

HERO OF THE MONTH

Success Magazine: Why is volunteering so important to you? Aside from the Girl Scouts, what other organizations are you affiliated with?

DCL: Volunteering is highly rewarding—I enjoy working collaboratively toward a common goal with others. It is a pleasure to volunteer with people who desire to make a difference by functioning together “outside the box.” Aside from Girl Scouts, I am active in the Capital Repertory Theater, Cohoes Farmers’ Market, Cohoes Business Council, Steering Committee, Siena College, Friends of Pruyn House, Program/Activity Committee, Shaker Heritage Society, and the Regional Food Bank.

SM: What do you do for a living?

DCL: I luckily do what I love. I am the Director of Recreation and Cultural Affairs for the city of Watervliet. Additionally, I am the co-proprietor of Harmony House Marketplace in historic downtown Cohoes. Over the last two years, I have worked with state and local agencies rehabilitating and restoring three historic structures. I have been able to work with others to launch two businesses in the buildings, a New York State exclusive wine shop and a bake shop which specializes in locally grown and produced products. Most recently, we opened an art gallery within this historic area. Everyone affiliated believes in our motto; “When you buy New York, you build New York.”

SM: How do you find time for yourself, when you spend countless hours volunteering?

DCL: I have been married to the same wonderful man for over twenty years. Joe’s support and caring helps me maintain balance within my life. We have three terrific children; Frances, Catherine, and Louis. Family time is the most replenishing time for us as parents.

SM: When did you become involved with the Girl Scouts?

DCL: I was a girl scout through high school, starting out as a Brownie. I have reaped the benefits of being part of a volunteer membership organization—sharing time with my daughters and other girls within the troop setting. As an active parent and troop leader involved with scouting for over ten years, I have been able to witness firsthand the strength of character fostered through Girl Scouts.

SM: Why do you believe in this organization?

DCL: Scouting does nurture the necessary confidence within girls to try, and to keep trying. The leadership programs offer girls fabulous opportunities to become connected within their communities as leaders through service projects. Through service, they see what is possible. It develops an appreciation for how leaders must be committed not only to the project they lead, but connected to the

people they are working with. Scouting teaches girls how to make decisions and how to support their peers’ decisions.

SM: What achievement are you most proud of?

DCL: That is an interesting question, as I strongly believe life is not a tabulation of accomplishments, but how we support others in their achievements. I have been fortunate enough to mentor others, both personally and professionally. As I watch them succeed, I feel honored to have been a part of their achievements and feel hopeful for their future.

SM: What is the most important quality for a leader to have?

DCL: A true leader, someone who can inspire others, can only lead if they do so with empathy. It is through empathy that leaders are able to positively influence and provide support.

SM: Who were your role models growing up? What experience has most influenced who you are today?

DCL: I am truly lucky. I have been surrounded my entire life with strong, effective role models. In the 90’s I had the opportunity to meet both Rosa Parks and Coretta Scott King at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta. Both women were gracious and promoted the understanding and appreciation of all cultures. That encounter was profound, as I realized the potential each individual possesses to make a difference within their community. I more fervently recognized that true leaders, such as Rosa Parks and Coretta Scott King, face challenges and build strong relationships by valuing others for who they are and encouraging them to reach for their highest potential.

SM: What are your goals for Girl Scouts of Northeastern New York?

DCL: To remain committed to their vision of building a high performance council that builds girls of courage, confidence and character, who make the world a better place. Through the programs offered, girls learn invaluable leadership skills, preparing them to embrace tomorrow’s challenges.

SM: What is the most important lesson you have learned during your years volunteering for Girl Scouts?

DCL: As a volunteer, you must not only bring your expertise and desire to contribute into the role, you must bring your willingness to learn and grow with the girls and the organization.

