

Julie Keating

Julie Keating teaches fourth grade at Rockwell Elementary School in Fort Atkinson. She graduated from the University of Wisconsin Whitewater in 1992. She joined the Rockwell staff in 2006 as a long-term sub and in 2007 she was hired as a fourth grade teacher.

Julie's personal philosophy of education is that every child deserves the opportunity to learn in a positive environment. This environment allows students the freedom to express their ideas, thoughts and reflections without fear. She instills in students the desire to learn by presenting material in an enjoyable and educational manner, thus creating a positive learning environment. To Julie, the classroom is more than just an academic area; it is also a social area. Development of social and academic skills and relationships will carry throughout a child's lifetime.

One of Julie's greatest goals each year is to close the gap between students academically and raise each child's level of achievement. She takes the time to sit down one-on-one with each student to gain an understanding of their interests and goals for the year. Each student has a challenge folder which is full of activities that are at their independent level.

Julie was coached in the Comprehensive Literacy Model. In this model which she employs in her daily teaching she learned how to meet individually or in small groups with all students so she can provide more help or more challenge depending on the student's individual need.

A unique program Julie began involves her fourth grade students becoming "big buddies" with a classroom of kindergarten students. Her students act as role models and interact with their little kindergarten buddies monthly. They create shared literacy projects and work on inspiring positive social behaviors. The greatest benefit she sees from this

program is the boost in self esteem, that some of her shyest and behaviorally challenged students, seem to gain per the expectations of being a big buddy.

Positive aspects Julie sees in education today are the advances in technology and the collaboration of teachers. School districts are seeing the importance of technology and are continuing to increase funding at all levels of education for schools to buy the latest tools and devises for classrooms.

Shawn McDonough, Julie's fourth grade teaching partner at Rockwell comments, "Julie's 'can do attitude' and faith in every child having potential makes her an awesome advocate for students. As a 23 year veteran teacher, I enjoy her insight. Her students absolutely love her. When you picture an elementary teacher, Julie Keating is the image you would see."

From a parent, "Last year our oldest son had Mrs. Keating. The year before, he was becoming bored with

school because things came pretty easy for him. Mrs. Keating was able to identify his abilities right away, and develop additional challenges for him in every subject area to keep him engaged; sometimes with other students and sometimes with projects on his own.

From Candice Johnson, Third Grade Comprehensive Reading Coach, "In the classroom, Julie exhibits an endless motivation for educational excellence. She was one of eight teachers in our district who volunteered to be coached in literacy to refine her practice. She shares her learning in inspiring other teachers. Julie is an exceptionally talented and dedicated educator."

With great pleasure we forward the nomination of Julie Keating for the Kohl Fellowship Award.