

Utah County Employee of the Month, January 2015

Karen Fairbanks - Legal Assistant III

Utah County Attorneys Office, Civil Division

After teaching school and working for a Sheriff's Office in Wyoming, Karen brought her three youngest children to Utah County to begin a new chapter in their life. That move eventually brought her to the Utah County Attorneys Office.

Her friendly, sweet demeanor made her the perfect fit to our office. Her first duties in the office included answering the main phone for the division and keeping an unnamed juvenile court prosecutor on task and in line, in addition to various civil division responsibilities. Eventually, she worked her way to the vital position of administrative legal assistant for Civil Division Chief Deputy, Kent Sundberg (aka 'EZ' and/or 'High Maintenance'), where she still resides today. We say resides because Karen spends more time in the office than she does at home. She is always willing to arrive early, miss lunch or stay late to get done what needs done. Anyone that knows anything about Kent's hectic schedule knows he is always in and out of the office. In his absence, Karen sees that his responsibilities here at the County are fulfilled.

In addition to working as Kent's administrative legal assistant, which is more than a full-time job itself, Karen also received the rookie-assignment - "Probation Paul". While excelling at all her other assignments, Karen has been extremely patient in helping him find his way along the sometimes confusing path of working as a new attorney in the civil division. Karen's institutional knowledge has been a priceless asset to Paul through his first few years here. On top of all of that she is a wonderful person and very deserving of the employee of the month award!

Karen's responsibilities, jobs and duties, both assigned and voluntary, require her to work with each and every County department as well as outside entities. She prepares Commission meeting agenda items, agenda's for numerous County boards and acquires or prepares the necessary supporting documentation for each item, more time than not it's at the last minute. Once agreements, ordinances and or resolutions are approved, Karen follows through with getting all signatures and providing the documents to the necessary parties. Certain documents require publication in the local newspapers and Karen meets publication deadlines with ease. She is an ace at scheduling impromptu meetings, coordinating numerous busy schedules. Karen has an excellent working relationship with the County's insurance company, where she initiates and follows through with claims, including, but not limited to, lawsuits filed against the County and property damage claims for County owned vehicles and property. Karen is always willing to step in and help her coworkers when the need arises.

Karen's first priority is her family. It must be noted that Karen's 'family' goes far beyond the biological one. She is a second mom and true friend to many and has too many kids and grandkids to count because no one is turned away. She enjoys art, gardening and music. She has passed these talents on to many others through piano and guitar lessons. Her most recent hobby is water Zumba which she enjoys immensely. Mainly because it is something she does with her daughter regularly.

Please note, this is only a very condensed summary of what Karen is and does. Karen is a valuable asset to Utah County and its employees. Words cannot express how much she is appreciated.

Submitted by the Civil Division of the County Attorneys Office

Photo Courtesy of Mike Stansfield