



Women Inspiring Women

Meet Cheryle Hlebakos



Cheryl Hlebakos was born and raised in Petaluma and always wanted to be a teacher. She spent her days dreaming and striving to achieve that goal. Cheryl's dream came true and she started her career teaching high school students for 18 years and the next 24 years as a guidance counselor – a total of forty one years in local education. Three years ago she retired from the Cotati-Rohnert Park School District but continues to operate a behind the wheel driving school she started twenty eight years ago. She enjoys keeping pace with these vibrant teens and being an inspiring influence in their lives.

She has volunteered for the March of Dimes Heart Fund and the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life. As a two-time cancer survivor, she has learned the motto, "Never pass up an opportunity," something she continues to teach her former students and others in her life.

Cheryl's mother, who will be 100 this year, was also born and raised in Petaluma and is the most inspiring person in Cheryl's life. Her mom taught her to be a lady. Her father asked her if she knew the difference between a woman and a lady. The answer? Every lady is a woman but not every woman is a lady. Her mother taught her by being a shining example of class and being a true lady. "Example is the best teacher of all," Cheryl says. Something I think served her well as a mentor and teacher of our community's youth for so many years.



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