

Cindy Cramer Jesinger

During the week of Mother's Day, I can think of no finer mentor to honor than our own Web Site Coordinator, Cindy Jesinger. Working daily with Dr. Murray and/or me as we build and expand the National Venturing Youth Cabinet Website, Cindy literally keeps us all on the same page.

When Cindy Cramer was a young girl, she was convinced she was a Cub Scout, because she was the only girl to whom Santa brought a present during her brother's Cub Scout Christmas party! Undaunted by her inability to join Scouting, Cindy excelled as a member of Camp Fire Girls, earning their highest honor, the Wohelo Medallion.



When her son entered first grade, Cindy could not wait to resume her interrupted career in Scouting. She became a Tiger Cub Coach. Although her son is now a "cow" or rising senior at West Point, Cindy is still active in Scouting, serving on the Executive Committee and Executive Board of Snake River Council and advising a Venturing Crew whose members attend Harvard, Yale, West Point, Harvey Mudd, Boston College... and at the local high schools. The Crew is now celebrating its "fourth generation" of members.

Cindy has a unique gift. She is a dream facilitator, encouraging youth to dream and have courage to share their dreams. Once verbalized, she tirelessly works to help them reach their dreams. Cindy believes youth must set the bar for themselves. She says if adults do it, we could all attend a great limbo; if youth set the bar, we get to watch a fantastic high jump.

Among adults, Cindy is the ultimate "networker". She is a recognized clearinghouse for youth opportunities. Executives from corporations around the country call her home as they arrange for flag ceremonies or youth volunteers for their conventions. The local Chamber of Commerce simply refers such requests to Cindy.

In addition to serving on the Executive Board and Committee and advising a Crew #192 in the Snake River Council, Cindy advises the newly formed Crew #192 in the Ore Ida Council (she hates to sew on numbers, so Ore-Ida arranged for the new crew to bear the same numbers!). Cindy is the Publicity Chairman for the Snake River Council, as well as the Assistant Advisor for their VOA. She remains a Committee Member for her son's erstwhile Troop #192 in the Snake River Council and is a Merit Badge Counselor. Cindy was on the faculty of the Philmont Training Center during Venturing Week in 2005, teaching Kodiak/Kodiak X. She also served as faculty for the Kodiak/Kodiak X course at the Brinton Center at Sea Base in 2005. Cindy has been/is the Course Director for three Kodiaks and an instructor for a fourth this summer. Annually, Cindy writes the Report to the Governor for the Snake River Council and assists youth in their presentation. Cindy introduced the Presidential Service Award to the Snake River Council, resulting in ten presentations to youth and adults in 2005.

Cindy's involvement in Boy Scouts is outstanding, and then there is her volunteer work in Girl Scouts of the USA. In addition to serving as the Advisor of Troop #611, she is the Chairman of the Gold Award Committee for the Girl Scouts of Silver Sage Council (parts of three states). She was the founding Advisor for the Council's south central Teen Advisory Committee, and has served as Association Chairwoman as well as Association Nomination

Coordinator. Within her Service Unit, Cindy serves as registrar and delegate to the annual meetings. She trains advisors and Girl Scouts in the Gold Award Process and writes letters of recommendation for senior Girl Scouts as they apply to colleges and for scholarships.

Cindy serves as President of the Congressional Award Board of Idaho's Board of Directors. She has advised Idaho youth for several years and now advises youth around the nation in this prestigious program.

Wagon Days, the largest non-motorized parade in the Northwestern United States, has been featured in numerous national publications. The highlight of the parade is the last existing authentic ore wagon (like in the old 20-mule team Borax commercial). Cindy chairs the overnight camp for the parade participants and sits on the steering committee for the event.

For the Community School, Cindy costumed high school productions of Hamlet, Boys from Syracuse, The Crucible and Pirates of Penzance. For several years, Cindy served as co-chair or department head of the largest recycling event in the Wood River Valley, the weekend Community School Garage Sale, netting \$100,000 to support school programs. Cindy arranged for BSA's Snake River Council to close out the sales, picking up unsold merchandise for their Wood Badge garage sales the same month each year.

Cindy served on the Board of the Trailing of the Sheep Festival, developing and implementing a youth art and writing program. When the festival became a 501C3, Cindy was its first president. She was a past secretary/treasurer of the Ketchum Sun Valley Ski and Heritage Museum.

As a Red Cross volunteer, Cindy joined the local LEPC and was a Disaster Action Team representative. Cindy has assisted as a chef and server at the local soup kitchen since 1998.

Cindy was the chairwoman of the first parish directory of the twinned parishes of Our Lady of the Snows and St. Charles. Within Our Lady of the Snows, she has served as Hospitality Coordinator, Lector, Eucharistic Minister, Bereavement Committee Member, Religious Education Teacher, and Liturgy Committee Member.

Cindy has received awards from many organizations. The three that meant the most to her were the Eagle Scout Mentor Pin from Connor Joseph Wade, the Silver Beaver, and the Ketchum/Sun Valley Chamber of Commerce Volunteer of the Year.

Cindy spent years studying at St. Louis University, earning a B.A. in Psychology, a M.A. in Urban Affairs and taking numerous graduate courses in Art History, Business Administration, before embarking upon doctoral studies in Higher Education Administration.

Cindy's son, Joe, wrote this about his mother for an application to college:

The young girl sat in the front row of the bus, afraid to breathe. After a four-hour Russian border delay, the KGB official finally boarded the bus. The girl was a veteran of many difficult border crossings, but this time it was different. The Soviet's war against foreign literature and religious items exceeded our war against drugs. The punishment was harsh; she was a smuggler of ideas, carrying banned books to eager recipients. Having previously removed the covers and title pages, she surrendered them to the guard. Appearing bored with the tattered books, he tossed them back. She exhaled. The KGB

never knew that the "plump" Catholic girl was padded with Jewish religious items belted around her lower torso.

Meet my mother, Cindy Cramer Jesinger, the major influence in my life. Her life has been one of which novels are written. From smuggling literature and religious artifacts into the Soviet Union in 1977 to visiting Grenada during a revolution and working at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, at times this spirited, strong-willed woman seems out of place in rural Idaho.

From the time that Cindy Cramer pursued a doctorate in higher education administration in the 70's, she became obsessed with the importance of balance in life. From the ancient Greeks to Thomas Jefferson's design of colleges, generations understood the necessity of balancing intellectual, physical, service and spiritual activities. In rearing her children, she applied centuries of wisdom. While we owned numerous televisions, my sister and I were not allowed to watch them, unless there was an educational special or news event. Instead, we were supplied with numerous magazines, a library of books and daily papers. We were challenged to read, create art, or play outside. Our art room was fully stocked; we participated in numerous athletic activities; our yard was the locus of neighborhood games. As a result, I became a voracious reader and would-be inventor. My childhood was idyllic.

Concerned that her children, living in an affluent neighborhood in the United States, could not understand the needs of our world, mom exposed us to countries less fortunate than ours. From age six until fifteen, every summer I traveled to places like Sadia, Morocco, within feet of the treacherous Algerian border, where American children had not visited in over twenty years. I learned to play soccer without shoes, like my neighbors in Morocco.

Today, few people know of her alternative methods of child rearing or her wild adventures. Cindy Cramer Jesinger is a dedicated community volunteer in Sun Valley, Idaho. Not content to leave her family at home while helping others, she involved us in her activities, taking pride in our service, delighting when organizations asked for our help instead of hers.

Once, when asked to describe my mother, I responded without thinking: "She is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent." I spent years becoming an Eagle Scout; mom had long since incorporated their values. She is what I aspire to be.

I am pleased to know this amazing woman. I am honored to work with her on this Web Site. Most of all, I am proud to be her daughter. Happy Mother's Day, Mumzy!

Love, Amy & Joe