



The Storehouse
COMMUNITY CENTER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Storehouse Community Center Names Joan Smith 2025 Volunteer of the Year



Smith, who has volunteered since 2016, was the guest of honor at the Storehouse's 2025 volunteer appreciation event at Riders Field, where she threw out the first pitch before a Frisco RoughRiders game

PLANO, TEXAS - May 7, 2025 - The Storehouse Community Center has named longtime volunteer Joan Smith as the 2025 Volunteer of the Year. Since 2016, Smith has volunteered 1,613.75 hours across multiple Storehouse programs. On May 4, she was the guest of honor at The Storehouse's 2025 Volunteer Appreciation Celebration at Riders Field, where she was invited to throw out the first pitch at the Frisco RoughRiders game.

“I am so honored to be named The Storehouse Volunteer of the Year,” stated Joan Smith. “When you volunteer for something that you are already getting so much from, it feels strange to get an award for it! I love working with an organization that exactly aligns with the way I believe and how I want to help people when I volunteer.”

Smith first began volunteering with The Storehouse in the Seven Loaves Food Pantry, where she met one-on-one with neighbors arriving for food. She has also served in Joseph’s Coat Clothing Closet, and today she not only volunteers in food distribution but also serves as the dean of registration for The Storehouse’s Academy Education Program.



Joan Smith serves as dean of registration for The Academy Education Program

“As dean of registration for The Academy, I volunteer an average of 10 hours a week inputting information into a software program about the various classes and students in The Academy,” said Joan Smith. “I also volunteer about four to five hours most weeks in Seven Loaves, where I enjoy working alongside other volunteers, greeting neighbors, and taking food carts to their vehicles.”

The Storehouse’s four integrated programs – the Seven Loaves Food Pantry, Joseph’s Coat Clothing Closet, Project Hope Neighbor Care, and The Academy Education Program – work hand in hand to provide pathways toward transformation for the neighbors. As neighbors’ needs are identified in various programs, team members provide additional direction and assistance to help serve them holistically.

“While we provide food and clothing, we also provide vital resources through Project Hope, and through The Academy, we help our neighbors move past those immediate needs into employment and self-sufficiency. That is the vision of The Storehouse, and it is very rewarding to be a part of it and watch it become a reality.”

Throughout her years volunteering, Smith shared how impressed she has been with the team’s continued streamlining of all processes, helping The Storehouse to not only better serve neighbors but to also serve more neighbors. She reflected on how the team has also figured out multiple

touchpoints to engage with each neighbor, such as through greeters in the food line or with volunteers running the food carts and assisting neighbors in Joseph's Coat.

"We are all working together to get to know our neighbors, find out their needs, and direct them to all of the ways we can help them," continued Smith. "And with The Academy that relationship grows even deeper as they come to classes regularly and have that one-one-one time with the staff and volunteers."

"One memory that has stayed with me from the beginning is from my early years volunteering at Seven Loaves and meeting with neighbors to gather their information," said Smith. "A well-spoken, well-dressed young woman came in for food assistance. I asked for her ID, made a copy, and returned it to her. Suddenly, she couldn't find it. I retraced my steps but didn't find it either. When I returned, she had found it and mentioned that moments like these are common for her as she continues her journey of recovery from substance use. That moment reminded me that every neighbor has a story—one that brings depth and humanity to their visit to The Storehouse. Nobody wants to have to come get clothing or food, but when it happens, I'm grateful this community is here to offer care and dignity."

Smith expressed many things she enjoys about volunteering at The Storehouse. She has made wonderful friends who enjoy doing things together socially outside of volunteering together.



Joan Smith volunteers weekly at The Storehouse's Seven Loaves Food Pantry

"When you work with others who also believe in what you are doing, you build a great relationship and want to spend more time together," added Smith. "I have made some very close friends. We share text strands, and we pray for one another in times of need. This is an added bonus of doing something we love together."

"Volunteering has also made me much more aware of what others are experiencing in our community," continued Smith. "It's easy for us to think that people in a food line aren't working or don't want to be contributing members of society. Because of my work completing data entry for The Storehouse, I happen to know that most neighbors in The Academy program are college educated and above. When we first meet our neighbors, we do not know all they have accomplished or what led them to that food line. This has been a true lightbulb moment for me."

Joan Smith is no stranger to volunteering in her community. She has been a loyal volunteer with the Women's Auxiliary of Children's Medical Center Plano for more than a decade. She served as its president during the pandemic, and this past year she led a five-year strategic plan detailing how the auxiliary can best support the new tower in Plano, which tripled the size of the hospital. Since 2011 she has volunteered for the Hendrick Scholarship Foundation, which provides Plano ISD graduates who have overcome adversity with scholarships for higher education. She enjoys mentoring students in this program and is currently mentoring the daughter of one of The Storehouse's neighbors, who is in her sophomore year and studying to become a nurse. Smith is the one who connected this family with this foundation.

Originally from Des Moines, Iowa, Joan and her husband Berk, live in The Colony. The couple first met as science partners in eighth grade but did not date until their sophomore year of high school. After attending separate colleges, the couple married, moved to California, and then relocated to Plano, where they resided for 30 years and raised their family. Their daughter, Kayla, who lives in Frisco, and son, Nick, who lives in Richardson, are both married and are expecting babies a couple of weeks apart. Kayla already has a son.

"The Volunteer of the Year is our highest honor, awarded to one individual whose dedication, consistency, and impact exemplify the spirit of service in our community," said Candace Winslow, CEO, The Storehouse Community Center. "Joan Smith has been a beloved volunteer across multiple areas of our mission at The Storehouse for many years and is so deserving of this honor. We cannot begin to thank her enough for her extraordinary service and dedication, helping so many of our neighbors on their pathways to self-sufficiency."

To volunteer at The Storehouse, visit www.thestorehouseecc.org/volunteer-sign-up.

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[The Storehouse Community Center](http://www.thestorehouseecc.org) (formerly The Storehouse of Collin County) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving the community through food, clothing, resources, education, and employment support. By creating strong partnerships and offering transformational programs, TSCC works to address the root causes of food insecurity and empower neighbors to achieve self-sufficiency. During its previous fiscal year, The Storehouse served 182,024 unduplicated neighbors with the support of more than 2,000 volunteers. Visit www.thestorehouseecc.org. The Storehouse EIN: 27-1883333