



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



Luis Gaviria Teacher crosses continents to help Garland students learn math, science

Growing up in Lima, Peru, Luis Gaviria never pictured a future as a fourth- and fifth-grade bilingual math and science teacher at Club Hill Elementary School in Garland. But that's exactly where his intercontinental path led him and his wife, Monica – and the two couldn't be happier with their choice.

After working in banking and telecommunications in his native country, Mr. Gaviria decided to make this big move and come to the U.S. to study English.

"I lived in California for a year and applied to different schools to get my MBA and was accepted at the University of Tampa in Florida," Mr. Gaviria says. "A friend told me about the field of teaching, and I gave it a lot of thought. I realized teaching appealed to me because I could make a big impact in people's lives. At a company, you're just making money for the business, but here you have more impact on an individual's future," he says.

As a GISD teacher since 2004, Mr. Gaviria has already realized his goal to make that big impact. He was named Teacher of the Year in 2007 at Club Hill Elementary School, and he spends his free time working with two other GISD bilingual teachers to create additional teaching materials to help students learn science more effectively.

"We're convinced we can help our community this way. A teacher can help 20 students, but this package will allow us to help the entire district," he says.

The result of this effort is "Los Cientificos," or The Scientists. This multimedia science education package helps students become interested in

science through movies, podcasts and other media designed to engage students, as well as newsletters for parents. Mr. Gaviria says he and his co-workers presented the package to a GISD administration group recently and impressed everybody with the package. Once "Los Cientificos" is complete, the group plans to take on preparation of similar packages for math and reading.

In the meantime, Mr. Gaviria is enjoying influencing one student at a time in the classroom.

"I can see the huge change I can make in my students' lives. When I meet my students at the beginning of the year, I see they need good role models. I try to influence my kids, talk to them and tell them they can be anything. I help prepare them to live in our society," he says.

Mr. Gaviria's unique path to Club Hill Elementary School serves to inspire his students.

"While getting my master's, I did a project on personal success based on my theory about a "ladder of success," which says you have to have goals – short- and long-term ones, meet them, and then establish new goals in all areas of life. That's what I'm trying to do: help my kids reach their goals. I've been very competitive all my life. If I do something, I have to do it well to get personal satisfaction," he says. He is striving to pass along that same work ethic to his students.

"I think I'm in the right place right now," Mr. Gaviria says, and the students at Club Hill Elementary School and in the Garland ISD are the fortunate recipients of this dedicated teacher's drive and compassion.



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