



The videographer who leapt out of the plane just ahead of Becky and her instructor captured this image during the first second of their free fall. (Photo courtesy of Ben Summers/Skydive Perris)

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Becky said. “He really has been pointing towards this, and it was years ago that I told him that I would go with him. Periodically, he would come up to me and ask, ‘Are you still serious about this?’ and I always said yes.”

Becky has conquered her own health challenges. Twenty-two years ago – her first year of employment with the Vermillion School District – she was diagnosed with breast cancer.

“I was diagnosed the first fall I was here,” Becky said. “So I missed my first set of Christmas concerts, and my first end of semester grades, and I found out I was not irreplaceable. Even at a

new school, everything went on okay without me. Maybe that’s a good thing for all of us to know, too.

“I’m kind of a control freak, and I teach my kids that. I just tell them, flat out, that I need them to do things my way in my classroom, so it was kind of nice to know that I could let go of that,” she said.

The cancer was something she couldn’t control. She decided her best option was to be treated by her doctor in Omaha, and stay with family there.

“People here in Vermillion were so nice to me. They took care of things at school for me, and took care of my apartment while I was away,” she said. “The school took really good care of me, and the people around here took really good care of me.”

Having so much to celebrate, Becky agreed to join Dave in his special celebratory birthday skydive. And Dan, who lives near Chicago, had already gone skydiving once a couple years ago and loved it. So he, too, agreed to be part of the troupe of Rider siblings that marked Dave’s special birthday by leaping out of a plane.

“Dan got a jump for his birthday from his wife a couple years ago, and he was anxious for a chance to go back up,” Becky said, “so last Christmas, when we were together as a family in California and talking about it, he said, ‘if you guys are serious about this, then I’m going to come, too.’”

A third younger brother, Steve, was unable to participate. He works for the U.S. State Department, and currently lives in Helsinki, Finland. He was present in spirit, however, having sent

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