

Honorary Alumnus / Alumna

Sue Pasters

Sue Pasters came to Ohio Wesleyan in 1989 to become the University's Director of Community Service Learning. In the words of her successor, Sally Leber, "The more precise statement would be that beginning in 1989 and continuing through May of 2011, Sue Pasters *built* the Ohio Wesleyan community service learning initiative into the comprehensive, award-winning program we know and love today."

When Sue was hired by Chaplain Jon Powers, her charge was to set up and direct the service learning office and to mobilize the Columbus Initiative, a tutoring and mentoring partnership between Ohio Wesleyan and the children at a Columbus inner-city school. She did it. She did it so well that the program grew to become the Columbus Initiative, a service-learning program that has celebrated its twentieth anniversary and regularly involves approximately five percent of the Ohio Wesleyan's entire student body.

During Sue's years in the office, she initiated scores of community-based partnerships in which students learned not only the joy of service, but also practical lessons about the importance of dependability, perseverance, and small steps toward great goals. Said Sally Leber, "Today we find students cleaning up the environment, taking suicide prevention calls, counseling domestic abuse and rape victims, accompanying victims of crime through the judicial process, delivering meals, socializing cats and dogs, coaching Special Olympians, researching and developing community improvement programs, offering volunteer income tax assistance, and providing translation services for free clinic patients and parent/teacher conferences—all because of Sue's ability to bring people together, identify profound community needs, and form sustainable partnerships."

Sue spent untold amounts of time gathering the data that resulted in Ohio Wesleyan's first appearances on the President's Honor Roll for Community Service. Because of her efforts, the University has been able to continue documenting service hours and now has appeared on the Honor Roll, with Distinction, for five consecutive years, and in 2009 Ohio Wesleyan was singled out with the Honor Roll's Excellence Award for General Community Service, one of only three colleges nationwide to receive that recognition. Additionally, our students have won eight consecutive Charles J. Ping Awards for Community Service, presented by the Ohio Campus Compact.

"When I was first hired," Sue said, "I had an idea of what community service was like on college campuses, but I didn't fully grasp the impact until my fifth year, when young alum told me how their life choices were being influenced by their college service experience." The University could have hoped for nothing better.

Both OWU and the community have recognized Sue's efforts. In her career, she has been named Citizen of the Year by the Delaware Chamber of Commerce and won the Directors Award from Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Ohio; the Ullom Community Service Award and the Community Gem Award from HelpLine of Delaware and Morrow Counties; and the Robert and Bette Meyer Award, which recognizes the OWU Employee of the Year. Today, we add her to the rolls of Ohio Wesleyan's Honorary Alumni for her distinguished OWU career, her genuine affection and life-changing impact on our students, and her leadership in creating strong and reliable town-gown relationships. Although we honor her today, it is she who has honored Ohio Wesleyan by her exemplary life and service.

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