

FEDERAL EMPLOYEES APPRECIATION WEEK

Cancer can't wipe out strength between family, friends

By DONNA BROWN
Special to the Standard

Cancer. That was the verdict three years ago when Mary Ann Quintana found a lump, the size of a pencil eraser, in her breast.

The cancer was removed and doctors told Quintana it was caught in time to keep the deadly disease from spreading. Soon, cancer was found in her lung. Now, Quintana knows she has only a short time to live.

How do you write a story about someone who is dealing with the ultimate tragedy in life — death — and not become emotionally involved? I couldn't. In fact, I didn't. Because, the story of Ann Quintana and the support she has received from her families both at home and at DDOU, touched and inspired me. I did not leave Quintana's office on the day of our interview with sympathy or even grief, but with a sense of strength from a woman who knows what it means to love the little things in life.

I say families because, although she has three children and an "extremely supportive" husband, she thrives on the strength of her family of 18 years and one month at DDOU.

"I think one of the things that has supported me most through all of this is the friendship of the people who work around me," she said. She is a packaging specialist in Stock Maintenance Division. "My supervisor, Leon Fielding, has been so understanding. Not a single person here has turned away from me. Everyone has faced this with me. That means a lot," she said.

Ann said she has been asked several



Mary Ann Quintana

times how she can keep working. Her answer is, "How can I not keep working when these people I work with are the people who have helped carry me through this far."

"Ann has been such a delight to be around," LaNae White said. "She just keeps smiling and joking. She's been re-

ally strong through the whole thing."

Although she has been very ill from chemotherapy and radiation treatments, Quintana has not used sick leave since July, 1985. "Ann has been a great example to all of us in the usage of sick leave," Karen Bjerke said. "She comes to work during some difficult times."

"When I leave to go through those horrible treatments, I always know that my friends will be here at the office waiting to ask me how it went and how I feel," Quintana said.

"As soon as Ann walks into the office the whole place lights up," Belinda Fiero said. "When she's not here, it seems dreary."

Fiero said Ann has gone out of her way to make her know how much she appreciates the things Fiero does. "I try to make sure Ann knows I appreciate her too."

Fiero remembers a time when Quintana was going through chemotherapy. She said Ann was losing some of her hair because of the treatments. "She was sitting at my desk and we were talking about the loss of her hair. I told her not to worry because my hair falls out all the time," Fiero said. "I ran my fingers through my hair to show her. Not one strand came out. Ann has accepted everything so well. She laughed and said, 'You dear thing, you were trying to make me feel better.'" Belinda thought to herself, "Yeah, I was — and I got caught."

Even in an interview over the telephone, I got the feeling that this lady, is loved. Fiero related one more incident when she told me of two houseplants she had that were dying. "Actually, the plants were dead," she said. "I gave them to Ann. She brought them back to life and now one of them is even blooming."

Quintana said the people she works with are always thinking about her needs. "They bring food for my family

and plants and candies and special books for me to read. Once this entire office took turns bringing dinner to my home."

Bjerke said she met Quintana on her first day at DDOU about eight years ago. "Ann was expecting her little boy Andy at the time," she said. "This could have given Ann an excuse to slow down in her work, but instead she worked circles around everyone else. She was very concerned that someone else might have to do extra work because of her."

"I remember when she worked on the DWASP Test Team. She worked very hard to make this program a success. She felt this was a good program that would benefit everyone else. It's because of people like Ann that DWASP was a success."

One of the most important things to Quintana about her friends at work is that she can come to work and have fun, and still be treated like the same person she has always been. "Because they treat me like the same person, I feel like the same person," she said. "They don't shower me with pity, they're just genuinely concerned."

"Ann is a person that we all have to look up to," Judy Luthy said. "I have a lot of feelings for her and a lot of memories." Luthy is a distribution facilities specialist in Stock Maintenance Division.

Luthy said she has known Quintana for several years. "My daughter and Ann's daughter grew up together. Ann is a very dedicated mother. It's hard to talk about it. It will be difficult not hav-

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DDO fitness center improves health of disabled, too

Christmas comes three times a week for Jana Chesley.

On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, Jana takes advantage of a unique Christmas gift she received from her father last year, John Chesley, with the help of the MWR Physical Fitness Center, gave his daughter the gift of health.

"Everything else seemed so routine," John said. "I thought it would be a neat gift — so I told Jana I'd bring her to the Center to work out three times a week, for one year." John works in Quality Product Audit Division.

While Jana celebrates her father's gift by gaining new found strength, Gloria Child works hard at the Center to strengthen her weakened muscles. Gloria is 15 years old. When she began using the Physical Fitness Center in June, it took her one and a half hours to do a mile around the gym. Today, she can do it in 45 minutes.

"I'm just tickled that we as civilians and our families can use this Center," Gloria's father, Clark Child said. Clark is an instructional systems manager in Depot Systems Management Branch. "This helps us physically as well as mentally."

Leo Comish III is a custodian at DDOU. He walks and plays games at the Center about twice a week. The Fitness Center is a place where Leo says he feels happy.

Jana who is blind, Gloria who is confined to a wheelchair, and Leo who has been deaf since birth, all have something in common. All of them have what it takes to find the strength to sur-



Gloria Child, left, is assisted by Arnie Peart.

dle some limiting barriers in pursuit of health and happiness.

Arnie Peart, a recreation assistant at the Fitness Center, is working with handicapped employees and handicapped dependents. His objective is to attract physically disadvantaged people to participate in a fitness program suited to them.

"Since Jana has been coming to the Fitness Center there has been a big change in her appearance," John said. "Jana keeps her shoulders back and has a better attitude about herself. Jana has always had a good attitude about life, but now she feels good about herself."

Jana is diabetic. She has been blind for over five years. At the age of 19 Jana developed a condition known as Diabetic Retinopathy which caused her to go partially blind. Soon after the diagnosis Jana developed glauco-

ma. She then went completely blind.

"I remember when the doctor told me I was going to be blind," Jana said. "I just sat there and looked at him. I thought, am I dreaming?" Jana learned about the condition of her eyes in July. "I spent the rest of the summer in

my room crying," she said.

Five years later, Jana, with the help of her family, neighbors and guide dog, Kelda, has learned to deal with her blindness.

"Sometimes I hate myself for thinking this way," Jana said, "but sighted people are so lucky."

Jana is the only girl in a family with six children. She maintains her own apartment and attends Weber State College in Ogden. She is working toward a degree in journalism.

"It seems like exercising at the Fitness Center is affecting my brain," Jana said. "I seem to be able to find deeper meaning in things that are taught in my classes. I don't get as easily depressed and it has helped my self-esteem."

Jana's father coaches her at the Fitness Center and helps her to concentrate on exercising major muscle groups. Jana said she likes to lift weights. Her favorite exercise is leg extensions. "When I first came here, I was lifting the plate on the leg extension machine. Now I can lift 60 pounds.

The exercise I'm doing, is doing some good."

Jana said Peart has been one driving force in her will to keep exercising. "Arnie gave me an 'Arnie Rock' when I first came here," Jana said. "He told me that when I don't have the strength to come work out, I can just rub my Arnie Rock and it will give me the extra strength I need." She added, "Sometimes it's hard to make myself come here but I always feel better when I do."

Peart has studied and applied physical fitness for 35 years. He has completed several medically oriented correspondence courses and in the past has worked with the McKay Dee Hospital Wellness Crew. This year Peart and his wife, LeeAnn, participated in a sign language class taught on Depot through the H.E.L.P. Program.



"Sometimes these kids come in here feeling bad about them-

selves," Peart said. "They're shy or afraid to open themselves up to us. Now kids like Jana and Gloria come here with big smiles on their faces and I can see they're really trying. I guess that's where I get my reward."

"Gloria has always wanted to be able to move around like the other kids," Gloria's mother, Beverly, said. "I remember when Gloria was little, she had been watching the other children playing on a tricycle. She kept insisting that if the tricycle would go for them, she could make it go too. I finally put her on it. I stood behind her so she wouldn't see me crying. She couldn't make it go."

Gloria was born with a condition called Spina Bifida or Open Spine. She is recently recovering from an operation performed in January where metal rods were used to help strengthen her spine. "She needs to start building

See **FITNESS** on 13

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