

July 29, 2020

## **Alternatives Volunteers Receive Profiles of Positive Aging Awards**



These are alarming times for many, but particularly for senior members of our community. Fortunately, as Isabel Allende wrote, “the spirit never ages,” and this spirit is exactly what caused Alternatives, Inc. to nominate volunteers Susan Anczarki and Valerie Gibson for the Somerset County Profiles of Positive Aging Awards.

It is not difficult to see why Valerie Gibson received a Profiles in Positive Aging Award. Her genuine love of service for others propels her involvement with boundless energy. Valerie has been of service to St. John's Episcopal Church in Somerville for many years and enjoys volunteering her time with the Clothing Closet, a service that provides clothing for those who are less fortunate. She is a member of the Somerville Civic League and the Bound Brook Literacy Club. Books hold a special place for Valerie because she also volunteers at the Somerville Library where she enjoys interacting with patrons as she helps them find that perfect book, article or magazine.

Alternatives is fortunate to have Valerie’s dedication to the Dignity Gala Committee. In addition to serving on this committee for a number of years, Valerie has supported the event by crafting decorations and auction items. At the 2002 Dignity Gala, Valerie stood along side her husband, Greg and her in-laws Jim and Jill as the Gibson Family was presented with the Dignity Award for their exemplary service to Alternatives, Inc.

Valerie is well known and respected in the community; she is always looking for ways to help people and keep her mind and body occupied and Alternatives is fortunate to call her a friend.

Susan Anczarki has dedicated her life to service for the health and safety of others. She received a Nursing degree and eagerly went to work at a NY hospital. She continued her education and received a certificate in Sports Medicine and Exercise Physiology and a Master of Science degree in Community Health Education.

Susan's volunteer involvement has been extensive. She served on the Office on Aging Advisory Council and was on the Board for Jewish Family Services, where she worked to improve the mental health of seniors and mentored a survivor of the holocaust. Susan was a key board member for the Food Bank of Somerset County. She also served on the Board of the Resource Center for Women and their Families, now known as Safe and Sound.

Alternatives benefits from Susan's expertise in a number of areas. She has served on the Board of Trustees for more than 20 years where she continues to play an active role as Secretary. She has played an integral role on the agency's Dignity Gala Committee helping to raise more than \$2 million during the event's history. When Alternatives sought out committee members for its newest event, the Dignity Dash 5k run, it was no wonder that Susan stepped up. An avid runner, Susan offers a wealth of experience that she accumulated while participating in many races including the NY Marathon! This year's Dignity Dash will be virtual, but Susan is still offering her guidance to make this a successful fundraiser for the benefit of Alternatives' clients.

Alternatives, Inc. is a community-based non-profit organization that provides services in nine New Jersey counties to people with special needs, assisting them in supporting themselves, gaining self-determination and achieving the highest degree of independence possible within their communities. For more information, visit [www.alternativesinc.org](http://www.alternativesinc.org) or call Alternatives at (908) 685-1444, extension 226. For information about the virtual Dignity Dash, go to <https://runsignup.com/Race/NJ/Bridgewater/DignityDash>

