



STAFF SPOTLIGHT: Karen Romero, 2nd Grade Teacher

Ms. Romero began her teaching career as a long-term substitute for 2nd grade at Stag Street ES. She went on to work at Kenter Canyon Charter ES as a fifth grade teacher. During the tough economic years of the 2000s, many teachers were laid off but not Ms. Romero! The parent group at Kenter Canyon enlisted her to become the in-house Science Lab Instructor where she remained for 4 years. While there, she planned the annual (but optional) Science Night. 62% of the school would attend science classes at night and due to its success, she was awarded the Exceptional Service Award in 2012! She then came to Encino Charter Elementary School as a kindergarten teacher for a couple of years and then moved to 2nd grade (her favorite grade). She has gone on to receive the LAUSD Highly Effective Practices in Teaching and Learning Framework Recognition in 2014 and LAUSD Teacher Perfect Attendance Recognition in 2014 and 2015.

Her teaching philosophy is a teacher should teach in a style unique to their personality. She likes to create a hands-on environment in her classroom, incorporating lessons that allow students to move out of their seats. She uses whiteboards, manipulatives and centers to switch things up and not use paper and pencils all the time. She likes to do activities like scoot, walk around the room and interactive PowerPoints. Students often sing songs to memorize math facts, skip counting, map skills and more. She also has students do a lot of work in pairs because she says, "sometimes two heads are better than one and talking things through with a partner makes learning a bit more engaging". She encourages kids to have fun but also provides the structure they need, creating a perfect harmony to maximize student learning. She focuses on classroom procedures in the beginning of the year securing their attention and cooperation, injecting learning with fun so they will absorb so much more! Another strong component in her class is focused on doing acts of kindness for others. She reads a book called How Full is Your Bucket at the beginning of the school year, and talks to parents about it during Back to School Night. It becomes part of her classroom culture. Doing acts of kindness makes other and yourself feel better (bucket filling). In turn, doing unkind things towards others makes the other person feel bad and yourself (bucket dipping).

Ms. Romero's life motto is "It takes a village to raise a child." That the more positive guiding influences a child has such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, coaches, various teachers makes a child more well-rounded **and better equipped in the world**. She tells parents she is part of their village. She spends more time with their child than anyone outside of their family so it is important for parents to stay in touch because as they are all part of the same team with the end goal being to do the best we can for every child.

Professionally, she's most proud of the annual Science Nights she planned at Kenter Canyon because she crafted everything from beginning to end including planning all the lessons and packaging the materials. She would train a small army of parents to teach the lessons and run the outdoor activity booths. It took months of planning and every year was different than the one before. The proof of her efforts was seen in the 62% (and some years even higher) of the school's population coming back every year to take two 45-minute science lab lessons each night. She has a special place in my heart for science and believes that her love for science was contagious during her time at Kenter! Personally, Ms. Romero is proud of her affinity for travelling the globe. She has visited many countries and is planning to attend the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia next year. Hopefully, her husband and she will get tickets to support team USA!

Ms. Romero is a San Fernando Valley girl through and through. She was born, raised and educated in Northridge. She lives about 8 minutes from Encino Elementary School and hopes to retire at this amazing school. While the majority of her life story has mainly happened in a 10 mile radius, her world is enormous with her frequent globe trotting! She's an avid Harry Potter fan and also love Darth Vader. Her favorite hobbies include gardening and reading, she says "there's nothing like a good story (book or show), a cup of tea and chocolate to make a great day perfect."! Ms. Romero's favorite saying is "It takes a village to raise a child.", and she certainly lives by this mantra. Her favorite quote is "It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities." —Albus Dumbledore, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* and again, this is a quote Ms. Romero teaches and lives by!!

