

the thank- you files



More of the stories, artwork and thank-you notes that inspire ATPE members each day

PART II

The Summer 2009 *ATPE News* included "The Thank-You Files," a collection of student thank-you notes, artwork and stories submitted by members. We initially planned to make "The Thank-You Files" a one-time feature, but we received so many submissions that we're going to continue publishing the "Thank-You Files" throughout the 2009-10 membership year. We're also continuing to collect submissions. Send your treasured notes, artwork and anecdotes to comm@atpe.org for possible publication.

Letters of thanks

Mrs. Hutchinson,

Hey! I just wanted to tell you that Amanda [name has been changed] took her ACT the other day for the first time and got a score of 25. Her daddy bought her an ACT CD and she hopes to make at least a 30.

It's funny how you had my child one year and shaped her whole life ... you touch a life and they leave you and you may or may

not see them again ... and you may or may not know the change you made in their life ... but you, my friend, have shaped my daughter's everything. You would be so proud of her. Amanda is an amazing little girl. She still sings ... sang a solo in the Christmas program at school.

Anytime Amanda has a great accomplishment, she says that she owes it all to Mrs. Hutchinson.

By the way, she wants to be a fourth-grade English teacher when she grows up. I told her to go into medicine or something where she can make a lot of money ... and from fourth grade to 11th grade, she still wants to be YOU!

We love you and miss you.

*Submitted by Jena Hutchinson,
fourth-grade English/Language
Arts teacher, Magnolia ISD's
Magnolia Parkway Elementary*

Dear Ms. (that's how I do it, right?) Williams,

Hey! I've never written you a letter before, so I better make a good 1st impression! Well, I just wanted to let you know that I'm praying for you! Not because you have problems

or anything, but because everyone deserves to be prayed for! And, if you have any special prayer requests then just let me know either by writing to me in another letter, or you could tell me, it's up to you. Thanks for being a GREAT teacher!

From your friendly neighborhood spiky-haired kid,

J

*Submitted by Julie Williams,
math teacher, North Hopkins ISD's
North Hopkins High School*

Stories of thanks

One of our crossing guards takes his job very seriously but has behavior and academic issues during school; thus, as [I'm] counselor, we spent a lot of time together. One day, this student saw me approach the crossing. He immediately put up his flag and said: "Don't worry, Dr. Latson, you're too important. I'll make sure no one hits you!" I felt very "cared for" and took his statement as a very sincere compliment.

*Submitted by Sherry Latson, school counselor,
Richardson ISD's Canyon Creek Elementary*

It had been a really rough year—too many kids could not stand each other, too many "low" students, not enough parental involvement, etc. You know the story line. I had tried everything I could possibly think of to help those kids learn to like themselves and others and not to fight over anything. As the year came to an end, I did see some improvements, but not what I had truly wanted.

The last day of school, my kiddoes did a skit for me, one I had no idea they had even planned. They all got up in front and acted out some things that I would normally say and how I would handle situations,

and then, for the big finale, they sang "Respect" to me and brought me to my knees! I keep that beautiful, vivid memory in my head when things do not go as I plan.

*Submitted by Eddie Hill, fifth-grade teacher,
Tyler ISD's Rice Elementary*

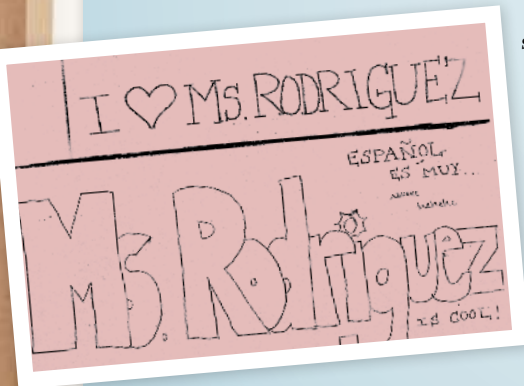
I recently received a letter from a parent regarding one of the many foster children that she is raising. This family is unbelievably giving. The student she is referring to struggles. He is very intelligent. He had a really bad six weeks (tardies, failing, missing assignments, etc.). I chose to keep his average at a 69 for the semester (after speaking with his parents) to provide him with some accountability and encourage him to work to his potential. Here is the letter I received from his foster mom.
Hi Sharon,

I just wanted to drop a note to let you know how very much I appreciate everything you do for my boys, especially [name redacted]. He really respects you very much, and from the bottom of my heart, I thank you for being such a great role model for him. I know at times he can be very challenging to work with and motivate, but I think it's important for you to know that you have had a tremendous impact on his life. Thank you so much. I have seen him grow so much this year in responsibility (not that he doesn't still have a ways to go) and [in] determination to change his life to build a good future, and your influence has been such a great part of his motivation.

I know most days, the majority of what you hear from parents is probably not the most encouraging news, but I really feel it is important for you to know that you are reaching at least one kid and making such a positive difference in his life. Thank you again for all you do.

I hope this story will encourage others in our profession to never give up and never give in!

*Submitted by Sharon Zabloski, math teacher,
Midlothian ISD's Midlothian High School*



Correction—The Summer 2009 *ATPE News* incorrectly listed the school of "Thank-You Files" contributor Kem Fogleman. Fogleman teaches second- and third-grade special education at Snyder ISD's Snyder Elementary. *ATPE News* regrets the error.