

Laura Ippel shows excellence for teaching through love and support

Indian Hills Elementary school second-grade teacher Laura Ippel's suggestion to others who want to follow in her chosen profession: keep pushing for excellence.

Ippel is Gallup's most recent recipient of the Teacher of the Month award. Given by Camille's Sidewalk Café, the award recognizes one local teacher within the Gallup area for his or her determination to help local students reach beyond their expectations. Award recipients are nominated by students and by those who feel the teacher deserves recognition.

Being chosen Teacher of the Month has been an honor, Ippel said, stating that she found the acknowledgement to be a very encouraging — and also overwhelming — surprise.

For Ippel, encouraging excellence from her students comes by setting an example. She says providing resources for her classes and driving her students' excitement about education gives her great satisfaction.

Ippel said that, since high school, she has had a love for children as well as a love of working with them. She said she was inspired to become a teacher in her early college years. Ippel received her bachelor's degree in elementary education from Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights, Ill. Upon graduating, she immediately began searching for a teaching job.

"I came right out of college and landed a teaching position here in Gallup at Indian Hills," Ippel said. "It was great because my husband is from the area and it worked out."

An educator at Indian Hills for four years, Ippel says she works with a great staff and feels blessed to spend her days with people who have shaped her as a teacher and given her an opportunity to grow in the field.

In the classroom, Ippel says she focuses on offering her students a safe environment filled with a plethora of opportunities, while keeping an eye on a positive future. She concentrates on balancing the needs of the children in her care, adding, "I want them to feel loved and important."

She acknowledges that in the world of teaching there are obstacles to overcome. Ippel says it's the students who continually motivate her to do her best, so that they can be their best. When asked what her advice would be to new and aspiring teachers, Ippel says to just keep pushing.

With an emphasis on social and emotional support, as well as academics, Ippel says, "Never stop learning, keep pushing yourself towards holistic education."

If you're interested in nominating your favorite teacher for Teacher of the Month, contact Camille's Sidewalk Café at (505) 722-5017 or stop by at 306 S. 2nd Street in Gallup.

By Dee Velasco
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