

New leadership at IVHS includes Vice Principal Kristy Heller

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IVN Senior Contributing Writer

With key leadership changes at the Illinois Valley High School (IVHS) enthusiasm is running high - and that includes positive energy from new Vice Principal Kristy Heller.

Heller and her husband were both teaching at Toledo High School (in Lincoln County, Oregon) last year when they decided to move to a region with a larger population base.

"We both really liked Southern Oregon so I started applying for jobs in the area," Heller said. "I chose the IVHS after really connecting with both the interview committee and the new principal, Tanner Smith. The programs they're running and how they care about the kids impressed me. They talked about connecting with the kids and making the school a better place. There's definitely a nice family atmosphere here and a high level of enthusiasm and I really like that small school feel."

Heller grew up in Siletz, Oregon, a small town near Toledo. She attended Linfield College where she earned a bachelor's degree in health and physical education - then returned home in 2003 and began teaching those subjects at Toledo High School, continuing on for 12 years. During that period she earned a master's degree in curriculum and instruction from Portland State University and also picked up

her administration credentials at Concordia University in 2014.

Heller's husband, Luke Korber, from the Dayton, Ohio area, served in the U.S. Coast Guard, which brought him to Oregon. Korber began teaching in the Lincoln County School District and eventually became a math teacher at Toledo High School, where he met Heller. The pair married in 2011.

Heller's broad-ranging background includes strong technology skills - which is one important reason Smith is pleased that she joined the staff at IVHS.

"Kristy's a real work horse. She's very much on top of things and she's very technologically savvy. She's done a lot of district trainings in computers and brings a lot to the table," Smith said. "She just kind of jumped in with both feet and embraced IVHS and the whole area. And, she's doing such a great job of setting up professional development opportunities for the kids and the teachers as well. She's saved me more than once with her knowledge of different computer programs and she's been able to streamline a lot of the computer related processes at the school. This has saved us all a lot of time and trouble."

In addition to her regular teaching schedule, "I did some computer training in Lincoln County and became a technology trainer," Heller said. "I learned lots of different software and ended up training teachers there. I love to



(Courtesy photo for the Illinois Valley News)

IVHS Assistant Principal Kristy Heller (right) and husband, Luke Korber.

learn new programs - especially ones that get kids engaged. This can really help pull kids into learning. It's their world. Every minute of the day it seems they're connected to their cell phones or some of sort of technology, so if we can incorporate that into lessons, it increases student engagement."

Like several newer teachers and educational administrators in

the Valley, Heller finds much to celebrate.

"This is an amazing community," she said. "Like any town it has its up and down, but it seems like when something needs to get done, everybody really comes together to make this a better place for all who live here."

She's also pleased about the high levels of parental involvement

at IVHS. "We've already had quite a few parents come in. We drop what we're doing to make sure they are heard and try to address their concerns. Our students are the top priority, so we'll do anything we can to make the school better and help the kids feel more valued. So I want parents and community members to know I am available."

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