



Seldovia Gazette

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Vivian Rojas – Serving Our School for Over 20 Years!

by Charity Winters



One of the unsung heroes of our little school is none other than Vivian Rojas, putting time in with kids both in school and after for more than 20 years as both a volunteer and a full time Title VII aide and part time pool manager. Committed to serving the community where her three children were raised and schooled, Vivian is a Seldovian who truly deserves some recognition for her years of hard work.

Originally from Copeville, Washington where she spent her growing up years, Alaska became a summer adventure for Vivian and 3 of her close girlfriends after high school in 1974. Looking for a job in a cannery it was a toss up between Dutch Harbor, Seldovia and a place in Southeast. Out of the three choices, Seldovia seemed to work out for the girls and from then on it became Vivian's home. Vivian eventually attended college in

Vivian and John were married in December of 1981 and they soon made their carefree globe hopping a thing of the past when their first son was born in 1981. They chose to create their own name for their firstborn – Daewon, a unique combination of the words “day one” to commemorate the first day that they were all together as a family. Vivian commented that townspeople often joked, “When is Day Two coming?” Emily and Evan soon followed. All three are graduates of Susan B. English. Daewon is finishing up a degree in environmental engineering, Emily is working on a degree in social work, and Evan graduated from high school last year and is working and taking a year from school until he decides what to do.

Once the kids started school Vivian began volunteering her time at the SBE. She was already a volunteer EMT and managed the

Anchorage and a few years later, ended up in Fairbanks awaiting a moose-hunting trip with friends. Needing a job before the big trip, Vivian made an attempt to find something in Fairbanks before realizing there were no jobs to be had. This drove her to the union hall where she found her way into a position working on the pipeline. For about 3 years, Vivian worked as an oiler and learned how to maintain heavy equipment. In later years, Vivian also relocated to Hawaii for a year and even lived in New Zealand for several months! But Seldovia was always home base for Vivian and she returned almost every summer.

In 1979, Vivian met her future husband, John Mickelson. Also in Seldovia for work, John had been working on a fishing boat the summer he and Vivian met. When his boss was ticketed and his boat docked for the summer, John had to look for work elsewhere, ending up at the shrimp cannery. Vivian was there too, but not to work. She was interested in the pounds of free shrimp that were being either thrown away or given to the nearest interested person. Vivian and John met and began seeing each other. John had an interesting past as a sheep-shearer, traveling in the states during the shearing season. He soon began taking Vivian along on his trips through farms in Idaho, Utah and Wyoming. They even spent 6-8 months living in New Zealand and shearing sheep.

pool on a volunteer basis as well. In 1996, a position for Title VII Indian Education opened up and Vivian took the job. For the children in her program, Vivian is responsible for helping them be successful by developing a rapport with the students, direct tutoring in Math, Language Arts, and Reading, and monitoring their academic grades. At the same time as the Title position came up, Vivian was also given a paid position as the part time pool manager. She is now a CPO (Certified Pool Operator) and a WSI lifeguard instructor, training and certifying lifeguards and teaching swimming lessons in the summer. Along with her busy work schedule, Vivian also spends time working with kids everyday in Power Hour, an after school program sponsored by the Boys and Girls Club. In the summer, Vivian has volunteered as the MC for the Fourth of July ceremonies for several years. Obviously, Vivian is a busy woman who has given much of herself to this community!



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