

20 Years Of Dedication...And Still Counting

In 1985 a 19 year old young lady migrates from her home in Florida to relocate in Marshall Mo. on a college softball scholarship. Two years later she would make a life changing decision when she began what would be a 20 year journey of dedication to helping troubled teenage girls at Butterfield Youth Services. Barbara Burley or “Boo-Boo” as children and staff fondly refer to her...has been an example of dedication, commitment and strength of character to both children and staff. In her 20 year career doing direct care, she has served in many different capacities. Her resume of accomplishments are:

- Direct Care Staff for 20 years serving in several capacities such as live in counselor, shift leader, case manager and unit supervisor.
- Foster Parent for 10 years, while raising her own daughter as a single parent, taking on the added responsibility of helping young ladies in her home, who would otherwise have no other place to go when they completed the program at Butterfield.
- Trainer for the agency, providing trainings for direct care staff such as, Burn Out, Stress Management and developing training components as well as teaching Strengthening the Culture of Care.
- Continuing her education by completing a Master’s of Social Work (MSW) from the UMKC School of Social Work graduate of 2006.

When speaking to co-workers and children both past and present here are a few snapshots of their thoughts:

- Staff 2007 - Boo-Boo is a true advocate for the rights of children and their cases. She is a fighter. She sees the good in children regardless of their situation and fights to get them what they need to be successful.
- Child 2007 – Boo-Boo is my momma. I like doing everything with her especially when she takes me to her church.
- Foster Child 2000 – Boo- Boo raised me when my family couldn’t take care of me. She helped me with my home work, made sure I went to prom, talk to me about how to be a young lady and told me to check my attitude when I was not acting right.
- Staff 1988 – Barb came on board at BYS with her warm smile and a heart to help whatever child needed her assistance. There was no job to big, too small or too nasty that Barb would not tackle. She has given BYS and children all

over the state of MO. 20 years of her life, genuine heart felt service and commitment. Through the good and the bad she yet remains.

- Shift Partner 1990-1992 – During this time I recall many situations of Barb going beyond the call of duty. There were many times she was the victim of personal injury, property destruction and personal offenses that would have caused the average person to quit and never do the work that we do with children. However, despite the challenges she was able to forgive and forget situations with each individual child and use each incident as a learning and growing experience with that child.

It is not so much that Barb worked in direct care with children for 20 years...it is more an emphasis of the children's lives that she has been a part of. When you speak with her about what she has accomplished in the past 20 years, she is humble and gives you the impression that this is simply her life's work. It is not counting the numbers it is making the numbers count. She genuinely believes every opportunity she has been given to be a part of a child's life is a privilege for her that she honors. Through her mistakes, personal crisis and extremes of working with children in her home and children and their families at work everyday...she continues to demonstrate professional courage, integrity and a patience for helping that can only be described as "long suffering"...as she often says with a smile "I will do whatever it takes to help a child and their family succeed".

Overall, throughout her career, Barb has demonstrated a natural willingness to work and serve beyond expectations. She has demonstrated: positive leadership qualities, applied solid skills in times of crisis, outstanding work attendance, promoted positive relationships among co-workers and staff she supervises, an openness to change and innovation as well as the ability to grow and develop both personally and professionally. Barb's career is an example, a testament of her efforts and sacrifice to enhancing the quality of life within the agency for both children and staff. 20 years and counting...

Submitted By:

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