

2016 Montgomery Serves Volunteer of the Year Award

Montgomery County, MD

Remarks prepared by Jan Jablonski

May 2, 2016

I am deeply grateful to the board of the Noyes Children's Library Foundation for nominating me for this award. Every one of you deserves recognition for your contributions. This award is for you too.

To have been nominated and selected in a county where so many do so much is beyond comprehension.

About 25 years ago, although we did not live in Kensington, my four-year-old son and I discovered the Noyes Children's Library and quickly became regular visitors. The librarians at Noyes welcomed Matthew, nurtured his interests, and provided a safe haven. In a child's world, where books are magic and children's librarians are magicians, Noyes librarian Irene Briggs was our Dumbledore. Librarians Joan Nelson, Saroj Ghoting, and Elizabeth Thornton - - McGonagalls all. Thank you.

I volunteer for the Noyes Foundation because I want other children and families to have a chance to find the same comfort and happiness at Noyes that my sons had.

My sons are part of a line of children, almost 125 years long, who have been introduced to books at the Noyes Library. In an old Noyes scrapbook, for example, there is a letter from Presidential Medal of Honor recipient Gilbert Melville Grosvenor in which he wrote about still being able to feel the warmth of the Noyes Library's wood floors when he read a book. I hope the line of

children will extend for **another** 125 years, and that this historic building will soon be fully accessible to all.

Noyes has survived and thrived because of wide, deep community support and the support of visionary elected officials and their staffs. Noyes was there for my children largely because of the efforts of former Kensington mayor Jane Plank. Since the 1990s, advocates have included former County Councilmembers Bruce Adams, Marilyn Praisner, Betty Ann Krahnke, Ike Leggett, former county executive Doug Duncan, and former MD state delegate and US Congressman Chris Van Hollen. From more recently, Councilmember George Leventhal, Councilmembers Craig Rice and Roger Berliner, Mayor Pete Fosselman of Kensington, and the district 18 team: Delegates Al Carr, Jeff Waldstreicher, and Ana Sol Gutierrez, and Senator Richard Madaleno. A special thank you too to Parker Hamilton, director of Montgomery County Public Libraries.

Finally, I am overwhelmed with gratitude to my husband and sons, family, friends and neighbors, and everyone who has made it possible for me to continue to work to support the Noyes Library and kept me company as ALS entered and has become a big part of my life. Down the road, I hope you remember my smile, and know that you made a difference.

With a nod to a New York Times essay, my message is this: If you ever fall off a tall building in slow motion, which is sort of what ALS is like, don't give up. You can get a lot done on the way down, and the view is truly beautiful. Thank you.

Thank you.