



601 West Liberty  
Wheaton, Illinois 60187  
www.dupagepads.org

**DuPagePads**  
The Solution to End Homelessness.

## For Immediate Release

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### Contact:

Carol Simler Executive Director 630.682.3846 Ext. 2310 csimler@dupagepads.org	Janelle Barcelona Director of Development 630.682.3846 Ext. 2220 jbarcelona@dupagepads.org
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### **Three Inspirational Volunteers Selected out of 4,000** DuPagePads Announces Volunteer of the Year Award Winners

(Wheaton, IL) Volunteers are a force of positive change in the community and are the heart and soul of DuPagePads. To celebrate their achievements in honor of National Volunteer Week (April 21-27, 2013), for the second year in a row DuPagePads requested that supporters submit nominations for the Volunteer of the Year Award in two categories: Adult and Youth (age 13 to 18). A committee selected the winners: Diane Brown, Adult Winner and Ben Hall and Riya Uppal, Youth Winners. With a combined total of more than 36 years of volunteering, the winners were awarded plaques and given special recognition.

"We know our volunteers are vital to achieving our mission of ending homelessness in DuPage County. We are continually humbled by their commitment and are excited to share the stories of Diane, Ben and Riya," says Carol Simler, DuPagePads' Executive Director.

In the early 1990s Diane Brown was instrumental in recommending that her congregation, Glen Ellyn Covenant Church, begin supporting DuPagePads. Since then, she has utilized her enthusiasm and organizational skills to oversee 80 volunteers each month donate meals and hours, successfully advocated for showers to be included in church renovation plans and led her congregation in becoming a summer overnight site on Saturday nights, overcoming challenging logistics. One nominator wrote, "...Because of the extensive involvement by so many in our congregation, our people have become more interested in ministries of compassion and justice. We attribute that 'growth' in our congregation to the way Diane engages new and old alike...We cannot think of a more appropriate way to recognize her 20+ years of service as a model volunteer..." Diane received her plaque as a surprise during a Sunday service at her congregation.

Ben began volunteering for DuPagePads at age five and Riya began at age eight. Ben's mother was a volunteer site coordinator at Congregation Etz Chaim and the two would set up the sleeping area, serve dinner and clean up after meals. Moved by their experiences at the night site, in 2010 the two (then age 12) decided to create a DuPagePads cookbook for Ben's Bar Mitzvah project and donate all of the sales proceeds to DuPagePads. The pair collected recipes from DuPagePads' volunteers, staff and famous local chefs. Since cookbook sales began, they have sold more than 500 copies and raised over \$3,500 for DuPagePads. They've already set a new goal of raising \$10,000 and just recently released the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, "Cooking for Pads: The Sequel." These cookbooks can be purchased through emailing [dupagepadscookbook@gmail.com](mailto:dupagepadscookbook@gmail.com). A nominator wrote, "Ben and Riya show that the ability to make a difference is not bound by age or experience. Their success is inspiring and speaks to their leadership and passion for DuPagePads' mission." Ben and Riya received their award as a surprise at Hinsdale Central High School's Award Night.

DuPagePads currently has more than 4,000 volunteers and is recruiting more individuals to assist during the Spring-Summer season. Simler adds, "We are so honored to have caring and dedicated volunteers. Their efforts continue to ensure that all families and individuals who are homeless will have food, support and a safe place to sleep for the night. I am truly humbled by their continued belief in our mission".

**When someone believes in you,  
everything can change.**

Not only is DuPagePads recognizing the achievements of their volunteers, but this year DuPagePads was awarded a donation from the Spirit of Volunteerism Fund of The DuPage Community Foundation. The agency was awarded this \$30,000 grant as a result of featuring examples of the achievements of DuPagePads' volunteer base and will enable the agency to produce and implement online volunteer training.

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DuPagePads, founded in 1985, is the largest provider of services to those who are homeless in DuPage County. Providing the county's largest Interim (Overnight) Housing and Permanent Supportive Housing Programs, DuPagePads' solution to ending homelessness is housing, coupled with support services and employment to restore hope and rebuild lives. The administration office is located at 601 W. Liberty Drive, Wheaton, IL 60187. Additional information can be obtained by contacting DuPagePads at 630.682.3846 or at [www.dupagepads.org](http://www.dupagepads.org).



From Left: Janelle Barcelona, DuPagePads Director of Development; Diane Brown, Adult Volunteer of the Year; Carol Simler, DuPagePads Executive Director



Ben Hall, Carol Simler and Riya Uppal.