

Marilyn Sheppard

*Sharing Love, Affirmation,
and a Generous Heart with Everyone*



A Smiling, Helping Friend to All

You see her at most activities at Risen Savior Catholic Community. She always has a smile on her face. She has lived in Albuquerque, New Mexico, all of her life and seems to know everyone. You hear this greeting whenever you go anywhere with her, “Hi Marilyn!” She always stops, greets each person she meets, and introduces them as her friend. Marilyn has literally hundreds of friends. She is always the one who is called on to do things and always the first one to volunteer for any task no matter how insignificant. I am honored to be called her friend also.

Sustained by Faith as a Mother, Widow, and Volunteer

Marilyn Sheppard is the mother of 7 grown children, a widow, and a volunteer for many activities. Two of her children are mentally challenged and live with her. She will tell you that she and the girls have their own “group home” and they are with her constantly even

though they are chronologically in their 40’s and 50’s. Her husband died 17 years ago of cancer that was diagnosed on Ash Wednesday and ended with his death on Holy Saturday. This was a troubling time for the family but their faith and courage pulled them through. Now Marilyn’s life centers around the girls, Terri and Lori, as well as her volunteer work.

A “Lady in Blue” Who Opens her Home for Meetings and for Parties!

Marilyn loves people and draws all kinds of individuals to her. She will always offer her home when a place is needed for a meeting or a party. Having parties is one of the things she loves. She has friends and/or family over to celebrate as many things as possible. The girls are used to this and know all her friends. Terri is shy but Lori is very outgoing.

Marilyn will almost always be dressed in blue. She jokes that when she was younger and went out shopping her husband would say, “What color ‘Blue’ did you buy this time?”

Lively and Life-Nourishing Family Life

Marilyn and her husband Dwane were married for 35 years. They had a modest

home and she will tell you that even with 9 in the house, they had only one bathroom. This was a challenge since 5 of the children were girls and struggled to be the first one into the bathroom to do their hair and make-up.

Dwane and Marilyn became involved with the Cursillo movement as well as Marriage Enrichment and helped many individuals in these activities. Their main focus was their family as the children were growing up. Marilyn attended all sorts of events, school activities and sports. Both parents worked with each child to become outstanding adults.

Now most of their children have families of their own and live all over the world. Several are in New Mexico, one in Colorado, one in Texas, another in Washington D.C. and one lives in New Zealand. There are 12 grandchildren who love to come to Grandmas. In summer 2009, several of the grand daughters will come to New Mexico for a week long, “Grandma’s Camp.” Marilyn is planning hikes, outdoor activities and sharing “girl talk.”

When asked about hobbies, one of her first loves is music. Marilyn will attend symphony orchestra



Marilyn with her daughters Terri (lt) and Lori (rt).

concerts as well as jazz presentations. She has a large collection of CD's that she plays just for relaxation.

Marilyn also loves gardening. Her large back yard has a wonderful selection of plants. A couple of years ago when she turned 70, Barbara, her daughter who lives in Albuquerque, gave a party for her and invited about 50 of her friends. Each person was asked to bring a plant for her to put in her yard. Some brought small plants but others came with large containers with a variety of plants. It took her some time to get all of them planted and cared for.



Marilyn and a friend at a church celebration.

Marilyn has belonged to two parishes in her lifetime and has friends from [Queen of Heaven](#) as well as Risen Savior. Her friends from each parish have kept up with her and were included in the group.

If you have a good book, from mystery to spiritual reading and recommend it to her, you will see it in her bookshelves. One unique collection, that is growing each year, is her collection of “shepherds.” Christmas time always finds someone giving her a new little figure to add to the many that she already has.

There are many times that Marilyn has helped someone without any fanfare. She is also a very active parishioner. Some of the ministries that she participates in at Risen Savior are:

◆ *Eucharistic Minister to the homebound and nursing home* — She goes to a local nursing home each Thursday to visit with the patients and give them the Eucharist.

◆ *Lector or Proclaimer for Mass on Sunday* — Marilyn serves very often in this capacity.

◆ *Eucharistic Minister at Sunday Mass* — Often she will attend two Masses because the 12:30 pm one often does not have enough ministers to serve everyone.

◆ *RCIA Team Member* — This is one of her biggest responsibilities. In this ministry, the team meets twice a week, once in preparation and the other in presentation of the beliefs of the Catholic religion to those who are exploring entrance into the Church.

◆ *Spiritual Reading Discussion Group* — Her love of reading has pulled her toward this group that has met for the last 8 years. They meet every two weeks to read and study spiritual reading books and discuss them, chapter by chapter. In September 2009, they will begin their 9th year of being together. In fact, they are now a small faith community who help each other and others wherever it is needed.

◆ *Assistant with ACT-ON.* — When asked what her favorite activity is, she will tell you that it

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is assisting a group called ACT-ON. This ministry was founded by a couple in the parish with a two fold purpose: ①to help women who are going back to work to obtain clothes and training and ②to give reconditioned computers to needy students. ACT-ON is essentially a clothing bank for women who do not have clothes and accessories to wear to interviews or to work. Groups and agencies refer women to ACT-ON. Volunteers also help the women with interviewing skills, how to present themselves to employers, and the basic skills needed to hold down a job. ACT-ON's second purpose is to refurbish and give computers to children in school and to college students in need.

I hope that you will get a picture of this “Lady in Blue” who works for others constantly. Whenever there is a new ministry or a job to do, Marilyn is usually called on for help. She looks for the poor and the lonely with a smile and a hug. She is a friend to everyone. After Mass one day, she was talking to an older woman who was waiting for a ride. She called me over and said, “I want to introduce you to Anne. She is my new friend.”