



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



## Tammy Renee Todd

### Third-generation Garland teacher follows lifelong calling

"I've known every since I was in kindergarten that I wanted to teach," says Garland Teacher of the Month Tammy Todd. "I come from a family full of teachers, and I'm the third generation. Both my grandmothers taught here, one for over 30 years, my aunt has taught in Garland for 32 years, and my mom also taught here. Teaching is in my blood."

A kindergarten teacher at Watson Technical Center for Math and Science since 2004, Ms. Todd says she helped her mom, aunt, and grandmothers with their classroom preparations "since I was in kindergarten, helping prepare for class projects and creating bulletin boards. I always felt I should come back to Garland and give back to the community that raised me."

After receiving her B.S. in education from Baylor University in 2003, that's exactly what Ms. Todd did. Garland ISD's kindergarten was designed as a half-day program for students, so Ms. Todd split her time between two schools in her first year, then moved to Watson in April of 2004, where she's been ever since – and where she says she intends to stay. "At this point, the only way I'd get moved is if I request it, and that's just not going to happen," she says.

Ms. Todd says she was always drawn to teaching kindergarten because she sees it as "a special opportunity. As a kindergarten teacher, you have the privilege of being the first teacher in a child's first real school experience. That's a unique opportunity to establish in that child a love for learning."

In Ms. Todd's classroom, that love for learning is ignited through play. "We don't sit

down a lot," she says. "My classroom is very hands-on. We do things that the kids consider games, but that have true educational value. They don't even realize they're learning."

Teaching kindergarten poses a challenge, she says, because students begin the school year at a variety of levels. "Our challenge is to take them where they are, springboard off from there, and get them where they need to be" by the end of the school year, prepared for first grade.

Ms. Todd has met this challenge during her years at Watson. "I've been pleased with their achievements. My students who just completed kindergarten were almost all ready for first grade by the end of the year. All but two were completely reading - and that's great because I had about 40 kids."

The challenges of teaching kindergarten will be doubled in the coming school year, as the program will be expanded to full-day. Ms. Todd is fully prepared to meet that challenge, and even relishes the change.

"Our goal now is to increase what we're able to do with our kids. We'll be able to focus more on kids who struggle, spending more time with them. We'll be able to enrich the early readers, getting them further along. The full-day format will strengthen our program," she says.

Ms. Todd herself provides strength to the kindergarten program. "For me, teaching is really a calling. It's an opportunity to serve the children of Garland, preparing them to reach their goals one day," she says. "Teaching is my passion. I enjoy it, and enjoy the kids." Watson is fortunate to have a dedicated, caring, enthusiastic teacher such as Tammy Todd.



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