



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



## Laurie Hermes Destiny, drive combine to create Garland ISD Teacher of the Month

Is it possible  
some  
educators are

just born to be teachers? If so, that may be the case for Laurie Hermes, fourth-grade math teacher at Kimberlin Academy for Excellence, and this month's Garland ISD Teacher of the Month.

"I knew from the time I was little that I wanted to be a teacher," Mrs. Hermes says. "I used to play school with my stuffed animals. When I was in college, I investigated other jobs, but I didn't find anything I'd rather do."

Mrs. Hermes earned her teaching certification at Texas A&M in Commerce, and while there, married her husband, Karl. "He was a huge part of me becoming a teacher," she says. "He put his college career on hold to work full time to help support me while I was student teaching. I could not be a teacher if it weren't for his support."

After graduating in May, 1999, Mrs. Hermes gave birth to her son in August, and started teaching at Garland's Spring Creek Elementary in November when a position opened unexpectedly.

Ms. Hermes began her career with the daunting challenge of teaching a bi-lingual class. "I taught in English, and a co-teacher taught in Spanish," Mrs. Hermes says. In her second year at Spring Creek, she taught a regular third-grade class.

After two years at Spring Creek, "I started looking for a school closer to home, and found Heather Glen. I taught fifth-grade math and science there my first year," she says.

The strong team at Heather Glen realigned after her first year, and Mrs. Hermes says she was able to teach just math.

When her son entered kindergarten at Kimberlin, Mrs. Hermes says she followed him there, and she now teaches fourth-grade math to both advanced students and grade-level kids.

Teaching at Kimberlin has presented its own set of challenges. "It keeps you on your toes,"

she says. "The challenge is keeping kids interested and engaged, letting parents know what's going on in the classroom, and working for what is best for each child."

To keep her students engaged, Mrs. Hermes says she uses a multi-media approach to teaching, including Power Point presentations, song and dance, manipulatives, and a variety of hands-on activities to bring math concepts to life.

To prepare her to teach gifted and talented students, Mrs. Hermes was required to get 40 hours of additional training in that field. In addition, teachers in the gifted and talented program receive an additional six hours of training each year to hone their skills even further.

She says Kimberlin is "a very busy school; there's lots going on." One extracurricular contribution Mrs. Hermes makes to that heightened level of activity is to serve as yearbook chair.

"I also teach Explorer classes on Mondays and Tuesdays until 5 p.m.," she says. These classes are designed to help at-level students improve their math skills. Other classes the school offers include piano instruction, art, sports, and a variety of academic enrichment classes. Explorer classes are offered to the students at no charge.

After just one full year teaching at Kimberlin, Mrs. Hermes says she's found her niche. "I had 99 percent of my students pass the math TAKS test last year," she says. "I also feel like I really got to know my kids and made a difference in their lives."

Fred Dillard, Kimberlin principal, adds that Mrs. Hermes was selected by the faculty as Teacher of the Year last year. "After being at Kimberlin Academy for one year, being selected for this honor speaks very highly of her dedication to our students and school."

Congratulations to a gifted and talented teacher like Laurie Hermes.



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