

Nomination for the "I Touch the Future" Award

Kathy Heller

This letter is a nomination for the "I Touched the Future" Award in support of Kathy Heller, a retired Shafer Elementary School kindergarten teacher. Even after retirement, she always seems to find ways to touch the lives of children, staff, administrators, and the community of Nazareth.

As soon as I began teaching in the Nazareth Area School District in 1988, it was Kathy Heller whose voice I heard daily greeting everyone in the halls so enthusiastically. It was obvious how much she enjoyed working with children and sharing ideas with staff and parents. Her energy for education was contagious. She joined committees at school, worked with students diligently, and was an active member at PTA meetings. Instead of going home and relaxing after school on cold winter days, she supervised the students' ski club. I had never seen anything other than a smile on her face; even on the busiest of days.

Working with Kathy, I was amazed at how many "hats" she put on, both inside and outside of school; benefitting children and the community in a variety of ways. She continues to involve students in positive learning experiences, presents them with opportunities, and shares her kindness. Teaching at the middle school currently, I'll run into Kathy organizing some type of activity for our students at the school.

Kathy is a role model for everyone (especially our youth). She involves students in Kiwanis K Kids, helps with Builder's Club, supports and participates in Relay for Life for Cancer, and participated on the Nazareth Area School District Advisory Board.

I was able to observe Kathy as a girls' tennis coach and watched her instill in her players a love for the game and an appreciation of this life-long sport. The team knew she cared about them and Coach Heller had a way to correct without criticism. After working with her team all week, she would run tennis clinics for children of all ages to help them learn the game as well.

Whether it be a high school band competition, a sporting event, a Nazareth community function, or anything that supports children, learning, or positive community outreach, Kathy seems to always show up and be helping in some way. I feel that Kathy has been a gift, not only her students, but to the entire community in Nazareth.

I've been teaching for 30 years, and I can honestly say without question; I have never met anyone who is more engaged in positively "touching the future" of so many people, in so many ways as Kathy Heller. I strongly recommend her to receive this award and honor.