

Carole Kovacich, Advocate for youth, poor

Montana Standard, 10/17/07

Anaconda - If Carole Kovacich's career had a motto, it would be: It won't make money, but it's the right thing to do.

That philosophy propels - and sometimes carries - Kovacich through her work as director of a local youth home and a food bank.

"I just like these kids," Kovacich, 62, said of her work at Discovery House. "I like working with them. They have lots of potential that nobody's even looked at."

An Anaconda native, Kovacich has a long history advocating for the community's youth and its poor.

She was religious education coordinator for Anaconda Catholic Community 25 years before becoming co-director of Discovery House, a project spearheaded by Sister Gilmory Vaughan.

When the nun fell ill, Kovacich took over not only Discovery House, but the local food bank.

She tackles social plight with the steadfastness of an army general, her determination strengthened as the battle rages.

Last year, Discovery House spiraled into a budget disaster and Kovacich rallied the community to save the house. Eventually, her call for help reached Community, Counseling and Correctional Services of Butte, which agreed to take the program temporarily under its financial wing.

True to form, Kovacich quickly disperses credit that comes her way.

"It's the community that saves Discovery House," she said. "It's the community that saves the food bank. It's not one person."

But friends say Kovacich's trademark leadership and perseverance are the reasons community assets remain intact.

She has given of her self completely to her family, her community and her work," Anaconda residents Jim and Carole Davison wrote in a Women of Distinction nomination. She has fought hard to keep Discovery House open and to help the youth of southwest Montana."

The mother of three grown daughters, Kovacich said she sometimes envisions retirement, but won't seriously entertain the idea until Discovery House's future is secure.

"I'm going to stick around until this is worked through...and Discovery House will go on long after I'm gone," she said, laughing heartily as she disclosed having planned little for retirement.

"I've never had a pension plan and I've never thought about it," she said. "God always took care of me. We will never be rich in monetary things, but I am rich in everything else."