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Kathleen O'Brien



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PLEASE TELL ME ABOUT YOUR ROLE AT PEACE, INC.

O'BRIEN: I'm responsible for the overall financial information for PEACE, Inc. I oversee the fiscal staff. We work with our corporate auditors, grant auditors, banks. When I came to work at PEACE, Inc. my main responsibility was to organize the department. I'm responsible for all of the internal fiscal controls – to abide by federal, state, and grantor requirements. The people I work with in the fiscal department are outstanding. I believe they are absolutely outstanding and I would put them up against any fiscal department. They are very knowledgeable and accommodating, and they ask a ton of questions, which is good for clarity and understanding. About 10 years ago, I put out two baskets – one with fruit and one with candy bars. When they asked me a question or questioned me, then they got a piece of fruit or a candy bar. I planned to do that long term. After one week, I went to the executive director, Joe O'Hara, and told him I couldn't afford to keep doing it – that's a fun, simple story about how great our fiscal department is. I'm just really proud of them.

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO MAKE PEACE, INC. PART OF YOUR LIFE?

O'BRIEN: I flew here from Omaha to interview with Joe O'Hara for the position. I was looking for a position where I could truly make a difference. This offered me that opportunity.

PLEASE SHARE A MEMORABLE MOMENT IN YOUR WORK EXPERIENCE.

O'BRIEN: It was memorable for me when members of the fiscal staff would question me or show me something I was doing wrong. It is very important that staff members question what I do to uphold the integrity of the department.

DESCRIBE YOUR CHILDHOOD AND THE INFLUENCE IT HAD ON YOUR LATER DECISIONS.

O'BRIEN: I grew up with three other siblings and wonderful parents. My mom was as sweet as could be. My dad really taught right from wrong – really instilled it in all of his children. He taught me you have to do what is right. Even if it is not received well by everyone, you have to stick to your moral compass.

DO YOU HAVE A HOBBY?

O'BRIEN: Two of my favorite hobbies are cooking and gardening. I'm not good at either one, but I truly enjoy both. Basically, I don't care that I'm not good at cooking or gardening. I enjoy doing them. I'm sure my relatives are glad when they know I'm taking them out to dinner rather than cooking. I learned as I got older that it is not the result - it is the process.

WHO IS THE PULSE OF PEACE, INC.?

O'BRIEN: The frontline people working with the constituents are the pulse of PEACE, Inc. We are all support - that's what it is all about.

PLEASE TALK ABOUT ONE OTHER THING YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE.

O'BRIEN: I am amazed by individuals in our staff, and on our board, and volunteers, and the amount of effort and time they put in for a wonderful cause. It amazes me – there are a lot of examples throughout our organization. How much time they devote - I'm amazed.