

LEADER OF VOLUNTEER EXCELLENCE (LOVE) AWARD

Whether she's walking families and patients to their destinations around the hospital, comforting those who've undergone life-changing surgery, or helping staff get what they need, Kootenai Health volunteer Susan Riess has made a noticeable difference at the hospital. Her compassion, spirit, and dedication are noticed by many and is why she's the 2019 Leader of Volunteer Excellence recipient.

You can find Susan at the hospital several days a week, but exactly where she might be is a little more difficult to nail down. Her volunteer work includes escorts and errands — a benefit for patients, staff and visiting family members; the Ostomy Support Group where she visits with patients and families; and serving on the auxiliary board in many positions as well as on IHA's Committee on Volunteers.

Through more than 8,000 hours of volunteering, Susan has provided comfort, support and hope to the countless people she's walked alongside. While the number of hours is impressive, it's her inspiring and dedicated spirit that has her standing out from an exemplary field of volunteers.

Susan's 16 years of volunteering at Kootenai Health are only part of her volunteer story. Her early foray into volunteering was as a kindergarten mom, in Little League, and with the PTA. Along the way, a passion for service bloomed in Susan and there was no going back. From serving in leadership with her church and helping at the election polls to putting together a hugely successful community food bank and helping the Children's Village — a residential home for children who are in need of a safe haven, Susan shares her time and talents throughout her community.

Seeing a need to help spread a "light and joy", Susan joined the Red-Hot Mamas in 2002. This outstanding, comedic, fun and inspiration group has taken their talents all over north Idaho and to events across the country. Susan spent 12 years dancing, singing, performing and dressing up in order to bring fun and joy to her community and beyond. You'll have to ask her for some photos!

It's obvious, Susan knows no limits to helping others. She is a wonderful and dedicated volunteer and an amazing part of her hospital and community. You can see how much she loves sharing her time with others in the hope of bringing smiles and laughter.

Susan, on behalf of all those who've benefitted from your passion to serve, thank you.