

News Release

Comptroller Franchot Presents Final 2020 Helping People Awards

*Western Maryland recipients stepped in to save the
lives of the most vulnerable*

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (July 21, 2021) - Comptroller Peter Franchot today [virtually presented](#) the William Donald Schaefer Helping People Award to recipients in Allegany, Frederick, Garrett and Washington counties.

"This final round of 2020 honorees showcase the best and brightest spirits of their communities. They stepped up to provide critical resources and create pathways for vulnerable neighbors, friends and families facing life and death struggles," Comptroller Franchot said. "It's my honor to recognize their efforts in memory of the late Governor William Donald Schaefer and his "Do It Now" approach. Today's award recipients embody his spirit. They recognized the needs of their communities, took action and continue to inspire the rest of us to face and address our challenges."

Mindy Wilkinson, owner of [She's So Pretty](#) dress shop in Lonaconing received the award for Allegany County. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Mindy selflessly dove right in, turning her dress shop in to a PPE production zone, making thousands of masks and isolation gowns to keep those on the front lines safe from the deadly virus.

In Frederick County, [Hayden's Heroes](#) was chosen as an award winner for their tireless fight to find a cure for Histiocytosis - a rare, incurable disease. After her son Hayden was diagnosed, founder Melissa Golden formed the nonprofit to invest in research and provide support to families battling this life threatening disorder. Despite losing Hayden to the disease in 2015, Melissa continues her work to fund a cure.

[HART for Animals](#) received the nod for Garrett County. HART provides grants to low-income families for spay/neuter surgery and other costly medical expenses. During the pandemic, they offered free pet food and straw to make sure fur and

feather companions were fed and warm, while keeping their families free from worry and added financial stress.

Washington County's Rick Wilson, founder of [Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry](#), took home the award for his humanitarian efforts. Twenty-three years ago, Rick founded the organization to provide donated meat to starving families in underserved communities. Since that time, it has grown into a nationwide initiative - saving countless lives and combatting food insecurity every single day.

Since 2012, Comptroller Franchot has presented Schaefer Awards to individuals or organizations serving their community in each of Maryland's 24 jurisdictions. This year due to continued COVID-19 concerns, [all award presentations were held virtually](#). Press releases were sent announcing the honorees in each region, along with [video links](#) to view the virtual ceremonies.

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