



PRESENTS THE TEACHER OF THE MONTH



Adrian Leday Bringing a fresh perspective to the high school classroom

Some teachers know from the first day they embark on their teaching career where their strengths and skills will serve them and their students best. Other teachers blaze their trails as new experiences present themselves. Such was the case with Adrian Leday, a math teacher at Lakeview Centennial High School.

Mr. Leday attended Texas A&M University in College Station, where he received a bachelor's degree in biology with a minor in chemistry. Based on that strong science background, Mr. Leday began a career in pharmaceutical sales.

Soon after setting out on that career path, Mr. Leday "realized that teaching was my calling," he says. This realization had a great deal to do with his mother, at that time a teacher at a successful, well-respected charter school in Irving. When a teaching position opened in the science department at her school, Mr. Leday took it.

As he gained experience in the classroom, he recognized that he had a natural affinity for math, and moved to that department. Now in his sixth year of teaching, Mr. Leday says he has found his niche at Lakeview Centennial, where he has been teaching for the past year.

As a teacher of both 9th and 12th graders, Mr. Leday says he has a unique opportunity to see the differences between those age groups, and works with them accordingly.

"There's a big difference in the level of maturity," he says. "The freshmen, just 14 years old and right out of middle school, are so different from the seniors, 17 or 18 years old, and in their last year of school. They have developed a sense of urgency, and keep looking toward graduation. The seniors really focus on what they need to do to make it to that goal."

Mr. Leday plays an important role in helping his students reach that all-important goal of graduation. Part of that is teaching a TAKS remediation class.

"I love to work with the students who have the greatest need," he says. "I love to have the

'OH!' moments. As students look at difficult problems, then see the solutions, their light bulbs go off, and that's so rewarding."

In the case of his ninth-grade students, Mr. Leday says he's in a position to help them start out their high school math program on the right foot.

"I try to make sure they're getting the skills they need, to indoctrinate them in the basic skills they'll need throughout their high school math curriculum," he says.

During his years at the charter school, Mr. Leday says most students planned to go to college. At Lakeview Centennial High School, he says that is not always the case, although students are "really committed to achievement, whatever the definition of that might be for them."

One of the greatest challenges teachers face is the many outside factors that can affect student performance.

"We have to be sensitive to our students, and remember that when they're having a tough time, they're not lashing out at teachers, but other pressures may be weighing on them," he says. "I've learned to develop relationships with troubled kids, the ones who require the most patience."

Building these important relationships is one of the most significant factors in Mr. Leday's success as a teacher, says school principal Wendell Brown.

"Mr. Leday is an extremely intelligent young teacher who works hard to make strong connections with students," Mr. Brown says. "The students enjoy working with him, and he is always available to help."

"He demands excellence from everyone he works with," Mr. Brown adds.

It's apparent he demands that same level of excellence from himself. Mr. Leday is currently pursuing a master's degree in secondary and higher education with an emphasis on math instruction.



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