

Valley Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

VALLEY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

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Being Part of Our Community



THOUGH THERE ARE MANY GREAT benefits to being part of your electric cooperative, the one item that sticks out to me most is being here in the community.

As time goes by, we are seeing many companies close their local offices and merge them into a larger corporate office somewhere else in the state or even in a different state or country. They are usually in a bigger city, and if you have an issue or just a simple question, you usually are either talking to a machine or a person who has no idea where you live.

They do these things because it increases the profit to their shareholders by cutting expenses, but they are missing a key element — community.

When you talk to someone at Valley Rural Electric Cooperative (REC), they live in the same community you do and understand the issues we are facing, whether it is a storm or hard times due to something that happened in our area. We see both the joys and struggles because we are facing them with you.

If you follow our *Penn Lines* pages, browse our website or attend our meetings, you may have noticed we always talk about the seven cooperative principles we follow. I would like to talk to you today about the seventh principle — “concern for community.”

Valley REC is rooted in the communities we serve and committed to making sure we focus all our resources to make our community a better place to work and live. I would like to highlight some of the programs and offerings available to our membership to promote living in Central Pennsylvania.

Each year, we have the privilege of presenting 15 seniors from our local school districts with \$1,000 Brighter Future scholarships. On top of that, we awarded 16 students from various schools \$750 scholarships from our Youth Tour program. Each of these programs helps alleviate some of the financial burden students face when looking to further their education.

Our award-winning Community Service Grant program is available to all our members to help with unexpected events or to give that community organization a little financial help in buying something for their community. Any member who has fallen on difficult times due to a medical condition, financial loss or some other hardship can apply for financial assistance to help offset their electric bill. Community organizations can also apply for money to help pay for those needed items that may be just out of their budget. One of the main stipulations to receive this money is that it must be used to help members of the cooperative. This past year, we distributed more than \$100,000 to our members to help them through difficult times.

A program I am also very proud of is our charity golf outing we hold each year to benefit local families battling serious medical issues. This year alone, we raised more than \$60,000 to help three families, and it would not be possible without the generous support of our community, donors, sponsors, employees, and our board of directors. It makes me proud to say I am a part of this wonderful cooperative family.

With the end of summer approaching, we know the county fairs will be starting up, and we will be at both the Huntingdon and Juniata county fairs. Please stop by our booth to check out what is new or just to chat.

Concern for community is essential to who we are as a cooperative. We serve our community not only by being an essential service, but also by helping to power our local economy. Whether through economic development, volunteerism or donations to local causes, we invest in the community because it's our home, too. Cooperatives bring good people together to make good things happen in the community, and I know Valley REC is making good things happen here at home. If you have any questions, comments or suggestions, please feel free to contact me or the office. Thank you, and God bless. 🙏

RICH BAUER
PRESIDENT & CEO

Valley REC Holds Annual Benefit Golf Outing for Local Families

EMPLOYEES AND FRIENDS OF VALLEY Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) took to the golf course in June for a tournament benefiting a local youngster, a registered nurse and a practical nurse.

Valley's Annual Benefit Golf Outing raised funds for local families facing difficult medical problems and all the challenges they bring. The cooperative closed its corporate office and all three district offices on Thursday, June 22, as employees joined golfers and other supporters at the Huntingdon Country Club in support of Bentley Fulkroad from Mifflin, Samantha Wilson from Hesston, and Stephanie Anders from Alexandria.

"Our benefit tournament brings together golfers and sponsors from across central Pennsylvania and beyond each year for a good cause," says Valley REC President & CEO Rich Bauer.

A committee comprised of employees from the co-op's corporate and district offices selects tournament beneficiaries each year and plans the golf outing.

"Each year, I'm amazed by the generosity of our sponsors, vendors, golfers and community, as well as the effort put forth by our employees to make this tournament a success," Bauer says. "We want to thank our longtime supporters and those new to our event for, hopefully, creating a good day on what has been a long road for the beneficiaries and their families."

The cooperative's 12th annual golf event raised more than \$60,000. The recipients will split the proceeds after expenses. Valley's golf outing has raised nearly \$345,000 to date.



JOHN BOOKWALTER JR.

CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY: Golfers gather to start Valley REC's Annual Benefit Golf Outing held at the Huntingdon Country Club.

"We understand the financial impact these families can have," Bauer explains. "But today is about much more than fundraising; it is about giving the families a memorable day and the camaraderie of everyone coming together for a great cause."

This year's recipients are:

Bentley Fulkroad

Bentley Fulkroad, son of Erica and Jared Fulkroad, was born with tricuspid valve dysplasia, a congenital heart disease that cannot be cured. He has had five open-heart surgeries since birth.

On May 9, 2021, Bentley received a new heart. His surgery lasted 14 hours, and doctors had to leave his chest open for four days. His body began rejecting the new heart, and he must travel to Philadelphia often for treatments. He takes 20 syringes of medicine daily, which includes two immunosuppressants he will have to take for the rest of his life. There is still a long road ahead for Bentley, but we are



FIGHTING CHANCE: Bentley Fulkroad, one of three beneficiaries of this year's Annual Benefit Golf Outing, eats a snack while awaiting treatment in Philadelphia.

praying he soon gets to enjoy the feeling of a normal whole heart.

Samantha Wilson

Samantha Wilson lives with her husband, Luke, and their 2-year-old son. Samantha was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2021, when she was 20 weeks pregnant.

She began weekly chemotherapy treatments and delivered a healthy baby boy five weeks premature in July 2021. She has blood pressure issues related to a genetic condition known as SDHD gene mutation. Samantha has had an adrenalectomy, a liver

resection, multiple lymph node resections, a double mastectomy, and lymph node removal, as well as daily chest wall radiation treatments, a brain tumor removal, and gamma knife radiation to her head. Samantha graduated from Penn State University and is a registered nurse.



CONQUERING CANCER: Samantha Wilson, one of three beneficiaries of this year's Annual Benefit Golf Outing, holds her now-two-year-old son alongside her husband, Luke.

Stephanie Anders

Stephanie Anders graduated from Juniata Valley High School and went on to earn her license as a practical nurse. She now works in the health care industry. She also served as the manager of the Alexandria American Legion.

Stephanie was diagnosed with IgA

nephropathy, also known as Berger's disease, which caused stage 5 kidney disease and cardiomyopathy. She must wear an external defibrillator 24/7 and receive dialysis seven days a week until she receives a kidney transplant. Currently, her heart is not strong enough to undergo major surgery. She continues to work full time as an LPN at Penn Highlands Hospital.

Golfing for a cause

Forty-eight teams registered for the day-long, best-ball scramble. The first flight hit the course at 8 a.m., while the afternoon flight began at 1 p.m. The winning team for the morning flight was the Palmer Construction team, comprised of Connie Barnett, Duane Souders and Lisa Souders. The afternoon flight-winning team was the Marks Brothers team, represented by Lantz Thompson, Luke Thompson, Matt Young and Pat Goodman.

Players were able to purchase "cheats" — such as an extra swing or moving a ball a set distance closer to the cup — as part of the fundraiser event, which included a silent auction and basket raffle of a wide variety of donated items.

All Valley REC employees lend a hand in lining up sponsorships and donations or assist with tournament



JOHN BOOKWALTER, JR.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE: Valley REC President & CEO Rich Bauer poses with recipient Stephanie Anders, center, and her mother, Gail Anders.

activities on the day of the event. Valley REC's previous tournaments have benefited a young girl with a brain tumor, a boy with a rare hereditary disorder, a cooperative lineworker, two high school classmates battling cancer, an adult who sustained serious injuries in a car accident, infants and toddlers with congenital conditions, a high school senior with a life-altering digestive disorder, and a young man who was paralyzed in a swimming accident. Valley REC plans to host its next tournament in June 2024. 🏌️



JOHN BOOKWALTER, JR.

THAT'LL PLAY: Forty-eight teams play golf at Huntingdon Country Club for Valley REC's Annual Benefit Golf Outing.

THANK YOU VREC ANNUAL BENEFIT GOLF OUTING SPONSORS AND DONORS!

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- Harmon Contracting, LLC
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