

2006 HONOREE

Lynn Astarita Gatto

Henry Hudson No. 28, Rochester, NY
Primary Elementary Education • 2nd Grade



Years Teaching: 31

Average Class Size: 24

Classes Taught Per Day: N/A

School's % of ESL Students: 32%

School Type: Public, Med. City

Type of Class: Self-contained

“My classroom offers a multitude of animal tanks, nooks, and crannies formed by comfy furniture, a book corner that houses one thousand books, state of the art technology, and a whole host of manipulatives and tools for hands-on learning experiences. The children are always engaged in active lessons. You will see scarves waving, pipe cleaners bending, and glitter glistening as we learn to spell new words. Children are writing scripts, designing costumes, and painting scenery for performances or puppet shows as an extension of a literature study. Small jewelry boxes are turned into accordion books to showcase student authored stories, and as they learn about circuitry and measurement, the children convert shoeboxes into model rooms decorated with mini-furniture and lamps that light up with the flick of a switch. Even snack-time offers a chance for math thinking as we divvy up crackers and discover patterns in cookie packaging. All of this happens within a classroom structured around teamwork. My team approach to learning provides a caring and supportive environment. For me, teaching is not about imparting facts and skills to children, instead it is about the journey we take together as we seek new knowledge.”

“My class is comprised of many children from families living in poverty. There are varying abilities and disabilities, differing languages and cultures represented. The children are not lacking in

intelligence, just experiences, resources, and an awareness of the greater world around them. I strive to provide a classroom that invites children to approach learning at their own level and using their own strengths through experiences. I want my students to think of school as an exciting adventure. Unlike many teachers, I encourage talk among the children. I believe language is a strength that urban kids bring to the classroom and I want to tap into it. Their talk can often stimulate unique lessons.”

“Lynn Gatto is the most creative and nurturing teacher I have ever had the occasion to encounter. Upon entering her classroom, you find yourself entering a world where learning takes place in every corner – her classroom is not like any other in the entire school. As a school-based planning team member and treasurer of the PTA, I’ve had many parents approach me asking how to get their child into Lynn’s class as all of her students are excited to go to school each day.”

– Darlene Schuler,
parent of former students

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS:

New York State Teacher of the Year (2004) • Toyota Tapestry Award (2002) • Teacher of the Month - Channel 8 (2002) • Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (1997)