

Stewardship is YOU

Editor's Note: This series features insights and points of view from community members who bring Stewardship alive in various ways. The aim of *Stewardship is YOU* is to engender thought and dialogue on a host of issues about the many programs of our parish and to remind us all that Stewardship is alive in everyone at St. Teresa.

This issue features Janel Palm. Janel and her husband Mike have been members of St. Teresa for many years. They volunteer together in preparing couples for marriage, and Janel has been co-chairing the Time of Your Life Gala for several years. Janel's and Mike's gifts of time and service are just one example of how we can use our unique gifts to live out the mission of Christ.



During your keynote speech at the Time of Your Life Gala last November, you happily and yet emotionally expressed your love of this parish. What is unique about it that draws you into it?

Community is the biggest thing, and friends in a welcoming environment. From the beginning, we liked how service started with a greeting of your neighbors. Father Frank draws us in with his homilies and leadership. But it wasn't until becoming involved with Time of Your Life that we got to know

Father Frank and fellow parishioners. St. Teresa's is really rooted in community.

How did you become involved in Time of Your Life at St. Teresa's?

We had been attending Time of Your Life for about three years before I started volunteering. That fourth year, we were having a great time on the dance floor at the Mart Plaza when we ran into Rebecca O'Brien, Chairwoman of the event. My husband told her we would love to be involved. Rebecca knocked on our door later, following up on our interest.

It was so nice to be asked! We were busy because I was co-chairing another event at the time, but we said sure! I knew I was good at throwing parties and enjoyed them. Our involvement started smaller that first year with agreeing to be co-chair of the auction portion. It is great when you are actively involved in an event where the planners and parishioners have a vested interest in the subject and the results. It made it less daunting for seeking auction donations and planning. We also have a full team backing us up.

Can you describe this team?

The team just came together. It consisted of former gala volunteers and recruits from a ministry fair. People naturally step up, especially if the activity sounds interesting to them. We can always use more people, and you don't need a special skill set to be a member. Sometimes we just need day of the event help. A small task can make a significant impact on the whole event.

Is it fun for you?

Yes, absolutely! The camaraderie in meetings, the sharing of ideas, the brainstorming, the energy coming from people who are really out to help and donate – it is always fun. I truly like planning events. It is what I do!

Committee members have a lot of fun and creativity in planning the big event, adding new features and twists year after year. It is also a great way to get to know people and broaden our circle of friends.

Our major fundraiser of the year is really a huge social event and party of the year that so many of us look forward to. Why is that?

Why do people like a good party? The community. We usually bring friends outside the parish to the party. Our neighbors said our parish community and guests were the nicest group of people who went out of their way to introduce themselves to us. We are so grateful to have found this parish and to be a part of it.



Is planning the Time of Your Life Gala spiritual for you?

When we run into problems or worry, Rebecca reminds me to pray. We also start meetings with a prayer. If I keep in mind the reason why we serve, it can help us become more spiritual and make more of a difference.

How has your family or your focus changed since coming to St. Teresa's?

We have become more connected and involved in the Church. The Church is part of our routine and structure of our kids' lives. It has benefitted Mike and me, and I want the kids to be benefitted in the same way. We take part in many of the activities at St. Teresa's, including Lenten and Advent workshops and spaghetti dinners. We have become more connected as a family, a family that incorporates Church, giving, and God in our daily lives.

What does Stewardship mean to you?

It is the giving of time, talents and treasure. My role in Time of Your Life is the stewardship I do.

This article was prepared by Stewardship Committee member, Mary Serrahn. The Mission of the Stewardship Committee is: To create understanding among St. Teresa's members that our unique gifts have been given to us by God. We will do this by creating, encouraging and communicating ideas and programs that help parishioners recognize and share their gifts. Our goal is to foster a continually growing sense of gratefulness and a response of increased sharing of gifts within the parish and the communities we seek to Support.

Planning for the 2018 Time of Your Life Gala begins this spring. To learn more about getting involved, or to discuss how you can use your own God-given talents at St. Teresa of Avila, email Rebecca at robrien@stteresaparish.org.