



Twenty some years ago Julie was a stay at home mom as three children were born into the home, two boys and a girl. When her daughter started school she went to work full time as a third shift custodian in the school district. This allowed her to attend the kids sports and to involved as a cub and webelo scout leader. Later she worked with disabled adults, those having multiple diagnoses – mental, physical, emotional and intellectual. She so enjoyed this work that she expected to do it until retirement. She says, “They gave back to me more than I ever gave, taught me more than I ever taught.

But life takes twists and turns. Along came a series of crises with her children that also put stress on the marriage. Julie tried to focus on everything in life she could fix, such as with those she cared for at work. Due to the turmoil and anxiety during this time, Julie became physically and mentally unable to remain employed. However, according to one of her references,

“When life hit rock bottom personally, where most of us would break, Julie became stronger.” Being a fixer all her life, she finally realized she could not fix everyone, so she allowed her children to grow, face their own mistakes and watched them gain self-respect and become stronger. Her reference goes on to say, “The strength of this woman shined through like a superhero.”

After being out of high school for 24 years, Julie decided to go back to school. Her choice for a major originally was substance abuse counseling due to her son’s addiction. The subsequent experience of dealing with the law in his case prompted her to change her major to paralegal studies. After her son’s experience, she wants nothing to do with criminal law and also realizes the emotional strain of family law is not for her. Her new direction is to work with a law office dealing in contracts, wills and trusts.

In his reference, Julie’s English professor shares the impact Julie had on his class. She was enrolled in a class whose format was a “two way video course” in which he was in a classroom in one location and Julie was in Crawfordsville. For most students he says, this is not optimum but goes on to say, “Except for Julie.” Since the subject material analyzed today’s journalism practices relating to a trial, it had a strong resemblance to what was happening for Julie and her son. Consequently she had strong opinions about the subject material, had no qualms about sharing them and challenged ideas. He says, “Julie was committed to my class in a much more complex way than most students.”

Julie has shared that with all the things going on in her life, she nearly decided to abandon school. She says, “If it were not for my English 112 class and a project we were doing, I just might have let depression and shame get to me.” Instead Julie is now into her required paralegal courses and doing very well.