

Kathy Eisenzimmer Memorial Endowment

Just do it! A scholarship for good kids

January 24th, 2015, was only one day after Kathy's birthday. Instead of celebrating her birthday we were saying goodbye. That was the day Kathy's fight with ovarian cancer ended ... the day God called her home.

But her memory and the impact she made on hundreds of young minds will live on for years to come. Throughout the years, Kathy worked with students at Sweetwater Elementary School in Devils Lake. She loved those kids. She made a difference in their lives, which is why her family wanted to continue to make an impact with "good kids" at Lake Region State College.

Kathy spent (in her words) "thirty-four wonderful years" at Sweetwater Elementary—twenty as a Title I para and fourteen as a Title I Library para. She always declared it an awesome job to watch and help hundreds of boys and girls grow!

She never talked about retirement because many thought she would work at Sweetwater forever! She certainly had the energy, positive attitude, and love for chil-

dren to work in an elementary school forever.

As a staff member at Sweetwater, Kathy wore many hats. Her official role may have been Title One Reading Paraprofessional and Library Paraprofessional, but her unofficial role was supervisor of students, nurse, hugger of kids, caregiver, organizer, cleaner, laminator-fixer, book repair person, teacher, lunch computer person, bus organizer, counselor, cheerleader, painter, decorator, disciplinarian, encourager, supply manager, and supportive friend to every person on staff and every child in our school. Kathy had designated tasks, but did everything else under the sun.

The kids at Sweetwater were so important to her, but so was her family.

Kathy Schell Eisenzimmer was born January 23, 1954, in Devils Lake, North Dakota, the only daughter of George and Donna Schell.

Growing up in Devils Lake, Kathy attended Saint Joseph's grade school and graduated from St. Mary's Academy in 1972. She then attended Lake Region "Junior" College. In high school, Kathy was a cheerleader for the Knights and a



member of the National Cheerleaders Association, attending many of their camps. Kathy was a majorette with the Devils Lake Concert Band, the only student from Saint Mary's to hold that position.

Kathy married Terry Eisenzimmer in 1976. They had been high school sweethearts since 1970. Their sons, Jeff and Tim, were Kathy's greatest treasures.

She was very close to her dad, George, her mom, Donna, her brothers Doug, Mike, and Chris Schell, and their families. Her father-in-law Ray, mother-in-law Jeanne and the whole Eisenzimmer gang were also a close-knit family.

Kathy worked three years for her dad at the famous Snack Shack at the Holiday Mall. Next she worked at Coast to Coast Hardware for five years before going to work for Devils Lake Public Schools where she focused on helping kids, supporting them with her motto—"Just do it."

One of Kathy's great joys was to see the Sweetwater remodeling and addition project completed, especially the library. Sweetwater Elementary Principal Dr. Deb Follman said Kathy had a work ethic like no other. *"When we moved back into the school after the remodel, she stayed until nine o'clock every night after school for a week helping the janitors put things away. She continued to clean and organize for months that year!"*

She painted walls that had not been completed. In fact, her painting skills have touched every building in this district as she worked as a summer painter for eleven years. She put together her crew of friends to help.

"Even without realizing it, she was a constant motivation for others," Follman added. Kathy was always willing to step in and get the job done. *"Even with Kathy absent, we are still asking everyone now and then 'Well, who did that job at our school?' and the answer is 'That's something Kathy did,' except it was never designated or written down anywhere. She knew the school inside and out."*

Kathy was always positive and loved each kid she worked with through the years. It didn't matter who you were, where you came from, what color your skin was, or how much money you had. Kathy treated every one with the highest level of respect and had a kind word or greeting for everyone walking into the school. She said that one can always find the good in any situation or person. She was an advocate for children, families, staff members, our school, and the entire district. Her beautiful smile and love of the children and staff at Sweetwater will truly be missed and never forgotten.

Her family has established the Kathy Eisenzimmer Memorial Endowment so that loving attitude can live on. Each year, a student will receive the gift of a scholarship. That way, Kathy is still impacting students' lives and helping them succeed. Preference will be given to students who graduated from Devils Lake High School, but other "good kids" studying in various programs at LRSC may also be eligible.

Kathy's families were her life—her personal family and her school family. Now, that family has grown to include students pursuing higher education at Lake Region State College.

Kathy's husband Terry said her most famous three words were "Just do it!"

"I first heard this from her in high school as we were dating. Whenever she would hear me talk about doing something or thinking about something I maybe should do, that's when I would hear those words. Or she would take it upon herself to get it done."

To honor Kathy, Terry advises students who receive this scholarship to "Just do it."

"Take your dreams and make them a reality. Don't just talk about it, because time has a way of passing by, and then you'll be wishing you had just done what you were dreaming about. Go for it. Just do it!" ●