



the Lantern

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A newsletter of the Presentation Lantern Center

Sponsored by the Sisters of the Presentation, Dubuque, IA

Pamela Miller's Legacy Lives On ★

by Megan Ruiz, executive director

Like the Presentation Sisters, Pamela Miller was a lifelong educator and humanitarian. From her work in the Dubuque Community School District, to her years of volunteering at the Presentation Lantern Center, to sharing the joys of reading with the next generation and instilling a love of books in her granddaughter, Daisy, Pam touched the lives of anyone who was fortunate enough to have met her. Even though I am not someone who had the pleasure of meeting Pam, I got a sense of who she was, based on conversations with people such as her endearing and joyful daughter, Angie, loving husband, Jim, and her dedicated siblings, in-laws and friends. It may have been a cold and snowy evening in January, but the warmth inside the Lantern Center that evening when we gathered in honor of Pam was remarkable. I learned even more about Pam from the Center's founding director, Sr. Corine Murray, who also introduced me to her long-time friends, Brenda and Joe Pieper.

Pam opened her heart to all who she encountered – bridging relationships with citizens from China who were studying in Dubuque to welcoming, befriending and helping to increase the English literacy levels of refugees from Syria, among many other new Dubuquers from a myriad of places. About 13 years ago, Brenda herself was new to Dubuque. As someone who moved to the Dubuque area in junior high, I know that even though Dubuque is a city, to newcomers, it can at times feel like a tiny town, where everyone knows each other and already has tightly-woven connections that can be tricky to integrate into. Brenda felt SO grateful when Joe and Jim, best friends since college, introduced them to each other. Brenda said “Pam really took me under her wing. She was so enthusiastic when she told me about the Lantern Center. It made me eager to volunteer there with her.” Pam introduced Brenda to her friends at the Center and many people in Dubuque, who would soon become mutual friends.

Pam's friends and family remarked that even though she had battled cancer on and off for



Pam Miller with her longest-running student and friend, as well the student's daughter.

many years and was inwardly going through a lot, she always made sure to show love to those she was closest to, outwardly. Friend and Center founder Sr. Corine Murray said “Even on some of her toughest days, tutoring alongside her friends like Brenda and working to help her student and now lifelong family friend Xiaoling, seemed to give her strength. She always had a positive energy about her.”

After her retirement from the Dubuque Community School District, Pam dedicated countless hours over the years to welcoming and enriching the lives of immigrants in need of a friend and mentor as they worked to improve their English skills through the life-long gift of literacy Pam gave them. Not only did she generously give the gift that has a “butterfly” effect on families and their upward mobility, generationally, but she also gave charitably, financially.

Before she passed away, Pam discussed wanting to make a significant and lasting donation to a charity with her family. She specified that in lieu of flowers and plants, gifts from family and friends should go to Presentation Lantern or to Hospice of Dubuque. Pam and Jim worked hard their entire lives, and Jim said they had also felt blessed and enriched by their relationship with the local community. “The community has been good to us and we wanted to give back. Pam had often talked about where a gift would make a great impact.” Since Pam had spent years tutoring and teaching at the Lantern Center, and she and her family are

Education Corner

By JoLynn Wall, director of education

Greetings PLC friends,

'Tis the season of Thanksgiving, which makes me think of the wonderful things in my life and in our world. We are so very grateful to our volunteers who give their time in tutoring and sign up to serve in any way that they can.

One volunteer sought to upcycle her Kindle by giving it to a PLC student when she was getting an upgrade. We connected with a student that has been longing for books and reading materials, as the pandemic brought gloom and isolation. The Kindle gift brought her new worlds to be opened as only books can do! The gift of reading is something that we may overlook, but it really is a gift that brings connection, information, laughter, and opportunity into our sight.

Literacy is not only reading but also having being able to write meaningfully. In October, I had the honor of delivering a rebuilt computer to a student.

Continued on page two....

passionate about our life-changing mission, it was the perfect fit.

So, during the spring of 2020, the Miller family created the Pamela L. Miller Fund for Presentation Lantern. This substantial endowment fund, housed at the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque, provides a yearly amount that we will be able to utilize to help meet any kind of financial need we face at the center, annually. Anyone who makes additional donations to this fund may be eligible for a 25 percent Endow Iowa tax credit.

We are extraordinarily grateful, uplifted and overjoyed that Pam believed so strongly in the Lantern Center's positive impact in the community, that she bestowed such a generous and lasting gift to us. Pam's legacy of promoting literacy will live on in all our hearts as we continue our mission each year, with her continued support.

Education Corner

Continued from page one....

This generous gift was built and donated by a son of a volunteer who has been furloughed due to COVID-19. To the student, this gift was a miracle. She can connect with others and pursue her learning and writing goals. Although I am not a fortuneteller, I do think that this student will be giving back to the world by sharing her written story of wisdom and experience.

We are also using the gifts of literacy to bring additional connection for anyone in our PLC family, through group book club on Zoom. Some advanced students are reading the book alongside their tutors. Others are helping intermediate-level students with vocabulary and meaning, so that they too can be a part of our weekly discussions.

The current book is *The Middle of Everywhere* by Mary Pipher. Through the words of the author, we are provided with experiences that help us relate to our



Director of education JoLynn Wall helps a new tutor and student pair up on Zoom and get working on English skills.

students with deeper love and understanding, while creating opportunities to discuss their experiences adapting to their new life here. We encourage everyone to check this book out, as it inspires us to keep doing what we do at the PLC, welcoming new friends from other cultures!

Gronen's Community-Minded Spirit

The Schmid Innovation Center | CARADCO Lofts fills an entire city block and was built between 1880 and 1906. The space was used primarily for factories, at that time. This iconic building, where at one time millions of windows and doors were produced, stood empty and vacant for years. Its parent company had moved production to Illinois. At this time, around 2010, additional housing and commercial space were needed in Dubuque. At the same time, the Lantern Center was starting to outgrow its space. The idea to rehome the growing Center, then housed in St. Mary's Catholic Church, to the soon-to-be Schmid Innovation Center was born.

Mary and John Gronen had conversations with Msgr. Thomas Toale and others from the board of directors at St. Mary's Church, such as Sr. Lynn Fangman, PBVM, current Lantern Center board member and former Steeple Square/St. Mary's Church Board member. They brainstormed about what else could revitalize the Dubuque community and what it needed: what could they do to fulfil needs within the community? One idea that sprouted from this discussion was what is now known as the Millwork Collective, a collection of non-profits that could work in partnership in the lower level of the Schmid Innovation Center.

Together with the City of Dubuque and other key players, the Schmids and Gronens created a plan for the Millwork District. Part of that district would include non-profits. By establishing a vibrant mix of residential, commercial/retail, and non-profit tenants, Schmid Innovation Center | CARADCO Lofts planned to create the "Sense of Place" that exhibits the qualities of true urbanism – density, diversity, energy, and sociability. Their goal was to create a thriving nonprofit center for collaboration and cohesiveness among non-profits.

And it worked! The Millwork Collective has enriched the space, which has mutually been transformed by businesses and co-tenants. The Lantern Center has collaborated in fundraiser booths together with neighbors such as



CARADCO building circa 1900. Immigrants from Germany, Ireland, Canada, Great Britain, Scandinavia, Italy, Russia, Mexico and Croatia settled in Eastern Iowa towns like Dubuque in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Here are some who worked at the window, sash and door company that is now home to the Lantern Center.

Junior Achievement, Habitat for Humanity and Compass to Care, to name a few and at events such as Blocktoberfest and the Merry Millwork Market. We've enjoyed committee meetings, tutoring sessions and welcoming newcomers to Dubuque by sharing a cup of coffee and bite to eat at Inspire, Brazen, Charlotte's and the Millwork Night Market. And more Dubuquers have been able to access us due to our proximity to the Jule bus station, the Fourth Street elevator and the walking distance to college campuses.

The Gronens knew that, in addition to space, growing non-profits could use help with funding, so they decided generously that the 10 non-profits which would reside in lower level of the Schmid Innovation Center would not pay rent, but instead, a monthly fee called "MIT" (Maintenance, Insurance and Taxes). This has saved each non-profit in the collective a large amount of rent over the years, as compared to what the standard, market rate would be for offices our size in the district.

Almost every year since opening in 2002, the Lantern Center has grown by leaps and bounds in both in numbers of community members utilizing our services and in numbers of volunteers. What once was a place where durable, tangible objects were proudly produced has since become a space where immeasurable and invaluable relationships have been built. These friendships have also withstood the test of time, and our hearty and thriving organization will continue to be a cornerstone of the community for years to come. Thank you, Gronens! And thank YOU, supporters. We can do what we do because of ALL of you, our proud partners. Thank you for being a force for good in our magnificent riverfront city!

A century later, immigrants who are CNAs, teachers, factory workers and retail workers study in the revitalized CARADCO building. They come to Dubuque from places including Sudan, Mexico, Spain, China, countries in Central and South America and the Marshall Islands.



SCHMID INNOVATION CENTER
900 Jackson Street
Suite LL5-1
Dubuque, Iowa 52001

The Presentation Lantern Center is a drop-in center offering hospitality, educational opportunities and advocacy to adult immigrants, especially women, who are striving to better their lives. Founded by the Sisters of the Presentation, the Center is generously sustained through donations from our founders and individual donors like you. Thank you and God bless you.

HOURS

Monday, Wednesday, Friday
10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Tuesday, Thursday
1:00 PM - 7:00 PM
—contact us for reopening info

Contact us at

563-557-7134
info@thelanterncenter.org

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We welcome your support and prayers. Your generosity touches many lives and hearts from around the world.

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