



**Friends, Inc.**

**SPRING 2013**

IN LOVING MEMORY OF



*Laura Binger*

"A FRIEND LOVETH AT ALL TIMES" - PROVERBS 17:17

**Currently 88 Dedicated Volunteers**

Executive Director, *Jan Brewer*

Volunteer Coordinator, *Sherry Bryant*

**Board Members**

President, *Betsy Estopinal*

Vice-President, *Darlene Duerr*

Secretary, *Tina Greer*

Treasurer, *Greg Burgess*

*Susan Bowen | Jim Daniel | Sallie Estes*

*Paulette Hamblin | Tiffany Noel*

*Jim Vann | Talitha Yokley*

## SHARING THE CARING

*In Huntsville and Madison County*

I never dreamed I'd be writing these words of remembrance about our co-founder and dear friend, Laura Binger. After a relatively brief illness, Laura Binger, co-founder of Friends, Inc., passed away Monday, March 25th. This is a great loss to all of us who admired this wonderful lady. Laura was my mentor and counselor for this organization. I admired her wisdom, humor, and love for others. Almost 10 years ago she gave me the opportunity to further her vision and ministry in this community through Friends, Inc. I had the honor and privilege to call her my friend.

Laura attended Monte Sano Methodist. This church family is in the process of building a playground and needed additional recreation equipment. Friends, Inc. purchased a swing with a plaque on the back in her honor. I had the privilege of visiting Laura and showing her a photo of the swing and the plaque. As I was leaving I said, "Laura, I don't want to say goodbye. I would rather say, 'See you later, Laura!'" She replied with a smile on her face, "Only if you're good and don't mess up. So Jan, be good". And we both laughed. That smile and those words were the greatest gift of all!

As a co-founder of Friends, Inc., Laura helped establish an organization that benefits those who are seriously ill or disabled, lacking a support system. She always listened with ears of empathy and a heart of compassion. We will miss her counsel as she was committed to making Huntsville a better place. Laura's foresight and compassionate legacy lives on through this organization and its many donors and volunteers who give of their time and resources. We are benefactors of the legacy that she has left to us. Our deepest sympathy goes to Dr. Dick Binger and family.

May you always have love to share,  
health to spare, and Friends that care.

Jan Brewer



*Jan Brewer, Executive Director*

Roses are red, violets are blue, and Valentine's Day was extra special for Friends, Inc. patients too! This past Valentine's Day Hampton Cove Middle School students created beautiful Valentine's Day cards for our patients, which we excitedly stuffed, sealed, addressed, stamped, and mailed, knowing those handmade cards would mean the world to our patients. And they did. We received numerous phone calls from our patients telling us how touched they were to be remembered. Many of those patients shared that those cards were the only cards they received for Valentine's Day and how very thankful they were for them. Caring and compassion can manifest in so many ways; even in cards made out of red and pink construction paper with little hearts and white doilies pasted all over them. What a huge difference a sincere act of kindness can make in a person's life!

In March we were honored to have Dr. Gary Bradley speak to us at our Volunteer In-Service on "Good Grief". Dr. Bradley shared of the different characteristics of grief, the stages of grief, and suggestions for coping with grief. The In-Service was most informative, with Dr. Bradley helping all in attendance to understand that no matter what the circumstances, grief is normal, healthy, cannot be rushed, and that there is always hope.

Most recently we had the privilege of celebrating the amazing men and women who daily give of their time and energy to Friends, Inc. at our annual Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast. What a fun time of great fellowship, delicious food, and outstanding entertainment! This year we were honored to award Mike Ragoza as our Volunteer of the Year; Bill Bodden with Most Miles Donated; Mike Voisin with Most Generous Donation of Time; Bill Greer with our Outstanding Service Award, and Mary McDonald with the Above and Beyond Award. All of our volunteers are invaluable beyond measure; truly transforming the lives of so many.

*Sherry Bryant, Volunteer Coordinator*



## Volunteer In-Service

Topic: "Good Grief"

Dr. Gary Bradley encouraged us as he spoke on this very difficult topic.



*Valentine's Day*

Thank you Hampton Cove Middle School for providing handmade Valentines for all of our patients!

# YOU WERE MADE TO DO GREAT THINGS!

## *Friends, Inc. Volunteer Appreciation*



FLORALS PROVIDED BY  
IN BLOOM FLORIST



ENTERTAINMENT BY  
DIXIE FLAVOR



VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR  
MIKE RAGOZA



# Laura Binger

was my friend before I even met her in person. When my husband Tommy decided to come to Huntsville and join the ENT practice of Gene Tate and Dick Binger, Tommy and I and our three children were in Tacoma, Washington where Tommy was serving in the Army at Madigan Army Hospital at Fort Lewis. Obviously, Washington was a far distance from Alabama and arranging our move was a little challenging! In step two wonderful people: Kathleen Tate and Laura Binger. Kathleen took care of setting up the office and Laura rented a house for us, arranged for all of our utilities to be installed, and invited us (all five of us) to stay at their home until our furniture arrived! All of this for people whom they had never met. Thus started a friendship of 38 years. To top it all off, I found Laura to share my love of books and we traded books over all these years.

How could I refuse a request to help with a "little project" she was interested in? Laura had served as a nurse with Hospice and had noticed that many of her patients lacked support for things such as rides to medical appointments, picking up medicines at the pharmacy, picking up groceries, a little respite care for the patients' caregivers, and even a friendly visit or call to brighten someone's day. Laura's vision was to form a nonprofit with volunteers providing these services. Thus was born Friends, Inc. She was tireless in the pursuit of getting the correct forms, making medical contacts, and raising funds to start out on a very small budget. Six of her friends formed the Board and from there we find ourselves today with dedicated volunteers guided by two amazing staff members, Jan and Sherry.

Laura was a tireless worker, always compassionate, very smart, a good listener, not one to call attention to herself, the kind of true friend everyone wants. She was my friend, and I will miss her.

-Dale Griggs



When you think of *Memories* you've made with *Laura*... those memories become *Treasures*.

In memory of Mrs. Mary Laura Binger

*Given By:*

*Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Albanese*

*Mr. and Mrs. Don Anderson*

*Ms. Judy Bible*

*Dr. and Mrs. Robert Boon*

*Mr. and Mrs. Dudley Brewer*

*Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Buchanan*

*Mrs. Robbie Burlison*

*Mr. and Mrs. James Burt*

*Mrs. Nancy Campbell*

*Mr. and Mrs. Steve Chandler*

*Mr. and Mrs. Henry Chase*

*Mr. and Mrs. Earl Choate*

*Ms. Diana Cooney*

*Mr. and Mrs. Billy Cox*

*Mr. and Mrs. William Crowder*

*Mr. and Mrs. Robert Davidson*

*Ms. Gayla Dean*

*Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Foxwinkle*

*Mr. and Mrs. Matt Fowler*

*Dr. and Mrs. William Goodson Jr.*

*Mrs. Beth Griggs*

*Mr. and Mrs. Cal Hanson*

*Mrs. Florence Helman*

*Dr. and Mrs. Richard Hull*

*Ms. Greta Inglis*

*Ms. Susan Johnston*

*Ms. Mary Ann Lafayette*

*Dr. and Mrs. Ed Litkenhous*

*Ms. Helen McBride*

*Mr. and Mrs. Jack McQuinn*

*Ms. Janet Moragues*

*Mrs. Bettie Murray*

*Mr. and Mrs. Dean O'Farrell*

*Mr. and Mrs. Bill Patrick*

*Ms. Bonnie Pearson*

*Mr. and Mrs. R.E. Rice*

*Mrs. Wynn Rodgers*

*Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Rodimon*

*Ms. Susan Rowan*

*Ms. Anna K. Sherwood*

*Mr. and Mrs. Jim Vann*

*Ms. Vi Veitch*

*Ms. Anne Walker*

*Mr. and Mrs. James Weaver*

*Mrs. Nita West*

*Ms. Doris Williams*

*Mr. and Mrs. Joe Worley*

In honor of Mrs. Jan Brewer

*Given By: Mrs. Marilyn Bethune*

In memory of Ms. Shirley Hood

*Given By: Col. and Mrs. Robert Brown*

In honor of Skilled Nursing and Therapy Staff of Fairview at Redstone Village

*Mr. and Mrs. Gene Ezell*

In honor of Mrs. Dale Griggs

*Given By: Mrs. Beth Griggs*

In memory of Mr. Bill Bradley, Sr.

*Given By: Ms. Greta Inglis*

In memory of Ms. Kay Meir

*Given By: Mrs. LaMerle Mikell*

In memory of Mr. Ed Starnes

*Given By: Mr. and Mrs. Bill Patrick*

In memory of Mr. Michael Balch

*Given By: Mr. and Mrs. Bill Patrick*

In memory of Ms. Ruth Cowie

*Given By: Ms. Patti Patrick*

In memory of Mr. Billy Max Duncan

*Given By: Mr. Thomas Robinson*

In memory of Mr. Billy Ray Wilbourn

*Given By: Mr. and Mrs. Jim Vann*

In memory of Mr. Ed Starnes

*Given By: Ms. Anne Walker*

In memory of Mr. Wayne Betowt

*Given By: Ms. Anne Walker*

In memory of Bill Bradley, Sr.

*Given By: Mr. and Mrs. Delbert Williams*

In memory of Bill Bradley, Jr.

*Given By: Mr. and Mrs. Delbert Williams*

Donations: Mrs. Joyce Adams, Mrs. Sidney Bailey, Mr. and Mrs. Boyce Bazzell, Mrs. Judy Berry, Dr. and Mrs. Robert Boon, Ms. Tiffany Brewer, Ms. Lillian Burcham, Mr. Tom Dashner, Ms. Leta DeMaiorbus, Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Duerr, Ms. Joan Emanuel, Mr. and Mrs. Armand Fux, Mr. and Mrs. Lee Gilliland, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Holt, Huntsville West Kiwanis Club, Mr. Gregory Hutcherson, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Israel, Ms. Barbara Langford, Ms. Martha Martin, Mr. Patrick McCauley, Mr. and Mrs. Forest McCulloch, Mr. and Mrs. Bobby Noblitt, Mr. and Mrs. Denny Sissom, Sons of American Legion Squadron 237, Mr. and Mrs. Heinrich Struck, Ms. Edith Toney, Mr. John Watson, Ms. Sara Welch.

*In Loving Memory*

Arlene Blackwell, Sarah Crews, Sophia Jenny Clements, Glenda Elston, Velma Gurley, Marilyn Hopper, Bridgete Kosman

*Thank you for allowing Friends, Inc. to be a part of their lives.*

SHARING THE CARING  
IN HUNTSVILLE AND  
MADISON COUNTY

*It is our mission to provide support to  
patients with serious illnesses or disabilities  
enabling them to maintain their  
independence through caring volunteers.*



Friends, Inc.  
P.O. Box 608  
Huntsville, AL 35804  
www.friendsinc.net

RETURN SERVICES REQUESTED

CFC # 40931



*Thank You*  
VOLUNTEERS AND DONORS

*Spring has Sprung*

**and Friends, Inc. is growing like a weed!** As I watch my yard come back to life and plant my spring flowers, I can't help but feel tremendous gratitude for our Creator and all the beauty that surrounds us. For me, spring is a time of renewal... and of gratitude. That's why I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for all you've done to make Friends, Inc. a success. If it weren't for you, there wouldn't be a Friends, Inc. You are that important, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for playing such a vital role in all the good that this organization provides. We simply couldn't do it without you.

-Jan Brewer

P.S. A special thanks to En Fuego Media for making this newsletter possible.