

# SAINT CLARE PARISH PROFILE

## LEA VANDE HEY



Lea Vande Hey feels right at home at St. Clare Parish and St. Clare Catholic School.

Which isn't surprising, considering she has been a parishioner since birth and attended the school at which she now works.

Lea is in her 14th year as the Administrative Assistant at St. Clare Catholic School, which recently resumed classes for the 2020-2021 academic year.

"I enjoy getting to know the families," said Lea, known as Miss Lea to students. "The best part of my day is spending time talking with the children, parents or grandparents when they stop by my office."

Lea had just started taking classes in summer 2007 to become a veterinary assistant when the Administrative Assistant position was posted.

"I just knew that was the job for me," she said. "I applied just under the wire, interviewed and luckily was offered the position."

Lea handles a wide array of responsibilities during the school day.

“Over a period of a day, I log in attendance and hot lunch, take a lot of temperatures and put on Band-Aids!” she said. “I assist parents with questions, organize field trips and plunge my fair share of toilets! Each day brings something new. I am blessed to be able to work with such a wonderful staff and principal as well as great parents.”

Lea describes the school atmosphere as “a pretty tight-knit community.”

“When someone needs help, everyone jumps in,” she said. “When someone has something exciting happening in their life, the community also jumps in to celebrate with them. (Principal) Julie (Hubbard) has been a wonderful leader, pulling the families and staff together. She has a wonderful way of making everyone feel important and welcome.”

It’s truly a wonderful school community, Lea said. “It’s very comforting to know that so many people really care not only about their child’s education but about the people that are involved in that education. We get to know each other not only on a professional level but a personal one.”

Lea attended St. Paul School (now St. Clare Catholic School) through seventh grade — since there was no eighth grade there at the time — and graduated from Wrightstown High School.

Lea was born and raised in Wrightstown, where she was baptized and received First Communion at St. Paul Church, which is now part of St. Clare Parish.

“My parents (the late Mark and Fran Verbeten) instilled a strong faith in God and family,” she said. “We grew up praying at meals and bedtime, attending church on the weekends and Holy Days, and praying the rosary after dinner during the Lenten season.”

Her parents were very involved in the parish. They sang in choirs and were part of the Christian Mothers’ and Men’s Society. Her father (who also attended St. Paul Catholic School) was a trustee and served on the Finance Council and, for a period of time, together they coordinated the CCD program as well as taught.

“The Catholic faith was very important to my parents and they encouraged their children to participate,” said Lea, who was a member of the parish youth group as well as the Children’s Choir. As an adult, Lea also served on the St. Paul School Committee.

Lea loves St. Paul Church, adding: “I just think it’s a beautiful church. I can’t count the times I have heard people that have attended Mass and funerals express how beautiful the church is.”

All three of Lea’s children (Aaron, Zach and Parker) attended St. Paul/St. Clare Catholic School.

“I hope to someday see my grandchildren attend this school as well,” she said, adding “Hint, hint, kids.”

Lea is also involved in her hobby/business of dog grooming. And in her free time she enjoys spending time with her children and friends, relaxing at her cottage, reading and golfing.