MEMBERconnection: Honoring moms around the world

A mother among mothers

JUDY COOK HAS always been passionate about helping children, as well as spending time with her own. She has three daughters, a son and 12 grandkids. A lifelong educator, Cook, of Vineyard, Utah, has worked as a kindergarten teacher for much of her life. After starting and raising a family, she took in seven of her children’s friends who needed a home. Even now, in semi-retirement, Cook still gives up time to help at a special-needs school.

For all these efforts, the Costco member was named Utah Mother of the Year (the nomination was submitted by Fred Cook, her husband of 51 years) and then National Mother of the Year by American Mothers Incorporated (AMI; www.americanmothers.org). The group, based in Washington, D.C., recognizes an outstanding mother each year who is “courageous, bold, innovative and creative.”

“Often, children miss school to help get water,” Cook says about the honor. Since receiving the award, she’s traveled to California, Nevada, Maine and Puerto Rico to help promote the goals of AMI.

Founded in 1935, AMI strives to “champion women by honoring, educating and serving mothers at home, at work and in the world.” Through programs across the country, the organization raises awareness of and helps battle plights affecting the role of motherhood and women’s rights in general.

As leader of the Global Motherhood Coalition at the United Nations, AMI also commands a global voice with which to advocate for mothers worldwide.

This month, Cook will help support the first annual National Mom to Mom Service Day, with this year’s event focusing on helping victims of domestic abuse.

—Peter Sacotte

Love to mothers around the world

AS WE CELEBRATE our mothers on May 11, the nonprofit Mothers’ Day Movement (MDM) asks us to consider spreading the love by helping less fortunate mothers and their families around the world.

Founded in 2010 by four mothers in Connecticut, MDM (www.mothersdaymovement.org) each year partners with a worthy charity committed to improving the lives of mothers in some of the developing world’s neediest communities.

This year, MDM is helping the ClearWater Initiative—founded by U.S. serviceman Ben Sklaver, who was later killed in Afghanistan—to expand its program of bringing clean water to the villages of Uganda, in eastern Africa.

“Mothers and children in Uganda spend hours each day carrying big, heavy containers long distances over rough terrain to get water for drinking, cooking and bathing,” says MDM co-founder Kim Athan, a Costco member.

“This problem isn’t just access. Each year, unsafe water contributes to the deaths of more than 12,000 children worldwide.”

“Often, children miss school to help get water.”

Since 2010, MDM’s donors have provided corrective surgery to Kenyan women with obstetric fistula, reduced maternal mortality during childbirth and helped open 13 tuition-free classrooms for girls in Kenya.

Says MDM co-founder and Costco member Stephanie Norton, “ClearWater Initiative spoke to us because by keeping children in school, they give back tenfold and can change their communities forever.”

—Matthew Robb

We want to hear from you!

If you have a note, photo or story to share about Costco or Costco members, email it to connection@costco.com with “The Member Connection” in the subject line or send it to The Member Connection, The Costco Connection, P.O. Box 34088, Seattle, WA 98124-1088. Submissions cannot be acknowledged or returned.