

Career change adds up to success for Feitshans

Class Act

BY JOHN HAUER

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PIQUA — The famous quote by Mahatma Gandhi — “Be the change you want to see in the world” — is what guided Bennett Intermediate School educator Lisa Feitshans to switch careers after 23 years in accounting to become a fourth grade math and science teacher.

Feitshans grew up in Darke County around the town of Pittsburg. She graduated from Franklin-Monroe High School in 1981. She played volleyball, basketball, and ran track for the Jets. She was also a member of the National Honor Society and Fellowship of

Christian Athletes.

“I have always liked math,” she said. “So, I decided on a career in accounting and finance.” She earned an associate’s degree in Data Processing from the University of Cincinnati, then, went to Wright State University and completed a bachelor’s degree in Finance and Accounting. She began working for the National Cash Register Company while finishing her degree at night.

“I had a good job at NCR, but after 23 years, I wanted to do something more than just work with numbers,” she said. “I was ready for a change.” A close friend from her church invited Feitshans to observe her classroom at Bennett School. The experience got Feitshans excited about becoming a teacher. “The late Kathy Rank, the Ohio Teacher of the Year in 2004, welcomed me into her



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Lisa Feitshans discusses a math question with one of her fourth-grade students at Bennett Intermediate School last week.

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classroom and inspired me,” she said. “When I left, I thought I want to be just like her.”

Ironically, the move to teaching was at the perfect time for Feitshans. “Six months after I started back to school, NCR announced their move to Atlanta,” she said. “I would have lost my job or have had to move to Georgia.” Feitshans stayed with NCR until the end of 2010, and began student teaching in January 2011.

Feitshans enrolled in Antioch McGregor University in an 18-month program where she received a master’s degree in education. She subbed at different Miami County schools for a year including several long-term sub assignments with Piqua City Schools. This led to her being hired full-time

as a sixth-grade teacher at Bennett. This year, she switched to fourth grade. She teaches 40 students in two sections of science and two sections of math.

“I love working with fourth-graders,” she said. “They are in that transition of being guided by their teachers to becoming independent thinkers. I love to see them make that leap.” Feitshans credits her smooth transition into teaching to her mentor, and now retired, educator Patty Deaton. “I learned a lot from Patty,” Feitshans said. “She was so dedicated and caring to her students. She thought teaching was not only a job, but a calling.”

Feitshans who raised two children believes that being a mother has helped her as a teacher and has helped her in dealing with other parents. “I treat my students as if they were my own kids,” she said. “Parents and teachers

working together is the best way to get successful results.”

A favorite student project the fourth-graders just completed was the creation of their own invention. As a class, students went through the process of brainstorming ideas, filing a patent for their invention, identifying their audience, and determining a cost for their product. Students created a poster and presented their ideas to the rest of the class. “I want them to believe they all had a great idea just waiting to be invented,” Feitshans said. “The students had some very interesting ideas for new products.” One student invented a lollipop as a way to give medicine to young children. Another student came up with wipers for the side windows of a car.

Outside the classroom, Feitshans has helped with the building spelling bee

and the school’s talent show. She has served on the Continuous Improvement Committee and assisted with Math Night at Bennett.

At home, she and her husband Greg, an engineer at Wright Patterson Air Force Base, have been married 27 years. The empty-nesters have a son and a daughter. Bethany is a freshman at Butler University and is majoring in pharmacy. Tyler is a junior at Ohio Northern University majoring in engineering.