

## Early Childhood Love

Monday, April 6, 2020

Today marks the 16<sup>th</sup> day that my teaching world changed as I knew it. Many of us in our profession know that teaching is not just something we do; teaching is who we are. I was blessed to have worked in the early childhood field- Head Start for over 20 years. I was able to learn about brain development and how children learn best and the importance of the family component. Thus, my first reaction to the beginning of this stormy time was – to provide a healthy and nurturing environment where students and parents can use as an outlet. At the beginning, calling or texting one by one was my first line of communication. Now I am humbled at the generosity and intentionality of all the details our Fowler District has been able to put together so that we can better communicate with each other, parents and students. I can only call these actions – “divine choreography”. In general families rally together during rough times. So, once again Fowler proved that we are family. I am blessed to know that my colleagues, my direct supervisors and our District office’s priority are the families, our students and us (staff). My mind is at ease, my brain is ready to receive the support and love from my colleagues. I am ready to think outside the box for my little ones in my case load and for the little one in our school and overall Fowler community.

I am writing this note after having our zoom meeting. My heart can’t stop smiling, my face has a big grin and I am just loving my little ones. Before the meeting my stomach gets fill with butterflies, just at the thought of “who is able to log in”.

Then, the logging process takes me back to the beginning of the electronic communication “you got mail”, only that now I see “Roberto’s video and audio are loading” and my heart begins to beat a bit faster with enthusiasm. Then, I begin to be calm and feel a peaceful wave that if one student can log in, then I gave the right “log in” instructions.

The first five minutes of the zoom meeting is a wonderful sight to see, to look at the students connect with each other and to hear them talk to their peers about personal incidents that have occurred since they last saw each other gives me a sense of love and virtual classroom community. I love how parents have partner with us and as the students log in, they are ready with paper and a writing utensil to take notes. As of now, my class and parents have stated that they love our zoom time and they look forward to the next meeting. Early in the morning I begin to get text confirmations from parents asking me, “today we have zoom, right?”. As I plan my next zoom meeting or communication ways for nonelectronic homes, a sense of peace, security and consistency keeps me going. Dr. Lobato, thank you for letting me use my talents, skills and love to keep going one day at a time.

Marlene Montiel

Western Valley Elementary

Third Grade Teacher