

The Washington County Consortium

NEWSLETTER

Brought to you by Sarah Woog, Executive Director of the Washington County Consortium (WCC)

August 1, 2019

ECET2 is coming up!

We are so excited for the ECET2 conference being held at the University of Maine at Machias on August 15. We've got some great programming and the reflective and celebratory nature of the day is sure to energize you for the coming school year.

If you'd like to attend, but have not already registered, please register here. The link will also provide additional details about ECET2 in Washington County.

<https://maineea.org/event/ecet2-downeast-august-15-2017-university-of-maine-at-machias/>

Harvest of Ideas planning continues and we are looking for presenters for the day. If you are interested in sharing at Harvest of Ideas, please complete the Request for Proposal Form (link below). Submissions are due by August 9 so we may contact presenters by August 16. It's great to have local talent and leaders in our field share, so don't be shy! This is your opportunity to support growth and opportunity for educators in our County.

<https://forms.gle/gwdCGDVoq4NZhn7j8>

Please check out the Washington County Educator Profile on following two next pages. I interviewed Mike and Jeanne Beal, retired Washington County educators who, between the two of them, have been serving students and communities in Washington County for almost a century! They are gifts to the communities they serve and wonderful inspirations for us all.

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Washington County Educator Profile

Meet Mike and Jeanne Beal, retired educators who, combined, have served students and communities in Washington County for almost a century (96 years and counting)



When I met Mike Beal, the first question I asked him was “Do you know you’ve inspired Ron Ramsay (Superintendent, MSAD 37)?” Mike replied, “Do you know he inspired me?” Mr. Beal was Mr. Ramsay’s teacher, Principal, and coach at S.S. Nash School in Addison back in the sixties. What Mr. Beal was expressing in his retort was a guiding principle I discovered defined his long and illustrious career in education: allow the children to inspire you.

Ron Ramsay, and Lorna Greene, Principal at D.W.Merritt School, both recommended I profile Mike. Lorna shared in an email “His wife is delightful as well, she has also been a teacher, a school volunteer and a loyal supporter of children, SAD #37 schools, and education. You may want to interview them as a couple. They certainly are cherished and admired educators in our area. I hope this helps.” It did. I was excited Jeanne joined us for our conversation at the Bluebird Ranch Restaurant in Machias, and together they painted a beautiful picture of their lives as educators with poignant reminders of why we do what we do.

Mike and Jeanne started their careers in education in the early sixties. They met in high school and married in 1960 while they were in college. Mike went to Jonesport High School and Jeanne went to high school on Beals Island when there was still a high school on the island. There was no bridge linking Beals Island and Jonesport then. They both graduated from the University of Maine at Machias (UMM). Jeanne took longer to graduate because she took every other year off to earn money to pay for college, while Mike had a basketball scholarship (he’s in the Hall of Fame at UMM), and finished in four years. Their early days together is a Downeast love story. They fell in love young, discovered a shared a passion (education), and worked hard to piece together a life in service to others.

They served, and they inspired. Mike’s impact is best expressed in the email Ron Ramsay sent to me in preparation for my interview with Mr. Beal. Mr. Ramsay shared:

Looking back on my years as a student at the S.S. Nash School I have nothing but great memories of my times with Mr. Beal. He coached and mentored us all day, every day. When we had recesses we spent our time playing basketball and baseball while learning through his example how to be a good, honest, caring human being. Mr. Beal always played, directed the game, coached, encouraged, and just simply made it fun. Everyone wanted to participate and everyone learned from their experiences. Mr. Beal was enthusiastic and it inspired all of us to do

their best. Everyone had great respect for Mr. Beal at all levels of his teaching, coaching and administrative career. You as a student wanted to perform well because you didn't want to disappoint him. He cared deeply about all of his students. Mr. Beal's contributions to our schools are legendary. His contributions to the individual students that he has taught and coached are beyond measure. I feel blessed that he was my teacher, coach and Principal and that he coached me in Elementary school and in High School and that he coached both of my boys during their elementary years. Mr. Beal has positively impacted generations of children.

Mr. Ramsay's description of Mr. Beal agreed with how Mr. Beal saw his years in education. Mike emphasized his constant engagement with children when he was a teacher and administrator. He saw all interactions as opportunities for impact, and as moments of inspiration. As an administrator, he met every bus at the beginning of the day. He used trauma-informed practices before we in education talked about "trauma-informed practices." Meeting students first thing allowed him to reach out to a tired student, or see that a student was having a hard time before it translated to disruptive or disengaged behavior. He was always out during recess, and admitted to occasional snowball fights. But even in this admission, I saw what Ron had described when he said he learned from Mike how to be "a good, honest, caring human being." During the snowball fights, projectiles weren't thrown at short distances, and didn't hit faces. He modeled good, honest, caring fun.

Mike's wife, Jeanne, has been a caring educator all of her life too. She was Ron Ramsay's first grade teacher. He shared, "She gave me the greatest gift of all... she taught me how to read." Jeanne taught generations of youngsters to read. After she retired, she went back to be an Ed Tech in Special Education to teach struggling students how to read. She was proud to share that the students she worked with were always readers by the end of their time together. She continues to support reading in schools and volunteers to read to Kindergarteners weekly. Jeanne's love of teaching is not only academic. She treasured, too, the relationships she had with children as an educator. Jeanne remarked, "Children have to have someone to look up to. Love what you're doing and children. You (as educators) are the guardian or parent many of them do not have."

I wanted to profile Mike and Jeanne Beal because, going into the new school year, I was eager to celebrate educators who would inspire us. They certainly have inspired me and I am confident their years of service and lessons in love can provide inspiration for us all. I am grateful for the time I spent with them. But I think the message we can glean from their lives in service, and the message they celebrate, is that we should find inspiration in the children with whom we share time. We can learn from them how to be more effective and fulfilled educators. Our own development is integrally woven into our time and engagement with our students. Actually, Mr. Beal said it best: "Every kid is different and you have to be different to get to every kid."