

Dear Colleagues, Friends, and Family,

On August 19, 2003 I will be 50 years old. As I was thinking about my upcoming birthday I was also thinking about my work in the human service community. As a youth in Minneapolis, Minnesota I worked in hospital bringing water, meals, and mail to patients. I also worked in daycare settings and in mayoral and other political campaigns. I was shaped by my community work as I grew to be a young adult. I grew to understand respectful relationships with adults and I felt more self-confidence with my own skills and abilities and the new skills that I was learning. It helped me with future job talents and connections.

For almost 30 years I have been involved in the human service community of Saratoga County. I have been privy to ways that children heal from child abuse and neglect, from divorce and separation and from various forms of mental illness. One of the most exciting things that I have seen is how *young people can transform gracefully* when they are given the opportunity to participate in meaningful community work.

Because of these feelings I have decided to begin a donor advised fund entitled, “Youth²-Youth Helping Youth.” There are many youth in our schools and in our community organizations that already extend a helping hand to community projects. I want to encourage this movement. I see what happens when youth help youth. *I would like to stimulate the growth of youth work in our community.* This fund will help young people think about issues that they care about and create community service projects that turn their ideas into action.

It is hoped that this fund “Youth²” can help the community to acknowledge and celebrate youth and to promote their positive actions in our Saratoga County home. Future projects may include a handbook of youth community service opportunities, “Random Acts of Kindness Awards” and other youth service awards.

Perhaps you know of a young person who is eager to do something for someone else and who may need seed monies to accomplish the task.

Thank you for all of your support over the years in all the community service activities in which I have been involved. Thank you for your support in assisting me in developing local and global programs in the community over the years such as the Saratoga Center for the Family, the Child Custody Stress Prevention Project, the Displaced Homemakers Program and the more recent international project, “Los Ninos de Chirripo”, helping Cabeca children in the Costa Rican rain forest.

I have learned, once again, by my volunteer involvement in the World Quilt Project of the Saratoga Mentoring Program that activities such as these really make a difference that is deep and profound. *Young people are proud of the work that they do and how it makes a substantial impact on their loved ones, their local community and the world.* It really works.

It is for these reasons that I now begin Youth² for our Saratoga County community.

Warmly,
Beverly Lazar Davis