



P R E S E N T S T H E TEACHER OF THE MONTH



Patricia Ashby Teacher of the Month makes positive contributions after nearly two decades in the classroom

After 18 years in the classroom,

some teachers are anticipating retirement. Not so for Patricia Ashby, science teacher at Sachse High School and Garland ISD's Teacher of the Month.

"I feel more uplifted than ever before. I'm so happy to do what I do," Mrs. Ashby says. "I'm excited to get up in the morning, knowing that my students are waiting for me."

Mrs. Ashby's positive outlook on education sets the mood in her classroom. "To be a good teacher, you must show respect for your students.

Consequently, my students treat me with respect. I always let them know I appreciate good behavior, and generally that's what they exhibit," she says.

"I've learned to make a 'problem child'— and every class has one — an asset. I turn them into helpers, give them encouragement." She says by taking these steps, students who might otherwise create a disruption or lose interest in the class are encouraged to be active, participating members of the classroom.

Eighteen years in the classroom have provided Mrs. Ashby with many "tricks of the trade" that help her classroom run more smoothly. She also exhibited a natural affinity for teaching, even from an early age.

"Since I was very small, while other girls were playing with dolls, I played teacher," Mrs. Ashby says.

Her elementary school also provided a peer-tutoring program, and when Mrs. Ashby was in fifth grade, she tutored first graders as part of that program. "We would work with the first-grade students twice a week, and I just loved it. I loved to see the expressions on their faces, the light bulb that would go off when they would come to understand something on which we had worked," she says.

While that peer-tutoring program took place in California, Mrs. Ashby's parents were originally from Ecuador, where the family returned when Mrs. Ashby was in high school. Following graduation, she attended Catholic University and

earned her bachelor's degree in chemistry and education.

After several years of teaching English to private-school students in Ecuador, Mrs. Ashby met the man who was to become her husband, a Texas native. After they married, the two moved to Texas and Mrs. Ashby earned her master's degree at University of Texas at Dallas.

Several years of teaching at a Dallas-area private school led to an opportunity with Garland ISD, where Mrs. Ashby has remained ever since.

Part of her rewarding teaching experience has involved using her fluent Spanish. She specializes in teaching chemistry to sophomores, juniors, and some seniors.

Most often, that work with seniors involves preparing them for their TAKS science exam as well as graduation. "We have a program called 'Senior Credit Recovery' which helps at-risk seniors pass chemistry. We work fast, and condense the material. We work hard with students, and my students and I celebrate every little success along the way. When they pass and can graduate, it's quite a sense of accomplishment," Mrs. Ashby says.

TAKS tutorials come into play in March and April as Mrs. Ashby works to prepare her chemistry students for this all-important exam. "The school does everything it can to help students be successful with this test, including morning and after-school tutorials, Thursday after-school classes and even Saturday class," she says.

"My students know I'm always available to help them, and that they can come to me with problems. I have an open-door policy, and I'm there every day for them. Even students from previous years come back to me for help," Mrs. Ashby says.

It's this caring, committed attitude that Mrs. Ashby brings to her profession that shows her students she wants to see them succeed. It's also the kind of attitude that qualifies Mrs. Ashby for Garland ISD Teacher of the Month. Sachse High School — and its students — are fortunate to have a dedicated teacher like Patricia Ashby on its staff.



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