

Remarks by Barbara Cutrone 2011 Huntington Foundation Spirit Award Honoree

Thank you all for coming tonight. HFEE is such a worthwhile organization. I know many people worked diligently on tonight's affair, but I would like to single out my friend Karen Dwyer for all of her hard work, great smiles and contagious enthusiasm. I would like to thank my husband, Frank, my children, Sam, Jamie and Jack and my family and friends for being here tonight. I could not imagine receiving this honor without you here.

I began volunteering in the district 17 years ago. Like many of you I started in the PTA. I was the membership chair at Flower Hill; thus started my long career of hitting people up for money. I had the great pleasure of working with wonderful parents, teachers, principals and administrators. I cherish the memories and friendship I have made along the way.

As I got more involved, I got to know the librarians, nurses, secretaries, custodians, building and grounds crew, coaches and security personnel. I have come to realize how many individuals it takes to run our district and how important everyone's contributions are. The dedication and devotion of the parent volunteers and school personnel are inspiring. All of my positive experiences have endeared the Huntington School District and the town of Huntington to me. In a town where residency is often measured in generations, volunteering for the schools has helped me forge an enduring connection. Huntington is my home and I am so fortunate to have met so many wonderful people on this journey.

When my son Sam was a junior, Huntington Athletics had an unrivaled year. We won the football championship, and the lacrosse state championship, Boys' basketball County Championship and Katy Larkin won State Swimming titles. Coach Muller asked me to help raise money for the football team. He wanted to make sure everyone on the team got a championship ring. It only took 3 years for it to dawn on me, that we didn't have an active Booster Club. I went to Mrs. McCarthy and that started the ball rolling. Many people helped us get started. HFEE was a big sister to us and lent its support whenever asked. Diana Ruggiero donated her time and skill setting up all the financial aspects of a 501c corporation and Jean Hegler was instrumental in the legal paperwork and there was a lot of paperwork. Without them there would not be a Booster Club or at the very least, I might be in jail.

Everything the Booster Club has accomplished in the last 5 years has been a collective effort and I would like to recognize the original & current board members, of the Booster Club, please stand or at least wave when I call your name:

Chris Duffy
Chris Beck
Barbara Napolitano

Bill Hughes
Timmy Pillion
MaryAnne Hicks
Jodi Biernacki

Steve Thompson . . .

. . . and especially Christina Plant and Carol Scully, who have gone over and above all expectations.

I would also like to thank Georgia McCarthy, Jim Hoops and Paul Rispoli for their invaluable help.

The Huntington Booster Club has been a wonderful experience. The personal satisfaction I have received from working with the Booster Board, Mrs. McCarthy, administration and the coaches have been immeasurable. I hope some parents with younger children will take over the reins and keep it going and growing.

I also share this award with my husband Frank better known as Coach Frank. Frank started volunteering the same time I did. He coached lacrosse for Sam's age group for Cold Spring Harbor/Huntington Lacrosse. He was on the original board of Huntington Village Lacrosse and coached Jack's teams for many years. Frank was not only a coach but a friend, mentor, father figure and fan to many of these players.

So Frank and I would like to thank you for being our friends, for being there for our children and thank you for letting us play a small part in your children's lives.

Have fun and go Blue Devils. Let's go Jets.