

2016 Benedictine Service Award

Debby (Beumer) Bradley '86

By living according to Saint Benedict's Rule, members of a community like ours cultivate love of God, neighbor and self through listening, worship and balanced, humane living. For Debby Bradley of the class of 1986, those early lessons in Benedictine living helped shape a remarkable life of service and caring.

Debby is the chaplain and director of foundation and marketing at St. Crispin Living Community in Red Wing, Minn. There, she has led her team through the development and implementation of a palliative care approach for those with chronic and serious illnesses. As a result, she was nationally recognized by *Provider Magazine* in 2014 in its article "20 to Watch."

Palliative care focuses on providing relief from the symptoms and stress of serious illnesses. The goal is to improve quality of life for both the patient and the family. According to Debby, what is vital is showing true compassion for the patient, while providing training, when needed, for family and friends to help their loved ones by doing the same. She firmly believes that even if a patient is dying, there is always the possibility of depth and meaning in the last days and moments of life.

"I feel these people are going through this journey no matter what," she explains. "The fact that they allow me to be a part of their experience and time is really an honor to me."

While her work at St. Crispin has been rich in service, it's just the beginning of the list of Debby's involvement. Debby worked for 24 years in faith formation. She volunteered extensively with CARE (Cancer Assistance Resource and Encouragement), working with terminally ill children. She volunteers on the board of the Faith in Action group in Red Wing, and she is the host of a local radio show called "Senior Smarts."

Debby wrote a children's book series about the Catholic sacraments called "Sophie Wonders" because, while working in faith formation, she felt frustrated at not being able to find good books on the subject for kids. "I wanted something to tell kids simply how it is," she says, "like a mom talking to her kids." She wrote the books she wanted and, years later, found a publisher who agreed to print them just as she'd imagined.

In addition, Debby volunteers on the Board at the Minnesota Correctional Facility in Red Wing. While there, she developed a video-and-discussion-based program called "Spirit Quest." The intent of the program is "to help the guys see they are not alone. They don't have to face the future by themselves—that they matter, they are a part of God's plan and they belong," says Debby.

Debby feels deep satisfaction in her relationship with God and has always felt the presence of God as her companion on the journey. Her time at Saint Ben's gave her a Benedictine context with which to express that satisfaction.