

WCU Unsung Hero: Joellen Reindl

In each issue of News You Can Use, we will be shining the spotlight on a member of the University community who, through their ideas, initiative and actions, makes the University or the wider world a better place. We will be sharing stories about individuals who found more effective ways to do their jobs, who went above and beyond on behalf of others, and most of all, who epitomize the “can-do spirit” that is West Chester University.

Our first *Unsung Hero* is an individual who is intensely focused on the needs of others. It's what her department is all about, it's what her job is all about, and it's also what frequently keeps her busy in her off hours.

Joellen Reindl is the secretary for WCU's Office of Service-Learning and Volunteer Programs. Her job encompasses everything from administrative work to serving as the editor of *Service Corner*, an email newsletter that keeps students and other members of the University community informed about volunteer opportunities, internships and employment for the common good, and more.

She supports a busy office that collaborates with a range of government and non-profit agencies as well as student organizations, faculty, staff, and members of the local community. Last year, WCU students contributed more than 812,000 hours of public service through service-learning coursework. Co-curricular service programs generated an additional 93,000-plus hours of public service. While Reindl didn't interact with every single student who performed community service, she did talk to a great many of them.

But when the phones stop ringing at the end of the day, Reindl doesn't leave behind her office's mission to serve. Last month, she often went shopping after work, picking up sippy cups, arts and crafts supplies, diapers, and other baby and children's gear. Reindl wasn't buying for her own family -- her children range in age from middle school to a recent WCU graduate. Instead, she was buying items needed and desired for children in foster care.

Reindl spearheads an annual interoffice effort to make the holidays brighter for local children who are in foster care under the auspices of Bethany Christian Services. Reindl and employees from Finance, Budget and Business Services, Student Affairs (including her own office) and the Academic Development Program met the “needs and wishes” of 30 children during the recent holiday season.

“Every child, or their guardian if they are too young, writes down their top three needs and wishes. Each employee who signs on to help is asked to provide at least one wish and one need from this list,” says Reindl. “But in the three years that I have been overseeing this effort, most employees have fulfilled each wish and need of the child that they're sponsoring. Many even go above and beyond what the child wish for.”

Reindl is a reluctant hero but when pressed on whether anyone signs up to sponsor more than one child, she acknowledges that she, as well as other employees, buy gifts for multiple children

each year. But she quickly deflects the attention to her own children, noting that they are the reason why she sponsors three children each year.

“When my three kids look under the tree on Christmas morning, there are always some boxes that simply have photos inside. These are the presents I bought for children in foster care in lieu of an extra gift or two for them,” says Reindl. “My kids love this tradition just as much as I do.”

Her 8th grade son, Jack, discovered that art supplies, pajamas and a robe, a copy of “The Polar Express,” and plenty of drawing paper were purchased for an 8-year-old boy. Her daughter Amanda, a WCU junior, received photos of onesies, sippy cups, toys and a night light, all intended for a one-year-old boy. And her oldest daughter, Lindsay, who graduated from WCU in May, was the the happy recipient of photos of toddler clothing, socks, diapers and toys, which went to a 17-month-old boy.

The week that Bethany Christian Services arrived on campus to pick up the foster children’s gifts -- boxes overflowing with clothing, toys, books and school supplies -- Reindl began the *Service Corner* newsletter with this quote:

I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And I will not let what I cannot do interfere with what I can do.

~Edward Everett Hale

Joellen Reindl is one who is, indeed, doing something to make a difference on our campus and in our community.

