



# *Parish Heartbeats: Stories of Faith In Action*

## **Are you doing what God wants you to do?**

Mary Doody and her husband Mike were among the founders of our parish community in 1980. Both Mary and Mike have been active in the parish for many years. Like many of us Mary spent her time working and keeping busy. When she decided to retire from teaching at St. Francis High School in Wheaton she began searching for what was next. "I started doing volunteer work for a national organization but it just didn't bring me that feeling of peace that comes from knowing you are where you are supposed to be, doing what you are supposed to be doing. I prayed for some sign that would direct me to volunteer work that was meaningful and right for me."

Eventually Mary met some women who were volunteers at Naperville CARES ([www.napervillecares.org](http://www.napervillecares.org)). These volunteers seemed to have something that Mary was looking for, "They seemed so genuinely happy and I knew that that kind of happiness was what I wanted. It was as if God had hit me over the head with the sign I had prayed for."

What began as a volunteer opportunity soon grew into a committed ministry. As a Volunteer Coordinator at Naperville CARES Mary recruits, trains and schedules other volunteers. The volunteers at Naperville CARES are dedicated to providing financial assistance and support to Naperville neighbors in need.

As Mary explains, "CARES prevents them from being evicted by helping them with their rent, or CARES prevents them from losing their jobs by paying for car repairs or providing them with donated cars so they can get to work. But beyond the financial help I hope we impact their lives in other, less tangible and more profound ways. Some of our clients have had nothing but bad luck and hard times most of their lives. I hope

that the services CARES provides restores in them a sense of trust and a belief that others do care and want to help them improve their lives."

Volunteering at Naperville CARES has also impacted Mary's understanding of her faith. As she puts it, "It has certainly enhanced my appreciation for all the ways God has blessed me and my family. I have learned about the numerous resources available in Naperville and DuPage County: financial counseling, transitional housing, food pantries and employment counseling, to name just a few. All of these are

indications to me that God is at work through the hearts and hands of others. At CARES, I am surrounded by some wonderful people, people who are extraordinarily generous of their time and talent. The opportunity to know and work with them is yet another blessing. Because of my work at CARES and because of the clients and other volunteers I have met, I feel a sense of peace and meaningfulness that can only come from being where God wants me to be, doing what He wants me to be doing."



In 2013 Mary Doody was named Volunteer of the Year by Naperville CARES.

**If you would like to know more about volunteering at Naperville CARES you can contact Mary Doody at 630-247-1022 or send an e-mail to: [volunteer@NapervilleCARES.org](mailto:volunteer@NapervilleCARES.org).**

**Parish Heartbeats is an occasional bulletin column that celebrates the ways St. Margaret Mary parishioners make a difference in the lives of others.**