

Three honored at Elizabeth Duncan Koontz dinner

Three local, public-spirited personalities were honored late last month with the 2020 Elizabeth Duncan Koontz (EDK) Humanitarian Award, given by the Salisbury Human Relations Council. Greg Alcorn, Annie Bates and Char Molrine were the featured guests at the annual EDK dinner on Thursday, Feb. 27.

Alcorn, a Salisbury native, graduated from Overton, Knox, Salisbury High School and Catawba College. He eventually ventured out of town to earn his MBA at UNC-Charlotte. Since 2001, he has been owner and CEO of Global Contact Services (GCS). GCS has about 1,000 employees and provides customer service support nationwide and internationally.

In 2016, sparked by his time with the NC State Board of Education, he created ApSeed Early Childhood Education. ApSeed is a non-profit that provides free, age-specific touchpad to low income children. The touchpad is designed to prepare disadvantaged children for Kindergarten. To date, over 8,000 touchpads have been distributed, including over 4,000 in Rowan County.

Greg's community involvement includes Catawba College, United Church Homes and Services, Families First, Boy Scouts, First Tee, Rotary club and the United Church of Christ.

"I am honored to be recognized for the EDK Award," said Alcorn. "Mrs. Koontz' commitment to education will always be an inspiration."

Bates is known for feeding the community through her service with Society of St. Andrews where she gleanes (collects leftover crops) for fresh fruit and vegetables. She gives the fruit and vegetables to any and all in the community. She picks pecans and gives them out to the community when gleaning season has ended.

Most notably, Bates has been a dedicated and loyal servant for Meals on Wheels for 42 years. She was formerly on the Board of Directors. She also has volunteered at several Rowan County Schools as a proctor, mentor and tutor. Her previous awards include:

- Martin Luther King, Jr. Humanitarian Service Award
- Rowan County Democratic Party Volunteer of the Year
- Excellence in Parenting 2018 North Carolina Award
- Community Mom of the Year from Let's Lend a Helping Hand for hard work and dedication to the community through her time, talent, and treasures
- Outstanding Volunteer Award
- Volunteer of the Year Award for her leadership and dedication to the children

"I have looked forward to this award ceremony for a long time," said Bates. "I have one other award [that I won before,] but I was really looking forward to this one."

Bates is a member of Trinity Presbyterian Church.

Molrine is originally from Hastings, Minn., a rural suburb of the Twin cities. Because of her parents' high profile in the town, she became aware of how "to help one another to be a healthy community."

When her three children left the nest, she was free to begin to volunteer in the wider community: Rape Crisis Council, Guardian ad Litem, Red Cross, Rowan Helping Ministry, editing a residential newspaper, organizing groups when necessary, hospital work, chairperson of Trinity Oaks Scholarship, enjoying therapy calls and work done with my standard poodle, Duprix, and the Literacy Council.

That adds up to 23 years in working with the energetic and eager folk who want to be the best they can be and become part of their new country.

"I was dimly aware of the Humanitarian Award," said Molrine, "and I was confused that I was chosen. The award was started with a woman who made things happen - I just quietly teach and help."