

# Becky Rider Takes a Big Fall

## *Extreme experience strengthens family bond*



Siblings Becky Rider, David Rider and Dan Rider smile for the camera after completing skydiving together to celebrate David's 50th birthday. (Photo courtesy of Ben Summers/Skydive Perris)

Each fall, a question teachers commonly ask their students as a new school year begins is “What did you do over the summer?”

The chances are quite good that no one can top the accomplishments of Becky Rider, the music instructor at Vermillion Middle School.

In mid-May, just as the last school year was coming to an end, Becky traveled to California, and met her two brothers, Dan and Dave. Dave, who lives in Los Angeles, is two-and-half years younger than Becky; Dan, from Chicago, the youngest of all of the Rider siblings, is 15 years younger than his sister.

Together, the three of them did something that's a bit spectacular and life-changing and as unusual as it is common. Their experience, while something new, was special because it changed something that the three siblings already possessed – their family bond – and made it stronger.

On May 18, Becky, Dan, and Dave, after a quick lesson and with the help of professionals, jumped into a clear blue California sky from a perfectly good airplane flying at 12,500 feet.

They fell for nearly a mile. Ripcords were pulled, parachutes billowed above their heads, transforming their plummet into a gentle downward glide toward the ground.

It happened so quickly. And yet it was a strongly galvanizing experience that the three Rider siblings still celebrate.

It was David's idea. He has battled a variety of health problems for much of his life, and has made it known to family members that to celebrate his 50th birthday, he planned to do something big, to make a bold statement about hanging on to life through its

up and downs. He planned to go skydiving.

While the Rider family gathered together in California last December for Christmas, they discussed David's plan, and decided he shouldn't really celebrate such a milestone by himself.

“David and I had been talking about this for four or five years,”

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