

Northwest University's Student Magazine

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## MARY'S CAF MENU: MODELING JESUS' LOVE

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By Alayna Wood

Photo by Jake Campbell



Students walking in to "the Caf" between 8:30am and 2:30pm Monday through Friday are warmly greeted by Mary Neufeld's bright smile. Neufeld, 71, has been working at Northwest University since 2009.

Neufeld said she came to NU amidst economic downturn, wanting to find a job where she could work part time and supplement her social security. It was through this search that she found a Craigslist ad for the position at NU.

"I thought, 'that's something I could do. I love kids, I have grandkids in college and that would be okay,'" Neufeld said.

Neufeld said while her job is a humble one, she finds joy in working with the staff and interacting with the students as they grow.

"The students come in young and innocent and then four years later they're graduating and going out into the world," Neufeld said "I just love seeing the progression."

The feeling is mutual as students speak very highly of her.

"If there is one person I look forward to seeing when I go to lunch at the Caf, it's Mary," said junior Jonathan Ferguson. "Putting up with all these college students day after day deserves some recognition."

Neufeld said she tries to show Jesus to NU students through her actions and demeanor by striving to be friendly and positive to everyone she meets.

Candy Arenas, junior, has experienced Neufeld's kindness in action on a regular basis. Arenas, who is legally blind, said she appreciates Neufeld's friendly attitude and personable demeanor towards the students. Neufeld can often be seen assisting Arenas as she gets her lunch and finds a table.

"She always helps me at lunch. We go through the line together and she tells me what is on the main line. If I want something from the grill, she will take me there to that part," said Arenas. "When she helps me go outside when I'm done, sometimes she will tell me stories of what happened to her on the weekend."

Beyond students' appreciation, Neufeld is a highly valued co-worker.

"I think Mary is wonderful," said Ed Norman, Caf manager. "She is such a kind, caring and generous person that I often strive to be more like her."

Neufeld said the biggest learning experience for her has been learning patience and experiencing the diversity of the students through her interactions with them.

"It can be difficult sometimes, and it has been a learning curve for me, just seeing the different cultures," Neufeld said. "I've worked in many companies, but I haven't worked so directly, talking each day with so many different cultures. So that's been a learning

experience and a good one for me."

Overall, Neufeld hopes that she can be remembered for being there for her family and those who need her and for being a person who loved those around her.

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