Gabe Minnich exemplifies Ut Prosim spirit of employees through commitment to Girl Scouts

by LAURA NEFF-HENDERSON, APR

Gabrielle Minnich isn't all that different from any of the folks who work at Virginia Tech. She loves her children, is well loved and respected by her friends and colleagues, wears maroon and orange proudly, and is committed to the university's land-grant mission to serve others.

There is at least one thing that makes her incredibly special though - the impact she has on the lives of countless school age girls and moms in the New River Valley community each year.

Minnich, known as Gabe to her friends, actively volunteers with Girl Scouts in several different capacities.

From her office on the second floor of the Media Building, Minnich has spent 25 years creating multimedia that captures the essence of the people who make Virginia Tech a world-class university and a great place to work.

Minnich is the electronic communications supervisor for Visual and Broadcast Communications in University Relations. She leads a team of professionals who develop, write, and produce a variety of videos and audio programming that supports and advances the university goals.

One of her favorite aspects about her job is that she gets to talk with all kinds of people and learn about them and what they're passionate about - and how they are making a difference in their fields.

"I get to find out who they are becoming," Minnich said of the students she interviews.

She and her team produced more than 300 videos in 2014-15. Their most popular video about the College of Engineering's Dean Roberta Joly-Belbass has been viewed more than 250,000 times.

"Gabe is a wonderful supervisor," said J. Scott Parker, web video producer/journalist. "She has a deep understanding of the culture and values of Virginia Tech and is passionate in her efforts to ensure that they are appropriately represented in our videos. Hiring her as a supervisor is one of the best perks about working at Virginia Tech for me."

"I love Gabe's enthusiasm, and she constantly contributes great ideas," said her supervisor, Randy Smith, director of visual and broadcast communications. "Her knowledge of and embracing of the university's mission and brand is extremely valuable to our department."

Gabe Minnich didn't spend much time in scouting as a young girl. The cause was something she grew to love as an adult, when her own daughter joined the Girl Scouts of Virginia Skyline Council in 2002. She knew the organization would be a good experience for her daughter and that was a shortage of troop leaders in the area. Minnich signed up and started a Daisy troop.

A few years later, when her daughter left scouting, Minnich found herself meeting from a troop leader to someone who trained troop leaders, along with a few other things.

"It's really important to stick with it," says Minnich. "You never know when you're making a good memory."

Over the years, she's become the go-to person when her fellow volunteers need help of any kind.

Minnich continues to train local volunteers who want to become leaders and serve on the council's recognition committee. She's known for sharing her professional skills with the organization as well, producing videos and multimedia for local troops and the council.

It's always been the amazing people she volunteers alongside says Minnich, who has kept her involved.

"Being part of something larger than life, that impacts so many girls," says Minnich, "is a wonderful thing."

Among her volunteer duties, Minnich has also been tapped a time or two during the last decade to serve in various roles across the council.

In July, she wrapped up a one-year stint as the leader of Blacksburg Cadette Troop #561.

The troop celebrated the end of the school year in July with a trip to New York City where the girls visited the Empire State Building, took in a Broadway show, visited the New York teen band the Arianna Diamondeband, and sang along to live songs performed by American alternative rock band Walk the Moon in Central Park during ABC's Good Morning America summer concert series.

"Without dedicated volunteers like Gabe, Girl Scouts wouldn't happen in our community," said Lori Greiner, Virginia Cooperative Extension communications manager. "Both of Greiner's daughters are active in scouting, one of whom was in Minnich's troop."

Minnich loves all that Blacksburg has to offer and particularly enjoys spending time downtown and supporting local businesses.

Her daughter Rachel is 18 and a freshman at Hollins University and hopes to one day write television and movie scripts. Her son, Dylan, 20, is studying at New River Community College.

In addition to scouting, Minnich enjoys spending time with friends and family and considers New River Valley Community Church a home away from home.

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In July 2015, Gabrielle Minnich took her Girl Scout troop to New York City, where they toured the Empire State Building, took in a Broadway show, and watched a New York Mets game, among other things.

"To me it kind of represents the bond between Blacksburg and Virginia Tech," said Minnich.