

Rest-Stop-Ranch Board members (2026)

Mary MacDonald – President

Karl Ackerman – Treasurer

Karen Moniz – Secretary

John Coulon – Director

Kathey Downey – Director

RESUME BOARD OF DIRECTOR MEMBERS:

Here is the biographical information for the Rest-Stop-Ranch Board of Directors, gathered from your provided documents and the requested online sources.

Mary MacDonald – President

- **Background & Founding:** Co-founded Rest-Stop-Ranch in 2009 alongside Karl Ackerman. She was inspired to create the accessible garden sanctuary after a personal journey caring for her mother, Margaret, who battled frontotemporal dementia.
- **Professional Roles:** She serves as an interfaith chaplain, a Certified Yoga Teacher, a Life Coach, and a Group Leader.
- **Community Support:** She offers year-round spiritual-care support, facilitates caregiver support groups, and provides private, one-on-one "Respite Retreats" for weary family care partners. She also writes the *Morning Report* eco-spirituality blog.

Karl Ackerman – Treasurer

- **Background & Founding:** Co-founder, Garden Creator, and Caretaker of Rest-Stop-Ranch alongside Mary MacDonald. Current employment Sophos Security Product Management.
- **Garden Development:** He utilized his deep passion for gardening to design, build, and maintain the property's seven wheelchair-accessible horticultural areas, creating a therapeutic environment for visitors.
- **Organizational Leadership:** He actively manages the non-profit's long-term goals and mission planning, represents the organization at town board meetings to improve infrastructure (such as permanent signage), and personally matches community donations to fund new accessible garden features.

Karen Moniz – Secretary

- **Ministry & Speaking:** For over twenty years, she has served as a dynamic biblical speaker and teacher with By Design Ministries. She frequently speaks at seeker-friendly events, mother/daughter events, and women's retreats, weaving biblical truths with everyday storytelling.
- **Community Leadership:** She is a dedicated Care Partner Specializing in Dementia and an active member of the Topsfield Dementia Friendly Team. In this role, she collaborated to help the Topsfield Fair become the first Dementia Friendly Fair in America. She is also a longtime volunteer at the fair and a former Mrs. Essex County.
- **Rest-Stop-Ranch Involvement:** She is an active and dedicated volunteer for the Rest-Stop-Ranch Memory Café program.
- **Personal Life:** She lives in Topsfield, MA. She has been married to her husband, Dave, for over 35 years, and they have two grown children and two grandchildren.

John Coulon – Director

- **Background:** He is a retired Local Public Health Officer in Topsfield. He originally grew up in Lynn, MA, and attended St. John's Prep.
- **Education & Early Volunteering:** He holds a degree in General Studies, titled "Community Organization of Human Services and Education". He has maintained volunteerism as a life priority. He started his rigorous volunteer work in 1968 by developing an after-school open gym program for developmentally challenged residents at the current Hogan Regional Center. He has long term blood donor history at Dana Farber Cancer Institute and Boston Children's Hospital and has 34 years as a Pan Mass Challenge rider.
- **Rest-Stop-Ranch Involvement:** He has been a volunteer at Rest-Stop-Ranch since 2010. He first met founders Mary and Karl in a professional capacity while working with Town Hall to expand the garden's offerings. He later joined the Board of Directors in his retirement.
- **Contributions:** He loves to "get dirty in the garden". He values the opportunity that outdoor manual labor provides to clear his mind. Mowing the front garden lawn is his favorite task.

Kathy Downey – Director

- **Professional Background:** She recently retired from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH). She worked there as a Healthcare Associated Infection Coordinator from 2020 to 2023.
- **Previous Roles:** She previously served as a Public Health Nurse in Marion, MA, from 2010 to 2020. She was also the President and Owner of Trio Algarvio Inc., a seafood business, from 1988 to 2022.
- **Education:** Her educational background includes a dual MBA/MSN degree from Boston University and U Penn Nursing. She also previously studied in the PhD Nursing program at U Mass Dartmouth.

- **Rest-Stop-Ranch Involvement:** She recently moved from the Southcoast to Beverly, MA. She became involved with Rest-Stop-Ranch through her specific interest in the Memory Café startup and participation.