

Publisher's wife joins staff of newspaper

By
Judy Hoyle
IVN Contributing Writer

Illinois Valley News publisher Dan Mancuso's better half, Laura, has joined the staff of the newspaper.

Laura Mancuso's love of the great outdoors brought her to Southern Oregon years ago and was reflected in her move to the Illinois Valley in 2012.

The Arizona native grew up in North Phoenix and attended North Arizona University in Flagstaff, receiving her bachelor's degree in community health promotion. Her first job out of college was as a certified health educator at Scottsdale Healthcare.

With her family, which includes her two sons C.J., 15, and Jaxon, 12, she moved to Grants Pass in 2007 seeking a small town in an area where they could experience four seasons and enjoy the outdoors.

Soon after, Mancuso found a teaching position with Brighton Academy where her sons were enrolled, and taught kindergarten through third grade for seven years.

When Mancuso met her present husband, Illinois Valley News owner and publisher Dan Mancuso three years ago, she started working at the newspaper office on Fridays and during the the summers and found she really enjoyed the

newspaper business. She resigned from Brighton at the end of the school year on June 4 to join the IV News staff.

Laura said the commute from the Illinois Valley to Grants Pass had become too time consuming and she wanted the opportunity to stay in the community she enjoys, home-school her sons and contribute more time at the Illinois Valley News where she will manage the office.

Mancuso said she looks forward to helping the community get the news they need, assisting with local advertising and editing copy. In addition, she looks forward to managing the everyday business aspects that come with running a newspaper.

Now that her long commute is a thing of the past, Mancuso said she looks forward to riding her three horses more often. She thoroughly enjoys trail riding and the couple, who will have been married two years in October, also enjoys hiking. They recently hiked the Big Tree Loop at the Oregon Caves National Monument and are planning to hike Mt. Elijah sometime soon.

Asked if her sons also enjoy horseback riding, Mancuso laughed and said, "My sons would rather ride their quad than a horse!"

The couple looks forward to enjoying hiking and swimming at the river with her two sons and Dan's two daughters and son this summer.



(Photo by Dan Mancuso, Illinois Valley News)

Laura Mancuso at the Illinois Valley News office June 16.

Lloydeen Davis sets an awesome example

By
Annette McGee Rasch
IVN Senior Contributing
Writer

It is not unusual to spot Lloydeen Davis motoring down Highway 199 in her electric wheelchair, from Kerby to Cave Junction, on her way to Evergreen Elementary to help children develop reading skills.

"I've always wanted to help children function in this world as best as they can and reading is such an important part of that," Davis said.

Davis, a practicing Quaker, says she lives by one of the religion's key precepts, which is to help others.

"My motivation is my love for God, his son Jesus, and his people and his world," Davis said. "God gives us life. What we do with our life is our gift to God."

"It was a bright day in the Valley when the Davis family settled here," said Cave Junction Mayor Carl Jacobsen. "They've volunteered for decades in the Fire Department, EMT services, the Kerbyville Museum, the Grange, Evergreen School, the Senior Center, scouting, and more. They're an amazing family and we're lucky to have them. Lloydeen's energy seems endless."

Davis, and her husband, Ted, who worked as a park ranger at the Oregon Caves National Monument for 23 years, have been married for 53 years. They moved to the Valley with their three daughters in 1972, in part, to escape the smog in California cities.

"I was going blind from allergies to pollutants in the smog," Davis said. "The doctors said it'd be permanent if I didn't leave the area forever, and my eye sight recovered here."

Davis, 74, has spent a lifetime overcoming physical challenges. She had polio as a small child and was paralyzed, with no feeling in her body from the neck down.

After six surgeries and years of physical therapy, she was back on her feet. Then in 1990, due to complications from the polio, she ended up back in a wheelchair, but that didn't slow her down much.

"I noticed how some neighborhood kids had some of the same problems I did as a kid," Davis said. "They lacked some basic skills they'd need in first grade, so I decided to do something about it."

From 1981 through 1992 Davis ran her own kindergarten and preschool program in Kerby, for 40 to 60 students, while also working for the school district.

"I used my salary to pay tuition for kids whose parents didn't have the funds," Davis said. "And my husband paid for the building and other expenses out of his work salary. The downstairs was the school and we lived upstairs. Many other parent volunteers and my kids pitched in too." Later, she also ran a free kindergarten at Evergreen.

During one period, for about three years, Davis couldn't make it to Evergreen because she was bed-bound. So students came to her house after school and her daughters would watch them while one or two came into Davis's bedroom for tutoring.

"It's really difficult when teachers have a lot of students at lower reading levels, because they cannot give all these kids all the individual attention they need," Davis said. "So those are the kids I try to help."

"The kids really respond to her," said Sally Clements, second grade teacher at Evergreen. "Lloydeen has a gift. She teaches with phonetics, and it's pretty magical, how she helps 'emerging' readers become beginning readers. She has this gracefulness, this innate ability that empowers kids to feel successful about themselves, enabling them to develop a foundation that is critically important in education."

Clements added that

Davis "lights up" around the children and never lets her physical disability slow her down. "That's a lesson in itself," Clements said. "It teaches acceptance and persistence."

The Lions Club has chosen to honor Davis for all her years of community service by designating her as Grand Marshall of this year's Labor Day Parade.

"Lloydeen is a special lady," said Gary Bell, Chairman of the Lions Club Sight and Hearing Committee. "I've known her for many years. Quite often I've seen her out in some pretty inclement weather, in that scooter of hers, all bundled up on her way to Evergreen. She doesn't let anything stop her. It's amazing."

In addition to her enduring commitment to coaching children, Davis still volunteers at the Kerbyville Museum and has served on the museum's board since 2004. She also bakes weekly for Senior Center activities. Over the years, she's also helped numerous families who've been down on their luck.

"Every morning I thank God that I'm awake," Davis said. "Sometimes it's really an effort to get out of bed and get dressed and go to school, but it's worth it. I have a blast. The only things that keep me home is if my wheelchair is giving me trouble or if my husband is sick."

Davis also credits her family, who all volunteer quite a bit themselves.

"My family kind of rounds me out," Davis said. "My husband volunteered with the IV Fire Department and we both drove the AC Valley Ambulance for many years. He taught boy scouts woodland skills, and, he always helped me and our daughters with our volunteer activities. We couldn't have done it without him."

See Davis on A-5

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