

Success Begins *At Home*

Family means everything to the accomplished recipient of NMB's top national scholarship

SITTING IN A COZY KITCHEN, watching mom hand-squeeze lemons to make fresh lemonade seems a bit like a scene from days gone by. But at the Breach household, it's a part of everyday life. So, too, is the supportive family lifestyle that Trudy and Loren Breach have shown their three daughters throughout their young lives.

That's where Rebecca Breach learned the importance of helping others become the best they can be. National Mutual Benefit's 2005 President's Volunteer Service Scholarship award recipient has grown up surrounded by family members who love and support her—and that's about as good as it gets for any young person.

Rebecca is a delightful young lady—talented, intelligent, but most of all, caring. With everything she does, she puts others first, and makes the most out of every experience. Whether she's giving violin lessons, teaching children Latin, or volunteering at church, Rebecca tries to improve the lives of those she assists, just as her parents have always encouraged her.

"She is an excellent reader and writer," her mother, Trudy, shared. She has completed books that even her teachers can't believe she's read. Her



Rebecca Breach (left) and her sister, Sarah, are pictured after performing in a recital with the Fiori Violin Ensemble, to which they both belong.

father, Loren, who worked for a publishing company in Racine for many years, would bring home book after book for Rebecca and her sisters to read, encouraging their lifelong love of reading.

"We have continued the book theme throughout high school. As the girls succeed at something, we reward them with a book from Barnes & Noble," Loren reports. "It's gotten more expensive as they grow, but it's worth it," he adds with pride.

Rebecca attended Stephen Bull Fine Arts, a magnet school in Racine. Having started playing violin when she was only five years old, Rebecca has grown to be a mature musician with a firm grasp for performing. She has been a member of various orchestras, from the Kiwanis Youth Symphony, to the Lakeshore Philharmonic. She has even performed with the Racine Symphony Orchestra and the

Community Orchestra at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside.

For the past two years, Rebecca has worked as a private violin instructor and volunteered her time as a mentor to younger musicians through the Lakeshore Youth Symphony. She is also a member of the Fiori Violin Ensemble, which will be taking a trip to Italy next April to study and perform. Her younger sister, Sarah, will also be making the trip.

Not only is Rebecca a talented musician, but also enjoys sharing her mastery of Latin with younger children. For the third year in a row, she has taught an after-school Latin class at Jefferson Lighthouse Elementary School. Teaching anywhere from 8 to 30 elementary students, she has made up her own curriculum and trained other high school students to use her curriculum to teach their own Latin class to touch the lives of even more children.

Rebecca can remember volunteering at a very young age. One of her earliest volunteer memories was working with her family on the annual AWANA (a national Christian organization) event at her church.

"We work on the AWANA Cafe every year together," explains Rebecca. "We take over the whole kitchen as we make a 'vat' of barbecue to serve people," she adds.

"We've done this now for about 10 years, and it takes two weeks just to do the shopping for this fund-raiser. Everyone at church looks forward to us preparing the meal each year. In fact, there's one

guy, Dan Ferg, who comes back from college just to do the nachos. All proceeds from this activity go to the AWANA missionaries,” Trudy contributes.

People always comment on how delicious Trudy’s barbecue recipe is. “And do you know where it’s from?” she asks as she grabs a thick cookbook off the shelf. “It’s actually in the very first cookbook National Mutual Benefit printed. You can find the Sloppy Joe recipe on page 393—it’s always a hit,” she explains. “This is my favorite cookbook. I wish we could still get copies.” (*Editor’s Note: The brown and gold NMB cookbook was published back in 1977 to celebrate the Society’s 75th Anniversary.*)

What’s unique about Rebecca is how down to earth she is regarding her accomplishments. Her role models are not professional athletes or rock stars, but rather her older sister, Laura; her mom and dad; and a woman by the name of Deborah Lehrer, AWANA youth director and kindergarten teacher at Roosevelt School.

Working with young people is Rebecca’s passion. This summer, she is employed as a youth leader at one of the city playgrounds. Also, one of her favorite activities during high school was working with the AWANA third and fourth grade girl’s youth group at church. She has served as assistant leader to Debbie Lehrer for the past five years.

“Rebecca takes it upon herself to use various techniques like games, songs, rhymes and skits, many of which she has created, to help children understand and memorize new information. She effectively works through the love and understanding that she has for each child,” states Debbie in her letter of recommendation for an NMB scholarship.

Where does Rebecca plan to go to college? “Well, it was between Carthage College and the University of Wisconsin-Madison,” she states. “I chose UW-Madison because it’s a tradition in my family,” she proudly adds. “Three of my uncles went there, four of my cousins have attended or are still there, and my sister,

Laura, graduated from UW-Madison last year.”

Rebecca will continue to play violin at UW-Madison, even though she has decided not to major in music. Her real dream is to go into education so she can get into the administrative end of education later on.

“I want to be a teacher. I had four great teachers as mentors. They motivated me and taught me good organizational skills. I’ve been lucky that way,” she admits.

“I am also a firm believer in trying to change things to make them better, if at all possible. If I can help improve the Racine Unified School District down the road as an administrator, I want to do that,” Rebecca sincerely states.

Hard work, involvement, and success are also traditions in the Breach family. Loren Breach and his family members go back a long way in their relationship with National Mutual Benefit. He and his siblings were the some of the first to receive member benefits from NMB’s Special Fraternal Bonus Program. These benefits helped keep their lives intact when their parents passed away in the 1970s.

“Three of us were out of high school and there were five younger children still at home at that time,” Loren remembers. National Mutual Benefit provided their stepmother, Betty, with a monthly income for the younger children, and the three oldest were able to receive a grant each semester to help them realize their goals through higher education.

Rebecca has learned that there’s nothing more important than the values her parents taught her and the constant support of family members. As she grows in knowledge and experience, she will no doubt continue to encourage others to develop the gifts they have been given and find meaning and fulfillment in life. ♦



The Special Fraternal Bonus Program, a fraternal benefit of National Mutual Benefit membership, played a significant role in the lives of the Breach family siblings when both of their parents died in the 1970s. Pictured from the left are Betty Ann, Bill, Walt, Loren, Marla, Andy, Jerry, and Elaine Breach, all of whom were able to stay together as a family and go on to pursue higher education due to the foresight of their father, Bill, and NMB’s orphan’s income and scholarship benefits.