

Retirement made her G.A.S.P.

How Fran Doll found her life's work

by Allion Petit

Many people dream about retirement, planning for the fun ways they will spend their free time. For Fran Doll, a near-death experience from breast cancer forced a retirement that she did not welcome. This experience, however, launched a new mission which has brought her passion, purpose and peace of mind. For 55 years Doll worked. She worked as a volunteer at Stewart's Caring Place, The American Cancer Society and Summa's Breast and Imaging Center. She also owned Superior Staffing from 1980-1997 until her diagnosis, when she turned her company over to her children so that she could focus on her treatment and recovery.

"I knew I needed to take a break in order to try and get well," said Doll. "But I was so bored!"

Doll went back to work at her company but the stress of working took its toll and she decided to fully retire after less than a year.

While on vacation in 2005, Doll heard about the story of Jessica Lundsford, the Florida girl who was abducted from her grandmother's home, held captive for three days and then buried alive. "Being a grandparent, I was appalled that this could happen," she said, "It was inconceivable to me and I just couldn't get it out of my mind."

The following year, Doll read an article about the incident and immediately felt the need to call Jessica's father. "That was a turning point for me," noted Doll. "I really felt that I was supposed to do something, I just didn't know what."

After several months of discussion and soul searching, Doll launched Grandparents Against Sex Predators (G.A.S.P.) in April 2006. From the beginning, things just seemed to fall into place.

"I met with the Summit County Sheriff's office and their support was instrumental in getting the project off the ground," said Doll. "They developed clear guidelines and a training protocol for our volunteers that not only would help support their own efforts, but also keep our volunteers safe," Businesses and support from close friends and family members have also been critical. A month after the G.A.S.P. launched, Doll received a call from America's Most Wanted (AMW) in response to an email she had sent.

"They were very interested in what we were doing and wanted to look at supporting it on a national basis!" Before she had time to panic, a second call from AMW offering their support to help secure funds and other resources. "I knew at that moment that this was God's purpose for me!"

In less than a year, Doll has mobilized more than 80 volunteers who work with law enforcement to educate the public about the dangers of predators and internet safety. The group also speaks and fingerprints children at events. They are now ready to begin recruiting search team volunteers, who will be frilly trained by the Sheriff's department to serve as extra eyes and ears in the event of an abduction of a child, All of this is done in support of G.A.S.P.'s mission of improving child safety by helping to find missing/abducted children and educating the community on child abuse and sexual predators.



Pictured R-L: Chief Gary Moneyppenny, Summit County Sheriff's Department, Nancy Hachat, President, GASP Board of Directors, Fran Doll GASP founder and Akron Mayor Don Plusquellic celebrate the opening of GASP's new offices in Quaker Square. GASP is open to volunteers of any age, not just grandparents. If you would like more information or find out how you can become involved call 330-247-1402.