

Decades of Memories

Since September 1975, when you walked through the front doors at the K-W Rotary Children’s Centre in Kitchener, or later at the Hallmark Drive location of KidsAbility, you most likely will have been greeted by Mary Helen Frawley. She has been that familiar voice and face greeting everyone with the warmth, humour and smile that she is famous for.

An alumna herself, having received speech therapy at the Rotary Centre as a child, Mary Helen was hired by executive secretary Myrtle Schacht. “Myrtle was my hero and mentor – she gave me my ‘lucky stay,’” she says.

Her colleagues became friends and when Mary Helen moved into her own apartment, the staff threw her a shower and outfitted her apartment! When she began her career with KidsAbility in 1975, there were only 25 staff in one location. Now in 2017, there are more than 220 employees in total, spanning eight locations.

Mary Helen believes that “potential realized” happens for every child and hopes KidsAbility can give that opportunity to generations of children far into the future. She herself has witnessed four decades of successes made possible through the support of Rotarians, donors, staff and volunteers.

A moment in Mary Helen’s vast career that gives her an incredible sense of pride was when the Rotary Club of Waterloo bestowed their highest award that they can honour a person with, a Paul Harris Fellow Award; it means the world to her and she wears the symbol of this honour, a pin, daily.

Mary Helen has dedicated her career to the organization she once benefited from as a child, including serving as a volunteer trustee on the KidsAbility School Board for five years.

“I love seeing all the children come in every day. When I am at the mall and see them, they recognize me.”

Although the organization has grown and changed over the years, that familiar and friendly face can still be found at KidsAbility’s Waterloo location welcoming the next generation of children, families, staff, donors and volunteers.



Mary Helen Frawley

Alumna, Staff Member - KidsAbility and
KidsAbility School Authority Board Member
2009–2014