

In the pursuit of excellence

Written by By Cody Begaye Sun Correspondent
Friday, 07 June 2019 06:30



Meet Camille's Teacher of the Month: Zia Redulla-Managaytay

Each month, Camille's Sidewalk Cafe 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 deserve the recognition.

Zia Redulla-Managaytay, of Chee Dodge Elementary School, where she has been affectionately dubbed "Ms. Z" by parents and students, has held a decades-long love for teaching.

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It was her love of teaching and a drive to push her students to success that led to parents nominating her for Teacher of the Month, according to the Camille's ballots.

One person who nominated Redulla-Managaytay said that she deserved it because she helps students who struggle with personal and academic problems and helps them improve.

Redulla-Managaytay said she stresses to parents the importance of pushing their kids to achieve.

"I then tell them, 'Your [child] is really smart, don't be satisfied with just high school. Go for college,'" she said. "Tell them to seek out more education, travel, and broaden their perspective, and help your fellow Navajos."

After graduating from University of the Philippines in 1994, she began teaching as a reading interventionist at the high school level.

During a span where she taught at a university level for 11 years, Redulla-Managaytay emigrated from the Philippines to the United States in 2002.

Then in 2007, she moved across the country and became one of four Filipino teachers at Ch'ooshgai Community School, where she taught special education students.

"My passion is really teaching with students with special needs," Redulla-Managaytay said in a May 24 interview.

After eight years at Ch'ooshgai, Redulla-Managaytay transitioned to Chee Dodge Elementary, where she taught at both the second and fifth grade levels.

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She said that her master's degrees in administration and school counseling have helped her become flexible with both learning and teaching.

"[Having] other [teaching] licenses means I can blend [in] and work anywhere," she said. "It's nice in regards to classroom management."

While the move from a large city in the Philippines to the rural region north of Gallup seemed daunting at first, Redulla-Managaytay said she quickly acclimated to her new environment.

"Since I was one of four Filipinos from [a] city, [the area] was a new thing to me," she said. "But I began to love the place."

As part of her conferences with students and their families, Redulla-Managaytay said that she sometimes travels to remote areas on the outer edges of Gallup, and the parents of her students greet her kindly.

"This will always be my second home," she said.

All of the conferences with parents are to help her with her main focus: pushing her students to do well. This includes encouraging them to prepare for state tests in hopes of becoming proficient in areas such as mathematics and English and language arts.

"I want my kids to have good scores, so I was pushing them to pass their tests," Redulla-Managaytay said. "While their success varies and is subjective, I really push them with everything."

In this way, many people see Redulla-Managaytay as motherly, she said. But she embraces that idea and trains her students to be responsible and to act respectfully.

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“Some parents expressed to me that their kids are not respecting them at home,” she said. “I talked to the kids about it. I told them parents are parents, and they’re owed respect.”

After speaking with some of these students, Redulla-Managaytay said their parents later thanked her after they saw improvement in their children’s attitudes.

This past week marked the final days of Redulla-Managaytay at Chee Dodge Elementary. She said that she will be moving to New York City next week, so her children can attend to their studies, and then she will be touring Europe, before returning to the Philippines this year.

But this is not goodbye, she added. She expects to return to the area in several years.

Having lived near Gallup for over a decade, she said that she’s had experiences where former students who are now doctors, engineers, and serving in the military have come up to her and thanked her for what she did for them. She said she hopes to have that same experience when she returns.

“I always tell the kids to learn more, and I’ll see them in high school or college,” she said. “I want them to have a college degree.”

Redulla-Managaytay wished to thank her students, the parents of Chee Dodge Elementary, and the administration, principal, and Gallup McKinley County Schools for their support.

More than anything, she hopes that parents and students will see the value of motivating their students to achieve higher success.

“I believe your potential will be discovered if you push yourself,” she said.

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Interested in nominating your favorite teacher for Teacher of the Month?

Contact Camille's Sidewalk Cafe at (505) 722-5017 or stop by 306 S. Second St. in Gallup.

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