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South Bay Schedules Manager Madeline Van Leuvan with one of daughter Julie's paintings, "Colorful Twist."

"Mother's Day reminds us that being a mother means always being there for your children."

-- Madeline Van Leuvan

## Mother's Day Has Special Meaning for this Metro Mother and Daughter

- Madeline Van Leuvan helps care for daughter with multiple sclerosis

By RICH MORALLO

(May 6, 2005) This Mother's Day, Madeline Van Leuvan will pick up the phone and talk to her daughter, Julie, in Louisville, Colorado.

"I'm planning to wish her a Happy Mother's Day," says Van Leuvan, a schedules manager for the South Bay Service Sector. She notes that Julie, herself, is the mother of a five-year-old daughter.

Van Leuvan will also tell Julie that they can celebrate Mother's Day properly, later in May, when she plans to pay a visit.

"We celebrate Mother's Day much the same as everyone else does with flowers and candy and the special meal," said Van Leuvan. "But, aside from the pleasantries and celebrations, Mother's Day reminds us that being a mother means always being there for your children."



Daughter Julie with her daughter, Eva, at home in Louisville, Colorado.

## Diagnosed with MS

Twelve years ago, when Van Leuvan's daughter was 24 years old and newly-married, doctors diagnosed her with multiple sclerosis.

"I was actually visiting Julie and her husband at the time they received confirmation about the disease," says Van Leuvan.

Through the years Van Leuvan, who celebrates her 33rd anniversary this year with Metro, continued to give her daughter support, care, love and attention.

"Most of my vacations are spent with Julie and her family," explains Van Leuvan. "MS is a progressively debilitating disease, but for the first several years, Julie was able to care for herself."

These days, however, her daughter has trouble with muscle movements and speech, is in a wheel-chair and requires a full-time caregiver.

#### **'She was a star athlete'**

"MS has been difficult for Julie - she was a star athlete, " says Van Leuvan. Julie was also an art lover and artist as a child, and continues in that field. She dedicates several days a week to painting.

Recently, Julie conducted an art class for her daughter's kindergarten class. With assistance from an art therapist, Julie instructed the youngsters in "splash art," creating a colorful abstract painting by throwing brushfuls of paint onto a canvas.

As the need has required, Van Leuvan has traveled wherever her daughter was - first to Northern California and then to Colorado - to help care for Julie whenever there wasn't a caregiver. She would assist in the search and interviews for professional attendants.

"One occasion, I helped care for my daughter for almost two months while I made sure the right caregiver was hired " she says.

"On Mother's Day, I will make my call to Colorado and thank my son-in-law for the great job he's done caring for Julie," says Van Leuvan. "And I'll tell my daughter Mother's Day means I'll always be there for her."