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Making a positive impact

By **LISA RUST**

Stacey Waskom's education and work experience together form a solid foundation for her present position as executive director for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southeast Indiana, where she has been employed since April 2000.

Waskom has a bachelor of science degree from the department of child development and family studies at Purdue University, where she majored in early childhood education, and a master of science degree in education from Indiana University.

She taught kindergarten for two years at White Creek Lutheran School, and then spent five years working at Kids Karousel Child Care Center in Seymour. While there, she served as director and kindergarten teacher.

Besides her official position with Big Brothers Big Sisters, Waskom volunteers as a Big Sister with the organization. She also serves on a volunteer committee for Community Foundation of Jackson County and is a 2005 graduate of Leadership Jackson County.

Big Brothers Big Sisters, a multicounty agency serving Jackson, Jennings, Washington and Scott counties, provides area children with the stability that an older person can help bring to a child's life, and that's something Waskom enjoys seeing take place.

"I love the fact that every day something new and different happens," she said of her position.

"Not only administrative, but I get to see firsthand the positive impact mentoring has on our children."

Big Brothers Big Sisters is a not-for-profit organization that matches children between the ages of 6 and 14 with a caring adult volunteer. These matches meet on a regular basis. During their visits, they may share dinners, go to the movies, parks or the library or do homework or other everyday activities.

"It is a very rewarding job and I love the balance it gives our lives," Waskom said.

Married to David Waskom in May 2000, they have two daughters, Laken Lee and Kaylee Jo.

"As a family, we are trying to spend as much time together as we can," Waskom said. Both she and her husband have busy schedules, so having routines is important.

"We eat together every evening at the kitchen table, and Laken has learned to set the table," Waskom said.

The Waskom family attends White Creek Lutheran Church.

Waskom enjoys genealogy and has done extensive research on the Heckman side of her family. Her interest began while attending Purdue, she said, and, "Once I started I couldn't stop the researching."

"It's really important to have this information, not only because it interests me a great deal, but so my children can know their family history to have and be passed on for generations to come."

Much of the information has been gathered from health departments, courthouses, cemeteries, libraries, census records and the Internet.

"My ancestors emigrated from Germany six generations ago from the Hanover area," she said.

"When we see pictures of our ancestors, it's amazing to see the resemblance of those today."

Recently Waskom spent time with a friend and researched her family, which helped her locate family she never knew existed.

Another pursuit for Waskom is reading.

"I especially took pleasure in reading 'The Notebook,' which was better than the movie," she said.

She also enjoys cooking.

"When I lived on my own, Mom would share her favorites with me. I use them today and will share them with my own daughters. My mom makes the best meatloaves, pot roast and of course mashed potatoes," she said. "My Aunt Anita makes the best potato salad and rebaked potatoes."

Chicken Tetrazzini

- 3-4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 1 7-ounce package spaghetti, broken
- 1 cup milk
- 2 cups shredded cheese
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- ¼ cup Parmesan cheese
- ¼-ounce can sliced mushrooms
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder

Cook chicken, cut into pieces and set aside. Cook spaghetti, drain and set aside. In saucepan, combine milk, soup, Parmesan cheese, mushrooms and garlic powder. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly until thickened. Add 1 cup of cheese and stir until melted. Add chicken. Spread spaghetti in 13x9 baking dish and stir in chicken mixture. Bake uncovered at 350 degrees for 30-35 minutes. Remove from oven and sprinkle with remaining cup of cheese. Bake an additional 5-10 minutes until cheese melts. Serve with garlic bread.

Kids Favorite Casserole

- 2 cups cooked pasta (rotini, ziti and elbow macaroni work well)
- 1 envelope of taco seasoning mix
- 1½ pounds hamburger
- 1 can diced tomatoes
- 1 small (4—ounce) can tomato paste
- ½ cup chopped onion
- 1½ cups shredded cheddar cheese

Cook noodles and set aside. Cook hamburger, drain, adding taco seasoning mix according to package directions. Add ingredients together in large mixing bowl and transfer to 9x13 baking dish. Bake uncovered at 350 degrees for 20 minutes or until cheese is melted.

Chicken Divan

- 3-4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 1½ packages chopped broccoli (about 18 ounces)
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- ½ teaspoon paprika
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 1 cup shredded cheese
- 1 cup bread crumbs

Cook chicken, cut into pieces and set aside. Cook broccoli and drain. Arrange broccoli in 9x13 baking dish. In a separate bowl, combine soup, mayonnaise, lemon juice and paprika. Add chicken. Pour over broccoli and sprinkle with cheese and breadcrumbs. Bake uncovered at 375 degrees for 40 minutes.