

Profile in Mercy: Kathy Barnitt



When Kathy Barnitt moved from Jersey City to Bradley Beach in 2003, she knew she wanted to volunteer. She quickly began doing her research and came across Sisters Academy. As a product of an all-girls school herself, the vibe at the Academy resonated with her and she quickly began working with Sister Mary Lou. Kathy has been at Sisters Academy from the time classrooms were in trailers and has seen it transform into the state of the art school it is now! She recounts her time working in the original building fondly and recalls the administration office was a tight fit for herself, Sister Mary Lou and the school secretary. Kathy says that while the structure has changed, the “caring and orderly” environment was always in place.

Prior to her time at Sisters Academy, Kathy was a speech therapist, working mostly in private schools. She also worked as a professor for individuals who are deaf and blind and is fluent in sign language. Her time in spent in an educational setting has been a valuable resource for the Academy. She comes to the school each week because she believes in the transformative power and “sustainable gift of educating young women.” In fact, Kathy and her friend Denise mentor a Sister Academy graduate, now in college. The three of them regularly meet and consider their bond to be powerful. This special relationship is not the only one she has made over the years. By volunteering in the administration office, she has made countless friends with both teachers and other volunteers. Kathy believes that the key to volunteering is to “take is seriously, show up when you are given a time, share your talents, it’s important to be there.”

When she is not at the Academy, Kathy is active in her book club and serves on the Board of the Bradley Beach Library. Every Sunday she sends a text message to each of her seven grandchildren with an encouraging quote. Recently, she sent “you always had the power, my dear,” a quote from the Wizard of Oz. “It’s important to empower young people, especially young women. The power will enable them to grow in confidence and strength in this very complex world.” We can all benefit from this positive sentiment! Thank you for all you do for us Kathy!

To learn about our volunteer opportunities at Mercy Center, please call (732) 774-9397 ext. 121.