



2018 Power of One Award Winner Mary Oldenburg

1. Why does your nominee deserve recognition?

I met Mary on a subzero January day in the parking lot of Johnson Bus. She pulled up next to the Do Good Bus, rolled down her window and said excitedly, “How do I drive this bus?!” Well words can’t describe how grateful I am that Mary Oldenburg rolled into my life that day.

Spend 10 seconds with Mary and you will fall in love with her. She radiates joy and a passion for serving others. She was the perfect addition to our Do Good Bus team. She goes above and beyond on every ride — not just by driving — but also by welcoming the volunteers with enthusiasm. She works side by side with our volunteers, taking time to get to know them all. She continuously shares ideas to improve the program, and has become my go-to volunteer for all things Do Good Bus, and beyond. The Volunteer Center is so lucky to call Mary one of our volunteers.

Mary is such a huge asset to our team. While she is an expert driver — you would be amazed how she can maneuver that bus! - she is also an expert at encouraging others. Whether its a bus full of kids, business people, friends or strangers, Mary can connect with anyone.

She’s always dependable and goes above and beyond. We’re honored that Mary donated 84 hours of her time last year. But even more importantly she helped me make community connections, came up with creative ideas to improve the program, provided a sounding board and left an impression on each of the 400+ Do Good Bus volunteers she encountered.

So many other organizations are the lucky recipients of Mary’s talents, as well. In addition to her job at Johnson Bus, time spent with grandkids, caring for her elderly mother, & driving the Do Good Bus, Mary is an active volunteer with LIFE OF HOPE and has taken on a time-intensive leadership role within her church. I don’t know how she does it all, but she always takes the initiative to call me and say “when do you need me next?!”

2. How does your nominee inspire you?

A few weeks ago I was out to dinner with my family on a Friday night. We were seated near the hostess stand, and watched as many couples and families filed in to get on the waiting list. In walks Mary and her husband. About 10 minutes later, Mary walked over to my table to say hi. We chatted a bit and as she was about to walk away she said, "Hey I've been talking up Camp Super Hero and the Do Good Bus to everyone waiting for a table. I'm pretty sure someone will be signing up!"

Sometimes the last thing you want to talk about is work. Running into Mary that evening was such a reminder for me that passion never sleeps. Every person you meet provides an opportunity to share your mission. Mary's endless enthusiasm for helping others is palpable in every minute of her day, even when out to dinner on a Friday night with her husband. Mary taught me an important lesson that night - always make the most of every opportunity that you are given, because you never know who you might touch!