

**Mary Ann Szabo bio** interviewed by David Bledsoe



Mary Ann was born in Baton Rouge, LA on August 24, 1954. She attended St Thomas Moore Elementary through 7<sup>th</sup> grade, Sherwood Jr. High 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> grade and graduated from Baton Rouge's Broadmoor High School in 1972. An amazing school sport feat for Mary Ann would be her record breaking high jump in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. A variety of after school and summer jobs include working at a dance studio, a florist and selling handmade crafts. She has always liked doing things with her hands.

Mary Ann studied Interior Design at LA State University for one year just after high school. She then completed a 6 months drafting course and immediately went to work for a custom builder drawing house plans. Later working as a Design Draftman in the Civil Engineering field and eventually becoming a Certified Engineer Technician. At the age of 26, she went back to LSU where she studied civil engineering until expecting their

first child a couple of years later.

After their children were born, Mary Ann free lanced as a Patent Illustrator for the next 20 years. She enjoyed the challenges and diversity of working with Inventors and Patent Attorneys. Other part time jobs over the years included CADD operator, preschool teacher and receptionist. 6 years ago Mary Ann started her own company called "Distinct Designs by MaryAnn" where she creates custom window treatments and interiors. She likes the flexibility of working for herself and the creativity involved in providing unique items for her customers.

Thirty-five years ago Mary Ann met John, a young Civil Engineer, when they worked at the same engineering firm. They were co-workers for a year before ever going out. Later they had both moved on to other firms before getting married in 1979 and settling in Baton Rouge. Mary Ann and John have two children; their son, Justin, was born in 1983 and daughter, Amanda, was born in 1985. The family moved to Franklin, TN in 1986.

They attend Christ United Methodist Church on Franklin Road where they have been faithful members since 1998. Their church has a strong emphasis on outreach, community service and relationships. Mary Ann serves on CUMC's Outreach Committee and represents Habitat for the church body. She and several other fellow CUMC members served in Biloxi, MS following Hurricane Katrina. It was a wonderful experience bonding with other volunteers and assisting homeowners while working on five different homes.

Some of Mary Ann's hobbies include gardening, reading, sewing, knitting, arts and crafts. She loves to read fiction and nonfiction. Mary Ann served as a Girl Scout leader for 5 yrs. when her daughter was young.

Mary Ann has taught literacy training in Nashville. Now, she teaches ESL classes for Christian Women Job Corp where she has about 12 Spanish speaking Franklin residents as her students.

Mary Ann first became involved with Habitat through her church in 2000. John and Mary Ann are the church's Habitat coordinators. She enjoys facilitating opportunities for others to serve the community through Habitat. "We have so many church members that are dedicated to Habitat." At the conclusion of every Habitat build, many church members express great appreciation for the opportunity to get involved. **Mary Ann says "Affordable housing is so important in the affluent county that we live in. Habitat increases the diversity and richness of our Community."**