



Edie O'Toole

Medfield Foundation's Volunteer of the Year for 2010

Edith (Edie) Vasaturo O'Toole was born in Medfield, and at age 85, Edie has had a long history of continuous commitment to volunteering in Medfield that caused the Medfield Foundation to name her as its Volunteer of the Year for 2010.

Edie serves members of her church, St. Edward the Confessor, six mornings a week, as the Church sacristan and the Eucharistic Minister at the 9:00 AM Mass. Father Leroy Owens says that "Edie has been serving at daily Mass longer than I have been the pastor." Edie also volunteers at the Church office as a "stuffer", inserting special notices into the Sunday bulletin whenever needed.

Edie has been an active member of Medfield Garden Club since 1992. In years past she was responsible for maintaining the plants and flowers at the Garden Club's site at the Fire and Police Stations. She volunteers with the Garden Club's garden therapy at the Thomas Upham House. According to Loretta Carrigan, who runs this program, Edie helped residents create plant and flower arrangements long before Loretta began to oversee the program, and that Edie continues to be the one volunteer she can regularly count on to help with garden therapy. Loretta observes that "Edie always spends extra time visiting with the residents after the garden therapy activity is completed." Edie volunteers for the Garden Club's annual sales which raise money for the many sites that beautify our town. Each spring, Edie carefully digs up numerous plants from her own garden, pots them, and meticulously labels each to be sold at the Garden Club's Plant Sale. Each fall, Edie participates in the Club's workshops preparing materials for the annual Greens Sale. In December she helps make centerpieces and boxwood arrangements for the sale and often works the day of the sale itself.



According to George Gray , former president of Medfield Historical Society, and Richard Desorgher, Town Historian, Edie attends almost all of the Society's meetings. She recently donated Medfield memorabilia and photographs which belonged to her family to the Society. Edie is also one of the original "assembly line" pie makers for the Society's Pantry Sale held before Thanksgiving to support the Peak House. Edie helps to make pies every year for the Sale and is noted for using her special apple peeler /corer/slicer to prepare the apples for the approximately 30 pies which are made annually for the Sale. Edie helped organize the "assembly line pie maker group" years ago when women started working jobs and no longer had time to make pies individually for the Pantry Sale.

Edie has volunteered for over 25 years to support those who suffer from mental illness, ever since a request went out asking residents to help with a special project at Medfield State Hospital. Many of the patients' rooms had been recently painted and there was a need for wall decorations. Edie responded with several other women, who used their crafting and sewing skills to create wall hangings from donated material and supplies they purchased themselves. It was from this endeavor that the Auxiliary for the Mentally Ill at Medfield State Hospital originated. Edie and the other women started meeting weekly and initiated an annual Holiday Fair featuring their homemade crafts, with the proceeds from the Fairs used to improve the quality of life for the patients at Medfield State. The group eventually started holding the clothing sales. Edie was one of the original workers for the Hospital Clothing Sales which to this day raise money for the mentally ill. For over 25 years Edie has volunteered weekly sorting, pricing, and hanging clothes for the Clothing Sales. Since 1991 Edie has served as the Treasurer of the Auxiliary for the Mentally Ill at Medfield State Hospital, now known as the Friends of the Mentally Ill since the Hospital closed in 2003. Donna Ulman of the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health states that "Edie was one of the first volunteers in Medfield for the mentally ill and has been a diehard, dedicated volunteer for over 25 years." It should be noted that Edie's efforts on behalf of the mentally ill began at a time when there was less understanding of mental illness, and Edie is to be commended for reaching out to Medfield's least understood residents, the patients at Medfield State Hospital, at that time. Edie and the Friends of the Mentally Ill continue to work today to improve the lives of the patients at the state's remaining mental hospitals. Edie did not abandon her commitment for volunteering for the mentally ill with the closing of the Medfield State Hospital.

Edie is recognized for her lifelong commitment to volunteer work, efforts in which she continues. Edie approaches each volunteer activity like a sprinter who puts intense effort into a short run, but Edie should also be compared to a marathoner who keeps running over long distances, striving all the while to reach a distant finish line. Edie keeps on volunteering and volunteering and at age 85 has not yet crossed her "volunteer" finish line. Medfield is indeed a better place because of Edie O'Toole's many years of volunteering.