

## The ENQUIER Women of the Year

### PRISCILLA BATSCHE UNGERS

# She helps young people to realize their dreams

By Alexander Coolidge  
acoolidge@enquirer.com

As a young teacher working with disabled children more than 30 years ago, one of the first lessons Priscilla Batsche Ungers learned was that labels get affixed to youngsters.

Scott had cerebral palsy. So did Bobbie Jo. Rodney had muscular dystrophy. Joe had spina bifida.

"I still remember the first day — it really was my a-ha moment," she recalls. "I learned their names and the labels they'd been given. The label described nothing about who they were. They were so much more."

Since then Ungers, of Hyde Park, has dedicated herself to helping children shed labels and pursue their dreams. Starting in that classroom but later branching out through extensive volunteer and nonprofit work, children and parenting have been the focus of her efforts.

Ungers credits her volunteer work, starting in the mid-1980s with the Junior League of Cincinnati, with giving her the training, contacts and confidence to pursue her passion. She served as president of the Junior League from 1996 to 1997.

In 1997, she began her long association with Withrow University High School when she helped found the school's college career center. The center educates youngsters about potential careers and helps them with the nuts and bolts of applying for college and financial aid.

Ungers said the center has been a passion of hers because it encouraged some non-college-bound teens to set their sights higher.

"This was exactly the type of program that attracted me: They had labels, they were minorities, they spoke English as a second language and they were econom-



Priscilla Batsche Ungers talks with Desiree Ouattara at Withrow University High School. Ouattara was among students Ungers advised at Withrow and will attend Miami University in the fall.

#### MORE ABOUT PRISCILLA

**Birthplace:** Mason

**Family:** Leslie "Les" Ungers, husband; two children, Maggie Parkhouse, 30; Joe Ungers, 26

**Education:** Bachelor's degree in zoology from Miami University; master's in special education from the University of Cincinnati

**Occupation:** Consultant at the Withrow University High School career center

**Current projects:** Overseeing the newly opened Beech Acres Parenting Center's new office in Westwood

**Best advice:** The biggest way to improve a child's life is to have a dedicated parent, caregiver or adults concerned with the best interests of that child.



Colombia whose visa expired in her senior year, preventing her from applying for critical scholarships. She was the class valedictorian. Ungers worked with college officials, got her church to sponsor the student, and she graduated from Xavier University. She is now pursuing U.S. citizenship and might attend medical school.

For the last eight years, Ungers also has worked with Beech Acres Parenting Center in Anderson Township. She is the board chair at the nonprofit that provides counseling and workshops for parents on everything from effective discipline to caring for foster children.

ically disadvantaged," she said. Still very active at the Withrow center, Ungers recalls one recent success story: a girl from

Deborah Kendrick  
Jean Leach  
Barbara Rabkin  
Grace Raines

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