



# SPECIAL EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION DISORDERS MONTHLY EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

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*Dr. Leader-Janssen has been the Department Chair of Special Education and Communication Disorders for two years. This is her 15th year as a faculty member in SECD!*

### ***What led you to choose a career in special education?***

When I was in college I managed a private pool, and one day I met Emma, who was non-verbal. I later found out she had autism, and decided I wanted to know more about her, so I enrolled in an Intro to Special Education course and knew I was in the right place!

### ***What's the career highlight you are most proud of?***

One of the most rewarding aspects of my career is to be the faculty advisor for the Student Council for Exceptional Children (SCEC). In 2010, the SECD officers nominated me for the CEC Susan Phillips Goran award, and I received it in Nashville, TN! This was one of the best experiences as I shared it with the SCEC student officers!



### ***Where's the next place on your travel bucket list and why?***

There are so many places on my travel bucket list! Our boys want to visit all 50 states, so we are working on accomplishing that!

Right now, Hawaii is at the top of the list in the U.S. and Greece is at the top of my list in going abroad! Our family loves being outdoors to explore and hike, so both destinations offer beautiful scenery!

### ***What's something an outsider wouldn't know about your industry?***

The challenges facing the teaching profession. If individuals outside of the education community would just listen to a day in the life of a teacher right now, they would be in awe of the challenges they face - but also in awe of the compassion and drive to make sure our children are getting everything they need on a daily basis - which is way more than academics!

### ***What do you do on your commute to/from work?***

Most of the time, I ponder and think about how to make the world a better place! I also use this time to touch base with my mother - 15 minutes of chatting with her starts my day off in a positive light!

