CSM Exercise Classes Join in Season’s Spirit of Giving

Posted by Alan Van Wormer  On 11/26/2018

College of Southern Maryland (CSM) exercise classes and the Leonardtown Campus community joined in the spirit of giving last week when CSM Group Fitness Instructor Geno Rothback and her Zumba students delivered boxes of food, clothing and presents to a St. Mary’s County family who needs a little help this season. After collecting donations from boxes set up throughout the campus, an abundance of offerings were delivered Nov. 18 to a California grandmother who cares for her granddaughter.

Rothback began organizing the collections in early November after working with the St. Mary’s County Department of Social Services to identify the family. She said she started helping local families three years ago as a tribute to her late father-in-law Peter Donchik Sr. of Melbourne, Florida. Donchik, Rothback explained, spent many years collecting socks and delivering them to homeless people throughout the state of Florida.

“He was such an inspiration,” she shared, “and I just want to continue to fulfill his vision of giving to those in need.”

Pamela Herold, of Leonardtown, has been a Zumba student of Rothback’s for more than six years and has participated in her Thanksgiving tradition of kindness all three years. “This is really the highlight of my year,” she said, “I am so impressed by Geno’s generosity and by the generosity of the St. Mary’s County community.”

As a CSM instructor, Rothback pointed out that she has the capacity to reach many people on a regular basis.

“This is really a village of people who help provide these donations,” she added. “I am thankful to CSM for letting us leave boxes in the corners of the Leonardtown Campus for everyone in the community to participate.”

Calling the St. Mary’s County community’s spirit of giving “extraordinary,” Rothback added that she has come to understand that such giving is a universal sentiment that knows no language or geographic boundaries.

“I am very grateful to also have the opportunity to travel abroad,” said Rothback, who just returned from a trip to Cambodia. “And I honor my father-in-law during our travels as well. One of the things we love to do is visit orphanages and shelters in other countries. Before the trip, I pack candies or books – even pencils for the children there because a little bit of kindness goes a long way.

“You never know when you could be an inspiration like my father-in-law was,” she added. “You never know when a book inspires a child to read, or a pencil inspires a child to write.”

The spirit of giving continues tomorrow, Nov. 27 when the CSM Foundation asks the Southern Maryland community to participate in #GivingTuesday, the annual international day of online giving that follows Black Friday, Small Business Saturday and Cyber Monday. The 24-hour event focuses on the giving season by inspiring people to collaborate and give to their communities following their post-Thanksgiving holiday spending sprees. This year, along with the generosity shown to scholarships, the CSM Foundation hopes to raise money for the Student Success Fund, which is an unrestricted fund that will support the student’s overall success at CSM. Learn more and take a peak: