



PRESENTS THE TEACHER OF THE MONTH



Jean Greenidge

Teacher “pays it forward” by helping students discover their potential

“My experiences as a student prepared me to be a teacher,” says Jean Greenidge, fine arts teacher and AVID

interview process to determine their readiness for the additional work the class will require both at school and at home.

Subjects covered include time management, note-taking and organization skills, “all the stuff that’s in the ‘hidden curriculum,’” Ms. Greenidge says. “We teach those ‘secrets’ that build good habits for learning, and even good social skills.”

The program has caught on dramatically at O’Banion. “The first year, we had to go looking for students to participate,” she says, “but this year, we had 200 applicants for 75 spots and we have a waiting list.”

That success is due in large part to Ms. Greenidge’s passion for AVID, says John Tucci, O’Banion’s principal. “She takes kids and challenges them to achieve at a higher level, shows them care and concern, and develops deeper relationships with them. AVID students may have challenges to overcome, but when they’re in turn challenged to go further, they begin to see college as a reality. Ms. Greenidge just seems to pull that out of them,” he says.

Mr. Tucci says Ms. Greenidge’s passion goes beyond O’Banion’s walls. “After just one year, she was the guest speaker at the national AVID conference. That says a lot about what she has accomplished here,” he says.

Ms. Greenidge says that incorporating AVID into the O’Banion curriculum has affected the whole school – even the students who aren’t enrolled in the program. “You can feel the difference in the air,” she says. “Even the teachers are challenged to improve their teaching. The staff development that’s part of the AVID program promotes more rigorous teaching” across the board.

Affecting students’ lives so positively through AVID has provided Ms. Greenidge with exactly the opportunity she had hoped for when she became a teacher. “I was the poster child for AVID. Someone reached out and helped me, and now I can do the same for other students,” she says.

“She’s not only the ultimate educator, but also the ultimate person,” Mr. Tucci says. “She’s the kind of person who motivates others – students and teachers.”

That commitment, passion, and influence makes Jean Greenidge a critical element in students’ success at O’Banion Middle School – while also earning her the honor of being named Teacher of the Month. Congratulations to this outstanding teacher and role model.

program director at O’Banion Middle School, and this month’s Garland ISD Teacher of the Month.

“One teacher literally saved my life in high school. I was headed down the wrong path, and she taught me I could do anything I wanted to,” Ms. Greenidge says, describing the way that teacher helped her discover her potential and work toward improving her life.

“I always thought teaching was the most important job in the world, but I waited to grow up enough to become a teacher. I couldn’t have done it right out of school. But I always had my eye on being a teacher,” she says.

A native of Alberta, Canada, Ms. Greenidge says she got her high school equivalency diploma at age 21, and at 23 earned her bachelors degree in drama. At 35, she earned her teaching certificate in Canada, though at that time, the country found itself in a down economy. “So I came to Dallas in 1997,” she says, and was offered a teaching position at O’Banion.

Immigration posed a challenge for Ms. Greenidge, and her teaching credentials had to be assessed at SMU. Once she cleared those hurdles, she embraced her position wholeheartedly, and has never looked back.

While serving as a drama and art teacher, Ms. Greenidge learned that O’Banion planned to adopt the AVID program. The acronym stands for Advancement Via Individual Determination, and Ms. Greenidge had experienced just that kind of determination to earn her degrees and certification.

“When I heard about it, I thought, ‘I have to do that!’ I saw it as a way to have a greater impact on more students,” she says.

Ms. Greenidge convinced the program directors with her passion, and heads AVID, now in its second year, for O’Banion.

“I’ve never worked so hard in my life, and I love it!” she says.

“AVID should be called ‘How to Be a College Student,’” Ms. Greenidge says. The program was designed to identify students who show academic potential and provide them with the skills and confidence they may lack to consider a college education. AVID classes are offered as an elective, and students and their families undergo an



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