

COUPLE AWARDED FOR OPENING THEIR HEARTS AND HOME



In November, Divine Word College presented Epworth residents Lloyd and Dianne McDermott with the Matthew 25 Award for their many years of service to the college, as well as people around the world.

Over the past 24 years, the McDermotts have invited 12 international students into their home, including 10 from Divine Word College. With love and support, they provided so much more than a roof over their heads. The couple taught students about American culture and gave them an immersive environment to practice their new English skills. In return, the McDermotts say the students taught them about the cultures of their own countries, which included Japan, South Korea, Haiti, France, the Philippines, Belarus and China. Lloyd and Dianne have also been an important part of the Friends Across Nations Club at Divine Word, serving as a surrogate American family of sorts to international students who live on campus.

The McDermotts' charitable efforts extend outside of DWC, too. After retiring, Lloyd and Dianne decided they wanted to travel and leave a "footprint" behind wherever they went. Since then, they've worked with numerous organizations to pitch in after natural disasters and help people living in poverty both in the U.S. and abroad. During a trip to Haiti, Dianne had an encounter with people who didn't have anything – not even a basic shelter. When she returned home, she organized an effort at St. Patrick's Church in Epworth with the help of the St. Elizabeth Pastorate and managed to raise \$17,000 to fund the construction of a building in that community in Haiti.

Lloyd said that as a boy, he didn't understand why he needed to study geography because he knew he'd never go to any of the places on the world map. Today, he says the experiences of traveling and serving as a host family for international students has allowed him to feel more connected to world issues. Dianne agreed, saying that travel has a way of making the world smaller. "When you go to a country and you see their culture and you meet the people, you can't look at it as just a place on a map anymore," she said. "There are good people wherever you go." The McDermotts have four children and 10 grandchildren but after many years of service and sacrifice, the love of their new extended family stretches across nations.



The Matthew 25 Award was established at DWC in 2001 to honor those in or connected to the area, who minister in the spirit of the Gospel message put forth in Matthew 25:35-36:

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me."