

Colleen Mazemke-Heart of the Valley YMCA Hero

I'm excited to be here on behalf of our YMCA to present this award to someone who is this - an encouraging, dedicated leader. It was an unanimous She would probably not describe herself as a leader, but there are so many facets of her job that she maneuvers through... only a leader can do all of them so well and with professionalism.

The 3 words that best describe Colleen are:

- **Encouraging**
- **Dedicated**
- **Leader**

I love this quote from Ann Landers - "It's not what you do for your children, but what you teach them to do for themselves that will make them successful human beings".

But it's true! And this is what our Hero recipient does every day at the Y... teaching and leading children to do things for themselves. Hang up your coat, pick up after yourself, be independent away from mom and dad, make friends, take turns, and use your words when you're upset. These are traits that don't come naturally must be modeled and patiently taught with a great deal of kindness and encouragement. These things lay a foundation for so many other things later in life. Yes, she is a leader.

Her Y journey started on August 19, 1991. That's over 25 years ago - now that's dedication to the Y. Think of all the changes that she has seen common goal both in the childcare field and at the Y. What a range of knowledge that she has, it's amazing. So in 1991 she started at the Neenah Menasha YMCA. She worked as a Kinder Kids Instructor, Day Camp Leader, Adventure Camp Staff, Lead Child Care Teacher, Preschool Teacher

Then in 2003 she came to HVY and is now a Preschool Teacher. And let me define Preschool Teacher. We have three classes and she Lead teaches all three. That's 60 kids a year, which equals out to over 50 sets of parents, how many grandparents & neighbors... and then over 60 conferences to do each year in the span of a couple weeks. Oh and I haven't yet mentioned she handles all the administration for the program - supplies, paperwork, annual campaign, field trips, parent communications, calendars, licensing (Compliance Statement), etc.

When I told her two assistants she would be receiving this award they were thrilled. I asked if they would share some thoughts about her, the notes were on my desk within 12 hours. That speaks volumes for the respect and admiration they have of her.

Mrs. Kiley - I feel honored to be assisting someone who consistently goes above and beyond in their position. She makes teaching "look easy" even though there are huge different learning abilities, maturities, and personality traits in her classroom. She can efficiently observe a classroom of up to 20 students and determine what each child needs to grow to their full potential. Colleen will go out of her way to meet with parents if they have concerns or specific expectations for their child's progress. And she treats her



coworkers with respect and appreciation, inspiring them to be their best. Colleen definitely makes a positive difference in the lives of those she touches.

Mrs. Thiel - Has a great line of communication with parents, a person who takes great pride in her job, compassion for the children, always looking into new and creative ways to teach lessons, professional, gets to know each child personally and helps them to grow to be self-sufficient.

These ladies have worked with her for years and adore her. Whether you have worked with her for year, like these ladies have, or just observe for a few minute - it's obvious what a wonderful teacher she is. Last week our IT Director was in her room last week to fix a phone and after about 10 minutes he looked over at me and said, "she's really good." Yeah. She is.

For me, I appreciate her flexibility and level head. She never gets riled or upset about anything... I've never seen it. In fact, her quote that's so true quote "It is what it is." And with that many years there comes a huge level of flexibility. She knows a lot of times to just go with it you just roll with it. Sometimes things don't go as planned. It happens. She's got the big picture outlook.

Please help me in congratulating Mrs. Colleen Mazemke as the Heart of the Valley YMCA Staff HERO!!