

Wayne Urbaniak & Grandkids

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In 2004, after her book, *A Busy Family's Guide to Volunteering: Do Good, have fun, make a difference as a family*, was published, Jenny Friedman founded a non-profit to bring her vision and passion to life. Jenny is now the Executive Director of Doing Good Together, whose mission is to, “inspire, encourage, and equip families to volunteer together (and to raise children who are compassionate, aware of social issues, and are instilled with a lifelong habit of giving.” To date, the focus of “Doing Good Together” has been the nuclear family, working closely with parents and

children. Jenny and her organization are beginning to see the future of facilitating the powerful grandparent/grandchild partnership to help bring their mission to life. Many retirees have the time, resources, and, certainly, the motivation to spend time with their grandchildren to give back to their communities while passing on a legacy of giving at the same time. Wayne Urbaniak is a retired special education teacher, who, since retiring in 2004, has been delivering Meals on Wheels in South Minneapolis on the same route every Tuesday. Retirement has also given Wayne and his wife, Kathy, more time to spend with their six grandchildren, five who live in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area. Wayne has creatively combined his Meals on Wheels volunteer effort with the love he has for his family by involving his grandchildren. When each grandchild is old enough to buckle and unbuckle his or her own seat belt, they are eligible to help Wayne deliver the meals. Those who have helped him range in age from four to eight. The three-year old, Delaney, has already begun to lobby for wanting to help and will soon. The grandchildren take turns joining Grandpa on the route—even the grandson who lives in Tucson, Arizona looks forward to helping when he is in town. The children love the routine for many reasons. They are proud to be doing the service for those in need, and eight-year-old Landon even presented how the program works to a church group to help influence others to participate. They enjoy the responsibility of helping match the meal recipient's name and address to make sure the right hot meal goes to the right person. And, importantly, they love doing all of this with Grandpa, who takes each Tuesday's helper to lunch after completing the route. Wayne Urbaniak's grandchildren bring meaning to his life and he to theirs. When he and the children join together to give back to those in need, it is, as Wayne says, “a blessing for the people we deliver to and a blessing for our family. Being part of something larger than yourself by giving back to your community will enhance your retirement life. Mixing a healthy measure of giving back with time spent with grandchildren is a recipe for bringing meaning to the lives of both you and your grandchildren.