

Ty Ankrom's Here's What I Think ...

When Sharon Wachenschwanz was a student at Ohio University, all education majors had to take Introduction to Speech Disorders.

"I'm sure a lot of the others were falling asleep but I found it fascinating," Sharon said.

In fact, she was so intrigued that instead of becoming an elementary school teacher as she had planned, she decided to become a speech pathologist.

It turned out to be the right decision, apparently, as she has been one for the Pickaway County Educational Service Center for 40 years.

A big change that has occurred in the field since Sharon started is a move toward inclusion, which she said benefits everybody involved.

"When I started, you took children out (of the classroom) and worked with them.

"Now," said Sharon, who works at Laurelville Elementary, "I could be in a preschool classroom all day."

Sharon said by staying in the classroom, her work with students can be observed by oth-



ers, which helps everybody. "We showed them how what we were doing can be carried over by teachers, parents, everybody," she said.

"We've become so much more a part of the school program," she said.

That aspect of her job is one that she credits for her longevity with the ESC.

"If it had stayed the way it was when I started, I probably wouldn't have stayed as long. But I like the way it has evolved into a team approach."

Sharon's dedication to the children has been evident as long as I've known her, having met her more than 20 years ago when I was the principal at Pickaway Elementary.

She always puts the needs of her students first and foremost. Even though she was assigned to multiple buildings, she took as much time as each boy or girl required to achieve the goals that had been established.

Her passion, dedication and

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Sharon Wachenschwanz

work ethic remain as evident today as it was then.

She also loves working at Laurelville and said that is another reason she is still working.

"I really enjoy working with the children. And the teachers are tremendous. My colleagues are my family."

With 40 years under her belt, Sharon doesn't plan to retire yet.

"If I can make a difference, I'll keep working."

Sharon was one of 24 ESC employees recognized recently for their years of service.

Also recognized were: Joy Brooks, 25 years; Michelle Borland, 20 years; Jenni Cheek, Richard Everman and Byron Welch, 15 years; Brandy Fraley and Beverly Riley, 10 years; Sara Christ, Megan Embrey, Beth Keplar, Erika Konowalow, Deb Leasure and Vince Perhach, five years; and Shelly Fink, Becky McKeever, Kristin O'Dell, Trent

Patterson, Lisa Payne, Peter Prewett, Lindsay Robinson, Erica Rock, Sandra Scott-Ford and Michele Walters, one year.

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