

Featured Profile: Pat Howard

Written by Debra de Bastos, Sudbury Senior Center volunteer

Last month, I had the pleasure of meeting Pat Howard at the Sudbury Senior Center. She told me that whenever she tells her daughter that she is going to the Senior Center, her daughter replies "So, Mom, you are going to your 'happy place'." I was glad to learn that Pat considers the Senior Center her "happy place" because she certainly does all in her power to make it a "happy place" for all who frequent and work there.

Pat was born in Masontown, Pennsylvania, a small mining town in southwestern Pennsylvania. She left home to study nursing in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Shortly after becoming an RN, she found herself at the Marlborough Hospital in Massachusetts where she worked for 44 years, before retiring at age 70. When she started at Marlborough Hospital she was the youngest nurse, and when she retired, the oldest. She loved her nursing career. Based on Pat's energy, intelligence, kindness and desire to meet and help people, it seems she made the perfect career choice.

Pat has a daughter as well as two granddaughters who were adopted from China, and she enjoys spending time with them. Pat has lived in Sudbury since 1964. During her early years in Sudbury, Pat was busy working full-time and raising her daughter. Despite her full schedule, Pat was also busy with gardening, reading, enjoying music and doing volunteer work. At one time, Pat and her husband had over 400 tomato plants, many other vegetables which they grew, and 125 house plants. During the growing season, they were able to provide vegetables to ten families with whom they were friends. Pat also became skilled at preserving vegetables grown in her gardens. She still loves gardening but, unfortunately and understandably, has had to cut back on the number of plants.

Since Pat was so active before retirement, she found transitioning from full-time work to retirement fairly seamless. She said that she has had a "model retirement" which she attributes, in part, to the Sudbury Senior Center "family", who has been so kind and welcoming.

After retirement Pat wasted no time in expanding her volunteer work, fundraising for various organizations, and spending more time with the activities she enjoys. Pat has been an active member of the Senior Center for the past fifteen years. Pat belongs to three book groups, one of which, the Senior Center Book Group, she started. She was the head docent at the Hosmer House, as well as a volunteer at the Sudbury Food Pantry. Currently Pat is a member of the Marlborough Garden Club, a board member of the Sudbury Villagers and of the Friends of Sudbury Seniors, and a warden at the election polls. She can be found at the front desk of the Sudbury Senior Center on Friday afternoons where she enjoys meeting and assisting people. She has made many personal friends who attend the Friday afternoon Watercolors group.

Pat told me that some of her greatest pleasures in life are meeting people, helping people and establishing new friendships. She has many long-term friends, some still from her nursing school days, but she has made many new wonderful friends from her volunteer work and social activities.

It was difficult to get Pat to talk about her accomplishments and all that she has contributed to the many organizations in which she has been, and continues to be, involved. She told me that she was raised to be humble and believes that when you do good deeds, you do them quietly and without fanfare.

Pat certainly has a zest for life and boundless energy. By the time I finished speaking with Pat, I felt that we had developed a “friendship” and hope to connect with her again in the near future.