



EXTRAORDINARY EMPLOYEES

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.



J. Scott Parker, web video producer/journalist (left) and Megan Donald Hughes, marketing manager for Recreational Sports (center) with Gabrielle Minnich (right).

▲ AT WORK

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 video 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 100 videos in 2014-15. Their most popular video about the College of Engineering's Giant Robotic Jellyfish has been viewed more than 250,000 times.

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

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

▲ GROWING UP HOKIE

Minnich's family moved from Kentucky to Blacksburg in 1970 when her dad, Dan Amos, began working as an agronomy professor at Virginia Tech.

Like many children who grow up in small town communities across the country, Minnich knew she wanted to "get away" when it came time to go to college. It was a dream come true when she was accepted to the University of Virginia, but the dream quickly fizzled when, after her first year in Charlottesville, Virginia, Minnich was ready to call it quits.

The academics, she said, were great, but the culture... that was a different story. It just wasn't the right fit for her, she says.

Her dad, she said, made her tough it out so she moved off campus for her second year, before transferring to Virginia Tech to finish her bachelor's degree. The interdisciplinary studies major found her calling during her senior year when she took a video production class.

After earning a masters degree in broadcasting from Boston University, Minnich spent five years working in local cable production in Brookline, Massachusetts.

It wasn't long after though that she began to get homesick and in 1988, Minnich moved back to Southwest Virginia. Before coming to Virginia Tech, she worked in similar positions at WSLC Channel 10 and Blue Ridge PBS.

▲ IN THE COMMUNITY

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 but there was a shortage of troop leaders in the area. Minnich stepped up and started a daisy troop.

A few years later, when her daughter left scouting, Minnich found herself moving 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 serves on the council's recognitions committee. She's known for sharing her professional talents 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 have 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 toured the Empire State Building, took in a Broadway Show, watched the New York Mets beat the Arizona Diamondbacks, 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 would not 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.

▲ FAMILY

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

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.

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

One of her favorite local activities is the Virginia Tech Homecoming Parade held each fall.

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



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.

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