

## WELCOME TO BENZIE COUNTY CENTRAL SCHOOLS FEATURED FRIDAY ALUMNI.

Today, we would like to recognize Jason Nordbeck from the class of 1993. As a student at Benzie Central, Jason participated in basketball, track, cross country, and football. In basketball, during his senior year he was conference MVP, scoring over 1000 points over his career and in track was state champ in the 110 hurdles.

After graduation, he attended Alma College and earned a BA in Education in 1997. While at Alma, he played basketball and ran track and cross country. At Alma, he met his future wife, Tammy.

After graduating with his Bachelor's Degree from Alma, he married his college sweetheart and settled in Grand Blanc, MI. There, he began working at Holly Elementary teaching and supporting the students with influence as a positive male role model in their upper elementary years, as well as coaching cross country and basketball at Holly High School. While working in Holly, he began work on his Master's degree at the University of Michigan-Flint, which he later finished at the University of Michigan-Dearborn in 2006 with a Master's in Public Administration with an emphasis in Education. Studying and attending classes evenings and weekends while working and caring for his kids, Jason made sure the Master's degree was never forgotten.

After becoming a father, he moved his family to Livonia, MI, where he has made a home for the past 16 years. He has taught at Smith Elementary in Plymouth for 14 years, mostly in 4th and 5th grade, serving the school as the "Leader in Me student lighthouse" team staff sponsor. The Leader in Me program provides seven habits for success in life, and Smith Elementary recently achieved a "Lighthouse" school designation, joining only 18 other schools in Michigan with this level of achievement. He's also completed the district's administrative internship program to prepare for becoming an administrator. His love for the classroom (and the playground) won out, and he is still behind the big desk in the corner, waiting for recess time to come around so that he can challenge the class to a game of basketball.

Jason is a leader in the community, as well. As his family has grown, he has coached many a youth sport, including flag football, tee ball, youth baseball, softball and his favorite, basketball. At church, he has served in the AWANA program as a weekly leader for the 3rd-5th grade boys, and is currently serving a parish as a Deacon. He also supports the local high school as the cross country team "dad" making breakfast for 20-some teen boys each Wednesday morning in season.

He's approaching 20 years of marriage to his wife, Tammy, and they have four active kids, Jackson (17), Braden (15), Emerson (11) and McKinnon (9) who keep them busy cheering for them in sports and musical pursuits. Sending the first-born across the graduation stage this upcoming June has him thinking back to his graduation. Jason said, "I never thought

that college would be my next step, but I had a teacher and coach in Mr. Bill Lynch that believed in me and pushed me to take that next leap. I try to be the type of teacher who mentors my students as I was mentored during my years at Benzie. We sometimes think we know our limitations, but it is not until we push ourselves to the limit that we actually reach our potential. Push yourself you might be surprised where you end up!"

