

## Gallup Catholic teacher pleased by reciprocal relationships

Written by By Cody Begaye Sun Correspondent  
Friday, 11 September 2020 03:55

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### Meet Camille's Teacher of the Month: Aurelio Culling

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 to be recognized.

Aurelio Culling, of Sacred Heart Catholic School, has taught in Gallup for about 13 years and spoke about the bonds he has formed with students in that time.

### ***BACKGROUND***

Originally from the Philippines, Culling said he came to appreciate what he calls the classic Catholic system of education after arriving in the United States.

“Learning about this system was, to me, the beginning of what I am doing now here in Gallup,”

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Culling said Sept. 1.

Culling has taught other grade levels, including high school and college in the Philippines. He said he had previously taught third grade and fifth grade in Zuni.

When he arrived in Gallup in 2007, he taught at Central High School and was assigned to handle the school newspaper. Then in 2013, he was asked to give the commencement address for the graduating class.

### ***UNIQUE CHALLENGES***

Culling was asked about any distinct challenges that come with teaching elementary students as opposed to the older students he previously taught.

“You have to consider the fact the students are young, and they’re still in the formative years of their mental education,” Culling said. “You have to teach them in the way they understand. They are between reality and fantasy at that age, so you have to hit that middle ground to get them to have a passion for learning.

“Then for high school students, they are more mature and they probably need more attention in respect to writing and composition,” Culling said. “For elementary students, they need more learning in basic composition. We have to start them with simple paragraphs and things like that.”

When asked about any attributes that make Gallup stand out from other places he has been, Culling emphasized the importance of the community.

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“Gallup is a fine city, and [the best thing] we can do is to educate the youth,” Culling said. “Because the youth are the hopes (sic) of the future. Consequently, if we educate them very well, they can become leaders of the community and therefore pass onto the people what they have learned.”

### ***HOW IT FELT TO BE NOMINATED***

Culling was actually selected as Teacher of the Month back in March, but the title and acknowledgement had to be put on hold as the COVID-19 pandemic arrived in the region and people retreated indoors.

But even with time passing, Culling was surprised by the nomination.

“The first time I heard I had been nominated for this award, I thought it was an incredible thing,” Culling said. “I thought there were more teachers out there who were better than I am at education, while I think I am just trying my best in this endeavor.”

He said he is grateful for the students who thought he deserved the award.

“It shows me they learned something significant in my class, something that touched them, and I appreciate that very much,” Culling said. “I appreciate it very much that my students saw something significant in the classroom.”

Culling emphasized he is just trying to do the best he can with teaching, but that his students will do their best in return.

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### ***PASSING IT ON***

Cullings took a moment to thank Principal Amy Jo Mulvaney for her substantial efforts.

“We seldom find principals who inspire their teachers to do their best,” Culling said.

Being inspired to keep doing his best as an educator is something that Culling hopes will be carried on by his students.

“It is a reciprocal relationship. When the teacher wants to do their best for their students, it is good if the students then want to do their best,” he said.

***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.***

By Cody Begaye  
Sun Correspondent