

That's How It's "Dun" – Jenn Neilsen Recognized for Her Service to Dunlap

Jenn Neilsen is this quarter's recipient of DCDC's "That's How It's Dun" Award. This award is part of a community service recognition program created to honor those who go above and beyond in their volunteer service contributions to the Dunlap community.

Neilsen is a Dunlap native. Her parents, Denny and Linda, owned and operated the Lehan Drug Pharmacy for many years. "I grew up going to work at the pharmacy with my mom and dad," Neilsen shared. "I literally was raised by the community.

"Living in Dunlap has had a huge influence on the person I am today. Growing up here, I constantly witnessed our community members working together as a team to keep Dunlap thriving. I witnessed firsthand how this community supported my family's local business for many years."

She is in her twenty-third year of teaching Chemistry and Advanced Chemistry at Denison High School. Her husband, Gary, works at Boyer Valley Schools and they have three children: Caden, 18; Gwendolyn, 14; and Dezlyn, 9. Caden is in his first year at the University of Iowa.

"Now as an adult, I want to give that support back. I know that it is my turn to be part of these teams and groups. I want to help the future generations to see how Dunlap is a great place to live and raise families. I serve in various organizations because I want to help nurture the programs and sports we currently have here in Dunlap."

Neilsen has spent a great deal of time this last year helping the Boyer Valley Drill Team raise funds for their upcoming trip to Disneyworld. Her daughter, Gwen, is on the team, so this effort has been a "labor of love." As part of this endeavor, Neilsen has helped the youth sell cotton candy and hot chocolate, worked at the Dunlap Carnival, assisted with Bingo outings, and helped organize the Drill Team's childcare fundraising events.

She serves as a Board member for the Boyer Valley Youth Organization, helping the group organize and execute sports tournaments, and volunteering to coach a 4th grade girls' basketball team. BVYO recently hosted a Chili/Soup Cookoff and Auction and Neilsen was on hand to ensure the event's success.

Additionally, she serves as Dunlap's Library Board President and is an active member of the Friends of the Library group, helping with summer youth reading programs.

Neilsen helped with religious education at St. Patrick Catholic Church for 20 years, teaching and cooking supper for the high school, and has helped with the community's summer Vacation Bible School program many times.

More recently, in the summertime, Neilsen has been working as a lifeguard at the Dunlap Pool. She is a member of Dunlap's Park Board and helped line up volunteers from WESCO to paint the metal benches at the pool. Last summer, Neilsen spoke to area youth about the importance of sun protection. This was an important piece of curriculum, as required by a shade structure grant that the Dunlap Betterment Group applied for.

"Jenn is very creative, very kind and very funny," shared Jill Schaben, DCDC Executive Director. "If you want to get something done, you talk to Jenn. Because if you've got her on your team, it's going to get done and she is an absolute joy to work with."

Schaben has had the opportunity to work side-by-side with Neilsen on some community projects. "Jenn helped paint the 'Welcome to Dunlap' mural. She is also a huge piece in the success of Dunlap's annual Art at the Park event," said Schaben. "It's apparent that Art at the Park is important to her because she always makes it a point to help from set up through take down. That's a long day. If we had a town full of Jenn's, we'd be set."

"I love how we are a very proud community," Neilsen chimed in. "This community's generosity always surpasses my expectations. I am always in awe of the unity and charitableness of our community members."

"Getting involved is a great way to work with people you might not normally have the opportunity to meet. I feel blessed for all the new friendships I have established through volunteering through the years."



Know someone who deserves recognition for their service to Dunlap? Visit dunlapia.com and click the Resources tab to access the "That's How It's Dun" nomination form. Four Dunlap area residents will be recognized annually. Contact Jill Schaben with questions at dunlapcdc@gmail.com