

Cathy Webb

Virginia Teacher of the Year 2010

I was NOT to become a teacher! Elementary, middle and high school were challenging periods of my life. During these periods, I was always shy, quiet, afraid to take learning risks, and very afraid of not meeting the expectations of myself and/or others. These emotions made the academic environment very uncomfortable for me, but yet I seemed drawn to learn! College brought on personal, emotional and social growth. My career goals were firmly developed giving impetus to continued graduate education within the still somewhat uncomfortable academic environment. When counseled by my admired academic advisor to take the educational speech pathology track, I firmly responded, "I will NEVER teach in a public school. I continued to pursue my education in the "clinical" courses for speech pathology. Armed with my hard earned M.A. degree I set off to my very first "real" job...in a public school!!!



Time passed and I did have some wonderful clinical experiences in hospital and rehabilitation settings, but life and circumstance led me back into the public school setting twenty four years ago. Although my "mind" was convinced this was the job for me, my "heart" was not. Again time passed, many students, and families passed before me and at some point I fell in love! The "job" became a passion and quest for more knowledge, better teaching strategies, improved student outcomes, increased parental involvement and student skill generalization within the community. There was and always will be a challenge to be met, knowledge to be learned and progress to be made. The shy, quiet girl became an advocate for students to feel safe within the educational environment, to take learning risks, to never fear failure and to reach for the dream that will give purpose and meaning to their life!

Every day as I walk the busy halls of my school, enter the organized chaos of the office, or open the door to my bright classroom that holds as many different children as there are seats in the room, I am filled with an excitement and a sense of challenge like no other.

When ask by others, "What is your job?" It is with great conviction I very proudly reply, " I AM a teacher!"

