



Student makes volunteering part of lifestyle

BY MARY CHALLENGER • MCHALLENGER@DMREG.COM • NOVEMBER 8, 2008

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It was an unseasonably warm Friday afternoon, the kind of late fall day when college students can normally be found flinging Frisbees and relaxing in lawn chairs on their front yards.

Calli Copoulos, though, had a previous engagement, one she couldn't imagine breaking.

The 20-year-old Drake University junior sat in the middle of a foam-print sofa at the Boys and Girls Club on the fourth floor of First Christian Church, an open book on her lap.



Sitting next to her, their heads craning over her shoulder and their bodies half-sprawled over her lap, were a handful of 7-year-olds, hanging on to her every word.

"When the horses reared up, the sheep leaped over a barrel," Copoulos read, then paused to make sure all the children were able to see the picture.

This is the time of year when charity rises to the forefront and individuals and businesses begin to look for ways to help those in need. But for some, like Copoulos, the community impact director for Drake's new Student United Way group, volunteering is a lifestyle, not an annual call.

As a high school student in Wisconsin, Copoulos, who is majoring in elementary education, said she used to get out of her school on her birthday so she could go around to schools and read Dr. Seuss books to kids.

Now she squeezes volunteering around 18 credit hours as well as philanthropic work with her sorority and responsibilities as a peer mentor.

Drake also has a strong volunteer tradition, Copoulos said, which is why the university was chosen by United Way to participate in its new Campus Chapter program.

The Family Fun Night with the Boys and Girls Club, in which Copoulos and about 14 other Drake students took part, was the university chapter's first big event, Copoulos said.

She says the plan is to host Family Fun Nights monthly and hopefully pull in parents as well as their children for health- and education-related activities.

"Lots of times people volunteer then leave," she said. "We'd like to form relationships."

Kate Barikor, volunteer coordinator for Boys and Girls Club, is all for the idea.

"It's kind of hard to get steady volunteers that will come in regular," she said.

Copoulos said although volunteering is about doing things for others, it's also something she does for herself.

"You know that feeling inside when you do something great?" she asked. "It does that for me. People think around our age you can't make a difference. But you really can - you just have to take baby steps."



RODNEY WHITE / THE REGISTER

Drake University student Calli Copoulos, 20, an elementary education major, reads to Lucas Messner, 7, during Family Fun Night at the Boys and Girls Club at First Christian Church in Des Moines.

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HOW YOU CAN HELP

Here is a list, provided by the United Way, of organizations that need volunteers and/or donations.

Adopt-A-Family

Purchase gifts such as food, clothing, and toys for a family in need

Amanda the Panda, JoAnn Zimmerman, 223-4847, jzpanda@aol.com

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Iowa, Katie Schorsch, 288-9025, kschorsch@bbbsia.org

Boys and Girls Club of Central Iowa, Kate Barikor, 274-9083, kbarikor@bgcci.org

Broadlawn Medical Center, Shelly Jordan, 282-5755, sjordan@broadlawns.org

Central Place Family Resource Center, Elaine Olinger, 967-7806, olingere@se-polk.k12.ia.us

Children and Families of Iowa, Mindy Hotovec, 697-7905, melindah@cfiowa.org

Hiatt Middle School, Erin Hemesath, 242-8128, erin.hemesath@dmps.k12.ia.us

Hope Ministries, Erin Dobraska, 265-7272, edobraska@hopeiowa.org

Iowa Homeless Youth Centers, Nikki Dempsey, 265-1222, ndempsey@yss.ames.ia.us

Link Associates, Cindy Spann, 262-8888, cspann@linkassociates.org

Lutheran Services in Iowa, Dawn Elliott, 271-7383, dawn.elliott@lsiowa.org

Mentor Iowa, Kristen Gruntorad, 277-9797, kristen@mentoriowa.org

Oakridge Neighborhood Services, Esther Morris, 244-7702, emorris@oakridgeneighborhood.org

Orchard Place, Katie Albrecht, 287-9605, kalbrecht@orchardplace.org

SUCCESS Program, Michelle Heard, 242-7890, michelle.heard@dmps.k12.ia.us

The Heart Connection Children's Cancer Programs, Brecka Putnam, 243-6239, brecka@childrenscancerprograms.com

United Way Ankeny Service Center, Becky McKim, 965-1976, bmckim@unitedwaydm.org

Visiting Nurse Services, Karen Sullivan, 558-9942, karens@vnscdm.org

West Des Moines Human Services, Doris Stoermer, 222-3663, doris.stoermer@wdm-ia.com

Young Women's Resource Center, Christina Heth, 244-4901, cheth@ywrc.org

Put Together Food Baskets

Provide ingredients to prepare a holiday dinner

Beacon of Life Residential Center for Women, Ruth Hardin, 244-4713, beaconruth@qwestoffice.net

Central Place Family Resource Center, Elaine Olinger, 967-7806, olingere@se-polk.k12.ia.us

Children and Families of Iowa, Diana Smith, (471) 869-9118, dianas@cfiowa.org

Hiatt Middle School, Erin Hemesath, 242-8128, erin.hemesath@dmps.k12.ia.us

Hope Ministries, Erin Dobraska, 265-7272, edobraska@hopeiowa.org

Link Associates, Cindy Spann, 262-8888, cspann@linkassociates.org

Lutheran Services in Iowa, Dawn Elliott, 271-7383, dawn.elliott@lsiowa.org

Orchard Place, Katie Albrecht, 287-9605, kalbrecht@orchardplace.org

Polk County Crisis and Advocacy Services, Breanne Ward, 286-2019, bward@co.polk.ia.us

Ronald McDonald House, Tiffany Finch, 243-2111, tiffany@rmhdesmoines.org

SUCCESS Program, Michelle Heard, 242-7890, michelle.heard@dmps.k12.ia.us

United Way Ankeny Service Center, Becky McKim, 965-1976, bmckim@unitedwaydm.org

Wesley Community Services, Judy German, 699-3370, jgerman@wesley-services.org

West Des Moines Human Services, Doris Stoermer, 222-3663, doris.stoermer@wdm-ia.com

Young Women's Resource Center, Christina Heth, 244-4901, cheth@ywrc.org

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Transport people to events/shopping, or deliver meals to the homebound.

Aging Resources of Central Iowa, Ellen Gilstrap, 255-1310, ellen.gilstrap@agingresources.com

Goodwill Industries of Central Iowa, Rodney Tomlinson, 265-5323, rodneyt@dmgoodwill.org

Iowa Homeless Youth Centers, Nikki Dempsey, 265-1222, ndempsey@yss.ames.ia.us

Visiting Nurse Services, Karen Sullivan, 558-9942, karens@vnsdm.org

Visit the Elderly

Be a surrogate family to an elderly person or provide gifts.

Fountain West Health Center, Eric Peterson, 223-1223, ericpeterson@fountainwest.net

Visiting Nurse Services, Karen Sullivan, 558-9942, karens@vnsdm.org

Wesley Community Services, Judy German, 699-3370, jgerman@wesley-services.org

Donate Canned Food

Central Place Family Resource Center, Elaine Olinger, 967-7806, olingere@se-polk.k12.ia.us

Children and Families of Iowa, Diana Smith, (471) 869-9118, dianas@cfiowa.org

Hiatt Middle School, Erin Hemesath, 242-8128, erin.hemesath@dmps.k12.ia.us

Hope Ministries, Erin Dobraska, 265-7272, edobraska@hopeiowa.org

Lutheran Services in Iowa, Dawn Elliott, 271-7383, dawn.elliott@lsiowa.org

Orchard Place, Katie Albrecht, 287-9605, kalbrecht@orchardplace.org

Ronald McDonald House, Tiffany Finch, 243-2111, tiffany@rmhdesmoines.org

United Way Ankeny Service Center, Becky McKim, 965-1976, bmckim@unitedwaydm.org

Donate Clothes

Central Place Family Resource Center, Elaine Olinger, 967-7806, olingere@se-polk.k12.ia.us

Children and Families of Iowa, Diana Smith, (471) 869-9118, dianas@cfiowa.org

Fountain West Health Center, Eric Peterson, 223-1223, ericpeterson@fountainwest.net

Hiatt Middle School, Erin Hemesath, 242-8128, erin.hemesath@dmps.k12.ia.us

Hope Ministries, Erin Dobraska, 265-7272, edobraska@hopeiowa.org

Lutheran Services in Iowa, Dawn Elliott, 271-7383, dawn.elliott@lsiowa.org

Mentor Iowa, Kristen Gruntorad, 277-9797, kristen@mentoriowa.org

Orchard Place, Katie Albrecht, 287-9605, kalbrecht@orchardplace.org

SUCCESS Program, Michelle Heard, 242-7890, michelle.heard@dmps.k12.ia.us

United Way Ankeny Service Center, Becky McKim, 965-1976, bmckim@unitedwaydm.org

Wesley Community Services, Judy German, 699-3370, jgerman@wesley-services.org

West Des Moines Human Services, Doris Stoermer, 222-3663, doris.stoermer@wdm-ia.com

Wildwood Hills Ranch, Emily Schmieg, (641) 396-2414, emily@wildwoodhillsranch.com

Young Women's Resource Center, Christina Heth, 244-4901, cheth@ywrc.org

Donate Toys

Amanda the Panda, JoAnn Zimmerman, 223-4847, jzpanda@aol.com

Central Place Family Resource Center, Elaine Olinger, 967-7806, olingere@se-polk.k12.ia.us

Children and Families of Iowa, Diana Smith, (471) 869-9118, dianas@cfiowa.org

Hiatt Middle School, Erin Hemesath, 242-8128, erin.hemesath@dmps.k12.ia.us

Hope Ministries, Erin Dobraska, 265-7272, edobraska@hopeiowa.org

Lutheran Services in Iowa, Dawn Elliott, 271-7383, dawn.elliott@lsiowa.org

Mentor Iowa, Kristen Gruntorad, 277-9797, kristen@mentoriowa.org

Orchard Place, Katie Albrecht, 287-9605, kalbrecht@orchardplace.org

Ronald McDonald House, Tiffany Finch, 243-2111, tiffany@rmhdesmoines.org

Serve Our Youth Network, Mary Tomlinson, 286-3344, maryt@serveouryouth.org

SUCCESS Program, Michelle Heard, 242-7890, michelle.heard@dmps.k12.ia.us

United Way Ankeny Service Center, Becky McKim, 965-1976, bmckim@unitedwaydm.org

West Des Moines Human Services, Doris Stoermer, 222-3663, doris.stoermer@wdm-ia.com

Wildwood Hills Ranch, Emily Schmieg, (641) 396-2414, Emily@wildwoodhillsranch.com

Young Women's Resource Center, Christina Heth, 244-4901, cheth@ywrc.org

Youth Emergency Services and Shelter, Jana Daisy, 282-9377, daisyj@yessiowa.org

Donate Other Gifts

Amanda the Panda, JoAnn Zimmerman, 223-4847, jzpanda@aol.com

Catholic Charities, Trish Radke, 237-5078, tradke@dmdiocese.org

Central Place Family Resource Center, Elaine Olinger, 967-7806, olingere@se-polk.k12.ia.us

Children and Families of Iowa, Diana Smith, (471) 869-9118, dianas@cfiowa.org

Fountain West Health Center, Eric Peterson, 223-1223, ericpeterson@fountainwest.net

Hope Ministries, Erin Dobraska, 265-7272, edobraska@hopeiowa.org

Lutheran Services in Iowa, Dawn Elliott, 271-7383, dawn.elliott@lsiowa.org

Mentor Iowa, Kristen Gruntorad, 277-9797, kristen@mentoriowa.org

Orchard Place, Katie Albrecht, 287-9605, kalbrecht@orchardplace.org

Serve Our Youth Network, Mary Tomlinson, 286-3344, maryt@serveouryouth.org

United Way Ankeny Service Center, Becky McKim, 965-1976, bmckim@unitedwaydm.org

Visiting Nurse Services, Karen Sullivan, 558-9942, karens@vnsdm.org

Wesley Community Services, Judy German, 699-3370, jgerman@wesley-services.org

Wildwood Hills Ranch, Emily Schmieg, (641) 396-2414, Emily@wildwoodhillsranch.com

Young Women's Resource Center, Christina Heth, 244-4901, cheth@ywrc.org

Help with Holiday Projects and Parties

Help host events, special organizational activities, wrap gifts and much more

Amanda the Panda, JoAnn Zimmerman, 223-4847, jzpanda@aol.com

Beacon of Life Residential Center for Women, Ruth Hardin, 244-4713, beaconruth@qwestoffice.net

Central Place Family Resource Center, Elaine Olinger, 967-7806, olingere@se-polk.k12.ia.us

City of Des Moines Parks and Recreation Department, Callie Le'au Courtright, 248-6380, chleau@courtright@dmgov.org

Des Moines Area Religious Council, James Trotter, 277-6969, foodpantry@dmreligious.org

Easter Seals Camp Sunnyside, Katie Marcouiller, 289-1933, kmarcouiller@eastersealsia.org

Festival of Trees and Lights, Chari Ghrist, 241-3215, ghristcl@ihs.org

Goodwill Industries of Central Iowa, Rodney Tomlinson, 265-5323, rodneyt@dmgoodwill.org

Iowa Homeless Youth Centers, Nikki Dempsey, 265-1222, ndempsey@yss.ames.ia.us

Make-A-Wish Foundation of Iowa, Mary Knueven, 334-2636, mary.knueven@iowawish.org

Mentor Iowa, Kristen Gruntorad, 277-9797, kristen@mentoriowa.org

On With Life at Ankeny, Melissa Sawvell, 965-1339, msawvell@onwithlife.org

Orchard Place, Katie Albrecht, 287-9605, kalbrecht@orchardplace.org

Polk County Crisis and Advocacy Services, Breanne Ward, 286-2019, bward@co.polk.ia.us

Ronald McDonald House, Tiffany Finch, 243-2111, tiffany@rmhdesmoines.org

Terrace Hill Commission, Erin Del Collo, 281-3604, erin.delcollo@iowa.gov

The Heart Connection Children's Cancer Programs, Brecka Putnam, 243-6239, brecka@childrenscancerprograms.com

The Salvation Army, Amy DeCastro, 282-3599, amy_decastro@usc.salvationarmy.org

Wildwood Hills Ranch, Emily Schmieg, (641) 396-2414, Emily@wildwoodhillsranch.com

Young Women's Resource Center, Christina Heth, 244-4901, cheth@ywrc.org

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