

“Heart of Malta” 2020 Honoree: Non-Medical Volunteer Kathy Corbalis Malta Volunteer Since 2011

It's the little things, they say, that are actually the big things in life – and no one does the “little things” better than Kathy Corbalis, a devoted and tireless non-medical volunteer for Malta House of Care since 2011.

For nearly a decade, Kathy has spent an average of 20 hours per week volunteering in Malta's administrative office, tending to all those little things that define Malta's brand: sending a Mass card; filing reams of grant applications and donor thank yous; hand-delivering auction items to high bidders; painstakingly choosing greeting cards for a birthday, retirement, or new grandbaby – all done with sincere concern and a million-dollar smile.

Which is not to say, of course, that this is ALL that Kathy does for Malta. Over the years, she has also:

- Drilled deep into foundation and corporation websites, investigating and then pinpointing scores of promising grant opportunities;
- Googled hundreds of Wonder Women nominees (68 this year alone!), curating key information for the Wonder Women Selection Committee (and participating on the Committee herself);
- Solicited thousands of tickets, gift certificates, pieces of jewelry, bottles of liquor, gift cards, and more for silent auctions and raffles;
- Created an Archive of Malta media clippings, marketing and event materials, and other key information; and
- Sold hundreds of tickets, created countless nametags, pinned on dozens of corsages, and warmly greeted thousands of guests at Malta's events.

In short, this remarkably selfless woman – who has also donated 22 gallons of blood, provided on-site disaster relief with the American Red Cross, and serves as a lector and Eucharistic Minister at St. Peter Claver Church in West Hartford – has given countless behind-the-scenes hours in support of Malta's mission of care. And THAT is certainly a big thing!



Kathy first heard about Malta in 2011 from Dr. Pauline Olsen, a retired OB/Gyn who was one of Malta's founders and is still an active medical volunteer on the van herself.

Newly retired after a career in project management at The Hartford, Kathy was randomly seated at a breakfast meeting next to Dr. Olsen, who passionately described Malta's mission and its volunteer-based model.

The following week, Kathy knocked on Malta's office door and offered her services to then-Executive Director Bobbie Bartucca. Instantly, Bobbie put Kathy to work, gratefully accepting her help with all the fundraising details that are Malta's lifeblood: stuffing envelopes; tracking donations; accepting deliveries; clipping articles about potential donors or partners for Malta.

It's the kind of work that makes all non-profits hum, but at Malta it is somehow different, thanks to people like Kathy – a can-do, roll-up-your-sleeves gal who exudes passion for Malta's mission in every single task.

It may also explain how Kathy was able to secure a \$50 donation to Malta from a perfect stranger on an Amtrak train en route to Florida. Well, from someone who *used* to be a perfect stranger.

Here's what happened: Aboard the auto-train one winter, headed south for vacation, Kathy and her husband Jay were randomly seated next to a couple they'd never met. They got to talking about what they were doing in retirement. Before the train had gotten to the Carolinas, Kathy had made some new friends – and Malta had acquired a new donor. Talk about a devoted volunteer!

In recognition of her huge heart for service and her thousands of behind-the-scenes hours as a non-medical volunteer, Kathy Corbalis was unanimously chosen to receive a 2020 Heart of Malta award.

