



PRESENTS THE TEACHER OF THE MONTH



Rachel McClung Teacher feels at home in the classroom “where all the action is”

“I always
knew I

Commended status, meaning they scored
90 percent or better, and I reached my
personal goal,” she says.

Goal setting is an important part of
achievement, Mrs. McClung believes, and
not only does she set goals for herself, but
she also shares this philosophy with her
students. “We start by setting goals for
every test we take. I have the students
write them down, then check back on them
after the test,” she says, adding how
gratifying it is to see the students’ delight
when they realized the reached or
surpassed their goals.

Mrs. McClung’s teaching style – and its
results – are being noticed around the
school. Caldwell principal Kathy Markham
says, “I have been in education for 34
years, and I can honestly say that Rachel is
one of the finest teachers with whom I
have had the pleasure to work. She
approaches her job with enthusiasm and
commitment and makes a real difference in
her students’ lives. Mrs. McClung sets the
standard for exemplary teaching.”

For Mrs. McClung, it’s all in a day’s work.
“I’m good at math, and I love teaching it,”
she says. “It makes me feel good to see my
students achieve.”

Mrs. McClung says one of the
characteristics that makes a great teacher
is the ability to adapt. “Be willing to figure
out what works – don’t try to do the same
thing every time.”

Another philosophy Mrs. McClung leans
on each day is to “Love the kids first. Teach
them second. I try to use that every day
when I teach, because some kids are very
challenging to work with. I believe my
purpose in life is to teach, and my place is
in the classroom. I like being with the kids
– it’s where all the action is!”

was going to be a teacher,” says Rachel
McClung, fourth-grade teacher at Caldwell
Elementary and this month’s Garland ISD
Teacher of the Month. She says she and her
friends would “play school, and I had a
grade book, wore high heels and a whistle,
and even took the kids on field trips
around the block,” she says.

Her favorite third-grade teacher “really
sealed the deal for me,” Mrs. McClung says.
“She inspired me completely. She was
young, new, and she believed in me.”

That early lesson certainly stayed with
Mrs. McClung, and has carried over into
her own teaching style. “I encourage my
students to believe in themselves and to
give their best,” she says.

Creating an up-beat, action-packed
atmosphere in the classroom helps, too,
she believes. “When I notice my students
are getting bored or struggling, we do a
chant or a cheer to rev their engines,” she
says. “We keep things very active. They get
to talk, to move around. It’s not just paper
and pencil.”

Liberal use of manipulatives, or
representative objects that students can
feel and hold, help teach math concepts as
well. “Some kids are so scared of math.
With manipulatives, they get to play with
their hands as they learn new concepts,
and then go on to do the concepts without
them. Kids who may not do well in reading
may do really well in math because it uses
a different part of their brain.”

Her high-energy teaching style is paying
off for Mrs. McClung and her students.
“Last year, all my kids passed the TAKS
test. My personal goal was to have at least
60 percent of my students achieve



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