

Embracing technology

Written by By Babette Herrmann Sun Editor
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Gallup High online teacher gets monthly accolade

Camille DePauli is a 21st Century teacher, breaking the mold of the stalwart instructor who stands at the front of the classroom lecturing and scribbling directives to students on a chalkboard.

DePauli, who has worked at Gallup High for nearly 30 years, was awarded “teacher of the month” by Camille’s Sidewalk Cafe. The contest allows for students of all stripes to nominate their favorite teacher or professor. From there, a committee picks the winner.

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Step into DePauli's classroom, and you'll find students working on computers, quiet and seemingly content with the online classes the school offers. Web-based classes range in scope from financial literacy to college preparation.

Many of the students that take online classes are "gifted," but as DePauli explained, the term gifted runs the spectrum from honor roll to students with special needs. She also helps to oversee the internship program, where students can get a taste of their dream job before they head off to college.

"It gives the kids what they can't get in a normal class," she said.

Notwithstanding, many students are now on solid college and career paths, thanks to the combination of college preparation, financial literacy, and internship programs offered to students by local businesses — including that of her son, Marc DePauli, who owns DePauli Engineering & Surveying in Gallup.

DePauli reminisced about a student who wanted to become an FBI agent, but changed his mind after the internship. The less glamorous side of typing out reports was the deciding factor for that student.

"It gives them idea of what it really involves," she said.

DePauli continued to talk about the myriad clubs and programs that the high school has to offer students, from ROTC to music. And that there's something for everyone.

"There's really no excuse to be bored," she said.

DePauli said she got her start with Gallup McKinley County Schools as a special education instructor. It was during a time when a total of four instructors traveled the district to teach at varying schools. This ended in the mid-1990s when schools started developing their own

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special education departments.

While she made education her career choice, she majored in music as a student at the University of New Mexico. DePauli has a passion for playing the piano, and she earned her Master's degree from Western New Mexico University.

In addition to teaching, she heads the school's recycling initiative. The school has nearly a dozen receptacles spread out to different classes. DePauli takes what her students collect to the local recycling center.

While the interview was supposed to be about DePauli, she would humbly steered the conversation back toward the students. When asked how she feels about receiving the monthly award, which included a gift basket of soaps and lotions, she replied, "sometimes you wonder if you're doing a good job, but you just keep plugging along."

To nominate your favorite teacher, head to Camille's and fill out a short form, explaining why your teacher is awesome.

Camille's Sidewalk Cafe: 306 S. Second St., Gallup (505) 722-5017.

***By Babette Herrmann
Sun Editor***