

# Neighbors of BRIER CREEK

Exclusive to residents of Brier Creek, Carolina Arbors and Creekside at Bethpage



*Margaret, Patti, Nona:*  
Partners in Charity



## Margaret, Patti, Nona: Partners in Charity

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With life mottos like “Bloom where you’re planted,” “Today I choose happiness,” and “Living with no regrets” it’s unsurprising that two members of the Brier Creek community, Margaret Pasquale and Patti Cunningham and their friend and colleague Nona Wright are passionate about volunteerism, serving the area in various roles with the Assistance League of the Triangle Area\*.

Organized as a national nonprofit in 1935, Assistance League’s roots date back to the turn of the twentieth century when founder Anne Banning and co-founder Ada Edwards Laughlin pioneered a tradition of compassion and benevolence carried on by their modern-day counterparts in Assistance League chapters around the country. A social activist at heart, Anne and a small group of prominent ladies began doing local charitable work in the mid-1890’s under the name Assistance League.

The Assistance League of the Triangle Area, founded in 1999, is the 104th Chapter. The chapter is run 100% by volunteers, serving Wake, Durham and Orange counties where the Assistance League is transforming the lives of women, children and families through community programs.

Margaret says, “Services locally are primarily funded with sales from A-Z Thrift Shop and we are proud to report all funds stay in the community to support our organization’s philanthropic programs.”

The A-Z Thrift Shop (1621 North Market Drive, Raleigh) has been

the heart of the organization locally. With the help of donations from the community, it’s able to fund six Philanthropic Programs. Community volunteers and members pick up the donated furniture and other large items. The membership sort and clean the household goods that are donated. Members also staff the shop.

The Assistance League’s signature program, known as Operation School Bell® supports local children in need by providing new shoes, socks, clothing, personal hygiene items and school supplies. During the 2019-2020 school year, volunteers provided direct support to 2,675 students in local Triangle schools.

Here are some other impressive ways Assistance League of the Triangle Area, driven by the power and determination of volunteers like Margaret, Patti and Nona, have affected change:

\*The Scholarship Program provided 37 scholarships to students attending North Carolina institutions totaling \$147,500 and ranging from \$3,000 to \$7,000 each.

\*Over 19,000 young patients have been comforted by the “Kids Place” program in seven ERs at UNC, WakeMed, and Duke Pediatric.

\*The Women in Need program served 750 meals to our homeless at their day shelter.

\*And, 75 Assault Survivor Kits\* have been distributed.

The League’s February event, “AL ACTION! Week,” is a National

Assistance League initiated event. Local members, partners, and the community donated 5,716 pounds of food and \$2,200.00 to the food banks of Raleigh and Durham. This equates to 15,763 meals for hungry people in our community!

"As a volunteer member you need to wear many hats," Margaret, of Creekside at Bethpage, notes. "A decision was made to open a thrift shop in Raleigh to help with fundraising. I was instrumental in setting up the thrift shop in 2006 and was the first manager in 2007 when the shop opened for business. Getting it up and running was one of the most rewarding times in my life."

Margaret first moved to the Triangle in 1977 and met her husband Tony here. After a short engagement, they were married in 1980 at Sacred Heart Cathedral. In 1983 the couple moved to Rochester, MN, for Tony's job with IBM, but after two harsh winters they moved back. She went to work for Teleflex Medical in 1988 as a customer service representative and advanced to Manager of International Customer Service and Logistics.

The Pasquales were married for 35 years until Tony's untimely death in 2015 after battling cancer, and enjoyed traveling together. They



had been living in their retirement home at the beach near Wilmington, but when her husband passed, Margaret and her dog Kirby moved back to Brier Creek where she again became involved with the League.

Patti and her husband Barry of Carolina Arbors have been married for 52 years and moved to the Raleigh area in 1995. During their corporate careers the couple moved many times - their current house is the 10th! "We love it here and enjoy meeting neighbors from all over the USA," Patti says. "We enjoy the pools, the courts (tennis, pickleball and bocce) and all the activities provided at Piedmont Hall."



The Cunninghams have two grown sons, one here in Raleigh and one in Texas where he recently moved with his wife and four sons. Before Covid 19, the couple would travel once or twice a year, favorite places being Paris and Santa Fe, NM.

Patti joined the Assistance League in 2003 and has been involved in all the philanthropic programs - in fact she was the President of the Triangle chapter last year - but would like to draw particular attention to Women in Need.

"We work with the homeless at the Women's Center and the Helen Wright



Center, with the women at InterAct and with families at Oak Hollow and Families Moving Forward. We provide home cooked meals for the Women's Center and the Helen Wright Center as well as snacks, bus tickets and necessary daily living items, the Interact/Solace Center with clothes and Assault Survivor Kits. With Families Moving Forward, we supply bedding kits with new pillows and quilts, sheets, bath supplies and kitchen utensils. It's very rewarding to help others and to see how much they appreciate every little thing!"

Nona Wright is the Assistance League of the Triangle Area's current President. She and her husband Jim celebrated their

50th anniversary this year and have two daughters, a son and six grandchildren between 6 months and 14 years-old with whom they enjoy all the grandparenting activities and perks.

Originally from Kansas City, the Wrights moved with Jim's job as a Corporate Attorney to Bristol, TN, for 13 years, and then to Raleigh in 1993. Nona started a home based travel consultant business which kept her busy for 15 years before she retired in 2018. Since moving to the Triangle they have enjoyed golf and travel as well as joining and volunteering with programs such as the Sister Cities of Durham, The International Focus and local PTAs.

"When Jim and I have moved, we have always looked for ways to give our time to help in the community. After we moved to Raleigh some of our friends were also wanting to give back. So we formed a Chapter of the National Assistance League® in 1998. The membership slowly grew with like minded members forming programs to help women, children and families. In addition to being current President, I was the manager of the A-Z Thrift Shop in 2019 and Jim serves on the Advisory Board."

These three powerhouse women and their love of volunteering in the local community are an example and encouragement to everyone. If you see them out and about, or visit the A-Z Thrift Shop be sure to thank them!

*If you are interested in becoming a member, donating items for our A-Z Thrift Shop or otherwise getting involved, please contact us at [www.altriangle.org](http://www.altriangle.org) or 919-875-8901. Our local community is benefitting from our philanthropic efforts, and we hope you are intrigued and willing to give back in some way.*