



MERCY CENTER

Profiles in Mercy: Dianne & Bob Meserlin



After retiring as the Athletic Director from St. Catharine's in 1994, Dianne was asked to assist and act as the "Interim" Athletic Director at Sisters Academy. Soon into her tenure, the "Interim" was dropped and the commitment to Sisters Academy became a family affair for the Meserlin's. After his retirement as a financial advisor a few years ago, Bob joined Dianne every Thursday to teach gym class. Gym class at Sisters Academy is unique for many reasons. As a privately funded school, Dianne and Bob are used to working with limited equipment. However, their creativity in executing exercises is the easy part. What they find most challenging (and rewarding) is working with girls from difficult backgrounds, who are not exposed to sports or formal physical education activities, and observe them learning the value and appreciation of "working as a team" and having fun while doing it. After several weeks coaching and helping the girls each year with the basics of soccer, yoga, dodge ball, and fitness tests, their patience and expertise pays off. They see the confidence start to come out and note the leadership potential within many of the girls.

Over the years, the rest of the family jumped in. At an early age, Dianne and Bob would teach their grandchildren the value of money and of giving back. They would give them \$25 each over a period of time for them to buy groceries to collect and bring to the Food Pantry. They began to appreciate how to make the best food selections based on budget and needs. As they grew older, their children and grandchildren have also come to the school to teach activities such as dance, cooking classes and making soup bowls for the JBJ Soul Kitchen. For the past 20 years, every December, Dianne and Bob ask friends and golfers at the Spring Lake Golf Club to sponsor an annual dinner for students who make the honor roll. This special occasion is often the first fine dining experience for our girls. It's also a highlight for the staff and chef at the Club every year. As long-time volunteers with Holiday Express, they have brought the live music experience to the school. They expose Sisters Academy to *any* person at *every* chance they get.

Dianne and Bob love to share their experience and stories of volunteering at Sisters Academy. "There is a miracle on Springwood Avenue. When girls are provided the opportunity, it's truly amazing what they can accomplish."

Dianne and Bob, you and the entire Meserlin family are certainly part of making this miracle possible.

To learn about our volunteer opportunities at Mercy Center, please call (732) 774-9397 ext. 121.