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Constant spark

The drive to transform neighborhoods, create nonprofits and support close-to-the-heart causes makes these individuals stand out in the eyes of their peers.

By Joseph Myers

Posted Oct. 11, 2012 | Comments: 1 | Add Comment

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Erin Dougherty
Photo by Greg Bezanis

Erin Dougherty maintains such busy professional and volunteer schedules that she might want to consider changing her first name to "Errand." Though idle moments come rarely for the 32-year-old Packer Park resident, she feels much more remains to address.

"I don't think I do anything more than I should do," Dougherty, a founding member of the Center City-based Philadelphia Electrical and Technology Charter High School for which she serves as the department chairperson for the electrical technology and cooperative education initiative, said.

The 1998 graduate of St. Maria Goretti High School, now Ss. Neumann-Goretti High School, 1736 S. 10th St., annually obtains jobs and internships for the 10-year-old institution's seniors, with her present endeavors pairing eager minds with more than 50 employers. With a sluggish economy touching all generations, she stressed the importance of having youths see their potential to contribute to its rejuvenation.

"We're really fortunate to be thriving now," she said of the students, who for 15 hours per week bank determination and dollars.

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In addition to devoting a decade to secondary pupils, the Temple University alumnus has taken on homophobia in collegiate athletics as a two-year board member of the nonprofit Br{ache the Silence.

"There is a significant problem within the NCAA regarding homosexuality, so I am working to promote tolerance and to help everyone to understand the importance of being inclusive," the Pennsport native said.

Her employer welcomes learners from 30 zip codes, with many registrants calling South Philly home. In helping the local attendees, she is indirectly fostering the community outside its boundaries and brightening its confines directly by volunteering for her high school alma mater's Millay Club; Philly Girls Got Game, an organization whose emphasis on basketball often unites young females for clinics at Neumann-Goretti; Burke Playground, Second and Jackson streets; Pennsport Civic Association, 1837 S. Second St; and the Edward O'Malley Athletic Association, 144 Moore St., for whom she worked as a coach in her adolescence.

"I love communal engagement," Dougherty, who also can count time as a delegate at two Democratic national conventions toward her list of civic accomplishments, said.

Always eager to add her input for the good of many, this individual deems personal recognition "humbling."

"I'm just someone who goes out and tries to do for others," she said.

Contact Staff Writer Joseph Myers at jmyers@southphillyreview.com or ext. 124.

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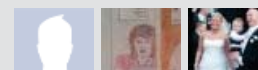
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