



# Ella Deane

Pittsfield, MA

Multiple health issues developed for Ella Deane as she approached retirement. But when her two year old granddaughter needed someone to parent her Ella said, “Yes.” She would do that. It was a decision that changed her life.

In the beginning she felt alone, different from younger parents raising their children and different from her peer group engaging in more traditional retirement lives. So when she saw a flier for a group called Grandparents Raising Grandchildren she again said, “Yes.” The group alleviated some of the isolation she was feeling and additionally provided her granddaughter with an awareness that there were other children with families like hers. As time passed she took on more and more leadership of the group.

When her granddaughter was in first grade at Morningside Community School there were few extracurricular options. Ella became a Girl Scout troop leader and created a troop which now, 10 years later, she continues to lead.

Today Ella spends much of her time at the First United Methodist Church on Fenn Street. Initially she came with her granddaughter for the Kids Eat Free Summer Lunch Program. When the program needed help she said, “Yes.” Soon she was running the breakfast program three days a week. Today she supervises the lunch program and is the cook on Tuesdays for the Harvest Table Dinner. The Grandparents group and her Girl Scout troop now meet at the church as well.

When Ella is not saying yes to activities and programs that serve others she enjoys spending time in the woods, as well as reading, gardening and putting at home. Her life is full, busy, and meaningful—a shining example of how we are served, when we serve others.

**Photography:** Igor Greenwald

**Words:** Greta Phinney