

WELCOME TO BENZIE COUNTY CENTRAL SCHOOLS FEATURED FRIDAY ALUMNI. Today, we would like to recognize Laurel Jewett (Yalch) – Class of 1999.

Laurel was kind enough to share this with us....

“I grew up in Honor and attended elementary school from Kindergarten-Sixth grade at Platte River Elementary. My mom was a first grade teacher there so I absolutely loved that school and felt like I was there all of the time. I think that is why I wanted to become a teacher because I grew up around them. During my time in high school, I was involved in many extracurricular activities. I played basketball, softball and took stats for the boys’ basketball team. I was class President and on the student council, which was fun helping plan dances such as Homecoming and Snowcoming. Some of my best memories were going to Washington D.C for Close Up, being in the musical Grease, creating amazing projects in physics class, and just being so involved with school events. I absolutely loved my time at Benzie and thank all of my teachers for making it such a great experience.

After graduation, I attended Central Michigan University (Fire Up Chips) where I earned a Bachelor of Science in Education in 2004. After graduating college, I substituted at Benzie in grades K-12 while trying to land a teaching job in the area. I kept very busy doing this. I even spent a year at the high school subbing as a para pro. I taught summer school at the high school for two years and also spent many hours doing after school detention. I was the assistant coach for the varsity softball team and absolutely loved my time helping them for a couple of years. One of my friends told me about a GSRP teaching job opening in Honor that I should apply for. I really didn’t know much about it at the time. I applied and landed the job working for Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency in January 2007. I really enjoyed it so I went back and got my ZA endorsement through CMU.

My husband, Brandon, had a new job opportunity so we moved to Petoskey in June 2009. I transferred within my agency to Boyne City Head Start located at the Early Education Center. The past few years I have taught a blended Head Start/GSRP preschool classroom, which also included special needs children. I truly enjoyed my time with NMCAA and was given so many great opportunities. I absolutely loved working with the children and their families. I met so many people throughout my years there. The best thing about teaching preschool is that every day brings something new. It’s often exhausting and challenging but I have learned to take a breath before I respond to things. The highlight of my days at work are when I see a child’s eyes light up when they learn/try something new. Just when you are about to question how much more patience you have or when you start wanting to give up, your students will have a breakthrough. There is nothing better than having a high-five moment with a young child when they feel successful.

I received my Masters of Instruction and Curriculum in Early Childhood Education and a ZS endorsement from Grand Valley State University in 2015.

I have recently been hired as the Early Learners Director for Boyne City Public Schools preschool programs and started this new journey on July 1. I am excited to be a part of a school system that sees a need for a high-quality Early Education Program that teaches all children and enhances their development. I’m looking forward to working and collaborating with teachers, staff, families and community partners to continue to build on and improve the Early Learners Program.

When I am not working, I enjoy spending time with my children. Kaden is 14 and will be a freshman at Boyne City High School and Bella is 7 and will be a second grader at Boyne City Elementary. They are both super involved in extracurricular activities. I also love sports and you will find me attending games, watching them on TV and staying current on sports news. I have coached my daughter, Bella's, softball team for a few years and hope to continue coaching. I enjoy taking road trips, kayaking down the Platte River, relaxing at the beach, shopping, attending concerts and roller coasters. I love coming back to Benzie County for visits and try to as much as possible."

Laurel, we are in fact #OneBENZIE proud. Continued success to you and your family always. You guessed it, Mrs. Crossman say....like, love and share!

