

Retirement means teaching teachers

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Janet Marissen has the utmost confidence in today's young teachers.

And that's because she's been helping new teachers become better inside the classroom for the past 20 years.

Marissen, 53, is retiring later this month after a 34-year teaching career in Ontario — but only 11 with the former Hastings County Board of Education.

The Foxboro School principal, however, has spent the past 20 years teaching Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation-sponsored professional development courses both in Hastings and Prince Edward as well as Frontenac County.

She plans on continuing teaching these specialized courses even after retirement.

"I'll still be teaching teachers because that's what I like doing best — facilitating teacher growth," she said. "I like helping teachers become the best they can be."



Janet Marissen

Marissen said she's impressed with the new crop of teachers joining the education ranks.

"From my experience, young teachers are enthusiastic, hard-working and well trained. They're eager to increase their skills and hone their craft...they're doing a good job.

"I feel very optimistic about the future of the profession because I've worked with these young teachers. They are a dedicated group and they're doing a good job."

Marissen and her husband, Harry, who retired from teaching two years ago, teach the federation-sponsored professional development courses together. Eight different courses are offered every year.

The Marissens teach three, sometimes four, courses a year — each course is 12 weeks long.

Born in Hamilton and raised in Ottawa, Janet Marissen received her teacher's certificate in 1964. She then taught in Burlington for three years and two in Brampton before moving to New Zealand for two years after her daughter was born.

She returned to teaching in Kingston in the fall of 1971. She stayed in the Limestone City until joining the Hastings board in 1987.

Marissen has taught special needs students at Stirling Primary School, was vice-principal at William R. Kirk School for two years and then Susanna Moodie for another year.

She returned to Kirk as principal for three years and has spent the past four years as Foxboro principal.

Retirement will be anything but boring, she acknowledged.

The Marissens will be busy looking after their grandson (her daughter is a teacher), serving on the boards of Eastminster United Church and Community Visions and Networking, in their roles as Belleville Lions Club members and investigating small business opportunities.

Marissen said she also plans on working with students in other capacities during retirement.

"I love working with kids and I'll look for opportunities to do that."