

Eileen Cousino:

Woman of the Year at St. Hilary



Congratulations to Eileen Cousino, recently named as St. Hilary's Woman of the Year. Her selection, as part of the National Council of Catholic Women's annual initiative to honor outstanding leaders, will be honored at the Council's Respect Life Luncheon on December 6.

Pastoral Minister Sr. Marlene Grasso observed: "Eileen is always saying, 'How can I help?' And she empowers others to serve the Lord. Eileen has a history of starting a ministry, running it, then empowering others to run the ministry. Then she can move on to another project."

Eileen is excited and amazed at the honor. "God has been so good to me and has given me the energy to help. He knows where I need to be, and He always opens doors for me." Her list of service to both the parish and the community is long. How has she served?

Let's count the ways

Eileen founded the "Seeds of Change Tutoring Program" at Margaret Park Elementary School because she and her husband Curt were disturbed with the way things were going in society for

children and families. "We wanted to make a difference and decided the only way to do that was through education."

"Many people said it couldn't be done, but within just a few weeks the program was set up, and St. Hilary parishioners were tutoring and running an after-school pro-

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gram. We have helped many children pass state educational testing, and we work with their families to help fill needs and promote change and growth." Lyn Schott now directs this program.

Eileen is also very active with the Catholic Workers community in Akron, including the Dorothy Day House, the Casa Maria Jose House, and House of Peace, which houses a number of Spanish-speaking families. "I help find what they need." This included remodeling a bathroom and creating a computer room.

Aine Donovan, a full-time volunteer director for Catholic Workers in Akron comments: "Eileen has been the jump start this community needed. We have many residents and few volunteers. Eileen says, 'Ok, we can do this,' and

she does it or finds someone who can. She is a dynamo, a tornado of energy, and we are so blessed to have her."

In addition, Eileen set up the Puppet Ministry with Randy Malick, was on the Advisory Board for the Youth Group for years, was committee chair for Troop 390, was a PSR teacher, was a member of the Joy Team, is a part of Generations of Faith and the Alpha Team, helps out at Genesereth Soup Kitchen, works on the kitchen crew for funerals, and helps Betty Sobieski on Social Concerns, among many other acts of service and leadership in the parish and the community.

And when Katrina hit, Eileen took Red Cross Disaster Relief Training and spent two weeks in Louisiana, working in a shelter.

Her support crew

"St. Hilary has always supported me and helped me. I couldn't do these things without the support of my family and our parish." Her family support crew includes husband Curt, with whom she works at their business, Kenderson, Inc., and children Curtis (35), Garret (33), Danielle (31), Collin (21), and Catherine (17) and four grandchildren (Curtis, Max, Gavin and Dahlia).

Well done, Eileen!