

Carson Celebrates 35 Years at IN*SOURCE

By Bridgett Morales

There is a small dispute between Scott Carson, Assistant Director of IN*SOURCE and Sally Hamburg, a 'founding mother' of the agency. "I think I started May 16th but there is evidence of the 18th. So it's the middle of the month," Scott said. Nevertheless, it can't be argued that in his 35 years at the agency, Scott has made a huge difference in the special education community.

The occasion was celebrated with a surprise luncheon in May. Scott thought he was going out to lunch with the current executive director, Joel Boehler, but thought it was strange that although they were going to a restaurant just a half mile down the street, Joel got gas and took a complicated route to the restaurant. Little did he know that staff needed time to finish the set-up for his celebration.

Putting this celebration together without Scott knowing was a major undertaking since Scott is the one who usually surprises others, according to Sally. The two met when he attended a training about special education in the 1980's. "Our oldest was in school and I discovered I needed to learn more about special education," Scott said. "I walked away with my mouth wide open. I learned all about how things are *supposed* to work."

Scott said he liked IN*SOURCE's mission and he and his wife wanted to raise their young family, two sons and a daughter, in South Bend where they both grew up. When he saw an open position, he called and interviewed with Sally. Sally hired Scott to be the director of the Indiana Surrogate Parent Program in 1983. "He was committed to the best interest of the kids," Sally said. "He had experience as a clinical psychiatrist and a son with a disability. So what we did wasn't foreign to him."

Taking the job was a gutsy move. "When I was hired in, I knew I had a job for at least a year." Not because there was a lack of need throughout the state, it was just a very small operation. "During that period, there was growing awareness there was a need for some regional support. The agency had a total of 7 people working, of which only 3 or 4 were full time," Scott said.

Scott is proud of many of the things developed over the years. One particularly important project was the mediation process in Indiana. "After Rich Burden came on board, I'd read that 33 states had a mediation process and I told Rich it was something we should be doing." So, he and Rich approached the Indiana Department of Education and convinced the director that Indiana needed a system to help families resolve their conflicts with schools. In an interesting turn of events, Scott then hired 'rehired' Sally Hamburg back to the agency to start the mediation program.

"It was the beginning of something pretty important," Scott said. Professionally, Sally said Scott is highly regarded, especially among staff, directors and members of ICASE. She is also privileged to call him a friend. As a friend, Sally said his best quality is his dedication to his family and has seen his family grow from toddlers to grown adults and is now a very active grandfather of two.

"Scott is very personable and a fun-loving guy who has been through a lot and always manages to be upbeat," Sally said. "He would come into my office and talk. We had some great ideas over the years, we also had some not so great ideas!"

As Scott's friend and coworker, Sally also knew of his faults and said some people get frustrated with him because he's not known to answer questions quickly. "If you want an answer from Scott, you may have to wait a while. He always says, 'Let me think about that,'" Sally joked. "He is not one to make a snap decision!"

Although issues related to special education can be complex and difficult, Scott believes one truth to working in special education still holds true today. "I think it is important to trust the process," Scott said. "Article 7 has safeguards built in. I always believed that if we adhere to the process, we can put together a program that is very good for that student."