

## **Roger Rumppe**

Roger Rumppe earned his Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of Wisconsin River Falls and his Master of Education from the University of Wisconsin LaCrosse. He teaches chemistry and science Fort Atkinson High School.

Roger explains educational philosophy can be defined in three words: Excite, Empower, and Establish. Once the fire is lit, students are ready to ask questions -the first step in the scientific method. Giving students the opportunity for discovery not only empowers them with scientific knowledge but also empowers them with problem-solving skills to tackle other challenges.

This year Mr. Rumppe created a new project called *The White Crystal Mystery.* "This is a great introductory activity that incorporates concepts like metric conversion and measuring while studying the physical properties of salts. At the beginning of the year students tend to be at all different levels. The great part is that this unit allows students to work at their own pace yet prevents them from moving on without demonstrating proficiency. It also allows students to continue with the lab while remediation occurs with others. Everybody is busy and no one is bored."

Another innovative project Roger has developed is Chemrog, Inc., a simulated research lab environment where students are employed as chemical technicians to work in the areas of Research and Development, Quality Control, or Chemical Engineering. Labs are designed to provide practical applications for chemistry like finding the amount of iron in a serving of spinach to creating an original brand of paint. Students are expected to finish a research project every three weeks and are awarded with chemdollars upon completion of their work. Students buy their grades using chemdollars. Students can also invest in the chemical stock market with extra chemdollars they accumulate once they have researched chemical companies that are traded on the stock exchange. Any gains or losses due to investments are applied periodically to their chemdollar accounts. Part of his role as a chemistry teacher is to promote a hands-on approach to chemistry, and Chemrog, Inc. definitely provides that

opportunity. This inquiry-based approach is designed for student success in chemistry. Students are allowed to do as much lab work as they want. The more research projects a student completes, the more chemdollars the student earns. Students can overcome grade deficiencies through good lab performance. It also develops technical writing skills as well as proficiency in the use of computers for collecting data and performing statistical analysis.

One of Roger's community involvement accomplishments so endearing to this community is the Connor Bourke Relays. Connor is a young elementary swimmer who had contracted brain cancer and had been receiving treatments. Naming the relays after him, the idea was to make Connor an honorary member of each of the winning relay teams putting him on the medalist stand 13 times, giving him more gold medals than Michael Phelps! Later, through contacts made by Coach Rumppe, Connor had a dream come true and got to meet Michael Phelps later that year and was interviewed by a national sports television station with his #1 hero at his side.

From Dean Johnson, Math and Computer Science Teacher, "I can proudly assert that Mr. Rumppe is one of the most passionate and inspirational teachers and coaches that I have worked with. His teams won big, but the kids learned a lot more along the way. In the classroom, Mr. Rumppe provides a challenging place for students to learn. He made the students think."

Nadine Hill, a parent states, "As a coach for the Fort Atkinson High School Boys Swim Team, Coach Rumppe falls into the category of "Coaching with Character" and he embodies this mantra through numerous team and character building programs intertwined with the swim program."

Dr. Jeff Zaspel, Principal of Fort Atkinson High School notes that through feedback gathered in a variety of means, including postgraduate surveys, Fort Atkinson High School graduates and their parents have commented about the great benefits they derived in taking courses taught by Mr. Rumppe.

With pleasure we forward the nomination of Mr. Roger Rumppe as Kohl Fellowship Award Winner.