

Outstanding Philanthropic Organization

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*	♦ I have read the 2020 NPD nomination guidelines.
Nominee Name *	Robin Hearn
Title/Business or Organization Name	Assistance League of Charlotte
Nominee Address *	 P.O. Box 471112 Charlotte, NC 28247 United States
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Name & Organization of Individual Submitting Nomination *	Stephanie Stenglein, Arts+
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Narrative *

Arts+ is honored to nominate the Assistance League of Charlotte (ALC) for AFP's 2020 Outstanding Philanthropic Organization for their nearly 30 years of service to our community. They are a passionate volunteer-led nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of children and families through community-based philanthropic programs – feed, clothe, mentor, educate.

Assistance League of Charlotte's programs are designed to address the issue of upward mobility by providing children an opportunity to succeed. If a child is prepared to learn with proper food, clothing, and legal counseling he/she will stay in school, get a job and become self-sufficient. The students served by Assistance League of Charlotte attend 27 of Charlotte's high-poverty elementary schools selected in collaboration with Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools.

Support for Assistance League of Charlotte philanthropic programs is made possible primarily from proceeds from their 100% volunteer run thrift shop. Additional support comes from private and corporate donations, grants, and membership dues.

Last year more than \$630,000 was returned to the community through five philanthropic programs:

- Operation Check Hunger
- Operation School Bell
- Mecklenburg County Teen Court
- Assistance League of Charlotte Scholarship Fund
- Outreach

OPERATION CHECK HUNGER (OCH) was established in 1992 as the first philanthropic program. It is designed to alleviate hunger by distributing food through five components of the program. In 2018–2019, Operation Check Hunger provided 465 elementary school children with weekend backpacks containing enough food for a family of four. ALC also funded summer backpacks. Total backpacks distributed for the summer and school year was 18,215. OCH supplied food for

medication administration and field trips to 250 Metro School special needs students and supported two in-school pantries. Eleven mobile pantries at four schools served 5,971 individuals. Additionally, a protein donation to Second Harvest Food Bank through an outside source provided more than 20,000 individual servings that included ground beef, chicken breasts and thighs.

In early December 2019, ALC, in partnership with Habitat for Humanity, kicked off its newest program extension of OHC, Heart of the Home. This program provides \$500 in supplies and kitchen necessities. They plan on sponsoring 19 new homeowners through this program by the end of May.

OPERATION SCHOOL BELL (OSB) provides new clothing for children in need in Charlotte Mecklenburg elementary schools. CMS personnel refer and accompany students to the Operation School Bell Store where, with the help of an Assistance League member, each child selects a new jacket, two uniforms (white polo shirts and navy pants), multi-packs of socks and underwear, a pair of shoes, a book, and a hygiene kit. During the 2018–2019 school year, Operation School Bell served 2,024 elementary children in 25 CMS schools at the Assistance League Center and an additional 7,328 children in K–12 schools through OSB outreach initiatives. Operation School Bell is the signature philanthropic program for Assistance League nationwide.

MECKLENBURG COUNTY TEEN COURT is designed to provide juveniles with no previous convictions a second chance when they admit their guilt, agree to be tried by a jury of their peers, and take responsibility for their actions. Teen Court also trains teen volunteers in the legal process as jurors, clerks of court, bailiffs, and attorneys, emphasizing communication, leadership, and diversity skills. Mecklenburg County Teen Court assisted 264 youth offenders and volunteer teens to provide 4,247 hours of community service in fiscal year 2018–2019. A total of 78 defendants successfully completed their cases with 50 cases currently active. Mecklenburg County Teen Court was operated with the assistance of 1,949 service hours from adult volunteers. Scholarships with a total value of \$6,000 were awarded to three outstanding teen court volunteers.

SCHOLARSHIP FUND awards college monies to Charlotte–Mecklenburg high school seniors and previous ALC scholarship recipients for their continuing education. The scholarships are based on community service, academic performance and financial need. Assistance League awarded 15 college scholarships in fiscal year 2018–2019 at a total cost of \$52,500. An additional 315 children received scholarships valued at \$20,000 to attend Arts+ and Stratford–Richardson YMCA Day Camp, and two adults received scholarships totaling \$13,544 to attend Community Culinary School of Charlotte.

OUTREACH is designed to provide goods for short-term needs to the Charlotte–Mecklenburg community. More than \$16,000 in goods was contributed to other local nonprofit agencies last year.

The Assistance League of Charlotte's contributions to Charlotte area are extraordinary. All the initiatives listed above were carried out in one year—imagine the cumulative impact of their decades of contributions. The fact that they accomplish all this through volunteers is amazing! The only paid person is a part-time coordinator for the Mecklenburg County Teen Court program.

Last year 174 member volunteers contributed more than 71,000 hours of their valuable time to make their programs and thrift shop successful. Based on statistical information from the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, the value of a volunteer hour is estimated to be \$24.95, which equates to \$1,795,277 for the ALC. Their members are professionals that have diverse career backgrounds including marketing, healthcare, education, science, etc. They bring their skills and their passion to the Assistance League.

Having dedicated member/volunteers does not just happen. They are very intentional and thoughtful in their membership efforts. They actively recruit through tours, speaking engagements and open houses where community members can come learn more about the ALC. Once a new member joins, they are assigned a mentor. Being paired with an experienced members helps the new member feel welcome and guides them through the process of getting involved in an area that is meaningful to them. One member states, "It is not just the cause but the friends you make in the community you want to be with."

For Arts+, the ALC is more than a funder; they are a partner. They reach out for meetings and check-ins throughout the

year. They ask what are biggest areas of need are and work towards aligning our needs with their organizational goals. Importantly, Assistance League members show up. Members join us for site visits to see their support in action and have great questions and insights. They join us for recitals to cheer on our students. They are great advocates for us and the work we do.

Additionally, they have not slowed down during the pandemic. Their thrift store may be closed but they continue to operate despite revenue losses. They remain a vital community resource: they are sewing masks; they are donating clothing, hygiene kits, school supplies and books to Lending Library sites around Charlotte; and they are donating food for families in need.

The organizations and people helped by the ALC are very grateful for all they do. Second Harvest Food Bank of Metrolina has awarded the Assistance League the following awards are for their efforts to feed children and their families in the community through the Operation Check Hunger Program:

- 2017 Community Partnership Award
- 2004 Partnership Award
- 1996 In Appreciation Award

Charlotte–Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) recognized the ALC with the following honors:

- 2018 Partners Award “...in recognition of your exemplary dedication to partnering and providing service to our organization”.
- 2001–2002 Star Community Partner Award (Community in Schools, Shamrock Gardens Elementary)
- 1999 Council for Children Community Friend of Children Award “In grateful recognition of your contribution to improve the lives of children and families.”
- 1997 Outstanding Community Partnership Award (Thomasboro Elementary)

As you can see, their diversity of partners, awards and grantors illustrate their integration in the community and awareness of its needs. For all these reasons and many more the Assistance League of Charlotte is a worthy recipient of the 2020 Outstanding Philanthropic Organization honor.

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Include a summary statement (150 words or less) that best describes your nominee and their philanthropy. If your nominee is selected, your quote will be used in social media, the event program, and other community outreach efforts. *

Assistance League of Charlotte is passionate volunteer–led organization dedicated to improving the lives of children and families through community–based philanthropic programs—they feed, clothe, mentor, and educate. Assistance League of Charlotte’s programs are designed to address the issue of upward mobility by providing children an opportunity to succeed. If a child is prepared to learn with proper food, clothing, and legal counseling he/she will stay in school, get a job and become self–sufficient. The students served by Assistance League of Charlotte attend 27 of Charlotte’s high–poverty elementary schools selected in collaboration with Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools

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- I certify that the nominee will be able to attend the award luncheon on November 12th.

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