

**Karen Kline***First United Methodist Church, Homosassa*

# Determined to care for whole person

**By Rita Johnson**  
*Special to the Chronicle*

**T**he Healthcare Humanitarian Award honors a healthcare provider, doctor or nurse who goes above and beyond to use their talent and knowledge to help improve the health of those less fortunate.

Karen Kline is a registered nurse who works as parish nurse at the First United Methodist Church in Homosassa, and whose efforts have enriched the lives of her church and the entire community.

When notified of her award, Kline said, "It was very humbling to even be nominated. It is even more humbling to be awarded."

The response were preceded and followed by her repeatedly saying "Wow!"

The nominations included these comments: "Karen is always willing with loving hands to help people with health issues and concerns within the community and the church."

"She's always there to talk with anyone who needs health-related information or just to be available to listen to their problems or concerns."

"Karen is very involved in Citrus County."

Kline grew up in Kingston, N.Y., and knew she would be a nurse from a very young age.

She had a knack for finding hurt animals and dutifully nursing them back to health. When her best friend moved to Central Florida, Kline came to visit and liked what she saw.

"I love this area. It feels like home. There are so many diversified talents here," Kline said.

Kline has been in the area 13 years.

She first worked case management at Oak Hill Hospital in Spring Hill. She changed jobs and went to Health South, but eventually went back to Oak Hill Hospital and worked in surgical ICU. Her empathy and dedication led her to HPH Hospice for four years before taking her current position.

As parish nurse, Kline offers individual counseling and support, as well as group education. Members of the congregation often stop in for advice and clarification of a medical issue or upcoming treatment, and there are always members who require visitation or comfort.

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Karen Kline

Healthcare Heroes  
**Healthcare Humanitarian**

## KLINE

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Kline is required to be:

- A health adviser for individual counseling and referrals to community resources; educator for individual or group health education programs.
- Advocate to provide visitation, resources, and assurance to individuals receiving treatment for illness.
- Liaison to help connect faith issues with community resources.
- Training of all volunteers and facilitator of church-sponsored support groups.
- A health promoter to promote health to the mind, body and spirit of the congregation and community.

She has used her talents and determination to bring many new programs and events for the benefit of not only the church, but also for the entire community.

Kline feels strongly that the whole person needs to be cared for – not just physical issues, but also mental

support and education.

- Teaching the seminar: "Taking Medicines Safely."
- Community Education Series.
- Memory Lane Respite – free care for Alzheimer's/dementia.
- The YMCA is brought into the church three times a week.
- Responsible for the Mind, Body, and Soul annual health fair.

Here what some of her supporters say about Kline:

"Our church is extremely blessed to have Karen serving on staff as our parish nurse. Through her experience in nursing she has brought our church a vast number of health-care-related programs that meet the needs of our particular congregation. These are often offered to the community as well, thus allowing our church the opportunity to minister to our local community. Our ambition is to help the church reclaim its rightful place as being in the center of the community, and such programs certainly allow this to happen. We are very proud of all

Karen continues to do through her ministry in our church and are extremely happy for her recognition through this award." – Pastor Kip Younger, First United Methodist Church, Homosassa.

"By setting up community education events, Karen is providing an opportunity for elders and all citizens of the area to learn of innovations in the health field and have a great time – all at no charge. Oak Hill

Hospital is partnering with local churches to provide a wealth of information from top-rated doctors who are willing to volunteer their time to educate the public. These Community Education Series require a great deal of time and effort on the church's part, and Karen does a fantastic job." –

Stephanie Sutton, director of volunteers and senior services at Oak Hill Hospital.

"I have worked with Karen for several years through her health fairs and I saw her commitment and caring for the whole community. Karen is a devoted, compassionate and innovative

Amy is the oldest girl, and even though her job requires her to wear a hard hat and inspect burned properties as a fire adjuster for an insurance company, Amy gives back to the community as a volunteer for the local cancer society.

Their youngest daughter, Sarah, is an OB/GYN nurse with two children of her own. Sarah explained her career choice by saying, "I saw what my mother has done all her life and how many people she has touched."

Neil is very proud of his wife and her accomplishments.

"She has always been one to help others and a great role model for our girls. Karen was a school nurse for 14 years and the schoolchildren trusted her. They

sought her out for comfort and advice. I have a lot to be thankful for. When I needed a triple bypass at 47, Karen took charge of my treatment and I don't think I would be here if it weren't for her training. She is a fabulous woman and a wonderful wife."

Outside of medicine, she has many other interests, like playing with their dog, Cory. He was named after her Corvette. Karen was the president of a local Corvette club for several years and is still a member and supporter of the club. She also enjoys driving her classy Mini Cooper.

Kline wants the community to know that there are so many programs offered at the United Methodist Church on Yulee Drive that are open to the community.

Mondays are a good day to stop in and find her. She looks forward to showing everyone what's available.



Parish nurse Karen Kline keeps the first aid kits replenished for various parts of the campus of the First United Methodist Church, Homosassa. STEVE LASKOFF for the Chronicle



Karen Kline and Pastor Kip Younger go over some paperwork for the church. STEVE LASKOFF for the Chronicle

and emotional issues, as well as spiritual.

A few of her accomplishments include:

- Started a support group and care group for families.
- Starting a group of nurses for