Thank You, Patty Vandever

June 7, 2012 By Shawn Decker

Since my comedic memoir about living with HIV, *My Pet Virus*, was published in 2006, I've had the opportunity to speak to English students at Charlottesville High School every May. It's kind of become a fun, end-of-semester tradition, and I'm always happy to find that the juniors seem to like my sense of humor. I always leave with a feeling of accomplishment, that I've opened up fresh eyes, ears and minds to what it is like living with HIV.

None of these encounters over the last several years would have been possible if it weren't for Patty Vandever. Last Friday I had the privilege of speaking in her class during her last day on the job- after over 30 years in education Patty is retiring. The class and I offered a host of TV watching opportunities for her, including Rob Dyrdek's Fantasy Factory. Patty humored us with a generous smile that suggested she had no interest in the comedic show about a skateboard pro who engages in various levels of shenanigan.

I just wanted to give a huge shout out and a huge thank you to Patty. I appreciate you setting aside a little time at the end of the school year for me, and wish you nothing but the best as you begin to set aside a little well-earned time for yourself.

Positively Yours,
Shawn

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