

# A Special Thank You... to our essential workers

BY STEFANIE WESSELL  
Gazette Newspapers

NORTHEAST OHIO - Everyone has seen their life changed in some way during the last few months, whether it's a minor inconvenience like wearing a mask while shopping in order to help slow the spread of COVID-19, or finding themselves unexpectedly laid off and struggling to sign up for unemployment benefits on an overloaded system.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed lives in small and big ways, with the most devastating effects being the more than 2,700 people who have lost their lives to the disease in Ohio.

The State of Ohio has gone through a number of mandates designed to keep residents safe and help slow the spread, from Stay at Home orders through the current Responsible RestartOhio orders.

While some employees transitioned to a work-from-home environment, others kept working through the pandemic - interacting daily with patients and customers who could

potentially infect them with the disease.

During the uncertain times of the COVID-19 pandemic, essential workers continued to head to work every day, risking their health to keep all essential services running.

Health-care workers, grocery clerks, firefighters, sanitation workers, police officers, auto technicians, factory workers, delivery drivers, waitresses and more have all played an important role.

The Gazette is honoring these workers with this "Thank You to Our Essential Workers" special section.

Readers were invited to nominate essential workers to be featured in this special section. In 400 words or less, they highlighted their favorite essential worker.

In this special section, retail workers are honored for continuing to greet customers, stock shelves and ring up purchases.

Truck drivers are highlighted for continuing to make deliveries and transport products from one facility to another to keep the country moving.

A custodial supervisor is recognized for cleaning Kent State University at Ashtabula

with her stuff and making it safe and sanitary for the faculty and students for when they are able to return back to school.

Van drivers are honored for transporting patients to vital health appointments.

An auto worker is highlighted for making sure customers have safe and reliable transportation.

And, of course, numerous health-care workers are honored for risking their health and lives as they continued to treat patients and nursing-home residents during a pandemic.

Because the nominees are all performing an essential task, it would be very difficult to rank one person higher than another.

Instead, prizes will be awarded by random draw. A number of local businesses have donated gift certificates.

The prizes include a \$100 gift certificate to J.R. Hofstetter, "The Family Jeweler"; two hats with oil changes from Midway Chevrolet; two outdoor furniture covers, key safe, DeWalt bit set and headlamp from Davis True Value; two \$20 gift certificates from Orlando's Golden Dawn; \$20 gift card from

All Things Coffee; \$20 gift card from Harbor Perk; two \$25 gift cards from Heritage Meats; 104 breakfast sandwich gift cards from McDonald's in Jefferson; gift card from Dublin Down; three cakes from the Conneaut Dairy Queen; three \$20 gift cards from Biscotti's Italian Restaurant in Conneaut; gift card from Carterland Candles; gift card from Bakery On The Square; \$50 gift card to Peter Allen Inn; 10 gift cards from Heavenly Creamery; gift card from Red Berry Candy; two gift cards from Pizza Joe's; one \$50 gift card from Evans Quality Meats; Vaccine Value Package up to \$165.99 from Western Reserve Animal Clinic; two \$20 gift cards from Charlie's Deli; one gift certificate to Morris Flowers; one \$25 gift certificate to Salty's Butcher Shop; one \$25 gift certificate to Rainbow Café; one \$30 gift card to Capps Pizza of Orwell; one \$25 gift certificate to Earth's Natural Treasures; four pack of tickets to Pioneer Waterland from Gazette Newspapers; two \$50 gift certificates to Nails by Jessie Rose; arrangement from Kirtland Flower Barn; and items from Jefferson Domino's and Village Green Golf.



**COMMUNITY CARE AMBULANCE**

**Community Care Ambulance staff -  
Clinicians and support staff**

**NOMINATED BY  
MICHAEL SASS, MBA,  
SPHR, SHRM-SCP**

Michael Sass has nominated the Community Care Ambulance staff.

The nomination entry is included below.

Community Care Ambulance (CCA) is a not-for-profit organization created to serve the mobile healthcare needs of multiple healthcare systems and communities in northeast Ohio.

Each and every CCA staff member is an Essential Worker:

**The Clinicians** who bravely apply their clinical and customer-service skills on the front lines to combat the COVID-19 pandemic - Paramedics, AEMTs and EMTs

**Trained and skilled staff** who transport patients to attend their healthcare appointments - Wheelchair Technicians and Shuttle Drivers



The support staff who make it all possible –

- **Mechanics**, who keep the wheels turning for CCA's caregivers to safely and dependably transport patients

- **Business Development/Customer Service staff**, who ensure CCA's customers' needs are met

- **Communication Center staff**, who dispatch the calls, at times in emergent situations providing skilled Emergency Medical Dispatching

- **Compliance, Quality Assurance and Education staff**, ensuring protocol compliance and ongoing staff training and development

- **Revenue Cycle Management staff**, who ensure CCA provides caring financial services to CCA patients

- **AP, Payroll and Cost**

Accounting, who ensure CCA staff and vendors who support CCA financial needs are met

- **IT/Data Analysis staff**, ensuring CCA has current and well-maintained technology to communicate instantly while analyzing operations to continuously improve

- **Resource Management staff** align resources to demand through effective scheduling and data analysis

- **HR for ensuring staff** have what they need when they need it so they can focus on their work in caring for each patient

- **Leadership – Managers and Supervisors** who give of themselves through long hours and challenging situations with the focus to safely serve each patient

**CCA Essential Workers** – All of your caring and dedicated efforts make a difference in the lives of others – you are an inspiration and you make this world a better place - thank you!



**Paula Shenal**

Operations Manager at  
Community Care Ambulance Network

**NOMINATED BY MICHAEL SASS**

Michael Sass has nominated Paula Shenal, Operations Manager at Community Care Ambulance Network.

“Community Care Ambulance’s Operation Manager Paula Shenal’s dedication to the safety and well-being of CCA’s staff is inspiring,” Sass wrote. “CCA staff are on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic response and Paula addressed a dire situation to mitigate their risk exposure and subsequently the risk of patients and other caregivers as well as their families.”

With less than adequate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), N95 respirator inventory was down to crisis level with only 100 N95 respirators available for staff to use.

“Paula took the initiative to write letters and make phone calls to all potential suppliers, organizations and government officials who might be able to help,” Sass wrote. “As a result of Paula’s extraordinary efforts, CCA’s N95 respiratory inventory has grown 10 times!”

He continued, “This newly acquired inventory affords CCA the opportunity to cycle the N95 respirators through a process to extend the life of the N95 respirator while CCA staff in the field have respirators to exchange so they are continuously protected. Awesome job, Paula Shenal – your efforts make this world a better place - thank you!”



**APARTMENT MANAGERS**

**Paul and Tiffany Rini**

Apartment Managers at Vineyards of  
Madison

**NOMINATED BY RALEIGH B.**

Raleigh B. has nominated her sister and brother-in-law, Paul and Tiffany Rini. “Throughout the COVID-19 shutdowns, they have not only continued with their normal duties as apartment complex managers for the Vineyards of Madison in Madison, Ohio, but they have also had to change the way they do it from new sterilization procedures every day of different communal areas, contactless showings, and much more,” Raleigh wrote.

Along with this work, they have also been the primary caregivers for Paul’s mother Alice, taking every single precaution and then some to keep her healthy.

“They have worked diligently to help ensure the health and safety of every person residing in their complex and even once restrictions began to be lifted continued to abide by them to help ensure the continued safety of a precious loved one,” Raleigh wrote. “For these reasons and so many more, I would like to take the opportunity to recognize them both as Essential Workers and to thank them for all their hard work, dedication, sense of precaution and diligence that they have clearly exhibited throughout this trying time!”



**J. R. Hofstetter**

“The Family Jeweler”

Diamonds, Precious Stones  
& Jewelry Design

53 N. Chestnut St., Jefferson, OH 44047

*We would like to thank  
our essential workers.  
We appreciate  
all of what you do!*

**Postman ~ Ricky Boomhower**

**UPS Driver ~ George Dzura**

**FedEx Driver ~ Jess**

*Jim, Sherry and Steffel*