

Kerry and Wink Tharpe - Family and Time: Two Precious Gifts

Kerry and John “Wink” Tharpe have a full plate. As working parents of three children under 10, with a big dog, and a large yard and house to maintain in Farmington, they know the value of time. Between Kerry’s job as a special education teacher at Farmington High School, and Wink’s as a retirement services manager with The Hartford, time engaged in other activities is precious to them.

They spend a portion of it volunteering. Kerry actively donates her time and renowned energy in support of Special Olympics of Connecticut (SOCT). Every Thursday, year round Kerry practices with her Farmington Valley Unified Sports teammates. For eight years she’s also taken the “Penguin Plunge,” a jump into chilly local waters to help raise money for SOCT sports programs. Wink plays a vital supportive role in the family’s volunteer activities and shows his support of both Kerry and daughter, Maggie, 9, who recently joined in the plunge.

The couple feels strongly about giving locally as well. The efforts they made to help the campaign for the renovation of the Barney Library are witness to that. They supported the town-wide referendum for funding toward the project, and then they “appealed” to the family foundation created by Wink’s grandfather for a donation to help support it. The private foundation, now managed by Wink’s father, allows family members to submit proposals they deem worthy of consideration. This year the library update was one of the winners. But their advocacy didn’t stop there. Even after the Barney closed for renovations, Kerry extended herself by submitting a heartfelt editorial to the local paper about how much the library has meant to them.

As back-to-basics parents, Kerry and Wink are passionate when it comes to their children reading regularly, and Barney Library resources have been invaluable. In fact, they boast ownership of just one box of children’s books, as access to whatever they need is a simply a walk away.

Their support and example will also serve to shape the minds and hearts of their children—Farmington’s next generation of concerned citizens and readers. And on a larger scale, the time spent sharing their enthusiasm, involvement and gifts will help to build and maintain the community they proudly call home.