



class act

A perfect fit

BY JOHN HAUER

For the Daily Call
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PIQUA — Helping others has always been the goal of Nichole Elsner. "I believe you have two hands, one to help yourself, and the second to help others," she said. The long-term sub is currently helping Piqua High School fill a need in the guidance department, and she is the counselor for the 282 freshmen.

Elsner was born in Troy, but grew up in Sidney. She graduated from Sidney High School where she sang in the choir and played saxophone in the band. She performed in the high school musicals and played softball for the Yellowjackets.

After graduation, Elsner enrolled at Ohio Northern University to major in elementary education. "I fell in love with ONU when I visited the campus," she said. "The setting and the students were a perfect fit for me." Realizing that teaching positions were scarce in Ohio, Elsner switched her major to psychology in hopes of landing a job in human resources in the business world.

She earned her bachelor's degree and started working in management. "My heart was still with education and helping students," she said. "I combined my two interests and decided to become a school counselor." She attended Wright State University and received a master's degree in school counseling.

As she feared, job openings for school counseling were even more scarce than for teaching. "I sent out a lot of resumes and filled out a lot of online applications," she said. "Finally, I found a job as a junior high counselor in Arizona."

Elsner worked for three years at Vulture Peak Middle School about 45 miles northwest of Phoenix. "I didn't know anybody, so it was quite an adventure," she said. Elsner used her softball skills and coached the girls' softball team. The team was very successful, so she was talked into coaching girls' volleyball. "I



MIKE ULLERY/STAFF PHOTO

Nichole Elsner, left, works with freshman Chelsea McGlothlin in the library at Piqua High School last week.

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had no experience in volleyball," she said. "But, I coached some talented young girls, and we went to championship games in both volleyball and softball."

The long distance from family and the lack of seasons made Elsner homesick, so in 2010, she moved back to Ohio. "I took a job in human resources at Sear's in Springfield, and I kept looking for openings in school counseling," she said. "I applied to Piqua City

Schools and became the long-term sub counselor in January."

The biggest difference Elsner has found between the middle school students she had in Arizona and her freshmen is the amount of paperwork. "Middle school was all about emotional and social concerns," she said. "High school generates more paperwork with scheduling and standardized testing." Elsner admits there is never a dull moment, and there is still some conflict with the 14 and 15 year-olds. "I counsel students about deal-

ing with problems and getting along with others," she said. "My main focus right now is trying to get to know as many of the freshmen as I can. We will start scheduling them for next year in a few weeks."

Away from PHS, Elsner is currently living in Springfield, but looking for something closer to Piqua and Sidney. While she is back in the four seasons of Ohio, she enjoys vacationing in warm places with a beach like Florida or California.

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