

A Teacher's Purpose

By RAMIRO RAMIREZ
SIUSLAW HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENT

Happy Teacher Appreciation Week to all teachers! As an honor to Teacher Appreciation Day on Tuesday, I will present some of the most memorable teachers I've had during my school years.

My kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Griffes, is still one of my favorite teachers as she had a kind heart and her class was fun. She had a connection between kids' hearts because she got the class hyped up for all activities. Whether it was math, social studies or reading, she always had the students ready for the next activity. The most memorable moment I had with her was one of my first times acting. In the winter, Mrs. Griffes set up a play so that the whole class could participate. I don't remember how well the play went, but I know it involved some singing, and dancing. I acted as a snowman — and boy what a time that was.

After I moved on from kindergarten, I wouldn't have a teacher as memorable as her

until fifth grade.

As we prepared to enter fifth grade, I heard some of my classmates talk about the teachers that they wanted to be with for the 2012-13 school year. Some of those included Mr. Daugherty, Mr. Utz and Mrs. Halpin. I, on the other hand didn't really care which teacher I had. I was then placed in Mr. Anderson's class, and that year brought more than I expected.

On the very first day of fifth grade, Mr. Anderson made an announcement about the signing of the U.S. Declaration of Independence. Some of the other students didn't seem to care about it since they were talking and doing their own thing, but I looked around the room and found several things related to U.S. history. Throughout the year, it was a great ride with him. Mr. Anderson appreciated that I was one of the leading characters in CROW's production of Meredith Willson's "The Music Man Jr."

There were so many subjects that I had a blast doing with him. Our class learned math and the history of America through the

magic of media.

The most fun I had was a research project on a hero we admire. At the time, I was a Microsoft enthusiast and had recently looked at the evolution of the Windows Operating Systems from 1979 to 2013. My project would be about the one who contributed the most help to these systems, Bill Gates. I could arguably say, this was the project I put the most effort into, going as far as making fake laptops, and an information board with loads of information about each operating system's name, launch date and reception. I even ended up dressing up exactly like Bill Gates — black suit and a pair of glasses. Mr. Anderson gave me an outstanding grade for my craftsmanship on my hard-worked project.

Afterwards, there were more teachers to come.

I can't think of a teacher any better than Mrs. Dotson, my sixth grade English teacher, to make middle school less stressful. My sixth grade year was very stressful since I saw friends and classmates go into their own groups and isolate themselves from me. Whenever I tried to squeeze into conversations, they would either ignore me or tell me to go away in a rude manner. I was pretty much left alone then, but Mrs. Dot-

son would have some stories to make my day better. Some stories included "Touching Spirit Bear" which is a book that I completely fell in love with. I do hear there is a movie about it, and a sequel to the book and movie titled "Ghost of Spirit Bear." I'm interested in learning more about these stories.

Another teacher that stood out to me was my Future Success teacher, Mr. Perry. In fact, he made the most impact on my life by clearing some of the fog in my future and have me focus on the things I loved via a website. In our class, we took a survey online of some things we loved to do and then the website would list possible jobs that thought would suit us.

Mr. Perry told us to narrow it down to three jobs we liked and then choose one of the three. One of them was a computer software designer, someone who creates and develops software for the computer industry. I decided to choose that job since the employment in that industry is growing, and heck, I love computers!

Mr. Perry is also the teacher most relatable to me. The most

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similar item we both share is a high level of discipline. I even got into the leadership program through his leadership advisor recommendation because he saw the qualities in me that could make me a potential leader for the school.

In my current school year at Siuslaw High School, there are several teachers that make my day better. Some include Mr. McNeil, my Geometry teacher, and Mr. Wartnick, my English II teacher. However, there is one teacher that stands out for me the most — my biology teacher, Mrs. Castro-Brandt. I can arguably say that she is my favorite teacher so far.

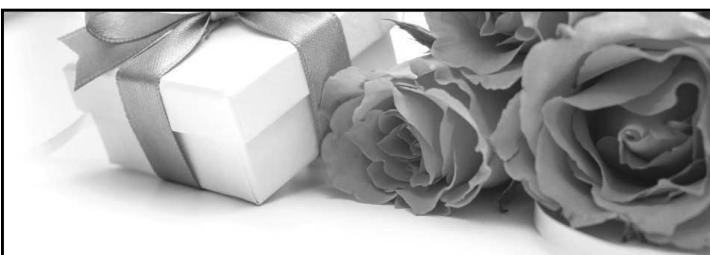
Thanks to her teaching, biology is now one of my favorite classes, a class I never knew I would like. A reason why she is my favorite teacher is the way she uses the "tough love" method on our class. If we are behaving good, she will be easy on us, but if we don't know some

class material or misbehave, she straightens up the class in a quick, strict and easy way.

Another thing that I like about her is that she embraces nature and the conservation of our planet. She has a project which has taken her over 20 years to build a mural solely out of plastic bottle caps. It may seem strange, but it is an excellent way to reuse these small plastic items. She thinks that she may be able to complete the project by the end of this school year, or in the middle of next school year. Because of those things, I have learned to appreciate the science of nature even more.

Teachers exist for a purpose: to prepare the upcoming generation with knowledge about the world they currently live in. They also teach them to be responsible, safe and well adults.

I would like to thank not only all my teachers, but all teachers, for educating us about the world around us.



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NUTRITION from page 1A

Marilyn Barba is the program director for FB4K. She believes the need for the program was clear and some form of nutritional support was needed for local students.

"In the spring of 2012, our small women's group researched, developed and, nine months later, were ready to implement our food backpack program," Barba said. "The program was designed to provide three nutritious, shelf stable, easily opened meals with snacks for Saturday and Sunday."

Church members have been coordinating efforts with the Florence Community Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and the local school districts to identify and support students that are facing immediate hunger and broader food security issues on a regular basis.

"Volunteers deliver the food bags to Siuslaw and Mapleton schools on Thursday," Barba said. "The school staff knows the students who may have little or no food to count on when they leave school Friday. They discreetly distribute the weekend food bags for those children to place in their backpacks."

Siuslaw Elementary School Principal Mike Harklerode currently accepts 70 or more bags from FB4K each week and sends them home with children that are facing nutritional issues. He spoke to the overall challenges faced by young people who come to class hungry.

"This program fits a very specific need in our community. We have a number of kids who get three meals a day at school. Over

the weekend, and especially over long holiday weekends, these students may not have access to the same level of nutrition," he said. "Being food insecure can be demoralizing. It is hard to think of anything else with a hungry belly. The food backpack program helps to fill that need. It also allows for families to maintain dignity and honor since the distribution is discrete."

The number of backpacks filled by the volunteers has increased steadily since the first year of the program. FB4K now readies 80 or more support bags each week.

"In 2012 we began feeding 20 children with funds our church's women's group had raised. We soon discovered the need was much greater," Barba said. "We faced two choices: end the program when we ran out of money or get the word out to the community of the reality of hungry children living among us. We are people of faith in God and believe we can fill a need when we become aware of one."

Barba said the small group

that had come together as a means of fellowship and community service was surprised at the response to the first year of food support.

"Honestly, we were overwhelmed. We are parents and grandparents and we would not walk away knowing the children were already counting on the food. So we took a risk, began to let the community know about our food challenged children and how FB4K's program was effective for them," Barba said. "What we found was a community full of compassionate friends, neighbors, businesses, churches and service oriented groups who would not accept the reality of hungry children."

The work done by FB4K has been appreciated by program participants and educators in Florence since it began. One of the often-mentioned reasons is the fact that 100 percent of all donations are used to purchase food for distribution.

In addition, FB4K was recognized and acknowledged on a larger scale recently.

According to Barba, FB4K partnered with the Florence Community PTA in 2016 and invited PTA President Tiffany Holdahl and Vice President Sarah Nunez to serve as advisors on the board of directors.

"Sarah submitted the FB4K program to the Oregon PTA in consideration for a statewide award," Barba said. "In April, we were surprised when she told us that she had not only entered us ... but that FB4K was chosen to receive The Program of the Year Award."

The Oregon PTA's website said, "This award will be presented to the local unit that submits an outstanding program or project that focuses on one or more of the following areas: parent involvement, education, health and safety, cultural or performing arts or community service."

While Barba appreciates the award FB4K received, she is quick to add that the success of the program is primarily due to the dedication and commitment of donors and volunteers.

"I think this Program of the Year Award is to be shared with every volunteer, donor and partner in our community who makes FB4K effective in erasing childhood hunger. Our volunteers are humbled with the community's generosity, support and trust in us. We work tirelessly to earn that trust and never lose focus of our motto ... Together, No Child Will Go Hungry."

For more information on the Florence Backpack for Kids nutritional support program, call 541-997-2497 or visit www.backpackimpact.com.

Thanks, Teachers!

Teachers play an enormously important role in the development of our nation's youth. They teach and inspire, guiding our kids toward bright, successful futures. They act as educators, role models and coaches, broadening minds and encouraging achievement. During Teacher Appreciation Week, we recognize teachers for their dedication to helping our children, our nation's future leaders, succeed.

Here are a few ways you can support, encourage and thank teachers in celebration of Teacher Appreciation Week, May 6-12 2018:

- Deliver fresh baked goods for teachers to enjoy at lunchtime or after school.
- Find out if there are any classroom volunteer opportunities that need to be filled.
- Encourage students to draw a picture or write a note of thanks for their teachers.
- Write a thank you note to your child's teacher.

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