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# LORI WATERS

Building strong families, building a stronger community





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**BUILDING  
STRONG FAMILIES.**

**BUILDING  
A STRONGER  
COMMUNITY.**

LORI WATERS UNDERSTANDS RESPONSIBILITY. SHE SERVES ON THE WINTER HAVEN YMCA ADVISORY BOARD AND AS THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS FOR THE LAKE LAND STAKE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS, AND SHE OWNS A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS: BUILT BY WATERS, INC. THE WIFE OF GLEN WATERS, SHE IS THE MOTHER OF FOUR CHILDREN - BRITTANY, BRENTON, BROCK AND BEAU. SHE KNOWS HOW IMPORTANT HER DUTIES ARE TO THE PEOPLE WHO LOOK UP TO HER. IN THE PAST THREE YEARS, SHE HAS ADDED ANOTHER TASK: OVERSEEING POLK COUNTY FAMILY WEEK, A WEEK THAT TAKES PLACE EVERY NOVEMBER. *FOCUS* MET UP WITH HER TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT HER INVOLVEMENT WITH THE ANNUAL EVENT.



**FOCUS: Tell me about how Polk County Family Week got started.**

LW: I had the dream. I had heard of National Family Week, I had seen that in Orlando they have Orange County Family Week, and I thought it would be a great idea for Polk County to recognize families and make sure they are given the attention they need. We want to support at-risk and healthy families and make sure that our focus is on them. A lot of organizations came together to make this possible – YMCA's, Boys and Girls Clubs, the school board, churches and more. Each of these groups are doing things within their individual areas, but Polk County Family Week is for the entire county. That is what is so great – all these organizations are helping for a united, countywide cause.

**FOCUS: What's the premise behind Polk County Family Week?**

LW: Really, the theme for Polk County Family Week is strong families build strong communities. In a way, we are all a big family – our neighbors, our extended family, they link us together. We must strengthen and support our families if we want to live in a good community. So we have activities at Polk County Family Week that make you think and challenges families to pay attention to each other. That's going to make stronger families, which makes a better place for us all to live.

**FOCUS: It's my understanding that this isn't put on by an organization.**

LW: It's put on by a group of people who care about families. It's unique and a really neat thing to be a part of. We welcome others who would like to be a part of strengthening families in our county to contact us and support these efforts. We have sponsors that donate money and/or products so that the week's events can be free for everyone.

**FOCUS: What does this event mean to you, having thought it up and organizing it?**

LW: It's amazing to see how so many people have come together to support families. I've lived in Polk County 26 years, and I've enjoyed it. Being involved in Family Week has made me appreciate Polk County even more. I have really grown to love Polk County because I saw so many people care and support something that is very important to me: families.

**FOCUS: How have you seen the event grow since its inception to what is scheduled for this year?**

LW: We have a Web site now that has great information for families. We develop a theme each year to focus our events and information around. We understand that families are busy – some have to take their kids to sports, music lessons, etc.; some are working many hours. We are all busy. We didn't want Family Week to be another burden on families. So this year we have activities planned that families can attend, and we have activities that can be done from their homes. We want it to be a week of encouraging and remembering our families of their importance. We want to help unite them. Our Web site has important links with service ideas, county parks info, local events and more.

Also, this year, we are having the Generation Celebration – our kickoff event on Nov. 14 at the PSC/USF campus in Lakeland. It will start with

a 5k run/walk and go throughout the day featuring bouncy houses, essay and art winners recognition, Grandparent of the Year Awards, fun and informative booths, free food and drinks, chili cook-off competition, free family pictures and lots of raffle prizes. The grand prize will be a Disney World vacation package. Everything is free. I hope we see lots of people coming and enjoying all that is planned for them. The Generation Celebration event is just the beginning – there are other events that are free and wonderful for the rest of the week.

**FOCUS: This year for Polk County Family Week there has been the addition of Grandparent of the Year. What's the thinking behind this?**

LW: This year our theme is Generations. We think it is important for people to remember their grandparents and their extended family, so aunts, uncles and grandparents realize the important roles they play in linking and strengthening families. We also think it is important for families to recognize and show gratitude for their grandparents. This is a way to recognize wonderful grandparents who are continuing to be positive influences for their families.

**FOCUS: How have you seen Polk County Family Week make an impact on the community?**

LW: We see many families participating in our week's events. We read beautiful essays from students. We see

schools having a family picnic on the lawn day, encouraging families to eat together. The list goes on. We love seeing letters from those who have participated in the past and have enjoyed the events. It has gone beyond what I could have imagined. People are actually taking the time to recognize families are important, and here are some ideas of how we can strengthen them.

To find out more about Polk County Family Week,  
log onto [polkcountyfamilyweek.com](http://polkcountyfamilyweek.com)  
or e-mail [info@polkcountyfamilyweek.com](mailto:info@polkcountyfamilyweek.com).

### *Notable accomplishments*

- President of Built By Waters
- President of the Polk County Builders Association
- Builder of the Year Award by the PCBA
- Won Woman of Distinction from National Association of Women Business Owners. Won five Auroras, a coveted award that pits builders from 13 southern states against each other
- Member of the advisory committee for the YMCA in Winter Haven.
- Public affairs director for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints