

Rotary honors long time nurse with service award

SAM PIMPER The Columbus Telegram

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Martha Davidson, recipient of this year's Service Above Self Award presented by the Columbus Rotary Club, second from left moving right, poses for a picture Thursday morning with Anne Kallesen, far left, and Marilyn Zehring. The duo nominated the long-time nurse for her years of service to her church family and the community.

SAM PIMPER PHOTOS, THE COLUMBUS TELEGRAM

Martha Davidson has always been more concerned with the needs of her friends, family and church congregation than her own.

Her friends will tell you that she's always there to lend a helping hand or drop what she's doing to make sure they are taken care of.

On Thursday, Davidson was honored by the Columbus Rotary Club with the Service Above Self award, presented annually to non-Rotarians who routinely go above and beyond to volunteer in their community.

Davidson, who for more than the past five years has served as parish nurse at First United Methodist Church in Columbus, was recognized at downtown's Picket Fence Café surrounded by the Rotarians who braved the wet and windy conditions to be part of her special moment.

Prior to her role with the church, Davidson worked as a nurse for Columbus Public Schools, along with two years as an industrial nurse with the Schuyler Meat Packing Plant (now Cargill).

Through her role as the Caring Ministry Coordinator at First United Methodist, Davidson accompanies church members to the hospital and doctor's visits, interprets what the medical professionals are saying to patients, transports elderly and handicapped people to church, completes Sunday morning blood pressure checks and takes meals to church members who are recovering from medical treatment.

Additionally, she helps people organize their medication, takes people out of town for appointments, drives for Meals on Wheels and was the co-founder of the local Alzheimer's Support Group.

"What I really want to say is that Martha notices people," said Marilyn Zehring, one of the people who nominated Davidson for the award. "She notices people who have a need and she responds to it. So there are just all sorts of people across Columbus that she has been able to help and assist.

"... Martha is also, I think, particularly drawn to older folks and caring for them. And nothing deters her from helping meet their needs."

Anne Kallesen, who spoke before the Rotarians in attendance, added that Davidson just really knows people and understands how they operate.

"She just sees people, really sees them," Kallesen said. "And a lot of us don't seem to quite be able to do that always. It's just a wonderful gift that she has, and she uses it."

Davidson said she felt privileged to be recognized for her giving spirit. Although, it's not something she does for any sort of recognition – she does it because it's important to her.

She also noted that sometimes she's been able to help in unexpected ways she didn't anticipate.

"I've been very lucky to just be in the right place at the right time," Davidson said.

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