

The Palm Beach Post

When she told her dad she wanted to teach speech, he gave her one

Posted: 8:37 a.m. Wednesday, June 23, 2010

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By age 13, Connie Duke had made up her mind. She wanted to teach.

"I was coming home from Bible camp and my friend who went with me said, 'So what do you want to be?' " she remembered. "And I said I wanted to teach speech. My dad pulled the Buick over and he turned around and said, 'You can't make a living teaching speech.' "

Duke, now 60, proved him wrong.

The Palm Beach Gardens resident has enjoyed a 40-year teaching career. Starting in high school classrooms and continuing in college, she has taught speech, communications and English.

For the past three years, Duke has taught English composition classes at Keiser University in West Palm Beach. She also serves as the school's associate academic dean.

She enjoys both roles and keeps busy with many academic, administrative and service projects, including one that raises money to support the Art Creation Foundation for Children in Jacmel, Haiti.

The foundation serves 60 children who have no stable home or families, or do not have access to regular meals. The organization feeds, clothes, provides medical care and educates the children in arts and crafts and pays for uniforms, books and tuition.

Duke and her students began working with the foundation two years ago as one of a handful of campus-wide service learning projects.

Others have included a 12-hour write-a-thon and a cookbook writing project.

"People have the idea that students in college are so focused on themselves. They're never outward-thinking," said Duke, who has a grown daughter. "What I found is, with our students, especially when they're involved with these projects, the focus comes off of their problems and life issues. The focus transitions from those problems to something else."

~jodie_wagner@pbpost.com

Comment:

Art Creation Foundation For Children is honored to have the support of Keiser University service learning students, faculty and administration as well, because of Dr. Connie Duke!

Not only do her students find their way beyond their life issues, so do our ACFFC youth, knowing they are connected to this fine group of students and faculty who make such a huge difference in their lives. Judy Hoffman, President, ACFFC Board.

Judy Hoffman
9:08 AM, 6/26/2010