

Ellen St. Croix

Ellen St. Croix retired from Distance Education and Learning Technologies in June of 2004, having served the university faithfully for 35 years as an audio-visual assistant. Retirement by no means implied 'rest', however, for she has been as busy and as productive in her post-retirement life as she was during her working career. Ellen has assumed volunteerism as her new full-time job and her days are filled with responsibilities in a variety of charitable and non-profit agencies.

Ellen's nominators, colleagues Harriet Taylor and Lorraine Kenny, painted a compelling portrait of her post-retirement activities. She is an active and committed volunteer at the Community Food Bank at Emmaus House. The volunteer coordinator in that facility reported that Ellen is the most reliable volunteer she has observed in her 30-year career. Volunteers of Ellen's caliber are of inestimable value because they allow non-profit agencies to open their doors on a daily basis. Her contributions are significant to the behind-the-scenes operations and can vary from stocking shelves, sorting food, counting donations, answering phones, helping at special events, to dealing with a demanding and sometimes difficult clientele. She consistently demonstrates skills of empathetic listening and non-judgment to those whom she encounters.

A faithful member of the Basilica Choir, Ellen participates in the ministry of music and song for the congregation for daily and weekend services as well as for other special occasions; serves on the Liturgical Committee and regularly assists at parish funerals. She is involved in fund-raising which ranges from church needs to sponsorship of immigrant families. She was instrumental in fund-raising for a theatre seat at the Petro-Canada Concert Hall in honor of the late Sister Katherine Bellamy; she regularly contributes from her own financial resources and rallies others to get involved. She displays leadership in securing donations for fundraisers and her involvement in selling tickets is legendary. She campaigns for social justice issues undertaken by the Catholic Women's League as well as fund-raising for hospice and palliative care; she is a consistent contributor of baked goods and meals.

Ellen is also a dedicated volunteer at the Gathering Place which provides programs and services to people with complex physical, mental or social difficulties. In that facility, she serves meals and cleans-up, talks and socializes with clientele, sorts clothing donations, and works in the 'boutique'. She has overcome her own health challenges, and, in the words of one of her supporters, "in spite of not being permitted to hold a driver's license, she has always been in the driver's seat when it comes to serving her fellow human beings."

Ellen has also volunteered at St. Luke's Home, demonstrating exceptional generosity in providing home-baked goods as well as knitted goods to all residents, not only to those who were personally connected. She provided help to various committees with organization and set-up for special occasions and gave freely of her time whenever she could.

Ellen still serves as 'den-mother' to many students who worked with her in audio-visual services at Memorial. They stay in touch with her, share their lives with her and are grateful for the transitional advice she provided to them when they arrived at MUN from small communities.

If the theme of Ellen St. Croix's life were to be captured in a single word, it would be 'service' – service to the university, service to her community and to her church, but most of all, sustained compassionate care in the personal service of her fellow human beings.

