

“Why I Teach”

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2011 Virginia Teacher of the Year

Why did I become a teacher? Simply put, I love children! I love learning! And, I love teaching! It is my passion. There are individuals that I believe excel because of natural abilities, dutiful preparation and ongoing reflection and refinement. In life, one hopes to find this niche, I feel that teaching is mine.

My journey towards teaching started early. My mother always encouraged me to follow my dreams with fervor. Expectations for excellence in behavior and academics were the norm. This helped me to realize the importance of education and the value of knowledge. She took extraordinary steps to ensure that I understood that our present circumstance did not define or preclude what I could accomplish. With this foundation, I gleaned that education was more than significant, it was essential. I also realized that one of the most influential people in our society with the charge of educating our future doctors, lawyers, police officer and politicians were teachers. I knew this was my future.

Secondly, I had teachers who were excellent role models. I am proud to be a product of Richmond Community High School, <http://richmond.k12.va.us/schools/Community121/> named one of the nation’s best high schools. They accepted nothing less than my best. The teachers and instructional program pushed me to excel while creating an atmosphere where I had ownership of my learning. It was energetic, stimulating, student-centered and promoted service to others. I employ these in my own teaching style.

When I walk into my classroom, I think, “I want my students to feel like scientists!” Each day is a new, special journey. Let’s go outside and create/record meteorology reports. Let’s make a rap/cheer about cell division. Let’s investigate seismic activity with motion detecting probeware. Let’s create stories about the beginning of our universe. I believe that learning is a gift shared with those we empower to use it. Teachers should be empowering, knowledgeable, caring, nurturing and natural givers. They should also be lifelong learners and believers in a bright future of ALL children. My students every year are constantly encouraging me through their uniqueness to improve. Whether it is becoming more tech savvy, developing service learning projects or including global awareness activities, they drive me to never sit on my laurels. Often I hear students say: “I loved that lesson!” “I get it!” or “That was so much fun!” However, what they may not know is that I am the one enjoying class and excited about what I do each day. What else can I say, “I am so proud to be their teacher!”

