At 79 years old, Maggie Craig — known as Wiggie to friends and family — puts people half her age to shame.

First, she is raising three great-grandchildren, two who moved in after the death of Craig’s granddaughter. They keep her hopping, but Craig still finds the energy to work in the nursery at her church. In June, she took command of kitchen duties during Vacation Bible School.

She volunteers at St. Vincent DePaul and the Help Office in Hancock County, where she was born and raised in a family of 14 children.

Caring is a hallmark of Craig’s life.

Based on her spirit of volunteerism, a panel of judges selected her to be Kenergy’s 2016 Member of the Year. To honor her concern for community — an important cooperative principle — Kenergy donated $1,000 to Hancock County’s Help Office, where Craig spends hours each week sorting and hanging clothes that will be given to low-income families or sold to raise money for the organization.

“Even though Maggie doesn’t have much free time as she is raising her two young great-grandsons after the tragic death of her granddaughter, she remains dedicated to the cause,” Craig’s Member of the Year application read.

The Help Office and its adjacent food pantry assist about 170 families a month with food, clothes, rent, utilities, eyeglasses, and medical prescriptions and bills.

“We’re like any other city or county,” said Hancock County Judge-Executive Jack McCaslin. “We have a lot of people in need. . . . (The Help Office) has been outstanding for our county.”

The Help Office could not exist without volunteers like Craig, said Executive Director Karen Fleming. “We don’t have any paid staff,” she said.

Fleming depends on about 20 residents who donate their time monthly.

Craig’s volunteer work brings her a great deal of satisfaction. She refers to those hours as “my time.”

“She’s got a good heart,” said Dianne Estes, who also volunteers at the Help Office. “She takes care of stuff.”

Maggie Craig, perhaps better known around Hancock County by the nickname Wiggie, is a powerhouse who volunteers in her church and for the community — all while she raises three great-grandchildren.
Suwanee Furnace Baptist Church’s name is appropriate on many levels. For one thing, many unforgettable Bible stories include fire and furnaces: Moses and the burning bush; Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and the fiery furnace; Sodom and Gomorrah’s destruction by fire and brimstone — to name a few.

Furnaces transform and make the old new again. And so it is with Suwanee Furnace Baptist Church, which has undergone a reformation in the past few years.

The church, which draws its name from a smelter that used to sit across the road, saw attendance drop as low as 20 some Sundays after a previous pastor moved to another state.

Many members considered closing the doors, but, according to them, God had other plans.

“I woke up one night, and God told me (Suwanee Furnace Baptist Church) is where I would be going,” said the Rev. Shane Board.

Four months later, Board received the call he expected from church elders. Everyone agrees it was divine intervention.

Since Board started preaching at Suwanee Furnace, the congregation sometimes swells to 100 on Sunday mornings.

Board’s laid-back style is a fine-tuned hobby

Willis Howard is a master at repurposing odd-ball items, such as turtle shells, bedpans, washtubs and cigar boxes.

When he looks at them — and scraps of wood — Howard sees ukuleles, dulcimers, cajons and thumb pianos.

“I started making musical instruments a few years back in my woodshop to help give me something to do when the weather is not good for fishing or working on the farm,” Howard said. “I don’t watch much TV, and I’m sure the wife enjoys having me out of the house anyway.”

Howard, who is Kenergy’s graphic artist, created his own Howard Instruments logo. His instruments aren’t a sideline. In fact, they aren’t for sale.

In his spare time, Willis Howard makes several musical instruments, including ukuleles, thumb pianos and cajons.

He plays and collects them, for the most part. However, he has gifted some to friends and family.

His interest in music started at age 14, when he first played guitar.

Making instruments requires a great deal of patience and precision, Howard said. “I could not tell you how many times I have messed up and had to start over because when you cut something a fraction too short, there’s not much fixing if you want it to sound right.”

Right now, he’s working simultaneously on a fiddle and ukulele. He plans to make a thumb piano and dulcimer in the near future.
Before the Rev. Shane Board came to Suwanee Furnace Baptist Church, attendance had dropped to as few as 20 some Sundays. Now, it’s up to about 100. Board credits an atmosphere of love and acceptance.

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In THE KITCHEN

**Refreshing Blackened Salmon Salad/Tacos**

*By Lynette Brown*

1-2 lbs. skinless salmon fillet  
2 Tbsps. blackening spice mix (no salt added)  
8-10 cups of romaine lettuce  
¼ cup fresh cilantro, chopped  
3 Tbsps. fresh lime juice  
Kosher salt  
10 small flour tortillas, warmed (if serving as tacos)  
Low-fat sour cream, for serving

Heat a large skillet over medium heat. Coat both sides of the salmon with the seasoning mix and cook, covered, until opaque throughout and blackened, 3 to 4 minutes per side. Meanwhile, in a large bowl, toss together the lettuce, cilantro, lime juice and 1/4 tsp. kosher salt. Flake the salmon into pieces and place in the salad mixture; toss and serve with fresh lime slices. If desired, spread sour cream on the tortillas, then fill with the salmon and top with the lettuce mixture.
Text us when the lights go out! To start, just text the word KENERGY to 85700 and follow the prompts. An overnight wait is required for the system to work, so don’t wait until the day of an outage to text KENERGY to 85700!

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area gave to Operation Roundup®.

If you agree to let the co-op “round up” your bill to the next dollar amount, you will donate an average of $6 a year. No member can give more than $11.88 annually using that method of giving.

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Thank you for making Operation Roundup’s® rollout a success. Your generosity makes me proud to be a Kenergy employee and member-owner.

Jeff Hohn
President/CEO

ROUNDUP®

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