation company, Kellie was a special education teacher. He spent his early years advocating for children with differing abilities, and that "teacher's heart" remains the engine behind Dean Transportation today.

Kellie's influence stretches across Mid-Michigan. From his leadership with the Lansing Promise to his championship of MSU Athletics, his mission has always been about access. But perhaps the truest measure of Kellie's character is how he treats those just starting out. Dean Transportation supported The Davies Project when we were new and unknown, providing annual financial support, helping us purchase a van last year, and including us in bus services and sponsored events.

Kellie doesn't just move vehicles; he moves lives. He sees a gap and builds a bridge, ensuring that every child in need has a way forward.

Community Connection Spotlight

A special thank you to the James Madison College Student Senate at Michigan State University for hosting us at their 10th Annual Gala at Graduate East Lansing and recognizing The Davies Project as their supported charity. Pam and Drekia had the opportunity to speak on behalf of the organization, sharing the impact of our work across the Greater Lansing community. It was also a wonderful evening connecting with such thoughtful and inspiring students and staff.





Max's Race is happening on **Saturday, June 13, 2026** at Michigan State University (MSU Akers/Hubbard Courtyard, 964 Hubbard Rd, East Lansing), and it's more than just a race—it's a day full of community, fun, and impact! The event kicks off with a 5K Run/Walk at 8:00 a.m., followed by a Kids' Mile Run and Sprint at 9:15 a.m., and everyone is welcome—runners, walkers, and supporters alike.

Sign up early to enjoy a **free breakfast BBQ from King Of The Grill**, plus a family fun fair, giveaway drawings, and more. It's a great way to come together, support an incredible cause, and celebrate the work we do for families in our community. For more information -> [Max's Race 2026!](#)

November 14, 2026 | Driving Change Gala

Get ready for the most anticipated event of the season! Our **Driving Change Gala** promises to be an excellent evening filled with elegance, fun, and plenty of dancing.

- **Tickets:** \$100 per person
- **Availability:** Now officially open!

Tickets are expected to go quickly, so don't wait until it's too late. Reserve your spot today to support our mission and celebrate the community we've built together.



With appreciation,

Pam

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pamela Riley Miklavcic".

Pamela Riley Miklavcic, PhD
Founder and CEO
The Davies Project

