

Ithaca Not For Profit Center Opens Just Because

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ITHACA -- (WENY) Just over a year ago, Judy Dietz passed away from ovarian cancer. She was just 58 years old. Now her memory lives on here. A center for not-for-profit organizations throughout Ithaca. Something that was a passion for Judy.

“I think it’s something she really would have liked. So I just take solace in that, that she’s someplace looking at this going good job,” said Jerry Dietz, Judy’s husband and managing director at Just Because Not-for-profit Development Center.

“When tragedy happens you have two choices. You can shut down or you can build and he built,” said Jerry and Judy’s only son, Robert. “I’m really here today to speak as much as I can on behalf of my mother to my father and just say how proud I am of you.”

And boy, did he build. Her husband, Jerry, came up with the idea and calling it, ‘Just Because’, after a party they had for Judy before she passed. A just because party. Now the building houses five not-for-profit organizations. The first time many of these programs have a space of their own.

“We discover new ways to build community everyday, just as Judy imagined,” said Joey Steinhagen, Assistant Director with Running to Places.

Art Pearce, Treasurer with Friendship Donations Network said, “I think she’d be very very happy to see all of this. In fact she’s probably aware of it.”

And although Judy isn’t there, her memory lives on in the center.

“She said to me, she goes, you know, there’s no way that you should stop living. You can’t stop living when I pass away. Because if that happens the cancer would have killed two people and that’s just not right. So this is what happened. I guess you just put your energy into this. You make something good happen,”

Jerry said.

Jerry says every year they plan to hold a Just Because party and will pick a different local organization every year to receive the proceeds, All for Judy.