

Success

Continued from page 1



MIKE ULLERY/STAFF PHOTO
Favorite Hill teacher Pam Locker works in her classroom last week.

the Teacher Leader program from Wright State University.

Locker was hired by the Miami County Educational Service Center. The ESC hires educators at the request of Miami County school districts in areas such as tutors, special education teachers and aides, guidance counselors, and intervention specialists. Locker was assigned as an intervention specialist at Favorite Hill. She is in her 20th year.

"I have been lucky by having two wonderful principals here at Favorite Hill," she said. "Former principal Dwayne Thompson (now a director of curriculum for Piqua City Schools) and current principal Mindy Gearhardt were my mentors. They helped me and pushed me to be a better teacher."

As an intervention specialist, Locker teaches, co-teaches, and tutors students who have an Individualized Educational Plan. These IEP students can be in their own classroom and also be in regular education classrooms. "I have a dedicated team of aides who assist me and follow our students," Locker said. "We work well together and provide the best situation for our kids." The paraprofessionals are Emily Plunkett, Tabatha

Davidson, and Heather Langston.

"Our kids get the attention they need to be successful in a regular classroom setting or in a special resource room," Locker said. "Some days can be a challenge, but it is very rewarding to see our kids achieve success. I love this job." Locker was named Miami County ESC Employee of the Year for the 2011-2012 school year.

A huge advancement in teaching methods involves the use of technology. "We have SmartBoards, Elmos (a high tech document and media camera and projector), iPads, and classroom computers," Locker said. "My first-, second-, and third-graders are surprisingly skilled at using these devices. The kids can activate the equipment quicker than the teachers and parents."

An assignment the younger kids enjoy is working with the calendar and doing assignments related to the holidays and special events. "They love singing, so we tie in songs to many of our projects," she said. "Singing and dancing gets them really excited."

Another favorite assignment involves the weather and temperature. "They are fascinated with graphing temperatures and seeing the rise and fall."

At home, Locker uses all her former 4-H skills. She and her husband Kurt live on a 40-acre farm outside of Bradford. "We have all the animals," Pam said. "There are chickens, pigs, turkeys, and even a donkey." Kurt is a farrier by trade and has been working with horses for many years. The couple has been married 19 years. They have two sons. Kyler is a sophomore at Bradford High School, and Konnor is in the seventh grade. The family loves to go boating at Lake Norris.



Challenges equal success for Locker and her students

BY JOHN HAUER

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PIQUA — Favorite Hill Primary School intervention specialist Pam Locker has seen many positive changes during the past 20 years with regards to special needs students. "Before, special needs students were placed in special classrooms away from regular classrooms," she said. "Now, the emphasis is on the least restrictive setting and more inclusion into regular classes."

Locker graduated from Bethel High School in 1988.

She played soccer, basketball, and softball for the Bees. She was also very active in 4-H and would eventually become a 4-H adviser. She pursued her college education at Ohio Dominican University. "I started out as a business major, but I took a class where I observed an elementary teacher," she said. "I was hooked and changed my plans and my major to education."

In 1992, Locker earned her bachelor's degree in special education. Later, she received a master's degree in

See Success/Page 3