



PRESENTS THE TEACHER OF THE MONTH



Joanna Boudreaux

Keeley Elementary
School in Rowlett

Teacher of the Month lays the groundwork for educational success

Joanna Boudreaux, a teacher at Keeley Elementary, enjoys teaching first grade because it is a "wonder year."

"First grade is such an important year because they learn so much and you see a lot of growth and development in them," she says. "At the end of the year, it's exciting to see how much they have actually learned at such a young age."

Ms. Boudreaux personalizes her approach to education. She takes each child's individual needs into account and makes sure each student gets the attention he or she requires.

In first grade, the focus is on the fundamentals, such as reading and writing. Students also are introduced to concepts that will shape their lives in the future, she says. During that first year, the building blocks of a successful educational experience are put into place.

"As teachers, we have to reach every child," Ms. Boudreaux says. "But this is also a team effort with the parents, who need to spend time with their children and read to them every day."

Ms. Boudreaux says she enjoys working with parents to make their child's first-grade year a good one. But the best part of her job is getting to know the children. She not only nurtures them through first grade, but also gets to watch their progress as they learn, grow and eventually leave elementary school for the next leg of their educational journey.

"My first group of students has just graduated from Keeley, and it's such a rewarding thing to see them become successful."

Six years ago, she was a first-year teacher, having just graduated from Texas Tech University with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education. She grew up in Richardson, where she graduated from Berkner High School in 1995.

Ms. Boudreaux was excited to get a position in the Garland Independent School District.

"Keeley Elementary is a great school, and the staff and administration here are just wonderful to work with," she says.

When she's not working, Ms. Boudreaux is almost always on the run. She has been training and running in marathons for about four years now, and she plans to enter the Disney World race in early 2005.

"It's a great feeling, crossing the finish line," she says. "I do this because I enjoy staying healthy, and it's a rewarding experience, too."

In addition, Ms. Boudreaux teaches aerobics and soccer, and she participates in extracurricular events with her students when she can. Play can be just as important as work when children are finding their way in the world.

"It's satisfying to know I'm making a difference in children's lives," Ms. Boudreaux says. "That means so much to me."



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