

WELCOME TO BENZIE COUNTY CENTRAL SCHOOLS FEATURED FRIDAY ALUMNI. Today, we would like to recognize class of 2005 alumni, Jessica (Smith) Edinger.

Jessica was born and raised in Thompsonville, MI., attending Betsie Valley Elementary from kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade, and then attending Benzie Central middle school and high school 7<sup>th</sup> grade through the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. While at Benzie Central, Jessica was involved in cheerleading, softball, choir, Madrigal Singers, Key Club, sang the National Anthem at most sporting events, and participated in the musicals, *Annie Get Your Gun*, *Footloose*, and *Anything Goes*. Jessica was also a part of the Teacher Academy Program through the Traverse Bay Area Career Tech Center. It was during her time participating in the Teacher Academy, that Jessica decided to pursue a degree in special education. After graduation in 2005, she then attended Central Michigan University, where she graduated in 2011 with a Bachelor's degree in Emotional Impairment Special Education. While at Central Michigan University, Jessica was a member of the Residential College of Education and Human Services. In 2009, Jessica studied abroad for part of a summer in England and then spent a month traveling to five different countries. Jessica states, "I was a homebody. I was scared to face my fears and leave home even for a small amount of time. I really wanted to travel and this opportunity was placed in front of me for a reason. Remember to not let your fears get in your way of whatever you want to do. It was one of the best experiences of my life!"

In 2011, Jessica married fellow Benzie graduate, Blake Edinger. They have four children, Andrew (7), Annabella (7), Amylia (3), and Lynlee (1). Jessica is currently in her fifth year of teaching Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) preschool at Buckley Community Schools. She is attending Northcentral University to earn her Master's degree in Early Childhood education. She can frequently still be found around Benzie County when she is visiting her family.

Jessica, we are in fact #OneBENZIE proud. Thank you for sharing your story with us...continued success and happiness to you and your family.

