



## OUR JANUARY INSPIRATION



“I really enjoy giving things to people.”

# Linda Dutcher

## AN INSPIRATIONAL EXAMPLE FOR ALL OF US

It seems only appropriate that the first Faces of Health story is about one of our community's most inspiring individuals — a person you've probably never met — *Linda Dutcher*.

Leading a relatively quiet life, Linda appears as an ordinary person. An unassuming bus driver living in a moderate apartment with only a few family members nearby, Linda has never pursued the spotlight. Linda, however, is anything but ordinary. What Linda does, however, makes her extraordinarily inspirational.

Our story begins 19 years ago when Linda met Brian, an autistic young man who required constant medical supervision. Having known Brian's mother, who was fighting terminal cancer, she quickly bonded with the both of them. After knowing Brian for only two months, Linda made a commitment to care for him in her home after his mom passed. “I couldn't fathom the idea of leaving Brian in the group home. His happiness means so much to me.”

Shortly after Brian moved in, they became inseparable. Four years ago, when Linda, herself, was being treated for cancer at the Yolanda G. Barco Oncology Institute, she and Brian decided to make placemats for local nursing home patients. They also began creating birthday cards for the patients and Christmas cards for our military service men and women overseas. Just this last year, Linda and Brian made more than 600 items that have brought heartfelt smiles to those in need.

Reflecting upon the more than 400 donated hours spent creating all of these gifts this past year, Linda considers it a labor of love. “The time invested in these projects simply isn't an issue. It's something Brian enjoys doing. I want him to have all the enjoyment out of life that he could possibly have. It puts joy in my heart to see him so happy.”

Linda is truly an inspiration for all of us. She serves as a valuable reminder for all of us that doing for others is one of our greatest gifts. She is our inspirational Face of Health for January.