

# Specialist living childhood dream

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PIQUA — Piqua Junior High School intervention specialist Lorrie Duer feels extremely lucky to be able to live out her dream. She wanted to be a teacher since the second grade after having Miss Madigan, a young and energetic teacher. Duer imitated her teacher, playing school for endless hours. "I have always loved working with kids," she said. She spent her free time babysitting for children, working at summer youth programs as a counselor, and volunteering in city



organizations that dealt with youth activities. Despite some discouragement from family, she followed her dream to become a teacher and has not regretted one day.

Duer was born in Rochester, N.Y., but also lived in California and Illinois. She graduated from Naperville High School

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— Lorrie Duer

MIKE ULLEW/STAFF PHOTO

Piqua Junior High teacher Lorrie Duer works between classes in one of the school computer labs.

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outside of Chicago in 1974. During her high school years there and at Poway High School near San Diego, she played soccer, field hockey, and did synchronized swimming.

After high school, Duer went to Ohio Wesleyan University and earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education. Later, she received an intervention specialist certificate and a master's degree in education from the University of Dayton. "I picked Ohio Wesleyan because I was able to get involved in the teaching profession as a freshman working in the elementary schools in Delaware, Ohio," she said.

Upon graduation from Ohio Wesleyan, Duer started applying for teaching positions. "I sent out 300 resumes. I got back 150 replies that resulted in only three interviews and two job offers," she said. Her first job was in Martinsville, Va. teaching reading improvement to grades 8-12 for two years. It was a brand new class to prepare students for the reading and math State Competency Tests. "I had no textbooks and no mentor," she said. "It was a challenge, but challenges are what make the job exciting." ...

has been an amazing experience and challenge which is what I love about teaching," she said. Duer has been an intervention specialist in a resource room for the past 10 years.

Duer credits colleague Vickie Keller with helping her settle in at the junior high. "Vickie is a great mentor. She showed me the ins and outs of being an intervention specialist," Duer said. "The whole PJHS staff is like a big family, and we support and encourage each other."

In the classroom, Duer utilizes a lot of hands-on activities. "The eighth-graders write their own short story at the end of the year, and the stories are made into an illustrated book for the students to keep," Duer said. "The students are excited to see their writings in a real hardcover book." Funding of the project is from the United Way Team Leadership Grant.

The entire junior high has undertaken a character education program. "On the first Friday of each month, we do activities centered on a certain trait like citizenship," said Duer. "Next month, the staff and students will be

make the job exciting."

Next, she went to West Islip, N.Y. on Long Island to teach 6th grade for one year. Duer moved back to Chicago for three years to teach 7th and 8th grade science at a Catholic school. Then, she moved to the Piqua where her husband was from. Lorrie left education at that time and worked for an advertising firm in Sidney for 15 years. "My new job gave me more flexibility to be at home more often and raise our two children," she said. "Always hoping to return to teaching some day, I attended classes at Urbana University to keep my teaching license current."

In 2001, Duer returned to education and took a position teaching 6th grade at Washington Intermediate School. The job was rified for the next school year, but Duer was hired to be an intervention specialist in language arts at the junior high. "Each new teaching position

staff and students will be working with responsibility."

At home, Duer enjoys spending time with her family, gardening, and being outdoors, walking or biking. "I play golf, or try to," she said. Duer has been a Girl Scout leader for nine years, volunteers at her church, and is involved with Girls On The Run, a Dayton based group that works with girls in grades 3-8. "It's a 12-week program where we teach girls to make good choices, and we do things to build their self esteem."

Duer's husband Tim, a PHS graduate, works in sales for Resistance Welding, headquartered in Benton Harbor, Mich. Their son David is a junior in sports administration at the University of Cincinnati and their daughter Elizabeth is an eighth-grader at Piqua Junior High.