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It is hard to believe that this is my 22nd year in special education. Never in my wildest dreams did I think we would be educating our students during a pandemic. Although school looks very different this year I have already witnessed several silver linings like; small class sizes, small group or individualized instruction, shortened days, family time to and from school. We have challenges but we also have opportunities during this time of Covid. Like the start of the Kittery school year my professional and personal life has consisted of many exciting and sometimes anxiety producing changes.

Back in October of 2019, on the deck of our little camp in Shapleigh Maine, Eric Herlan and I were married. The two of us share many interests including; kayaking, reading, traveling, cooking and gardening. We continue to spend time with our four beloved grandchildren; Silas, Ellie, Henry and Callum and of course the rest of our extended family. Eric is a special education attorney so we have many spirited discussions about teaching and learning.

We were deep into the COVID pandemic in May of 2020 when my son and daughter in law welcomed Callum Nicholas O'Brien into the world. Callum joined his big sister Ellie. It was a strange and anxious time for a baby to be born. With all of the restrictions and our collective anxiety we were on pins and needles before the birth. Callum has proven to be the perfect distraction from all of the world's challenges.



This September my granddaughter Ellie started Kindergarten at Mitchell School. This has not been our traditional back to school routine. But as her driver I have the privilege to see Kittery's students happy and back with their friends and teachers.

So here we are in a year of "masking up" and 6 foot distancing. It's different and often difficult. The pandemic will not hinder my passion for leading the charge to provide an enriching and robust education for all Kittery students with disabilities. I am grateful for my colleagues, Kittery families and most of all our students. Let's make this the year of unexpected silver linings!