

https://www.beloitdailynews.com/uncategorized/her-passion-for-helping-families-becomes-dutter-house/article_41164bf8-9170-551b-ae5f-a936ccd1d530.html

Her passion for helping families becomes Dutter House

Aug 21, 2010



Rosemary Dutter stands outside the Dutter House, 1981 Luety Pkwy., Beloit, a facility for which she was the driving force which gives respite care to families with children who have disabilities. *Staff photo by Debra Jensen-De Hart*

Public is invited to visit, celebrate the Dutter House open house 1-4 p.m. Sunday

As a mother, grandmother and a retired teacher of 39 years in the School District of Beloit, Rosemary Dutter's passion for children has always been to enrich the lives of children.



Presently, she works as a realtor for American Dwellings (formerly Coldwell Banker) in Beloit.

Her passion for helping children, and her volunteerism on their behalf however, has grown even stronger.

“Having raised five sons in this community, we have tried to be involved in things with them,” Rosemary said of herself and her husband, Hank, retired from the fire department and presently a fire inspector.

This led to her involvement with the Boy Scouts, where she was a den leader and ran the summer camp with a friend.

“They awarded me with the District Award of Merit. I try to support the Scouts , especially the Cub Scout Softball Tournament, which I still find the most delightful of all sport activities,” she said.

The Dutters’ sons also were involved in hockey and baseball, and Rosemary served on boards related to both as well.

She’s also been a bell ringer for the Salvation Army, and served on the PAPAS board for the high school theater, helping with fundraising.

But during the past year or so, Dutter probably has taken on her biggest challenge yet as a volunteer, an effort she hopes to share with families throughout the Stateline Area.

“When our grandson, Kyle, was born with special needs, the entire family chipped in, taking turns to get him to therapy at the Birth to Three Clinic. So several uncles took turns, and we all tried to help him grow. As Kyle became older, we saw the strain that special needs create and the need for family respite care,” she said.

Dutter said families with special needs children can feel alone and isolated and there may be a lack of playmates for the child. There may not be other families to bond with and no one to help celebrate small achievements.

She decided she could be the one to initiate a way to help those families find a place that their child would recognise, love, and enjoy; a place the parents could trust to give a warm secure environment; a place where siblings would be relieved of the responsibility of watching out for their brother or sister; a place where parents could network.

And so, with help from her friends, relatives and others in the community, The Dutter House, 1981 Luety Pkwy., was created and opened in November of 2009. About 40 children with special needs in Rock County, so far, have been served, she said.

Serving on the Dutter House Board of Directors is Gena McGuigan, a co-worker of Dutter's.

“She's a very neat lady and the driving force. Without her, it wouldn't be in existence. She loves all kids and she's phenomenal with them,” McGuigan said.

Volunteers from all walks of life, including many in the education field, have helped out at the Dutter House, she said.

That includes students from McNeel Middle School in Beloit and Willowbrook Middle School in South Beloit as well as Hononegah High School in Rockton who have become involved in many ways. “They have cleaned, and painted and played with

children. They have delighted the children with their enthusiasm, kindness, and helpfulness. We have been amazed,” she said.

“I set out to do this with the idea and the community has been there in every way possible,” she said. “Mike Rorabeck, founder of the John Doe Movement, helped me get the idea off the ground and the Hendricks Family foundation gave me start up funds, with a challenge to match for more funding,” she said.

In addition, people like Joel Lovgren, who serves on the employee Inclusive Council which oversees community relevance projects at Frito-Lay, also called. Volunteers who work at the company then came in groups to the site to paint and weed, trim and plant flowers and supply the fencing, ramps and more.

Lovgren also has been involved at the house as well as his children, he said.

Of Dutter, he commented: “She has a passion for what she’s doing & she wants to help people with families with disabilities.”

Now that the house is ready for use, “It’s a matter of getting the word out. The house is there, it just needs to be filled,” Lovgren said.

Other donations also came from many places and people in the community, Dutter said.

“My brother told me, “Just walk down the street with your basket and people will fill it.” It seems to be true. We have toys and furniture donated, we are working on building a playground, we have a long list of volunteers, and we love what we do.”

An open house is planned at the Dutter House from 1-4 p.m. on Aug 22 at 1981 Luety Pkwy. where people can learn more about what the facility has to offer families.