

Karen Jablonski: Focus On What Students CAN Do

Karen Jablonski, 4th and 5th grade ELA Teacher at North Wales shares how she “lights a candle” in her classroom: “When I meet my students on the first day of school each year, I know that I will affect their lives in some unique way, just as each of them will affect mine. I firmly believe that each and every student has some form of intelligence/gift. It may be academic intelligence, social intelligence, artistic intelligence, musical intelligence, physical intelligence, comedic intelligence, or even emotional intelligence. But, everyone has a gift to share with the world and a purpose for his/her existence on this planet. Philosophically, I view this as a challenge, as I believe it is my job to help my students discover their gifts and assist them in developing these gifts to the fullest.

In returning to the quote, ‘It is better to light a candle than curse the darkness,’ my interpretation is that as an educator and role model, I must assist every child in my classroom to discover and develop his/her light, strength, or gift. To take risks with tasks that are challenging so that he/she makes academic, social, and emotional gains within a safe environment. Often, educators will ‘curse the darkness’ by pre-judging a student’s academic, athletic or social shortcomings based on anecdotal data instead of drawing their own conclusions. To sum up, I believe I must focus on what I can do for my students, not what I can’t.”



This is Karen’s 32nd year in the district. She earned her elementary education degree from Penn State and her masters degree in reading from Beaver College (now Arcadia). Karen has been married to her college sweetheart, Tom, a Senior Production Engineer Manager at Boeing, for 30 years. Tom supports Karen’s endeavors as an educator by attending school functions such as “Pumpkin Patch Day,” “Turkey Tales Day,” and her annual puffin play. Karen and Tom are extremely proud of their accomplished children, Scott and Lindsay. Scott is a safety manager in West Virginia, where he frequently works in and around coal mines. He additionally coaches three basketball teams, conducts fitness training at local high schools, and serves as a personal trainer at West Virginia University. Karen’s daughter, Lindsay, is finishing her final year of a six-year accelerated doctoral program in pharmacy at the University of Pittsburgh. Upon graduation this spring, she will complete a two year residency at a hospital in New England. In addition to teaching and raising two awesome kids, Karen enjoys cooking, eating, walking, and working out. Some of Karen’s other pastimes include reading, gardening, spending time with family, and trying out new restaurants.

Jenna Rufo, Director of Special Education and Student Services, shares that she was so impressed by Karen’s positive attitude and dedication to her students in a recent meeting that Karen inspired the idea for this newsletter! She is truly a light for North Penn!