



# Patience and persistence



MIKE ULLERY/STAFF PHOTOS

Piqua High School intervention specialist Jim Vetter, seated, checks on some paperwork with principal Tony Lyons in his office last week. Vetter (left) mans a line on the Gen'l Harrison canal boat at the John Johnston Farm and Indian Agency last fall.

**BY JOHN HAUER**

For the Daily Call  
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PIQUA — As a high school student, Jim Vetter, intervention technician at Piqua High School, thought his love of music would lead him to become a school band director. In college, Vetter realized he did not have the patience and persistence to pursue that career. Little did he know that he would wind up in a career that revolves around patience, understanding, and persistence.

Vetter grew up in Piqua and graduated from Piqua High School in 1965. He ran track for the Indians, but his passion was music. He played trumpet and baritone horn and was the drum major for the marching band. "I thought I could be a band di-

rector," he said. "However, I wasn't really ready to go to college, so I chose an alternate path."

He worked for a year helping his father in the electrical business. Next, Vetter went to rural Eastern Kentucky to work at a church boarding school. "The road system in rural Kentucky was very bad at the time, and it would have taken hours of travel for someone to get to the closest school," he said. "As a result, many churches ran their own schools, and I started working at Redbird High School run by the Methodist Church." His duties included handyman, activities director, and fill-in dorm parent. He also worked with the local Boy Scouts.

After two years, Vetter enrolled at Otterbein University to start his college education. "I chose to come back

to the area and go to Otterbein," he said. "My future bride was a student there." In 1972, he earned his bachelor's degree in sociology. "Otterbein was a great experience," he said. "It put things into perspective and gave me confidence."

Vetter and his wife Brenda took jobs at Children's Home in Worthington outside of Columbus, a residential treatment facility for youngsters. "We worked there for two years," he said. "It started us on a long path of helping young people."

His next stop was Miami County Children's Services. He filled a variety of positions including case worker and supervisor. "It was a tough job trouble-shooting problems where kids were involved," he said. "I

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always worn a beeper, and I can remember handling a serious problem on more than one Christmas Day."

Vetter spent seven years with Children's Protective Services, then, became the regional director for Head Start in this area for three years. "We covered five counties, two time zones, and three area codes," he said. "Needless to say, it kept me busy and on the road." After Head Start, Vetter spent over ten years as the director of Miami County Children's Services. In 1999, he joined the Miami County Educational Service Center and worked in schools throughout Miami County. "I typically visited six school districts every week." Currently, he is in his second year of working exclusively at Piqua High School.

At PHS, Vetter works with many students helping them develop appropriate social and coping skills. As with his previous jobs, he also deals with unique and special situations. "Many of my students have Individual Education Plans that require this intervention, but I will work with any student who is referred to me," he said. "I've worked with one tenth of the students at PHS."

"I reach out to students and try to touch them in a positive way," he said. "I will meet with most of my students of a regular basis to make sure they are making progress and staying on the right path." Vetter works with in-school suspension students and students who are in danger of being suspended or expelled who are part of the Alternate Education program.

Away from school, Vetter is a busy person. He is President of the Southview Neighborhood Association. He officiated soccer for 26 years. And in the summer, he is the captain of the Canal Boat and Canal state certified interpreter at Johnson Farm. "I'm fully trained in Mule 101," he said with a smile. "I tell my friends it's my quarter of a million dollar yacht."

Vetter and his wife who is a teachers' aide with the school music programs at PHS and the junior high have been married 43 years. They have one son, Josh who works at Johnson Farm. Jim and Brenda sing in local musical groups including the New Renaissance Singers. Jim plays trumpet for area civic bands and the Gotham City Brass Quintet.