Donka Digest

100 Women Who Care Make Contribution

During December of 2012, the 100 Women Who Care - DuPage selected Donka as their quarterly charity and presented our agency with over $10,500.

"Donka provides a terrific opportunity for persons to be able to do what the rest of us do without thinking. Leanne gave a heartfelt presentation to the group and the decision to choose Donka obviously became an easy one," stated Sally Wiarda, the 100 Women Who Care - DuPage founding organizer.

100 Women has chapters nationwide and strives to donate $40,000 a year to local charities. Women meet quarterly and vote from among nonprofit organizations that are "pulled from a hat" of many nominated by group members. Three nonprofits are selected to speak and the women choose one beneficiary, based on that presentation. Each member of the chapter, which strives to attract 100 members, then writes a check to the nonprofit selected.

Donka is fortunate to have been selected and thanks 100 Women Who Care - DuPage for their support. This is the second time Donka has been supported by 100 Women, having received a contribution from the Naperville chapter in 2011.

Visioning the Future with Ann Byrne

Ann Byrne (foreground), Donka's visual instructor, works with a student at the Wheaton computer lab.

Let's face it. Working with a computer can sometimes be frustrating; even when all of your senses – the way you process information, learn and solve problems - are sharp and functioning properly. Now imagine trying to operate a computer and complete your work without the benefit of being able to see the computer screen.

For persons with blindness and low vision, Donka provides training to do just that: successfully and efficiently operate a computer without relying on the visual cues most of us depend upon. "It begins with accepting that a major transition in how you learn must occur," says Ann Byrne, Donka's instructor for students with visual disabilities. "Learning is 80% visual and 20% auditory…and for our students who have been sighted or are losing their sight, this also means that 80% of the way they

used to learn is gone. So, it's a matter of helping them learn by listening. Students who have been blind since birth already do this."

JAWS, (Job Access with Speech), the most popular screen reading technology used by persons with visual impairments, is a software application that reads the content of a computer screen aloud to the user. The software interfaces with Microsoft products including Windows and Office, as well as web pages and other software applications commonly used by persons with visual disabilities.

Ann teaches students to use keyed commands to operate JAWS and move around the computer screen to type documents in Word, complete spreadsheets in Excel, send emails using Outlook, surf the web for personal interests, and much more. Also, Ann says, typing words helps persons who cannot see strengthen their spelling skills, as they have no visual reference to rely upon.

This is where learning /processing by listening becomes especially important; and can get really

Also in this issue:

- *ShaRone Lindsey - working student*
- *Floyd Groen - new board member*
- *Bowling fundraiser*