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## **Mentor “Paying it Forward” by Working with Area Youth**

Bill Frederick

While Beth Anne Sandak works helping local residents find employment, she spends her free time helping area youth find guidance.

Sandak, who provides worker training services as part of the Workforce Investment Act at PA CareerLink, is also a mentor for disadvantaged youth through Goodwill’s GoodGuides Mentoring Program.

“My work with GoodGuides is simply a way of paying it forward. I feel that my mentee helps me just as much, if not more, than I help her,” said Sandak. “She gives me a chance to focus my energy and really reflect on how blessed I am. I’ve been so blessed by family and friends. I could not have achieved all I have without their support and I just want to give to her what I’ve been given. I can relate to her, I can help her get through the tough teen years. My hope is to inspire her. I had the good fortune to have time and energy to give back.”

GoodGuides requires volunteers to dedicate a minimum of four hours per month working one-on-one with the teens.

“Anyone can give four hours,” Sandak said. “Skip your nap or skip going to the gym. Pay it forward. The program is a good way for me to show family and friends how grateful I am for their love and support. To reach out and make sure these kids get a chance and stay out of trouble.”

Sandak has also written a book, “Journeys: Inspirational Stories of Courage and Strength.” The book showcases the stories of local women affected by breast cancer and the history of breast cancer treatment and research in Windber.

“The stories of those who battled breast cancer provides inspiration for those currently battling the disease,” said Sandak.

“The most important thing about this book is that it pays honor and tribute to women who have battled breast cancer and those that have lost their lives,” she said.

Sandak donated the proceeds from the book to Windber Research Institute.

Sandak is also a member of the Taunia Oechslin Girls Night Out for Breast Cancer committee, an event that was founded in 2007 by the late Taunia Oechslin, of Westmont, as a way to help women defeat breast cancer. The event has raised more than \$135,000 in its first four years for the Joyce Murtha Breast Care Center.