

"The Life of a Role Model"

When I sit across from the very graceful, delicate looking, blond haired, and blue-eyed woman I start to feel more comfortable. I feel as though I could say anything to her and she would understand. I don't know if it is the way she is leaning towards me, her eye contact, or knowing that because she is a guidance counselor, she is used to children telling her everything, good or bad, but every time we speak I get the same feeling and response from her. As if she was very interested in the conversation, and me; I know I can always rely on her for that feeling of importance.

After we greet each other, and she is done sipping her coffee, I started with my first question "What do you feel your greatest accomplishments in life have been?"

"My children are definitely my greatest accomplishments, " says 45 year- old Debra Faneuf. Debra has four children of her own, her youngest being eighteen. Although she feels her children are her greatest accomplishments, she loves her job as a guidance counselor at North Brookfield Elementary School. Raising her own children and growing up as the youngest of four children help her be understanding and patient with other people's children.

Growing up, Debra had major problems, which helps her relate to children in need. She had a low self-esteem as a child, along with a father who battled with alcoholism. These problems had a lot to do with her wanting to help others, but more specifically children. She chose to help children rather than adults because she feels that she has a better chance of preventing problems when people are younger than when they are older.

Debra feels that the most common problem that children have to deal with today is divorce. She also thinks that because so many kids have both parents working all the time, there is a lack of communication, between the child and parent. This is a reason why she likes to get the children involved in after-school activities. Last year she worked with sixth grade students on an after-

school project called "Paws for the Cause." The students held fundraisers to raised money for food for animals in local shelters. Not only did this help raise awareness throughout the community, but also it helped the children learn different things such as responsibility, and people skills. In a sense, this was as useful and helpful to the kids as it was for the animals.

This year she is working with the sixth grade on different projects. They will be holding several fundraisers such as dances, and a fashion show towards the end of the year. All the money raised will go to NEADS, which helps service dogs, dogs used to help handicap children.

This just goes to show one of her best qualities, to be giving. "When she first walked into this school, she had a smile on her face, and respected everyone she met," says a former student. "Immediately after that, everyone respected her, and that has helped give her a reputation for being loving, and always welcoming you with arms wide open."

Written By: Amanda Budney

A Hard Day's Work

By Andy Forgit

Being a director must be hard for Joan Hubacz, just following her around made me tired. She never knows what to expect. That day her students were practicing for a Christmas play, and everything was a little different – even for her. Some children were eagerly working on their costumes for the play, while others danced, sang, and practiced their parts. It seemed as though there was confusion, yet I considered it to be organized confusion. Everyone had a specific task to do that was related to the play.

Joan Hubacz's days are challenging as the director of Mad Brook Academy, a private elementary school in North Brookfield. She starts seeing children arriving as early as 7 a.m. and they leave as late as 6 p.m. She makes sure that all the paper work and student records are complete and up to date, and throughout the day she makes sure that the children at the school get individual attention in small classes. "We don't want the children to fall through the cracks." Mrs. Hubacz says.

It is quite a change for Mrs. Hubacz. You see, she started out her career as a microwave engineer. Gradually, her career took a bit of a twist, and she then became a high school math teacher. Finally, she decided that she wanted to work at home because she wanted to spend more time with her own kids. That is why she decided to open her own school.

In 1989, with hard work and dedication, a preschool was opened to the public and Mad Brook Academy was established. After much success as a preschool, kindergarten was added. Then in 1993, first grade, and each year since, another grade was added.

Today the school offers preschool through grade six. I wonder if she will have a grade seven next year?

The school has a hands-on approach to learning. They have a lot of ongoing projects, such as growing an herb garden and building a tee pee. An upcoming project is A pond, and maybe a kiln for all the pottery that they do. The kids take an active part in all the projects. On the walls are pictures of kids in boats and helping to construct the teepee.

With her family, Mrs. Hubacz likes to ski, hike, read, and on occasion, relax. She is a very nice person; she was nice to me as a visitor to the school, and I could see from the way she spoke kindly to the students and the teachers that she is caring. I hope she is able to accomplish all of her goals, such as the completion of the pond, but most of all, I hope she is able to continue to provide a good education for her students at Mad Brook Academy in North Brookfield, Massachusetts.

Ordinary to Extraordinary

Determined. Brave. Extraordinary. These are just a few words that describe Joyce Perry, a wonderful woman in our community. She and her family have raised money for families whose lives have been affected by cancer. They have annual dinner dances with raffles and a silent auction. Her other family members go on the annual walk for the Why Me Cancer Foundation. Her husband and their son participate in a money-raising bike race. Joyce's daughter is planning to walk in the marathon in Bermuda for Sherry's House. The money they raise goes to the Why Me Cancer Foundation. As you can see this family is always actively raising money.

Joyce was recently invited to a groundbreaking ceremony for Sherry's House. It will be a place where kids with cancer can go to get away from the hospital. Rather than having to stay at a hospital with lots of doctors and nurses the kids could come to Sherry's House. They would be around their families and other kids their own age with the same diseases and problems as them. Yet Sherry's House is still near a hospital in case of any emergencies Joyce is very dedicated to all of the events she participates in. She volunteers her time to raise money for kids with cancer. Joyce doesn't do all this because she has to; she does it because she wants to.

At rare times when Joyce isn't busy she's relaxing at home. It's a beautiful home that covers a troubled past. Joyce's house is warm and inviting. The smell of recently cooked dinner still lingers in the air. Joyce has sparkling eyes. She has many homemade projects around the house. The room is full of personal things; knickknacks and pictures

in memory of Jamie. There are little glass and porcelain angles around the room because of Joyce's love of angles. Joyce sits down on the couch. She carefully threads her sewing needle. Gently, she pushes the cloth. It will soon be her new curtains. The faint tick of the needle and the whir of the sewing machine are the only sounds in the room. One day she just picked up a craft book and taught herself. "I take something and make it pretty." She jokes. This is Joyce's life. However, life didn't used to seem so perfect.

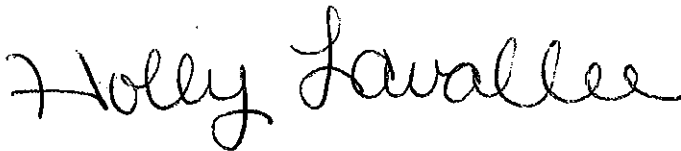
Joyce is the most determined person you'll ever meet. Her granddaughter says, "She's always there to spend time with me. She's there to talk with me about personal things. And she's very stylish!" However, Joyce is no ordinary woman. In 1994 Joyce was diagnosed with breast cancer. She said, "It made me realize life can be short. Appreciate what you've got- people, friends and good things in life." Joyce's cancer treatment lasted for about the course of a year with treatments of chemotherapy and radiation. Physically, cancer and its treatment left Joyce feeling tired. She was sick on and off. On top of all this Joyce was in a horrible emotional state. Jamie, her only grandson, was diagnosed with a form of brain cancer. From the beginning of Joyce's diagnosis the doctors knew that she would survive. However, Jamie's cancer would take his life before the end of that year. When Joyce's cancer treatment was finally over, she was still in a horrible emotional state. Her burden of having cancer had been lifted. But another burden lay heavy on her heart. Jamie had died.

The whole family had to pull through the tragedy together, but they made it. Although it took a long time to heal from what had happened, Joyce kept her life going. She knew

how the disease affected people with cancer and their families. That's when Joyce began to raise money for different foundations. Her whole family helped out - including her daughter, Jamie's mother. It was Jamie's last wish for the family to help raise money to find a cure for the deadly disease.

Joyce was lucky to have survived her cancer. I'm glad I got to know such a wonderful person. She's inspired me to make the best out of life. I'll try to live life to the fullest and see the glass as half full. She's taught me that although at time things may seem bad you have the power to make them better. She explains, "There are no guarantees in life, you can only pray for the best."

By: Holly Lavallee

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Holly Lavallee". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid, with the first letter 'H' being particularly large and stylized.

October 12, 2001

North Brookfield Junior / Senior High School