



### **Camille's Teacher of the Month Award goes to a teacher who focuses on Indigenous students**

Each month, Camille's Sidewalk Café recognizes one local teacher within the Gallup area for his or her determination to help students go above and beyond. Prospective teachers are nominated by students who feel they should be recognized. This month, Zowie Banteah of Zuni Shiwi Tsana Elementary School is the recipient of the Teacher of the Month award.

Banteah teaches fourth grade at the elementary school and has been a teacher for almost 19 years.

In an interview with the *Sun*, Banteah said she became a teacher because she wanted to give back to her community.

"I've always felt it was important to give back to my own community of Zuni," Banteah said. "I wanted to be a better teacher to our Indigenous students as representation matters."

The nomination that won Banteah the award said she is caring and thoughtful and puts all her

## Representation matters

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kids first.

Carrie Loretto, who teaches fifth grade at Zuni Shiwi Tsana Elementary, agreed with the statement that Banteah puts her students first.

“She puts the kids’ emotional needs ahead of everything else,” Loretto explained. “She gets to know her kids really well.”

Loretto stated that Banteah’s knowledge of her students helps teachers in upper grades because she lets them know what to expect when a student leaves her classroom.

Loretto had nothing but positive things to say about her coworker.

“She’s an awesome teacher [and an] awesome person, and she just brings that into the classroom,” Loretto said.

Banteah said her favorite part about teaching is her relationships with her students.

“I love the relationships I’ve built with students over time and to see their continued growth and development, not just academically, but socially and emotionally,” Banteah stated. “I always tell my students that I look forward to watching them graduate from high school and have made it (sic) an effort to see them walk across that stage or to see them become productive members of our community.”

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