

Lifelong love of school turns to dream career

I knew teaching was the way to go for me.
- Kristie Dankworth



MIKE ULLERY/STAFF PHOTO

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PIQUA — Bennett Intermediate School fifth-grade language arts and science instructor Kristie Dankworth always wanted to be a teacher. "I loved going to school," she said. "I knew teaching was the way to go for me." And, judging from her principal's comments, she made the right choice. "Kristie is very motivated and energetic," said Dan Hake, Bennett principal. "She is an effective, student centered teacher."



Dankworth was born in Lower Burrell outside of Pittsburgh. She graduated from Burrell High School in 1992. She was active in

student council and served as junior class president. After school, she played basketball and softball for the Buccaneers.

Dankworth pursued her teaching goal at Clarion University in northwest Pennsylvania. "I chose Clarion because of its outstanding reputation for teacher education," she said. "It was a perfect fit." In 1996, she earned her bachelor's degree in elementary education with a certification in early childhood education. Later, Dankworth received a master's degree at Wright State University in the Teacher

Leader Program. She also has her principal's certificate.

After Clarion, she moved to the Piqua area and began subbing for

Piqua City Schools. She did this for a year and a half, mainly at Piqua High School as a tutor to prepare students for the Ohio Graduation Tests. In 1998, Dankworth was hired full-time as a sixth-grade teacher at Bennett. A year later, the schools redistricted, and she moved to fifth-grade English and science.

"I enjoy teaching," she said. "It is nice when a student understands what I am doing. I can see that light go on in their head." Dankworth credits the Bennett fifth grade team of teachers with working together for the benefit of the students. "The team is very supportive and we help out each

Bennett Intermediate School teacher Kristie Dankworth works on a lesson plan during a prep period last week.

other."

A fifth-grade science project that the students have fun with is a Biome Box. Each student creates their own "box" or diorama on a selected topic like the rainforest. "The student must research the topic and decide what to put into the box," Dankworth said. "Then, the student presents the box to the class and explains the significance of each part."

Dankworth has been teaching

See Career /Page 3

Career

Continued from page 1

in Piqua long enough to have her students from her first years graduate and go on to college or a job. "It is very gratifying to see former students become successful and know that I had a hand in it," she said.

Her other duties at Bennett include running the annual Spelling Bee and serving on the Business Partnership Committee. Bennett is partnered with Hartzell Propeller. "They have been a great business partner," she said. "To-

gether we plan two trips or activities per grade level." Most of the activities revolve around aerospace. For example, in the spring, they put on a presentation about the Wright Brothers for the fifth-graders. At Christmas, Hartzell gives each student a care package of gloves, candy, a toothbrush, and other items. The company also provides food baskets for families of students.

Dankworth's effectiveness and accomplishments were recognized by Piqua City Schools when she was named a district Master

Teacher. "I like being in the classroom and being around kids," she said. To be awarded the Master Teacher title, a teacher must have worked in the district for at least seven years. A teacher has to submit a portfolio that focuses on leadership, instruction, and professional growth that shows their excellence inside and outside the classroom.

At home, she reads a lot and watches all kinds of sports. The family enjoys travelling, and they have been to Myrtle Beach, Dallas, California, and Pennsylvania. She and her husband Chris, who works in Purchasing for Hartzell Propeller, have been married six years. They have a four-year-old son named Kade. The family lives in Bradford.