

# 2002 Hall of Fame Inductee

## Rita Swiener

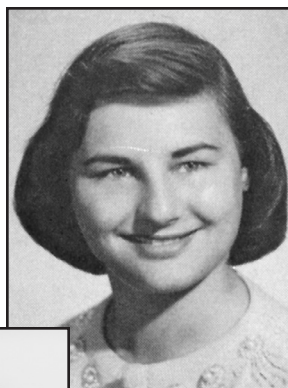
### *Class of 1959*

Helping others is a good way to describe what Rita Swiener enjoys doing and does well.

In 1968, Swiener founded a not-for-profit organization known as Santa's Helpers, Inc. The organization buys, wraps, and distributes gifts to needy children and their families at Christmas and Hannukah throughout the St. Louis Metropolitan Area. With Swiener at the helm, Santa's Helpers, Inc. began with five students sponsoring six children to 18 Santa Crews delivering to over 2,000 children. This total volunteer organization has over 200 men, women, and children giving of their time.

Call for Help, Inc. is another organization that Swiener lends her time and skills to helping out. Call for Help is an Illinois not-for-profit agency composed of seven programs – Suicide and Crisis Intervention, Information and Referral, Adult Residential Services, Sexual Assault Victims' Care Unit, Youth Teen Hotline, Youth Residential Services, and Homeless Women's Shelter. Swiener is member of the organization's Board of Directors and has served in various leadership roles since joining the Board of Directors in 1986. Her involvement and compassion for those whom Call for Help serves initiated the dedication of "Swiener Hall," a wing in the Jobe Center for Homeless Women in 2000.

Swiener, who is a former Professor of Psychology at State Community College in East St. Louis, is a licensed clinical psychologist who does pro-bono psychotherapy for the indigent. Because of her kind and giving spirit, Swiener has received such honors as the KSDK's Christmas Spirit Award, has been featured on "Good Morning America" and has been written about in such publications as *Ladies Home Journal*, *The National Enquirer*, "The American Character," "Who's Who Among American Teachers," and "The Marquis Who's Who of American Women."



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