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## Moore wins Starfish Award for helping others

BY DONNA SMITH  
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Thanks to the efforts of Carol Moore, 36 young people from the former coal-mining area of Briceville won scholarships and went on to college. Many of them were the first in their family to graduate from college.

Coal Creek Scholarship winner Jonathan Sharp was not only the first to graduate from



college, but the first to graduate from high school. And it was not only Moore's volunteer efforts toward the scholarship that contributed to his success in life, he said, but her influence as a person.

"She is touching many kids' lives like mine," Sharp told a crowd of well-wishers and representatives of social service organizations and nonprofits Wednesday. "With much love Carol, I thank you for being an influence in my life."

Carol Moore is the latest winner of the Anderson County Interagency Coalition's Starfish Award.

Surprised by the award, the Knoxville resident said she thought it was going to be given to Barry Thacker, her boss in business and volunteer efforts. He and Moore work for Geo/Environmental Associates Inc. in Knoxville and, through work to improve water quality in the Briceville area and nearby Rocky Top, they met and fell in love with the people of the area

and formed a nonprofit organization to help them. It's called the Coal Creek Watershed Foundation.

Decades ago, the area thrived with many coal mines providing employment and housing. But as the coal-mining industry went into decline, so did the area.

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### Story behind the 'Starfish'

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What is the Starfish Award about?

United Way of Anderson County Executive Director Rick Morrow tells the story of a grandfather walking with his grandson along the ocean's shore. The beach was covered with starfish and the young grandson patiently picked them up one at a time, tossing one after another into the ocean, then going on to the next and doing the same. "Why are you doing this?" the grandfather asked. "It doesn't matter. You can't save all of them."

The young boy picked up another beached starfish and tossed it into the ocean. Turning to his grandfather, he said, "I made a difference in that one's life."

Making a difference in even one life is what the Starfish Award is all about.



Donna Smith/The Oak Ridger  
Starfish Award winner Carol Moore, second from right, is flanked by well-wishers Jonathan Sharp, from left, Kyle Leinart, Anderson County Mayor Terry Frank, Barry Thacker and County Director of Schools Larry Foster.

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Now, the area is one of the poorest of Anderson County. Briceville is located near Rocky Top, which previously went by the names of Lake City and Coal Creek.

After hearing residents' concerns about the quality of life for their children, as explained in background information compiled prior to the award presentation, Moore and Thacker decided they had to make sure the children knew the value of education.

Through the nonprofit Foundation and Moore's individual efforts, more than \$300,000 in scholarships have been given to

36 students since 2002. But she has donated many hundreds of hours of time as well through annual events such as the Coal Creek Health Day, field trips, and speakers to help the children learn about the value of education and the importance of the area's history and heritage.

Other information about Moore: She donates each year to the scholarship fund, pays for maintenance for Briceville Church, and pays the fees for the Cub Scout Pack at Briceville Elementary. She helps students fill out their college applications. For the past 12 years, she has served on the Anderson County Tourism Board and has been instrumental in getting four sites in the area listed on

the National Register of Historic Places: Briceville Church and Cemetery, Fort Anderson on Militia Hill, Fraterville Miners Circle, and Cross Mountain Miners Circle). She organizes tours for interested parties to learn about the history of Coal Creek, especially for descendants of miners who died in the Fraterville and Cross Mountain mine explosions of 1902 and 1911, respectively.

Kyle Leinart is another of the scholarship winners who spoke about Carol's importance. He said many of the people Moore has influenced are like him in that they didn't know they were going in life, but now "hundreds are happy and living their dream."

The Starfish Award presentation, held at Oak Ridge Associated Universities, began with Rick Morrow, United Way of Anderson County executive director, explaining

that the Coalition is composed of people in the field of social services and nonprofits serving the Anderson County area. Each year, they give the Starfish Award to honor someone who has made a difference in others' lives.

Wednesday's presentation included the first Starfish Award winner, William "Bear" Stephenson, who donates a time to conduct auctions for nonprofit groups each year, but Morrow said

sadly the event didn't include last year's Starfish Award winner — Tim Myrick, who lost his battle with cancer on Sunday. Morrow requested a moment of silence in memory of Myrick.

"Those of you who knew Tim knew a very special man," Stephenson said. "He put up one heck of a fight."

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