



PRESENTS THE TEACHER OF THE MONTH



Helen Ragsdale

Sewell Elementary School
in Sachse

**Looking forward to new
students, new memories**

Even though she has been teaching for 31 years, Helen Ragsdale looks forward to the beginning of the school year because “every year is a new year, and it’s a joy to see students grow.”

Ms. Ragsdale teaches third grade reading at Sewell Elementary School in Sachse in the Garland Independent School District. She and the four other third grade teachers have 90 years combined experience. Ms. Ragsdale started teaching at Sewell when the school opened about 12 years ago.

Children in the third grade reach a unique point in their school careers. “They are still young and impressionable, but they are maturing and need to start learning things that will shape their lives as adults,” said Ms. Ragsdale. And that’s what she has loved most about teaching for more than three decades.

“The children are independent, and they are still really like sponges,” she said.

Ms. Ragsdale earned a bachelor’s degree in education from the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff in 1972 and a master’s degree in education from Prairie View A&M University in 1981. She taught for several years in Arkansas before moving to North Texas, and she has been teaching in the Garland district for about 19 years.

As a reading teacher at Sewell, expanding the imaginations of her students is a daily goal.

“I like to stress reading to the students because it opens the door to everything, and it all comes together for them at this grade level,” Ms. Ragsdale said.

The students also learn about math, writing and social studies and science from three other teachers, and the school also

offers a third grade bilingual classroom. So when students reach her class, Ms. Ragsdale is able to focus specifically on building their reading skills and helping them learn and appreciate new ideas.

But the learning experience doesn’t end in the classroom. The classroom is actually an extension of the home, where learning should be emphasized as well, Ms. Ragsdale said.

“This is a partnership with the parents, and we are working together for the success of their child,” she said. “We are here as partners to do the very best to educate their children to have a bright future.”

After so many years in the classroom, Ms. Ragsdale has seen many students return and keep in touch, and she enjoys hearing their success stories.

“One student came back and told me how she remembers that she thought she knew everything in the third grade,” Ms. Ragsdale said. “And now she has learned so much more, but she remembered the things I taught her.”

Ms. Ragsdale said she has no plans to stop teaching anytime soon, but even after she does, she’ll likely go back to the classroom as a volunteer.

“I would love to do some volunteer work and reach out and help people,” she said. “Whether it’s in education or just in general, I still want to make a difference.”

Meanwhile, she enjoys several hobbies, including collecting spoons decorated with state emblems and elephants with their trunks up.

And, she collects memories of the children whose lives she has touched.



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