



Gifts of Love

Couple Requests Donations to ACC on Wedding Day

When Monica and Sid Sandstrom of Jamestown exchanged their wedding vows in March, they celebrated their commitment to each other in a very memorable ... and non-materialistic ... way.

The couple decided to forgo the traditional wedding gifts such as plates, linens and crystal. Instead, they asked family and friends to make donations to the couple's non-profit employers. Monica (Brewer) Sandstrom is on staff at the Anne Carlsen Center (ACC). Her husband, Sid, is employed by Youth for Christ.

Their unconventional request has touched the hearts of many.

"These two are so special for giving in this way to the Anne Carlsen Center," says Shelley Nannenga, ACC's Planned Giving Specialist. "We are so blessed to have Monica as a part of our staff. This really reiterates who our employees are, and the love they have for our students."

"My first reaction was that it was pretty different," says Sid. "But that is Monica. Her heart is totally into that. And when I thought about it, this is how we are as a couple. Gifts aren't the number one thing with us."

Love at First Sight

Sid graduated from Jamestown College in May 2008. When he returned to his hometown of Elma, Wash., for his graduation party, he met Monica—who had been invited there by a mutual friend—for the first time. The two connected instantly.

When Sid went back to Jamestown to work for Youth for Christ, an inter-denominational Christian ministry, he and Monica kept in touch by phone. The relationship continued to blossom, and in October, Monica—who was working as a CNA and physical therapy aid in Hillsboro, Oregon—decided to follow her heart to Jamestown. She began working as a Life Skills Assistant at ACC in November, and in December, Sid asked her to marry him. While discussing plans for their nuptials, the two decided they wanted to make a big difference on their big day.

"We were in Target looking for a DVD player, and Sid had talked about registering," recalls Monica. "We started talking about all the time and money that could be put towards a better purpose. Sure, it isn't a bad thing to honor people with gifts at their wedding, but we wanted to better someone else's life for the greater good."

The wedding took place on March 21 in Aberdeen, Wash. Guests had been notified of the couple's philanthropic plans when wedding invitations were mailed out. A small card was tucked into the envelope with the other ceremony information. The card explained the couple's wishes, as well as their goals of "living simply so others can simply live."

Wedding guests responded to the couple's selfless request in earnest. Some enclosed their donations in wedding cards;

others visited the Center's website at www.annecenter.org to make their gift online.

"Some people think it is different, the other half think it is pretty cool," says Monica.

Caring for Kids

While Monica and Sid have helped raise funds for the Anne Carlsen Center and Youth for Christ, they are also helping spread awareness of the important roles of each organization.

"(At the Anne Carlsen Center), I enjoy watching the kids learn and develop new skills," says Monica. "It's fun to see the students make so much progress. I appreciate how proactive the staff is in helping each child."

As an ACC Life Skills Assistant, Monica helps guide children and young adults with a wide range of disabilities. Her responsibilities include assisting individuals in their everyday tasks, helping students find ways to interact in the community, and teaching social graces and appropriate behaviors. Monica's supervisors at ACC say she has excelled in her position and quickly become a vital member of the team.

"She is a wonderful worker who cares about kids, teens and young adults," says Tabitha Fletcher, RN, the River's Bend Home Coordinator. "She keeps active with them throughout the day. You can tell she loves what she does."

Because of her skills and dedication, Monica was recently promoted to the position of Home Team Leader.

"She is one of the primary LSAs now," says Fletcher. "That is not common for someone who has been here for just a few months. She'll be a great advocate for the students."

Meanwhile, Sid is keeping busy with his job at Youth for Christ. His responsibilities include helping provide a safe environment for Jamestown-area youth at "Teen City," an afterschool drop-in center for grades 6-12 that offers a host of recreational activities.

As the couple starts their life together, they know the values they share have already had a positive impact on the lives of many. They hope to inspire others to give from the heart to help nurture abilities and change young lives forever.

You can donate online using our secure Web site, www.annecenter.org. Or, send your gift of love in the enclosed envelope. For information about planned giving options, complete the request form on the inside of the back cover. Thank you for making a lasting and meaningful difference in the lives of individuals with disabilities.



Monica Sandstrom, an ACC Home Team Leader, helps 6-year-old Simona count how many days are in the month of February.

New to the Tree

Members of this group have made significant lifetime gifts to support the Anne Carlsen Center. They are recognized on our Tree of Life—a work of art and focal point at the Center, with leaves, apples, stones and clouds bearing the names of those who have given.

The Tree of Life recognizes those who have given at least \$5,000 in their lifetime to the Center. In 2008, 31 individuals and businesses became part of this tribute.

As the Tree of Life continues to thrive, these donors are helping the remarkable individuals we serve do the same.

Those who joined the Tree in 2008 are:

Zona A. McArthur Estate	Dakota Medical Foundation	Noridian
Melvin H. Myhre Estate	Mr. J. K. Benson	Alina Stevenson Estate
Mr. Alvin C. Nordsven	Cora M. Odland Estate	Mrs. Elizabeth Munson
Mr. Wayne A. Stroup	Midland National Individual	Jeffrey and Lucinda Malm
Kathleen D. Pretty Estate	Matching Gift Program	St. John's Lutheran Sunday School
Albert Carlsen	Rev. Jo Anne Moeller	Health Care Insurance Services
Ms. Roselyn Lueck	Marvin and Georgie Mechtel	Mrs. Iris E. Henning
Ellantena F. Buchanan Estate	Nathan and Emily Spickler	Walz Pharmacy, Inc.
Mr. Erwin L. Herdahl	Tim Dwyer	Ms. Mary Gray
Florence Putterman Foundation	Sr. Farm Account	Leevers Foods, Inc.
Montana Dakota Utilities	Eva Dwyer	
Dakota Central Telecommunications Cooperative	James and Dorothy Powers	