

Karen Green

Owed to Havre de Grace ...

I was born along this river
And from here I've never strayed
My body might have wandered
But my heart has always stayed...

~ Karen Green

Right up front I'll admit that Karen Green is one of the special people that I truly admire. Not because she's perfect! But because she's brilliant, talented, hilarious, persistent, a team-player, and truly a humanitarian! I don't believe I've met a person who, while being so unassuming, accomplishes such a great deal. (Maybe that is the lesson for the rest of us!)

Many folks in our community know Karen as the Havre de Grace Parks & Recreation Specialist. Well, we just know she runs the show. And with the new Havre de Grace Activity Center at 351 Lewis Lane, she also is now the building manager. No small task!

A story that describes the fondness many have for Karen came from Terri Glenn, who helps operate the Senior Center within the HdG Activity Center. Terri's son, Shawn met Karen when he was about 3 years old. That very first day he offered her a stick of gum. They've been buddies ever since. Karen shared that even when she was out sick, he'd mail her gum and LifeSavers™ so that she'd get well quickly.



Karen Green

Shawn is now 16 and during the summer was helping with camps at Harford Community College. And as Karen shared this, she opened her desk drawer, pulled out a pack of gum, grinned and said, "From Shawn."

The kids that enjoy Karen's support have great respect for her. She's fair and forthright. Whatever the rules are for the kids — go for the grownups! If the kids can't take food into a particular area, she'll tell the adults the same rule. This act alone has earned her a very positive response from the young people at the Center.

Throughout the year the Center offers more than 60 programs that include a variety of sports, dance and drama activities. The Activity Center is also responsible for the Halloween Parade and the Easter Egg Hunt. Of course, Karen will be the first to tell you that without

the dedicated volunteers, very few of these programs would be possible.

Karen has many facets to that gem of a personality. She has volunteered 20+ years at the Hopkins Children Center, including training volunteers for the RadioThon and TeleThon fundraisers.

She's spent the same number of years as an adult volunteer for our local S.M.I.L.E.S group. And somewhere in all that activity, she actually ran her own catering business for 5 years. She mentioned creating an 8-tier octagonal cake created with no flour! (Kind of makes me feel rather lazy!)

Karen loves being around the theater and has chaired the Phoenix Festival Theater Advisory Board. When Quackers Productions was operating in Havre de Grace, she was stage manager. She smiles and says, "I really enjoyed that job."

Then there's the savvy, wise, and humorous Karen that I've grown to appreciate through her writing. She's a brilliant woman who loves to write poetry.

Life Stages

Lately, I find myself saying, "When I was young..."

So, what am I now?

Was there a day I failed to note, when I passed to another year, another plane,

To something other than the world I knew

Will I one day say, "When I was old..."

Because if I am neither young or old

What will I have become?

Perhaps I should say, before I became one with the earth or just prior to becoming a dust bunny...

Maybe I should just live in the moment

Not thinking of what I was or what I might have been

And then, I can just enjoy being me and if I can't

I'll have a hot bowl of soup and a cup of tea or a big scoop of ice cream with chocolate sauce and marshmallows and ...

I'm sorry, what was the topic...

~ Karen Green — 7/19/07 — Express Yourself

Speaker? Oh, did I mention speaker? Well, I should have because Karen has spoken for many organizations and is always a hit! And organizer? Oh, yes, she's coordinated events, fundraisers, dedications—well, just too many to mention here.

After learning of Karen's many and varied interests and skills, I had to ask what brought her to this Parks & Rec. position more than 25 years ago. Karen shared this story.

"As a child I had always been involved in Parks and Rec. programs. In college, I became a junior counselor. Following college, I worked for the State of Maryland in the Drug and Alcohol Program.

"One day, a man pulled a hunting knife on me! The police took 20 minutes to respond (not in Havre de Grace). During

that time I did a bit of bargaining with God, "If I get out of this, I'll do something different and meaningful with my life."

She survived the ordeal unscathed, though never quite forgetting the fear. Shortly after, her dad handed her an application for the Harford County Parks and Recreation Department. She remembers reading it and thinking, "Oh my, this sounds like a bookkeeping job!" She kept reading about the reports to be filed, etc.

Over 25 years later, Karen is still keeping the kids active, on a straighter path, and smiling every day. I'm not sure we really want to thank 'the man who pulled the knife on her.' But we definitely want to thank God for listening to her plea and giving her the opportunity to touch so many lives in our community. 🙏

NOTE: *Below are three more facets of this beautifully spirited lady.*

Me and Brudder Gregg

Once,

We Al Caponed our way to the creek

Drew our water guns

And shot down all the ants

On the south side ...

~ Karen Green

This Mourning

Outside, the wind propositions the trees
The cats in the alley sing their wanton blues

And me, I sing my siren song

Tonight, only the carpet

Climbs my stairs

~ Karen Green

Daddy Quit Your Second Job

A T-bone steak

Will never take

The place of Daddy, home

Eating nice

Don't pay the price

Of being here, alone.

~ Karen Green