

Webster woman just happy to make a difference

Daniel Wallace
Staff writer

(December 3, 2007) — Some deeds and thoughtful acts seem to warrant repayment, but for Lori Patric, a simple smile and a warm hug will do. The 48-year-old Webster resident has spent her life volunteering and organizing community projects to help people in need.

People who know Patric say it's not uncommon for her to do a good deed on a whim. Two years ago, when she decided to go back to school at Monroe Community College, she got the opportunity to get involved with larger volunteer projects when she joined the college's travel and tourism club.

"It was the perfect mix of my favorite activities — traveling and volunteering," said Patric.

The club has done everything from raising money for victims of Hurricane Katrina to helping local charities. Patric has led many of the endeavors, including a "Spirit of Rochester" holiday event that benefited hundreds of at-risk children and young adults.

Diane Cheasty, chairwoman of the hospitality department at the college, said it's typical for Patric to spearhead a project but not look for the glory of the position.

Each semester, the travel club gets involved in as many as 12 volunteer experiences. While Patric was a member of the group, the organization was voted Club of the Year out of 60 other groups.

"Titles don't mean anything to Lori," said former president Tiffany Walker, 25, of Rochester. "She's so happy when she thinks she's making a difference in the lives of other people."

When she helped put the "Spirit of Rochester" together, Patric said the most memorable part of the day wasn't the entertainment or the 600 guests who came out. It was seeing a mom sitting in a circle with her family while eating pizza and hearing that woman talk about how wonderful it was not to think about her child's battle with cancer.

That event sparked another activity that the organization put together for a group from a battered women's shelter that could not attend the holiday party.

"Lori is always thinking about who else can we serve," said MCC hospitality professor Janet Zinck.

Patric helped organize a day at the zoo for these women. And while they were grateful, all they really wanted was a happy photo with their children since many of them had left all their possessions behind when they left abusive spouses.

"It's overwhelming to think of what we take for granted and how meaningful a simple picture was to them," said Patric, a mother of two.

Zinck and Cheasty put together a 12-page nomination essay about Patric for the *Rochester Business Journal's* "Student Standout Award," which Patric recently won.

"Lori is always trying to let someone else get the credit and shine. I think that's her gift," said Zinck, who was sad to see her leave the program this summer.

Patric graduated from MCC in May with a certificate in travel and tourism and works as a part-time tour guide at Koning Day Tours in East Rochester.

"What I do, it's not about me," said Patric.

"It's about everyone working together to make things a success."

MCC Travel and Tourism Club

Total annual revenue: \$2,500 (done through fundraising).

Number of volunteers: 20-plus.

Year founded: 1987.

Address: 1000 East Henrietta Road, Rochester NY 14623.

Web site: Under construction.

Phone: (585) 292-2580.

Greatest need: Donations to fund educational opportunities for students.

The United Way and RochesterCares Inc.

United Way's Volunteer Connection links about 200 people with volunteer projects each month.

To find out more, go to www.uwrochester.org and click on "Volunteer," or call (585) 242-6474.

RochesterCares, a Hands On Network affiliate member, coordinates hands-on projects with more than 25 nonprofit agencies.

For more information on upcoming projects, go to www.rochestercares.org or call (585) 428-7231.