

June 3, 2016

Sheli Fulcher Koontz promotes 'Day of Service'

Sheli Fulcher Koontz has been working on a service project as president of the Idaho Trial Lawyers Association. The event is called a "Single Day of Service" campaign, which encourages participation in community service project that can satisfy a community need in a single day. Last fall, ITLA partnered with United Way in its "Day of Caring" event in Coeur d'Alene, by sending a team of volunteers to participate in various service projects held throughout the community on a single day.

Asked how she got involved with such a program, Sheli responded with this description:

"As ITLA President, I outlined a plan to increase our presence as a trial lawyer organization in our communities in a positive way, by doing something good for others. The idea was finding needs in local communities that could be met through a "Single Day of Service."

"The first Single Day of Service was held in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho on 24 September 2015. I participated with a team of enthusiastic ITLA members from the firm of Owens, McCrea & Linscott PLLC in the United Way of Kootenai County's "Community Day of Caring." At this annual event, teams of individuals from various businesses in the local area take a day off from work to perform service projects in the community and raise money for the United Way. The teams range from banks, architect firms, and title companies to retail sales and restaurants. The service projects include painting, clean-ups, deliveries, construction, etc.

"Our seven-member ITLA team was assigned to load and deliver cords of split fire wood to low income seniors who qualified for wood delivery through ElderHelp of North Idaho. With four pickup trucks, we loaded and hauled approximately 25 loads of firewood to seniors living in Coeur d'Alene, Rathdrum, Athol, Spirit Lake, Bayview, and Hayden. I would also like to point out that all of this was done by five women and two men in less than eight hours! We worked hard all day and had a great time sporting our Team ITLA t-shirts. The recipients of our efforts were both grateful and very interested in ITLA as a result. Mission accomplished.

"ITLA will continue to work with the United Way on future service projects throughout Idaho. In the meantime, the ITLA has embarked on another Single Day of Service event known as the ITLA Bike Helmet Safety Project, which was part of the February 2016 Yin & Yang Dinner. ITLA is proud to partner with the Treasure Valley YMCA's Safe Routes to School program, which provides free bike helmets for children in our communities.

"Safe Routes to School gives away approximately 600 bike helmets per year to any child in need of a helmet. No one is turned away, unless the program does not have helmets to give. The cost is approximately \$9.49 each for a helmet that is nearly universal in fit and of good quality. The helmets also have "cool" graphics which encourages a child to wear it, versus just a plain blue or green Styrofoam helmet.

In the 2013-14 academic year, over 650 bike helmets were distributed to over 10,000 school-age children who attended community events, school programs and bike rodeos. The Safe Routes to School program is striving to expand its reach to more children and to distribute even more helmets in the 2015-16 academic year.

The ITLA Bike Helmet Safety Project is seeking donations from Idaho State Bar members and their firms. Your generous, tax-deductible donation will purchase bike helmets for distribution to children who need them. Donations to the ITLA Bike Helmet Safety Project should be made to ITLA directly.

The event and participant satisfaction was very successful. She is also working with United Way of Treasure Valley to create similar events. ITLA has initiated YMCA's Safe Passage to School program to provide bike helmets to kids. YMCA lost a grant that regularly funded this program, so ITLA has stepped in to make up and exceed the current shortfall of bike helmets. The kickoff for this service project will be at the ITLA's Yin & Yang dinner."

Sheli said she hopes the Plaintiff and Defense Bar members will work together for a common goal and benefit the community in a public way.

The Idaho State Bar is conducting a campaign to raise general awareness of the good deeds and admirable qualities of Idaho attorneys. For more information, or to share your community service story, contact ISB Communications Director Dan Black at dblack@isb.idaho.gov

