

WELCOME TO BENZIE COUNTY CENTRAL SCHOOLS FEATURED FRIDAY ALUMNI. Today, we would like to recognize Class of 1992 graduate, Ginger Heyn (Torresan). Here is what Ginger was kind enough to share with us.

“After I graduated in 1992, I attended Baker College in Cadillac. When my car died, I had to come up with a better plan in order to continue going to school. At the time, Baker College only had two schools with dorms – Muskegon and Flint, Michigan. I chose Flint. Growing up in downtown Beulah did not prepare me for the cultural diversity I was to experience when I arrived. Flint was a complete culture shock. It was a big city and had a vast majority of different ethnicities. I stayed there for two and a half years majoring in Business Management and Accounting.

After an almost near tragedy, I needed to come home and help my mom take care of some family issues. I enrolled at Northwestern Michigan College in Traverse City and continued to attend business classes. Working a full time and part time job plus going to school full time eventually got the better of me plus my student loan bills were climbing to an alarming rate. What I hadn't realized when I left for Baker College was their tuition was three times higher than our local college. I was 20 years old and had accumulated \$20,000 in debt that I wasn't sure how I was going to repay. Attending NMC allowed me more access to grants and was a third of the cost but I was also struggling with whether or not I wanted to go into business management. I needed to take a step back and reevaluate my life and school.

While giving school a break, I ran into an old acquaintance of mine from school and we started hanging out around town; running into each other often. Eventually we decided to go on a date. John Heyn (class of 1990) and I had our first date at the Cedar Polka Fest in 1995; we have been together ever since.

I reenrolled in college classes in the winter for the winter of 1998 but I was undecided on what I wanted to pursue as a career – teaching or nursing. I knew if I returned to NMC, I could get my basic education out of the way and decide on a career path along the way then transfer to the newly build University Center. A month before I was to start school I discovered that John and I were expecting a child. This was definitely a game changer. My husband wanted me to be a stay at home mom. This meant nursing was out and I figured by the time the child was in kindergarten I could graduate and hopefully find a teaching job. So teaching was the career path I chose.

I was still working as a secretary while I was pregnant and started taking a couple of classes at night and online. At six months pregnant I had to quit my job and go on bed rest. I could still attend my night class but sitting for eight hours a day, five days a week could cause harm to me and the baby boy I carried. I was showing signs of Preeclampsia which if not treated with caution could cause me to have a stroke and die. In the meantime, my husband decided to start building his own general contracting company.

In August of 1999, we had a happy, healthy baby boy Hunter J. Roger Heyn (class of 2018). As he grew up he attended Lake Ann Elementary and then Benzie Middle School and High school. I graduated in 2005, Cum Laude from Ferris State University in Traverse City with a Bachelor of Science in Business Education with minors in Career Technology and Social Studies. I started substitute teaching at Benzie Central Middle and High School right away. I spent the next ten years there and I was there almost every day during the school year. I eventually left to work for the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Tribal School for two years. While teaching I started working on my master's degree at Grand Valley State University with an emphasis on English earning a certification in English Education.

I decided to get out of teaching and landed a position as an Administrative Assistant for Coldwell

Banker Schmidt Realtors. I do everything from answer the phone to processing paperwork to training agents how to be successful. I have been here for three years and have no intention to go anywhere else.

My advice to kids in school is no matter where you come from or what situation you find yourself in, it is up to you which path you choose to take.”

Thank you Ginger! We are #OneBENZIE proud!

