

Utah County Employee of the Month, January - 2016

Katie Harris - Switchboard Operator

Information Systems

Katie Harris originally started with Utah County in July of 1981 as a "Switchboard Operator." That position was later relocated to the Personnel Office. In 1990 the County experienced an economic downturn which resulted in a Reduction in Force for some positions which included Katie's. Fortunately for the County, she was quickly rehired to the Health Department in January of 1991. She has worked for several different departments during all of her years here, and everyone has benefitted from her being here! She is the kind person on the other end of the telephone line that will help the public get to the right department to answer their questions. She always asks, "Can I help you?", when someone walks into the Admin building, and is the smiling, friendly face they can talk to. She is always pleasant, and happy to help.

She has the best sense of humor! She can tell a story like no other. Katie also has a very tender heart, and really does care about everyone. She always asks how you are doing, and is able to take your mind off the sometimes weighty matters that can be part of working for Utah County. She is compassionate toward everyone, and encourages you to do the best for yourself.

She is the consummate "bar tender" of Utah County. You can see folks from all walks of life at Katie's bar- sharing stories, laughs, and conversations. She helps everyone from visitors seeking a specific department, or an answer to a simple question, to Governors, recording stars, and more. She is often a sounding board for department heads and employees alike.

Paul Wake noted, "There are things that make a workplace pleasant, like county phone books that list people by first names, and open doors even with mighty high officials. And there are things that make workplaces unpleasant, like the sort of impersonal attitude that results in people having to deal with voice mail trees instead of real humans.

Our workplace has a warm welcome for both employees and visitors, and that warm welcome is Katie Harris at the information desk in the lobby of the administration building. People don't come into the administration building and wander around hoping a sign tells them where they need to go. They see Katie at the information desk, and go over there, and she knows just where they should go. And one way or another, she tells them. Katie has been around the county and the community long enough to understand what people need to do to get their problems solved. That same institutional memory makes her interesting for employees to talk to. She also keeps the lobby visually appealing through seasonal displays. County government is a lot more personable and public service oriented with her being there."

Andrea Allen added, "Not many people will tell you "THANK YOU" after you tell them where to go, but in Katie's world, it happens almost every day!! We have so many customers tell us how sweet, kind, and friendly the lady at the information desk is.

Katie is always willing to listen, to share (she provides the Tuesday Commission meeting candy on her own dime), to direct, laugh, and hug anyone who needs a little lift. She can make anyone's day good or bad better! What an asset to Utah County. She is so very deserving of this recognition!"

Several other employees added, "When it comes to information, Katie is the "go to" Guru! Cooking, cleaning, social, medical, you name it! I think she could have been on the advisory board for Ann Landers and Dear Abby! That's what makes Katie so endearing to so many, she truly has touched many lives and has been a tremendous influence to people in and outside of the County."

Marilyn Dye recognizes Katie as one of the first friendly faces she met when she was hired in June of 1988. They worked together in the Personnel Office, and Katie tells everyone she taught Marilyn everything she knows! Marilyn adds, "Katie loves her work, no matter where it is, and makes the entrance of the Administration Building glow with her fun and caring personality! She is not only a special

friend, but an exceptional wife, mother and grandmother!"

Jane Ivie said that "the best advice she ever had was from Katie; Katie told me to "tell at least three people to go to Hell every day!" and she is right!" This spirited, fun lady should be nominated for Employee of the Month.

Nominated by her fan club!