

WELCOME TO BENZIE COUNTY CENTRAL SCHOOLS FEATURED FRIDAY ALUMNI. Today we would like to recognize class of 1983 alumni, Anne Herron.

Anne was born and raised in Benzie County and graduated from Benzie Central High School in 1983 as the valedictorian. She was in National Honor Society, the yearbook staff, Pep Club, FHA and was the first Benzie Central High School Key Club president.

Anne remembers one day helping her fellow students with an assignment and Mr. Gray telling her she should be a teacher. She wants to give a shout out to her English teachers Mrs. Goodreau, Mr. LoCicero, Mr. Becker, Mrs. McLaren and Mr. Kik.

Since Benzie was so small, she wanted a small college, which is why Anne chose Grand Valley State College (now University). Her first major was medical technology, but as soon as she learned she had to work on cadavers, she quickly changed her mind and went with her first passion. Her major was English with a minor in German. She also earned her teaching certificate. She graduated in 1987. While loving the Grand Rapids area, all her classmates were from there and Anne knew they would get the jobs and there were no openings at Benzie, so she moved to California where her older sister already lived.

Anne missed school so much that it wasn't long until she enrolled at California State University, Fullerton. She earned her Master's degree in Early American Literature in 1995.

She credits her parents for her work ethic. She worked at the Stoplight Restaurant in Honor during high school and at Beulah Drug during her college summers. Anne is going on 30 years as a teacher for the Orange County Department of Education.

Upon entering California, she immediately got a summer job at a Hallmark Store. She searched for a teaching job and all she could find that first fall was a part-time tutoring position at a group home for pregnant girls. That job led to Anne substituting in alternative education schools. Before she moved to California, she didn't even know that such schools existed. For 19 years, she taught all subjects to students that lived in a group home. The majority of those students did not want to be there, since, even though their parents were unfit, they would rather be homeless and with family. She then spent 5 years teaching at a lock down facility. Students that had been arrested and wanted to work on their schooling and anger or drug issues lived at this probation site. What was most sad there, was that students did so well to turn their lives around and then when they were released, they went home to the same family and neighborhood that got them into trouble the first time around. Anne is currently teaching junior high at a school for students that live at home but were expelled from their public schools. Anne says that she knows that all you parents and teachers out there know that schools and students are not the way they used to be. She tries her best to steer them in the right direction and hopefully instill in them a desire for learning and to be a good citizen.

Anne has no children of her own, but recognizes the importance of giving children good role models. She was a Brownie Troop leader for 2 years, a Sunday School teacher for 3 years, and she had a "Little Sister" through Big Brothers, Big Sisters for 10 years.

Another area that needs help is animals. Currently, she works with feral cats (OCCommunityCats.org) (She has 2 rescued cats of her own). Anne feeds existing colonies and they trap as many cats as they can. The older, wilder cats are spayed or neutered and released back to their spot and the kittens are fostered and homes are found. They are always looking for a donation.

Anne has been single all her life, although she found someone right after she turned 50. She says that she is just a late bloomer. Anne and Jeff have been together now for 3 years.

Anne's hobbies include traveling (favorite place is London and she has been to 48 states), theatre, and hockey (Go Anaheim Ducks!) She also loves art. She remembers feeling rejected by band and choir in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, but now sees it as a blessing that she had to take art in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. She belongs to a few monthly art groups that share ideas and trade artwork, and her passion to this day is still reading. After receiving her Master's from California State University, Fullerton in 1995, she realized she missed reading and having discussion, so she started a reading group. There are still 3 original members 23 years later.

Anne says, "Life is good!!"

Anne we would have to agree..life seems to be very good for you. We are #OneBENZIE proud of all of your accomplishments, and wish you continued happiness and success. There is no denying, Mrs. Crossman invites you all to like, love and share.

