

Ronald Reigelsperger



Ron has been employed by the Montgomery County Juvenile Court for 27 years. After three years as a traditional Probation Officer (PO) he requested a transfer into Building Bridges because he believed he could make a greater impact on the lives of Court-involved youth within the advocacy structure of this program. He has been with Building Bridges/Community Based Services Program ever since, and is currently the Supervisor for the Community Based Services Unit.

Throughout his 25 years working for and supervising the Building Bridges (BB) component of Community Based Services, Ron never rested on his laurels. He constantly strove for more for each youth and family. If a youth was not responding to his direction and plan, he changed the direction. If the youth was responding, Ron pushed harder to further engage him/her. Ron thought and interacted with each of his Probationers the same way he did to each of his own children.

If the job took seven years as it did with Buddy, then Ron gave it at least seven years of time and attention. Ron still has contact and gives support to Buddy (five years later) and Julie (aged 30 now and working in a responsible position within the private sector) and Eddie (aged 25, married, father of two and working in the field of security.) Christa, age 29, once a BB kid, now works as a Work Therapy Specialist helping today's troubled kids. **Childhood is a resource Ron will not allow to be squandered.** Watching these young people learn to trust again and grow because someone now cares is the motivation to his success.

Within the first year of functioning as a Building Bridges Probation Officer, Ron also "took on" the running of the Work Therapy Groups, supervising volunteers and coaching BB ball teams. Two years later he had his eight-year-old son along on the weekends while he ran wholesome sporting activities for inner-city kids. Two more years saw him with his son still along while he ran a weekly work therapy group for children with mental retardation and developmental disabilities at Stillwater Hospital. That same year he organized a downtown jogging group for inner-city youth. As his own family grew he added his daughter and youngest son into the interactive mix. The result has been some long-lasting close relationships with the youth of Montgomery County and his personal family.

Each year Ron added new programming features to better serve not only the youth of our county but their families as well. Ron expanded the Residential Alternatives Program to serve non-adjudicated youth and their at-risk families as a diversion effort to official Court involvement. This family advocacy program works directly with the families to give help in the areas of economic need, parenting, parent's personal needs as well as providing objective feedback and direction for youth.

Ron has worked for years with service clubs to recruit volunteers as well as financial support for the BB/Community Based Services programming. Single handedly he has run the Moraine Lyceum Society's Tutoring Program for Kids, the college intern program, a girl's volleyball league, staff-kid biathlons and the yearly Talent Show.

It is Ron's creative zeal that has enthused his staff and a group of five probationers to build a canoe and take it on a one-week camping trip in Canada, to build a VW Bug and raffle it off (the proceeds going back into the program), to get a Work Therapy group to clean out a carriage house for the Opera Guild and attend a dress rehearsal of the Barber of Seville recently. He is constantly willing to expand kids' horizons and improve their self-esteem. This man has dedicated his life to the philosophy of **"making things happen"** for kids and families in Montgomery County.

Ron shares his enthusiasm and motivation with his staff, volunteers and interns making his attitude truly "contagious". Volunteers remain involved with the program even after they've relocated to other cities. They offer support in terms of finances, invite groups to their new home for three or four days, etc. Interns enjoy their experience so much that they routinely apply for and secure jobs as Probation Officers and Work Specialists within Montgomery County. His staff go so far above and beyond their job descriptions that two of them received the employee of the year awards. Ron promotes growth in everyone he works with.

His daughter Mandy now helps him run the annual weeklong camping trip within the Court. His son Curt participates in the biathlons. His oldest son, Brad now follows in Ron's footsteps as a PO in Greene County. His long term effect on some of the probationers referred to him long ago can be seen whenever they call and share their desire to give back to the community some of the help they were given in earlier years. The refrain heard consistently from them shows why he deserves the Award:

***"He stuck with me through thick and thin,
he never gave up on me."***