

January 8, 2014

Dear Forty Under 40 Selection Committee:

It gives me great pleasure to put "pen to paper" and talk about my good friend, Megan Milligan. Megan has been a part of my life for almost 10 years. Getting to know Megan and watching her excel at being a mom, a wife, a professional, and a friend has been delightful – and a little humbling, leaving the rest of us to merely dream of keeping as many balls in the air as Megan effortlessly juggles. At the risk of sounding cliché, we do not know how she does it – three fabulous, kind-hearted boys; a full time job fearlessly asking anyone she knows to support Anawim; plus volunteer activities at St. Augustin's church and school in her "spare time." Megan has a genuine dedication to the betterment of the world in which she lives – on both a small and large scale.

In her "real job," Megan devotes her time, talent and passion to helping the broad community in which we all live. Megan's true generosity is revealed by her carefully selected "extra curricular" activities. Because our first grade boys are in the same class at St. Augustin's, I have a front row seat to Megan's "can do" attitude in the school. Flynn and Roan, her two older sons, are fortunate to have a mom who puts her kids' education at the top of her already packed agenda. Megan cheerfully volunteers in the classroom for holiday parties, teachers' luncheons and standard school activities. Yet, Megan's commitment to serving St. Augustin's far exceeds the standard. By teaching the grade K through 3 Junior Achievement program for St Augustin's, Megan introduces kids to the harsh realities of the business world – Junior Achievement style – breaking down difficult "adult" concepts into kid-sized pieces. Similarly, Megan dedicates time to the "Talking Canvas" program at St Augustin's. Talking Canvas is a collaboration between our school and the Des Moines Art Center whereby volunteers, such as Megan, encourage kids to creatively explore the world of art – again taking sometimes complicated adult themes and joyfully reexamining them from the perspective of second graders. While the kids may not know it, through this exposure art, Megan is helping them understand history and develop respect for other cultures.

As I conclude my thoughts, I'd like to propose an answer to the "how does she do it?" dilemma. Megan is endlessly driven by an unwavering belief that everyone...everyone...deserves a chance to succeed in this world. Megan is not satisfied until she shakes out the "good" in a person – it's in there, she just knows it. We should all be inspired by her passionate belief. For these reasons, Megan Milligan would be an outstanding addition to the Forty Under 40 "club" as recognized by the Des Moines Business Record.

Sincerely,


Christine Carroll Cownie