

Volunteer in the Spotlight: *Katie Haring*

In every issue, we interview one of our many outstanding adult leaders, so they can share with us something about their lives and what motivates them. We spoke with **Katie Haring**, paymaster and webmaster for the Chesty Puller Young Marines based in Akron, Ohio. She has been volunteering with the program for eight years.

Q: What got you involved?

It was really my stepson who got me involved. He had gone to Space Camp in Huntsville, as an individual camper, and he met Young Marines there. When he returned he told his dad and me, "I have to join Young Marines"! And shortly after that he told us we had to get involved too. We hesitated at first, and asked him to prove to us his commitment. Well, he made lance corporal in one year, so then we had to join up.

Q: Did your own background prepare you for this role?

My undergrad major was in recreation management, and I'd also been a special events coordinator, so that has helped. But more important, I get along with people really well, I'm a people person. Being paymaster, at recruiting time I tell parents if they need any extra help for their kids, such as help paying their dues, we will just help them make it work. I think being easygoing, not overly serious all the time, also makes it easy to work with other families.

Q: What changes have you seen in the kids?

I'm amazed as I watch how they become such leaders, cheering on the younger ones for instance and becoming so mature. My stepson is an example: He's 21 now and he is in the Air Force as a firefighter, something he always wanted to be. Young Marines helped him acquire terrific leadership skills.

One girl came into our unit timid and shy and afraid of adults. Well, in the last year she has become the first one to shout at the end of unit meetings, "Goodnight, sir!" – and she's just 11. She talks about the program at her school all the time, and now three of her young friends are coming to join up.

Q: What have you taken charge of that you might want to brag about?

Being a special events coordinator, I asked if I could please take charge of the Young Marine Ball in October. Now I direct the silent auction, the d.j., the caterers – and I go all out with it. We have a different theme each time, and the kids go home with special gifts. They get a chance to get all dressed up in way they don't usually get to, and they love it.

Q: Advice for other adults considering getting involved?

In our unit, we're actually looking for more adults now, since some staff have retired. I know parents often feel "stuck" with not enough time in their lives to volunteer, but in our unit we can usually match their available time to something we need done. I like to tell parents, they might as well stick around after dropping their kids off—some drive 40 minutes each way – so that they can share something with the kids. It's easy for our new parents to learn the program, because our unit commander is so helpful in getting them trained.



Katie Haring

• WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Gregory Moreno, formerly a Young Marine with Temecula Valley and Douglas County Young Marines, graduated from Marine Corps Basic Training at MCRD San Diego on Jan. 28th, 2011. Receiving the rank of PFC upon graduation, he immediately went to Camp Pendleton to complete his training, after which he will head to Missouri for his occupational specialty training. PFC Moreno was honored at his graduation ceremony by the presence of Young Marines National Director Michael Kessler and others from the national staff.



Dave Adams, Young Marines Director for Training & Education and Karen Lenker, Assistant Director for Training & Education were present to congratulate PFC Greg Moreno at his Marine Corps graduation.